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COMMERCIAL NEWS

A sensational Swiss invention.

After several years of research and experiment, carried out in collaboration with a Swiss firm which manufactures looms for the weaving of ribbons, a Swiss inventor, Mr. Georges de Mestral, of Nyon, has just completed a new kind of fastening for clothes, etc., which has already aroused great interest throughout the world and is bound to have a great future. The "Velcro" closure, which is somewhat similar to the well-known "Zip" fasteners, will prove very useful for clothes, furniture, packing and for a great many other purposes. It consists of two ribbons, one of which is furnished with a number of tiny hooks made of nylon (there are about 60 per square centimetre) whilst the other ribbon is covered with a kind of looped nylon velvet (which has something like 800 loops per square centimetre). When these two ribbons are placed so as to touch each other, the hooks enter into the loops and thus ensure a remarkable adhesion. The ribbons then seem as if they were glued fast to each other, and can resist attraction of about 14 pounds per square inch; in spite of this, they can be detached from each other very easily and without any effort, if one goes the right way about it! Tests have proved that the "Velcro" closure can be used 10,000 times without suffering any apparent deterioration, which shows that its "life expectancy" is much greater than that of the articles to which it will be

applied. Among the many advantages possessed by this new invention are the simplicity of its use and application, the absence of any rough places or bits of metal, the possibilities it offers for boiling, dry cleaning, sterilisation, ironing and dyeing. Moreover, "Velcro" ribbons can be cut to the required length without any waste; new possibilities for their use are being found every day.

Yet another success for Swiss watchmaking.

A Franco-Swiss expedition for alpine exploration in Greenland recently provided an opportunity for the Genevese firm, "Manufacture des Montres Universal, S.A.", to carry out a particularly effective test with one of its Polerouter-Automatic-Microtor models. From the time they left Geneva and during the whole expedition, the alpinists wore their watches without ever winding them or setting them. They climbed ten peaks which had never before been conquered, under very variable meteorological conditions, in close proximity to the magnetic pole, and where the ground required a very hard athletic performance. Observation of the watches during the expedition showed a very regular functioning of the automatic winding system and an astonishingly regular movement; upon the return of the party only very slight variations were to be noted.

Good Cheer at Christmas— —and Every Day

The bright and fragrant wines of Switzerland are quickly becoming more and more popular in Britain, and supplies are now available from leading wine merchants and department stores. You can now celebrate Christmas in Britain as you would at home in Switzerland—with your own national wines!

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A pioneer of the Swiss embroidery industry.

The inauguration took place recently, at Gossau, near St. Gall, of a monument to the memory of Isaac Gröbli, who was born in 1822 and died in 1917. He was the inventor of the "Schiffli" embroidering-loom, the machine used for the manufacture of the greater portion of Swiss embroideries — guipure, eyelet embroidery, fine embroidered fabrics, etc.

Centenary of an important Swiss firm.

A short time ago the centenary was celebrated of an important brass-founding firm, Messrs. Oederlin Ltd., at Baden. This business was started with forty employees, who made small articles, such as door-handles and knobs, flat-irons, etc. The manufacture of taps, which was undertaken soon after, took on a great extension with the invention — by a member of the staff — of the interchangeable tap. To-day this hundred-year-old firm has twenty times as many employees and produces a large number of cast or moulded articles, made from yellow metals, light metals and even plastic substances.

Swissair's new air freight service between Europe and America.

This autumn the Swissair Company put into service a DC-6A aircraft, of a capacity of 11.5 metric tons, to be used solely for freight transport. This "Cargo-liner" is equipped for the handling of all goods. Among the advantages offered by this means of transport are that one can send clothes which instead of being packed are placed on dress-hangers suspended within special bags, or send perishable goods in air-conditioned quarters, or send live animals — even elephants — by this rapid means of transport. The new plane makes two flights per week across the North Atlantic. Its first non-stop flight, New York — Kloten — Zurich, was accomplished in 12 hours.

Postage Stamps for the whole world.

Messrs. Courvoisier, an important Swiss firm belonging to the graphic branch of trade, has just received an order for the reprinting of a Ceylonese postage stamp. This is not the first time that this firm has printed stamps for the Government of Ceylon, which has informed it, on several occasions, of its complete satisfaction with the work.

The firm also numbers among its customers a great many other countries. Thus, the Belgian Congo, Haiti, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, the Philippines, Salvador, Turkey, Venezuela, Yugoslavia and, of course, Switzerland, are among Messrs. Courvoisier's regular customers. The firm has also executed orders for Angola, Australia, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Ecuador, Portuguese Guinea, India, Iraq, Iran, Iceland, Macao, Nicaragua, Poland, Portugal, the Saar and Italian Somaliland.

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Yet another prize-winning Swiss film.

On the occasion of the "Journées Européennes du Film Technique", which took place recently at Rouen, a prize was awarded to a Swiss documentary film, namely, "Pylon 138", which had been produced for the account of a big Swiss electric company.

A Swiss watch designed specially for the medical profession.

Among the watches intended specifically for use in certain professions is one which has just been produced by the Swiss firm Doxa S.A., of Le Locle, and deserves to be mentioned in that it is of great interest to doctors, nurses and other persons who have to do with sick people. The control of the counting unit on this watch is operated by a single push which functions very freely in a three-time movement. After having pressed the button and counted twenty pulsations, the doctor can read the number of the patient's pulsations per minute on the least encumbered part of the dial, namely around the hour of twelve. This pulsimeter is provided with a circular magnifying glass, which greatly facilitates its use.

The ingenuity of Swiss engineers.

In Switzerland, the very uneven configuration of the mountainous regions sometimes forces the engineers to have recourse to extremely original methods for solving problems of equipment and transport. A helicopter has recently been employed for the purpose of laying a line for the transmission of electricity, in the mountainous region of the Domleschg, in the canton of Grisons. The helicopter trailed a light but strong cord, made of nylon, and placed it on one pylon after another. The nylon cord then served to pull a metal cable along the pylons, with the aid of which the conductor was finally put into position.

In another mountainous area, this time in the Valais, a plastic conduit for drinking water has been installed in a very difficult terrain, where the placing of a metal pipe would not only have been too costly, but even quite impossible in some places. For instance, in order to span a very steep gorge, a plastic pipe was used, made in one piece, measuring 1,080 feet, having a diameter of 2.5 inches, steel-plated in order to protect it from damage caused by lightning, and suspended from a steel cable. As the transportation of this tube, made of "Somoflex", presented difficulties in certain places, it was simply rolled out and carried by the local children, who were delighted to be able to escape for a few hours from the discipline of school. By placing a child at every two or three metres, the weight to be carried by each one of them amounted to only 4.5 to 6.5 pounds.

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