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## EMBROIDERIES AND LACES

*H*as one the right, in a period of total warfare, to praise the beauty of embroideries and laces? Should not mankind renounce all luxury in dress and the home in such times as these? And yet, for psychological reasons which, particularly in wartime, must be considered as important factors, fashion has every right to exist. War upsets the spiritual equilibrium and increases the need for diversion and some compensating value or other to offset the great sacrifices we are called upon to bear.

Embroideries and laces are one of the many forms of artistic self-expression. For thousands of years man has sought to translate his sense of beauty into these delicate arabesques and designs. Embroideries and laces appear to the soul of man like a greeting out of a peaceful past, like a gleam of hope for a happier future.

It is not a desire for ostentation, but the knowledge that these delicate adornments are particularly fitted to enhance the charm of women, which causes these lovely products of the textile industry to be so unremittingly popular.

Despite wartime conditions, the embroidery industry centralized in St. Gallen has spared no pains to create new designs and to maintain the high standard of its products. Although the industry is now cut off from former fashion centres, the invaluable experience of highly specialized workers and a generations-old tradition has stood it in good stead. Designers and executives have not limited their efforts to mere imitations of classical designs, but have created entirely new patterns which interpret modern tastes. No more than in painting or sculpture, does fashion today follow a definite aesthetic trend, and creative fancy is given free rein. There is certainly a danger of excess in such a period as this, but the embroidery industry has testified by its products that, despite the immense possibilities which lie before it, it still respects the principles of form and beauty.

Muslins, transparencies, organdies, tulles, crêpe georgettes, crêpe-de-chines, form the background for delicate embroideries. The designs selected include stylized flower, leaf, plant and animal patterns, and also artistically presented geometrical shapes and allegorical figures. For evening wear, white embroidery on white ground predominates. For girlish ball dresses, richly embroidered tulle in white or pastel shades is preferred. Wonderful effects are obtained with these vaporous fabrics, even for house-gowns. In many cases, to enhance their effect, embroideries are combined with smooth-surfaced fabrics. Even for beach-wear, laces and embroideries have, in the true sense of the word, "won their place in the sun". Linen beach-jackets, too, are ornamented with charming designs, while heavy embroideries of plastic effect are selected for bath-robés.

Lace has achieved a new triumph. We ourselves are often the slaves of technical contingencies, but lace breathes the very spirit of technics. Apart from its use for wearing apparel, lace is ideal for trimming. Exceptionally beautiful effects are obtained with applications, while a great variety of products of the industry can be used for blouses.

In the last few years there has again been a marked trend towards lace-trimmed lingerie. Laces, broad and narrow, motifs with Broderie Anglaise, insertions of all kinds and delicate tulle embroideries are enjoying renewed popularity, for despite their delicacy they are very durable and therefore most suitable for washable lingerie and under-garments.

Further progress has also been achieved in dainty lace trimming for handkerchiefs, and there is a growing demand for St. Gall hand-embroidery — a proof that machine goods will never replace the hand-worked article.

In the home, embroideries and laces harmonize with every scheme of interior decoration. Small table-covers and runners set off lustrous furniture, and curtains, adapted to modern tastes, add charm to every window.

After having once again conquered the heart of womankind, these dainty products aspired to yet higher spheres; the play of light and shadow under a lacy veil etherealizes the smile of a woman and seems to herald happier days, when beauty and the joy of living again come into their own.

PAUL STEIN  
*Director of the Union of Swiss Embroidery Exporters.*

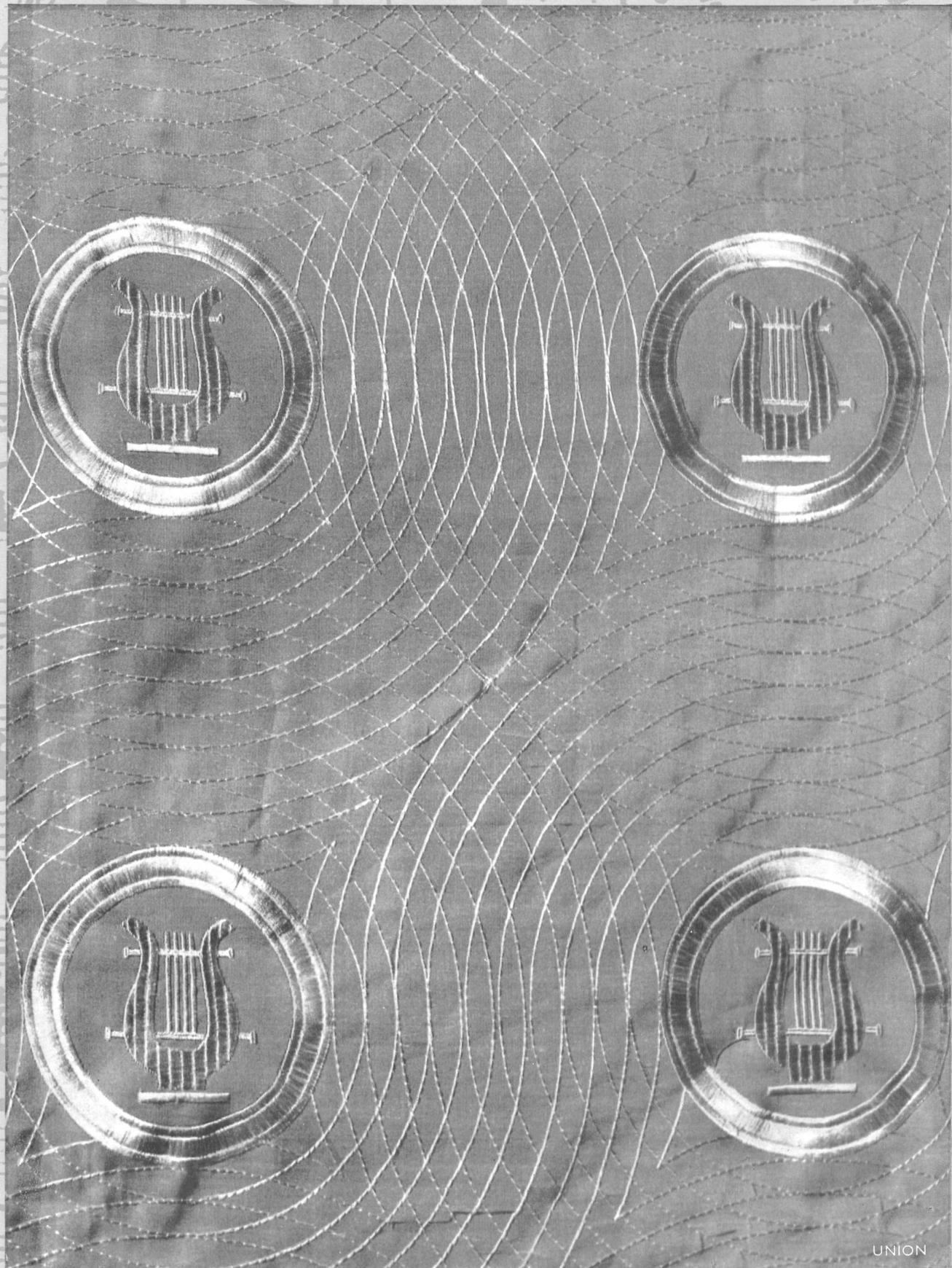






Composition:  
*Les artistes et dessinateurs de Suisse*

Exécution:  
*Les brodeurs de St. Gall*



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