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providing employment for 40,000 embroideresses. The first embroidering machine was invented in 1829, but it took more than 20 years to perfect it enough for its products to satisfy the consumer. Invention followed upon invention. In 1865, the first pantograph was made, and in 1910 the automatic shuttle machine made its first appearance on the market. It is interesting to note that these three types of machine are still used to-day, for each of them possesses its own particular advantages.

In 1913 the embroidery industry was at the head of Swiss exports with a total export value of 210 million francs (gold). The set-backs suffered by this industry after the first World War — consequences of the supplanting of cotton lingerie by rayon and tricot, of devaluations and import restrictions — were gradually able to be neutralised. This recovery was interrupted by World War II. But manufacturers did not allow themselves to be discouraged ; they worked to improve the quality of their products and to perfect new techniques. After the war, St. Gall was able to offer embroidery and embroidered laces which, by reason of their originality, conquered not only Parisian Haute Couture but also very large sections of the population. Since manufacturers have realised that the Swiss embroidery industry can only hold its own by work of the best quality, they devote particular care and attention to the training of designers, enlargers, hand-embroiderers and workers in the home. But the use of new materials and their combinations in appliqué work are also studied. New designs take into account the evolution of fashions and taste. Thus for example geometric figures have been most popular recently.

These continual efforts show that in spite of the new wave of rearmament, embroidery and lace are nevertheless still very much in demand, so much so that at the moment it is no longer possible, even by working overtime, fully to meet the demand.

THE TEXTILE FINISHING INDUSTRY

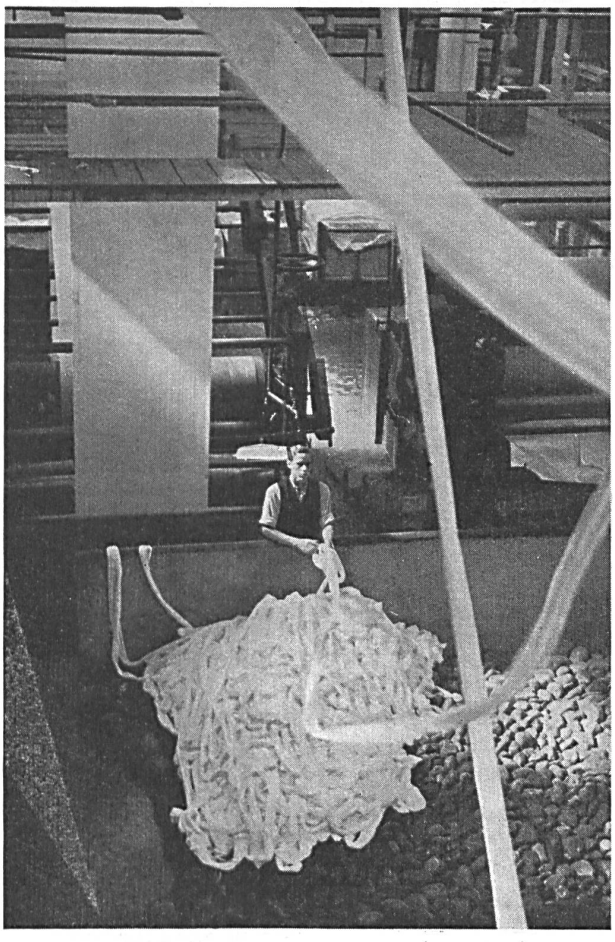
by Dr. P. KÜNG, Secretary of the Association of the Swiss Textile Finishing Industry, Zurich

« Every living thing has a tendency towards colour ». These words of Goethe's are particularly appropriate in the field of fashion, and therefore in the field of textiles too. Man's instinctive need to adorn himself and his taste for colour continually encourage him to change the shape and colour of the objects around him, and nowhere is this more apparent than in the field of textiles.

A textile industry therefore, even in its very earliest stages, is not capable of enduring without a corresponding finishing industry ; this is particularly true in Switzerland, a country with a very old textile tradition.

It would not be possible therefore to ignore the economic role of the Swiss textile finishing industry. Some idea of its importance may be gained from the fact that it employs about 10,000 people in some 80 different establishments. Among these there are firms of varying degrees of importance from the small workshop, which is still purely artisanal in character and where the work is mainly carried out by hand, to the large completely industrialised concern with more than 1,000 employees. This industry is mainly situated in the cantons of the north and the east of Switzerland where the textile industry is mostly to be found (Aargau, Appenzell, Basle, Glaris, St. Gall, Thurgau and Zurich).

The textile finishing industry, which is very highly developed in Switzerland and quite capable of carrying out all its many tasks, handles the materials entrusted to it at all stages in their manufacture. However it is only very rarely that it deals with textile fibres that have not yet been spun. For colour weaving on the other hand it bleaches, dyes, mercerises and in certain cases also prints the yarns. The fabrics — the next



stage in manufacture — are rarely handed over to the trade, a field already dependent on fashion, in the unfinished state in which they leave the looms. The finishing and transformation of these fabrics is the main task of the finishing industry.

Textile finishing consists of a great variety of treatments, chemical processes, mechanical transformations and manipulations that the layman, when he is not completely unaware of their existence, only knows of by hearsay. In most cases finishing is carried out to order. The tasks of this industry are not only those of finishing in the ordinary sense of the word, the effects of which are naturally the most visible, such as the bleaching, dyeing and printing of fabrics. Far from it. Before the fabrics reach their final state and are ready for sale, in all their beauty, they have been submitted either before or after bleaching, dyeing or printing, to a whole series of operations, depending on the use for which they are intended. In fabrics made from vegetable fibres — to quote but one example — certain characteristics of the fabric, its appearance for instance, can be appreciably improved by mercerisation. In fine cotton fabrics which have been submitted to the operations of finishing, the improvement in quality is even more marked. These processes depend on the property possessed by cotton fibres of swelling under the action of certain alkalis or acids, which gives the cotton fibres a transparent or opalescent appearance, or a starched stiffness resistant to washing; these effects are very often combined with the printing processes. It is among other things these finishing operations, the fruit of the research and ingenuity of Swiss specialists, that have won fine cotton fabrics their world-wide reputation.

But to-day as yesterday, finishing and processing establishments are in constant need of new ideas and new scientific and technical discoveries in order to be able to satisfy the continual flow of new demands on the part of fashion and the consumer. Thus it is largely to finishing that we owe the great variety of textile products resulting from its processes, from the old form of finishing and certain mechanical operations such as the raising, glazing and diapering of fabrics, to the numerous more modern techniques such as proofing by impregnation, the treatments making fabrics uncrushable, unshrinkable, etc. The finishing and processing of textiles does not only refer to yarns and fabrics, but to other textile products such as ribbons, hosiery, knitwear, embroidery, lace and tulle.

Finishing, if we may be allowed to make this striking comparison, is a form of beauty treatment applied to textiles and based on scientific research, in which semi-finished products are submitted, under the constant supervision of laboratories, to the effects and action of different processes and different machines in order to be transformed into goods ready for sale.

THE LINEN INDUSTRY

by W. BRAND, Manufacturer, Langenthal

Switzerland's linen industry is the outcome of a very old tradition. It was in 1162 that the first craftsmen in this field came to St. Gall from Milan. In the neighbourhood of Constance, the monasteries encouraged the growing and working of flax, which they harvested and prepared for export. St. Gall took over the working of flax from Constance and in the 15th century developed it to a very high degree of prosperity. This economic activity, the most important of all, spread from Eastern Switzerland as far as Upper Aargau where the government of the canton of Berne took it under its protection in 1600. The linen trade was at its height about the year 1787. In all, some 15,000 bolts of officially checked linen were despatched to the great European fairs. During the first quarter of the 19th century, wars lowered the output and in 1830 it amounted to only 7,000 bales. It was only when cotton became extremely expensive as a result of the American War of Secession that the linen industry recovered a little of its importance, and a few tenacious manufacturers succeeded in maintaining their production and adapting their programme of manufacture to the requirements of the day. Up till the year 1890 pure linen was woven exclusively by hand, while the half-linen qualities had already been woven on mechanical looms for some years. In 1929 the number of people employed in the Swiss linen industry amounted to 2,000, with an output valued