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ACTIVITY

What activity has gone into the making of the countless « little dresses » and gowns for important occasions for the winter and early spring before they finally complete the complicated cycle of their manufacture, hidden in the workshops of fashion until the moment of their triumphant entry into the dazzling shop windows of Fifth Avenue. The crowds file continuously past this sumptuous free exhibition of the last word in fashion. For more than a hundred years the prestige of Fifth Avenue, this vital artery of New York, has persisted in spite of the rapid and unceasing changes in a town teeming with activity like an ants' nest.

Like migratory birds these new fabrics for the autumn have come from the four corners of the earth to bring women the pleasure of the latest fashions with the seasonal change of adornment, dresses and coats.

There are woollens from England and Scotland with their plaids and classic tartans, which this year, introducing a new note, offer muted and changing effects. There are strong American woollens with their pure and rich colours ; new fantasies in nylon, rayon and cotton, products of New England or the Southern States.

There are silks from France, Switzerland and Italy vying with each other in beauty. From Switzerland again, there are the finest organdies, the most delicately worked embroidery, golden prints, fabrics with the most perfect finish for ball dresses and evening gowns for the festive season ; also special dress materials for small girls and babies.

A whole host of new ideas in the printing and finishing of fabrics comes direct from the valleys of the districts around St. Gall and the Lake of Constance. And it is not only the fabrics which attract attention but also the knitwear for sport, silk or wool jersey underwear — light and as warm as can be desired — ski jackets, sportswear and rainwear of a rare elegance. Finally, there are the ribbons of Basle and the straws of Wohlen from which will be made the first hats, harbingers of spring, for sunny days in January.

It is surprising to be able to find so many articles imported from Switzerland in New York among the piles of fabrics, clothes and fashion accessories which have come from all countries to be sold in the New World.

All these specialities from Switzerland, these fabrics, these handkerchiefs and this embroidery, have crossed the ocean in large droning aircraft, or in the deep holds of ships. Uncle Sam has drawn aside his customs barriers cautiously to let them in. They have been received by the

agents, the wholesalers and the buyers in New York, who have despatched them to the clothing manufacturers of Seventh Avenue.

These Swiss specialities really must have outstanding qualities for them to be chosen in such a multitude of fabrics, coming as they do from so far and meeting with such active competition in the United States. It is their originality and their perfect workmanship which distinguish them from the mass ; it is their quality which has won them their success in New York since the early days of Fifth Avenue at the beginning of the last century.

Thus a dress made in America of a fabric from Switzerland represents the result of terrific activity. What a series of adventures, from the spinning, the weaving and the finishing of the fabric created in Switzerland to the triumphant appearance of the model worn by a New York cover girl in a fashion parade at the Waldorf Astoria, the Plaza or the Ritz-Carlton. This activity is the life, the livelihood of thousands of workers from the rural factories of Switzerland as well as of the city girls in the workshops of Seventh Avenue. The final product is beauty ; is this not a goal which fully justifies all this work being continually carried on between one continent and another ?

Thérèse de Chambrier.



Robes d'après-midi en gros grain.
Grosgrain afternoon dresses.
Trajes de tarde en grosgrén.
Nachmittagskleider aus Grosgrain.



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Tissu : L. Abraham & Cie, Soieries S.A., Zurich.