

New York Letter : traveling

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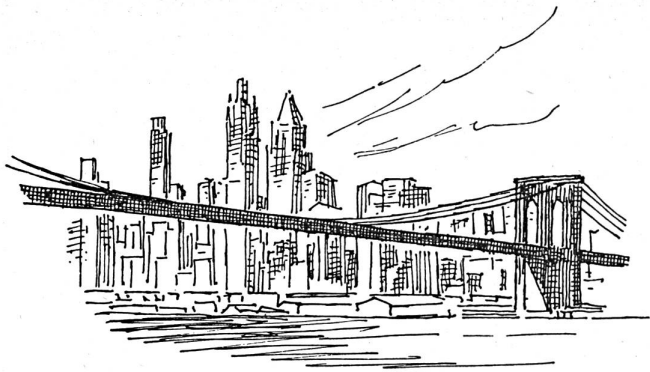
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Traveling

The art of traveling is the art of choosing. Choosing the new horizons that will best be suited to the circumstances and the state of mind that drive one to seek a change of climate.

For every clothes-conscious woman, the art of traveling is that of choosing from among the many temptations the few outfits best suited to her movements, to different times and different places. These dresses and suits will have to appear fresh and impeccable when taken out of their lightweight bags for air travel, cabin trunks or even rucksacks.

Traveling is an art that is practised at all times of the year and which can always be improved. One of the main reasons for traveling is to go from one climate to another — to pass from the sweltering heat of New York or Washington to the freshness of the Norwegian fjords, or, conversely, from the snows of Switzerland to the golden sand of Arizona.

Switzerland is at the cross-roads of the world. Every traveler ends up, sooner or later, by passing through Switzerland. The Swiss themselves are often to be found outside their own country. The same is true of the products of their industries, almost all of which are destined for export. The fabrics created in Switzerland therefore are inevitably destined to travel. That is why weavers, dyers and finishers have developed to such a degree of perfection the art of light fabrics which are easy to pack and take away on one's travels or simply to despatch overseas by air.

The organdies of Saint-Gall and vaporous open-work embroideries, diaphanous voiles and batistes, light silks from Zurich and braided straws from Aargau are striking examples of these. Light and as if the first puff of wind would blow them away, these articles of the fashion industries leave Switzerland to find places for themselves in all parts of the world.

Many of these textile creations start off by being launched in Paris by Haute Couture, in New York in the ready-to-wear collections, in Los Angeles and in the smart, dressy capitals of South America. The main purpose of these organdies, fine cottons and silks therefore is to travel, first of all by the mere fact of being exported from Switzerland, of making their way to all the fashionable capitals of the world, then to the fashion houses and the shops all over the United States where they appear in the form of suits, outfits, dresses, lingerie, blouses and light coats for summer evenings as well as for the winter evenings of the tropics.

For the American woman who is ever restless and travels for the sheer love of it, the light fabrics imported from Switzerland make outfits particularly appreciated for the ease with which they stand up to packing and even cramming into air travel bags. For climates so varied as those of the United States, they can be used at all times of the year, everywhere. One has only to glance at the shop windows of New York, a week after Christmas, to see light dresses ready for Florida and the Southern States. And this is even more true in summer, when the whole metropolis is sweltering under the heat which will last till fall. In a climate like this, clothes of cool and light materials are indispensable, and Swiss fabrics are particularly well suited to fill this need.

Besides, in spite of the many qualities of the new synthetic fibres, they are rarely as pleasant and fresh to wear as the fibre of cotton woven into organdy or glazed batiste, supple voile or that of silk in chiffon, organza, shantung or washable silk material for shirtwaist dresses. That is why, in spite of the continual progress in the so-called man-made fabrics, cotton keeps its place in the forefront of fashion and silk a place of prestige and distinction.

The consummate skill of the chemist and the finisher has given these fragile creations practical qualities that they did not possess before the war, when one automatically had to iron one's dresses every day after each wearing. This was a period when there was no shortage of domestic help, whereas nowadays a woman no longer has any time to spare for these household tasks. The ironing of fine organdies, embroideries, voiles and fancy fabrics has been infinitely simplified by the application of the most modern finishes.

Thus past and present, the luxury of former days and the refined simplicity of to-day, join hands to create a fashion which is extremely feminine but without affectation, a fashion for women who are active but who are particular about every little detail of their clothes. For American women, although very keen on sport, wear the most dainty outfits with infinite charm and grace.

The creations of Saint-Gall are now used for the making of outfits and dresses which can be worn at all hours of the day and for all occasions. The silks of Zurich are also very popular for dresses and the light coats that cover organdy dresses. These fabrics never look out of place or season when used with taste and discrimination.

Thérèse de Chambrier.



CHRISTIAN DIOR, NEW YORK

Half-silk damast from *Rudolf Brauchbar & Cie, Zurich*