

Zeitschrift: Swiss textiles [English edition]
Herausgeber: Swiss office for the development of trade
Band: - (1951)
Heft: 1

Artikel: Swiss textiles in the tropics
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-798775>

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Swiss textiles in the tropics

If there is a country in the world which is remarkable for the lavishness of its colours, then it is Brazil once the warm season has arrived.

The contrast in fashions is all the more noticeable as, in a few days, as if at some unspoken word, the clothes which were intentionally dark and sombre for the winter season are cast aside by all women and give place to the most extravagant combinations of colours.

Whence comes this word of command which, by such a whim, suddenly changes the face of the towns? The cause is not always to be found in the return of the warm weather, since the passing of the seasons is more gradual here than anywhere else, but rather in the infinitely fickle and changeable character of the Brazilian woman; this is the real reason which suddenly turns the whole of fashion towards new pre-occupations, new joys.

With the return of the warm weather, woman's silhouette is changed as if by magic, offering to the sun and to the eyes of passers-by the promise of a new life full of joy and animation, and for a time a great peace seems to reign among all women. Each of them makes use of a harassing climate as an excuse suddenly to allow the dressmakers the most daring liberties, the most ingenuous deceptions, permitted by a fashion which will rapidly reach its climax. Then, suddenly, a uniformity of appearance will be born.

The idea which first of all encourages women to free themselves from all restraint is the charming pretext that their clothes must be made as simple as possible, but at that rate, standardisation soon sets in and it is then that the real search begins. Oh! Miraculous fashion, which every season is able to follow its natural trend and gradually to assert its true character.

Last year the fabric of the dress was the main outlet for the expression of a woman's personality, and the wave of draped, pleated and floating panels always succeeded in achieving the desired effect. This summer colours have come into their own again, clearly gaining over white in popularity. The silhouette, which has stopped at the permitted limits, requires of them the personal touch which no woman could do without, and this is yet another opportunity to notice to what an extent Swiss textiles have been called on to fill this delicate rôle.

When a summer fashion demands so much of colours, their quality must be above reproach and that is why the superiority of Swiss dyestuffs combined with the qualities of the material have once more brought the Swiss textile industry to the fore.

But, as in all exuberant climates, weariness and with it a desire for something new comes more

quickly than anywhere else. The equilibrium which appears to reign in the middle of the season changes rapidly and becomes a mad scramble brushing aside the established rules. Summer comes to an end in a most eccentric combination of colours which, in the other hemisphere, might be considered in dubious taste but which are well suited here to the smooth dark skins and large bright eyes of those they adorn; their brilliance is heightened still further by an equally brilliant sky and a sea which also uses at every moment a thousand wiles to renew its charms.

All this great joy of living, this spirit of careless abandon, which this summer has been at its most brilliant, will come to an end with the Carnival in one final cry of gladness, setting free for a few days the last and hitherto unsuspected resources of the rainbow, now enhanced still further by all the golds, the fires, the spangles imaginable so that in this way the festival of the summer may culminate in a final crescendo of colour.

Fred Schlatter.

