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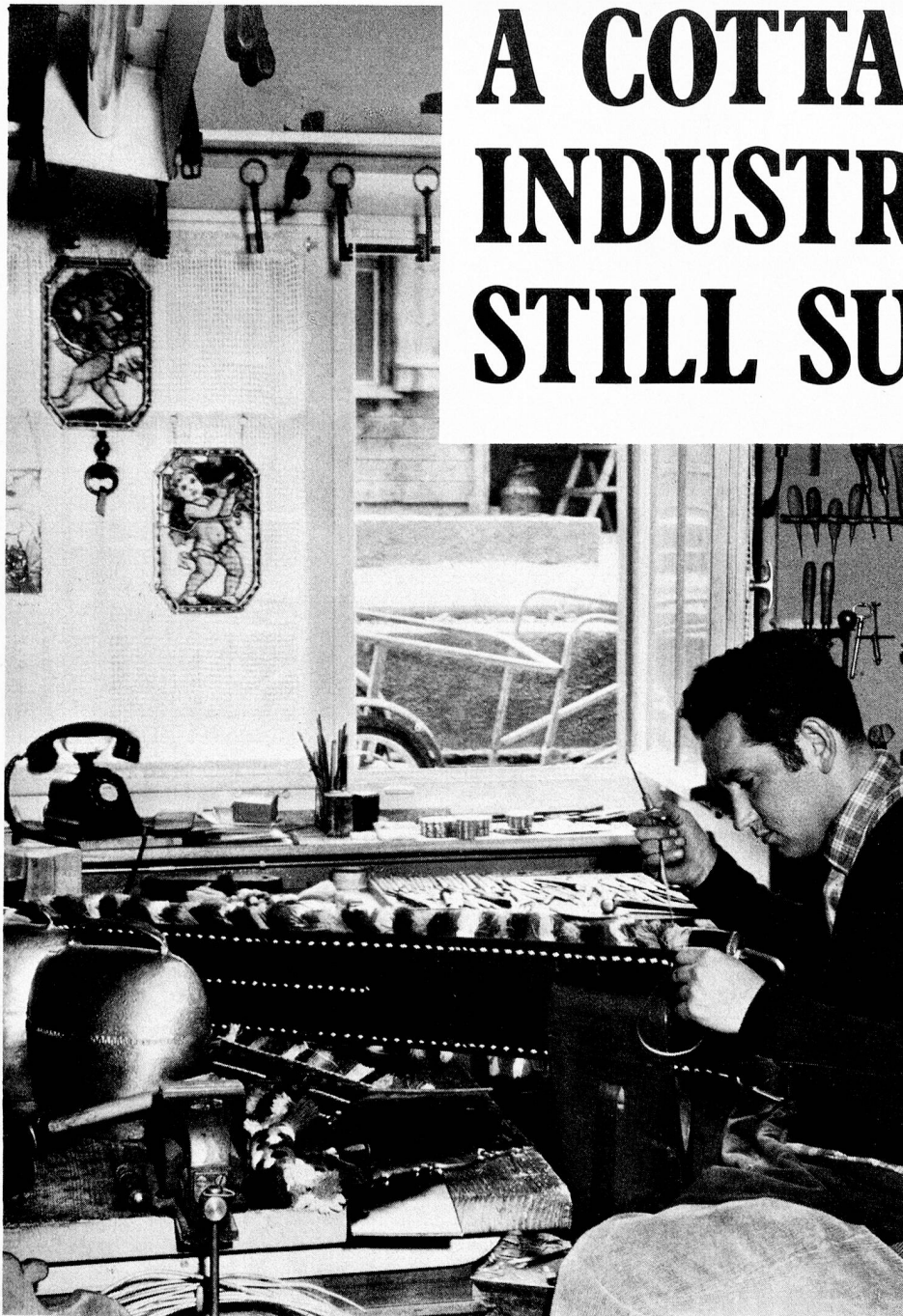
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A COTTAGE INDUSTRY STILL SURVIVING!



Switzerland is renowned for its beautiful national costumes. Amongst those for men, the Appenzell and Toggenburg "Trachten" are the most picturesque.

Their braces are works of art, showing intricately worked brass ornaments on the straps and the cross pieces.

Similar ornaments embellish the impressive cow-bells and the giant hand-bells hung on elaborately woven and colourfully embroidered leather straps, often nearly two feet wide. The lovely brass work is also much admired — but who makes it?

It is *actually* made by hand, a slow and very skilled job. There has never been much demand, for such braces and bells are handed down from generation to generation, and there is almost no problem of wear and tear.

Around 1780, there were about five artisans who produced this kind of work.

Today, there is only one! One hopes though that he may yet be able to pass on his know-how.

It would be a great pity if this traditional finery were no longer made.

Since 1830 the Faessler family at Appenzell has handed down the art of "Schellenriemenmacher" from father to son.

At the age of 15, Emil Faessler began work under the tuition of his father, a hard taskmaster.

After three years he was able to work his first bell strap on his own.

Now his father has retired and the whole responsibility rests with Emil. His reputation reaches way beyond the Canton's boundaries.

Zurich photographer Egon Bolliger took photographs of Emil Faessler in his workshop. They show him embroidering the bell strap with coloured leather thonging, cutting out brass figures with a fret-saw and embossing a figure, to give it "life".

The ornaments are fixed on the leather with fine rivets. A large bell strap takes at least a week to complete and costs a princely 400 francs.

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