

Swiss textiles in the tropics

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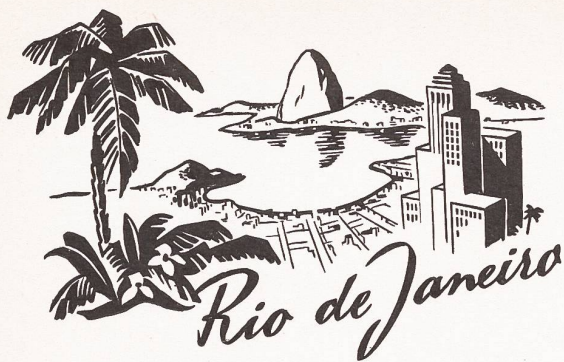
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Swiss textiles

in the Tropics

While at this moment all the countries in the hemisphere of good taste are, and have been for quite a long time, enjoying the new finds of fashion, we are the reluctant laggards who can only look forward to these joys six months later. In the autumn, when Paris flings to the world its new ideas, its delightfully tempting outfits and fabulous coats, our minds, with the returning of the warm days, are busily occupied with the search for beachwear and cool and comfortable garments. When, in its turn, our autumn approaches, the silhouettes which come to us from the North show us how unimaginative we have been, and make us regret to see



Suit in Swiss fabric by the
« Galeria Carioca de Modas ».

the passing of a season before we have been able to catch up with and enjoy the very latest fashions.

But since we must be able to live with the times, let us also manage to live with the seasons. At the moment of writing, when the countries of Europe are all on holiday, it is winter in Brazil, a season tempered by pleasant tropical mildness. It is also the season of social festivities and particularly the great horse-racing season. The magnificent « Jockey-Club » racecourse is the most fashionable spot in Rio and attracts all the pretty women in the country. And everyone knows how numerous they are! But there is one regret that we cannot help expressing — the excessive use of black at all these social gatherings. The Brazilian woman seems to imagine that no outfit is really smart unless it is black, hence this exaggeration that is so hard to understand in a country of sunshine, and only for the reason that Paris has always made such extensive and skilful use of it. But it must not be concluded from this that black is unique; very beautiful taffeta dresses with ingenious stripes and warmly coloured prints contribute their gay note, while white stands out in bright contrast.

It is always to Swiss embroidery that we turn, as soon as it is a question of adding a delicate touch to a model which would otherwise be too severe, and it is Saint-Gall which comes to the rescue of dresses needing happy combinations of guipure. Plain, and particularly embroidered organdie, which would not be so appreciated if it did not bear the label « Made in Switzerland », is still to be found practically everywhere on the market. It may be considered at the moment as the leading and most important representative of the Swiss textile industry in Brazil.

Apart from smart outfits for important gatherings and lesser festivi-

ties, there is the greatest variety of fashions for the day-time, the afternoon and sport. However, the almost complete absence of coats causes regret at being unable to adapt the marvellous flair of the Parisian coat to this climate. The woman who can bear to wear any extra clothes however, will even go so far as to wear a fur coat! ...and the number of these courageous souls is legion.

On the other hand the tailormade reigns supreme for street wear. For this, the classic line predominates. There appears to be a great reluctance to admit the use of fantasy and yet the models which break away from the masculine silhouette always receive the compliment « muito bonito », but even so a kind of routine prevails. At this time of the year, all the tailormades are of woollen materials. Although many men wear white linen all the year round, the women like to change with the seasons. A few very rare models of suits have been made of staple-fibre in imitation of linen, but it is better not to speak of the regrets caused by the temporary impossibility of importing fabrics so admirably suited to Brazilian skies. Let us be content with the knowledge that Swiss textiles, even if they are rare or are not being imported, are at least represented by a few models which are helping to keep alive the undisputed good name of this industry.

As for day dresses, we should be completely at a loss if we were to try to describe them, so bountiful is the fashion that governs their lines, so rich the variety of their materials. In July and August, the changes in temperature are so rapid from one moment to the next, that it is often a real problem to know what to wear. It is perhaps, after all, this great variety that gives Rio its true character as a town of contrasts.

Fred Schlatter.