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A happy alliance

It is a happy alliance of the art of the weaver and the dressmaker, of the fabric and the cut, which has given birth to the harmonious fashion reigning to-day in New York as in the rest of the civilised world.

Thanks to the stimulus of competition, to the abundance, at last restored, of natural textiles such as silk, cotton and wool, and to the inexhaustible possibilities offered by synthetic fibres such as rayon, nylon, orlon, etc., an infinite variety of fabrics, each more beautiful than the next, has appeared on the markets of the world.

It is the consummate skill of the chemist, the finisher and the dyer that has succeeded in giving to each of these fibres new qualities touching on perfection : materials of cotton, wool, silk and linen have become more durable, more supple and more varied.

The progress achieved in the field of textiles has had a powerful influence on the creative spirit of dress-makers and ready-to-wear manufacturers as well as on the imagination of the woman of to-day.

In the 15th century, bold navigators discovering new worlds fired the imagination of all the artists, writers and merchants of their day. In the same way, in this 20th century of ours, the chemists and the dogged scientists, who have discovered rayon and nylon, and transformed cotton, silk, linen and wool into uncrushable, unshrinkable, waterproof or washable fabrics, have done the work of pioneers. They have aroused an incomparable sense of rivalry in the industries and arts of fashion and clothing to-day. In their own way they have changed the face of the world by putting elegance within the reach of all women, whether rich or of modest means.

Never before in the whole history of civilisation has there ever been such a wealth of fabrics and clothes accessible to every purse. Never before have women's clothes been so elegant for all classes of society. Never before has the total length of mate-

rial available per person per year ever been so great as at the present moment. This is one of the great luxuries afforded us by modern science.

It would seem as if this delightful flowering of the thousands of different fabrics of the 1950 fashions were a sort of soothing compensation for the deep unrest existing in international politics. More than all the solemn speeches at UNO, it is the amazing rise of international fashion that has created active and courteous exchanges between country and country, between continent and continent. Common bonds of interest have been renewed and are continually becoming closer between the different centres of textile production and fashion. A very close feeling of solidarity exists between Egypt, Tennessee and Saint-Gall, between China and Zurich, between Hong Kong and New York, Melbourne and London — and Paris is the centre of this fine lace-like web of threads joining together the centres producing or creating textiles and fashion accessories.

Neither customs barriers nor import duties, nor complicated and prohibitive exchanges, nor wars, have succeeded in destroying the fragile but powerful web of the international relations necessary to the development of fashion in all countries.

The contribution of the small country that is Switzerland to this international work of textile creation and the spreading of fashion, is considerable. Quality — perfection — beauty — these are what Swiss producers of fabrics, silks, embroidery and fine cottons, linen and woollens are ever striving to export to the four corners of the world. In this way the Swiss textile industry contributes to a large extent to sending out charming creations for every season to all countries of the world where fashion flowers anew. Great use is made of them by the dressmakers and best ready-to-wear manufacturers in New York and the United States.

Thérèse de Chambrier.



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