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## New York Letter

THE LUXURY OF IMPORTED FABRICS

American fashions, which are based on the large-scale production of ready-to-wear clothing, cannot afford to go in for all the refinements found in French Haute Couture. This has resulted in a simplification of line, a coordination of cutting operations and mass production requirements that give the models of New York and California their personal characteristics of practical simplicity and youthful elegance.

The big ready-to-wear manufacturers have to curb their fancy in order to ensure a reasonable margin of profit. As a result we find in almost all the collections presented in New York each season less diversity in the cut, fewer ornamental details and signs of the most careful planning of the structure of each model in order to avoid loss of time, unnecessary seams, non-functional buttons and buttonholes and other costly details. The principles prevailing in the automobile industry also hold good in the field of ready-to-wear clothing. Mass-production has to take into account the cost of raw materials and the final cost of the finished product.

The American ready-to-wear industry, whose models are thus limited in their design and cut because of the necessity to strike a balance between costs and expected returns, recently found an ingenious way of renewing its creations and varying without extra cost the appearance of its models, even including those intended for large-scale distribution throughout the United States.

Owing to the remarkable progress achieved in the field of textiles and the almost infinite variety of fabrics now available, a model that has been well thought out from the point of view of cut and design can now be made in a range of fabrics so different from each other that the original appearance of the toile or pattern is completely unrecognisable. With a very small number of carefully planned dresses, skirts, coats and two-piece outfits, easily adapted to standard American sizes, a ready-to-wear firm possesses a solid foundation with which to ring the changes ad infinitum by making clever use of the wide choice of wonderful fabrics at its disposal. Skilful combinations of new colours, eye-catching



FORSTER WILLI & CO., SAINT-GALL  
Bodice appliquéd with a large  
black guipure rose.  
Model by Claire Schaffel, New York

SWISS FABRIC GROUP, NEW YORK

CHRISTIAN FISCHBACHER CO.,  
SAINT-GALL

«Fisba» white fancy woven voile.  
Model by Sportator.



textures that are pleasant to handle, and synthetic or natural materials make it possible to adapt the basic models to the different hours of each and every day throughout the year.

American textile production has become more and more varied during the last few years, and the artistic efforts of the big textile concerns have produced collections of fabrics, especially printed cottons, that are outstanding successes. Often designed by famous American or French artists, American cotton prints have a special allure. They suggest a youthful vitality, a colorful and very American gaiety, and are a delight to the eye.

In American ready-to-wear clothing, steady progress is being made each year with the new textures and mixed fibres with resinous finishes.

However, in spite of the progress accomplished by its mighty textile industry, America nevertheless remains dependent to a certain extent on the ideas of Europe for the renewal of its fashions every

season. America has a knack for adapting the original creations of small textile factories in Switzerland, France, Italy, the Tyrol, Scandinavia and elsewhere to suit its own practical purposes. In order not to lapse into the monotony of mass-producing enormous quantities of dresses all exactly alike, New York clothing manufacturers have need of these original ideas conceived, somewhere in Switzerland on the banks of a mountain stream or in a flowery meadow, by a designer whose name will never hit the headlines but whose designs have been used by the factory for a bolt of material, limited in length perhaps but planned with as much care and love as if it were a question of creating a fabric for a ball gown for Cinderella or some other celebrity of fairy tale or screen. From the technical point of view no pains will be spared to ensure that the quality of the fabric and the finish will be as perfect as possible, without detracting in any way from the glory of the tiny spark of artistic genius that inspired the

designer. The creation of a fine design, like that of a fine fabric, is not the exclusive prerogative of any one part of our globe but is dependent on the artist's being in direct touch with nature—witness, for example, the fabrics of the people of Mexico or India, or those of the mountain peoples in the remote valleys of the Alps. A contact between nature and those who create and manufacture fabrics is the vital, inexhaustible source of artistic creation.

Such a communion with nature, which is made difficult and well-nigh impracticable in most big industrial centres in America, has been able to survive in Switzerland in spite of the industrialisation of the textile districts of Saint-Gall, Zurich, Aargau, the canton of Berne, Basle, etc., owing to the dispersal of the small factories (small by comparison with those over here in the States) in the rural districts, which have remained predominantly agricultural in spite of the presence of a local industry.

The embroideries of Saint-Gall, the printed and embroidered organdies, the fine figured cottons, the dainty handkerchiefs which are dispersed like so many diaphanous butterflies to the ends of the earth, the embroidered blouses, the silks of Zurich,

the fancy straws from Aargau for bags and hats, the wonderful non-sag knitwear, the most elegant and practical ski jackets, the ready-to-wear models in knitwear or fabrics of Geneva, Zurich and Basle, the millinery ribbons, all these extremely varied high-quality Swiss products are manufactured and created in an atmosphere favoured by nature. The setting of lake and mountains, orchards and forests is accessible to all the workers and heads of textile firms in Switzerland. Moreover, technical and industrial specialisation has been going on for centuries in the field of Swiss textiles as well as in that of watches and precision instruments. Switzerland also possesses an unequalled tradition for quality and artistic value, which has slowly been established and perpetuated in its export industries as a whole, and that of textiles in particular.

One has only to see some of the New York collections at the beginning of the season to realise the prestige of models made of imported fabrics, a very large number of which come from Switzerland and are particularly well suited to the American climate, whether summer in New York or winter in Florida and the South.

*Th. de Chambrier.*



SWISS FABRIC GROUP, NEW YORK

CHRISTIAN FISCHBACHER CO.,  
SAINT-GALL

«Fisba» colour woven fancy ottoman.  
Model by Young Traditions.