

Zeitschrift: Swiss textiles [English edition]
Herausgeber: Swiss office for the development of trade
Band: - (1946)
Heft: 4

Artikel: Fashions in New York
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-798995>

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From Top to Toe

The American well-dressed woman can find in New York — that City of inexhaustible resources — the most beautiful products of America, Asia and Europe, wherewith to enhance her innate elegance.

Among the many countries which export dress materials and fashion accessories to the United States, there is one, and one of the smallest, which stands out by the quality and extraordinary variety of its wares: that little land is Switzerland.

In the most fashionable stores of New York, Philadelphia and Chicago, you will be surprised to see that a woman of taste can, in normal times, clothe herself from top to toe with goods imported from Switzerland, or buy Swiss-made fabrics and accessories, such as dress or lingerie silks, fine cotton fabrics and embroideries for summer dresses and evening gowns, underwear and knitted sports wear, original footwear, millinery straws, ribbons, handkerchiefs, blouses, dickies and dainty jabots, scarves, kerchiefs and other fancy articles, and — of course, it goes without saying — that indispensable «final touch» — the Swiss precision watch, a decorative and, at the same time, most useful jewel.

Silks

Among the green orchards and flower-decked gardens of the quiet countryside surrounding the Lake of Zurich, silk mills are ceaselessly at work to perfect those beautiful fabrics whose age-old reputation is firmly established in oversea markets. New printing processes have been found and this Swiss industry is now sending to the United States printed silks with a wealth of colour comparable to the hues of dainty tropical butterflies. After the dull fabrics and dress materials of wartime, what a joy to see once again those sumptuous silk dresses, scarves of many colours and to feel the soft handle of fine necktie fabrics.



Cotton fabrics, Embroideries

There is always summer somewhere in the United States, for in that vast Continent, somewhere — always — fine days are here. When summer has abandoned New York, the country clubs of Long Island and New England, the dainty, embroidered voile and organdie gowns migrate to the eternal spring of Florida or California and the holiday resorts of Arizona.

The fine cotton fabrics, a centuries-old speciality product of St. Gall, are always «in season» there. Plain, printed, fancy or embroidered lawns, fresh piqués, magnificent embroideries, laces as delicate as the petals of Alpine flowers, waft the name of St. Gall far and wide across the United States. They are further distinguished by an infinite choice of designs and a traditionally perfect workmanship.

Summer frocks, gowns for the «deb», for evening wear, blouses and crisp trimmings in Swiss fabrics and embroideries — all these are all the more valued because they can be washed and ironed an infinite number of times without losing their original freshness.

Handkerchiefs

And so it is, too, with the charming Swiss handkerchiefs from St. Gall or Appenzell. Whether embroidered, printed or trimmed with insertions and laces, bright-hued or immaculately white, these dainty Easter and Christmas gifts never lose their charm.



Underwear and Knitwear

The United States have a great diversity of climate and Switzerland also exports knitted underwear, fine and warm of texture, which can be worn under the lightest of dresses without impairing the all important «line». Perfection of style and finish have won for these articles a prestige which has not been lost despite the shortage which prevailed on the American market during the war years.

For town, country or mountain wear, Swiss-made underwear, pullovers, sports wear and knitted frocks, feature in the collections of the best-known houses of Fifth Avenue.

Footwear

To judge by the map, it would seem logical that Switzerland should have specialized rather in strong walking shoes and mountaineering boots. To draw such a hasty conclusion would, however, reveal a serious misunderstanding of the creative genius of Swiss footwear manufacturers who are as clever in designing fairylike sandals, dainty court shoes for town wear, as in producing warm and heavy ski boots or cosy footwear for after-ski joys — and all well-made and distinctive in style.

At the Stork Club, the Ritz Carlton, or Sun Valley, the well-dressed woman shows her taste by wearing fine Swiss footwear — for town, evening or sport.

Millinery

New York milliners have incomparable chic. They perch on their client's pretty heads the most amusing, charming and becoming models it is possible to imagine.

And, once again, it is from the Swiss countryside, from the country town of Wohlen in Aargau, that come the finest natural and artificial strawbraids, the best horsehair and straw laces, hat stumps and novelties in synthetic fibres with which New York milliners weave their capricious masterpieces, those heralds of spring, those «One-and-Only» hats for the Easter Sunday Parade which, every year, announces the coming of spring in the City of New York and — indeed — in every American centre.



Ribbons

From Basle in Switzerland come the fancy ribbons which deck the millinery of Aargau straw. Dotted, spotted, striped, checked, adorned with a thousand fancy devices, in the newest and most fashionable of shades, these quality ribbons make charming and durable millinery accessories which confer upon the creations of American designers that note of refinement which so distinguishes their work.

Accessories and Novelties

The elegance of the New York woman has its foundation in those impeccably cut tailormades which she loves and renews each day with a variety of accessories, so feminine, so vaporous and becoming that they eliminate all trace of masculinity from a shirt blouse. Few women know so well as does the American how to use lingerie accessories with such consummate skill. The American woman loves finely pleated blouses, adorned, with lace incrustations and drawnthread work, embroidered dickies, cuffs and collars or — in contrast — pure silk blouses printed with bold designs.

Coloured pochettes, embroidered flowers in high relief, a nosegay, a brightly coloured scarf, a decorative watch pinned to a lapel. These are just a few of the gracious and most feminine accessories Switzerland is sending overseas every day to delight the eye and heart of American women.

Imported from Switzerland

And that tiny land of Switzerland thus helps to keep the greatest of Democracies supplied with luxury articles which, in their turn are used in the apparel industry, in haute couture houses and high-class stores. Very often — sometimes without even knowing it — the smart woman of New York is dressed from head to foot with fabrics, accessories and trimmings imported from Switzerland.

THÉRÈSE DE CHAMBRIER.