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Swiss textiles in the tropics

Almost before the winter season, which has been very little favoured by the weather, is over, Brazil is already preparing for the long summer months ahead. Definitely the atmospheric conditions do not back up the efforts to make out that our climate is not a tropical one. All the ruses employed to give a « Parisian winter » character to Rio's great season call for no ordinary resignation and courage. During the three months or so of the concert, opera and theatre season, and in temperatures which are often still very high, Brazilian women wear the warmest furs with an ease which we cannot but admire, and always wear woollen suits or dresses for going out in the afternoon.

Sao Paulo, the great rival of the capital of Brazil, enjoys a climate which is naturally more agreeable owing to its altitude. Life in this centre, more exclusive than in Rio, makes a better imitation of European life possible perhaps. The population, which is more mixed too, gives more scope to Paris fashions. However, no matter how exuberant the winter season may be in either of what are generally called the Brazilian capitals, the place that can be claimed by Swiss textiles is more restricted than during the summer. To see them reign throughout the year one must go north, towards the important towns of Bahia and Pernambouc. There, where the year is one long summer, a more favourable climate or atmosphere for the expansion of Swiss textiles could hardly be imagined. The light and cool creations to which the organdies and embroideries of Saint-Gall have accustomed us have moreover long been known and sought after in these regions of relentless sun. The very gay

life there, without making them important centres of fashion nevertheless sustains the market in this field, in view of the size of the populations which find their greatest pleasure in the joys of dressing up.

But there is not only sunshine in Brazil. If we come down towards the south again, we see in passing Bello-Orizonte, a mushroom town which, in a few years, has become one of the most important consumer centres of the textile industry. Next we come to towns such as Porto-Alegre, Curitiba and Rio-Grande do Sul, all of which without pretending to compete with the great cities of the north in the field of fashion, nevertheless consume great quantities of Swiss textiles which are in such great demand that import quotas are no longer capable of satisfying the demand.

As we already mentioned at the beginning of this report, the whole country is preparing the launching of the summer season. In every collection there are a few models in materials made on Swiss looms, which will help to keep alive the good name of these articles, but in no case will the demand that will result be able to be satisfied, the stocks that one would like to see increasing tending to disappear to such an extent. Let us mention however that the shops still possessing a minimum of available stocks do not hesitate to make attractive shop-window displays of these articles which everyone covets, in this way contributing to the upholding of a reputation which is in no way due to chance, the demands of this climate having so often proved their superiority.

Fred Schlatter.



Swiss fabrics in Brazilian shop-windows