

# St. Gall fabrics and embroideries

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The Chairman endorsed the sentiments expressed by Mr. Vischer and his high and noble conception of emigration and the audience thanked the lecturer most heartily for his interesting and illuminating address.

M.R.

## CITY SWISS CLUB.

We have received very favourable comments from members who were fortunate enough to attend the last meeting which has been termed as one of the best, most interesting and amusing monthly meetings that the City Swiss Club has had for a long time. We understand from the Secretary that the committee has another little surprise in store for the November meeting, and the committee look forward to a still greater attendance. Members will be welcome with as many guests as they wish to bring.

ST. GALL FABRICS AND EMBROIDERIES.  
At the Swiss National Exhibition 1939 Zurich.

St. Gall has undertaken to co-operate in the Swiss National Exhibition in Zurich next year with a display of the finest products of textile industries. The display will include both materials and embroideries. A good deal has been written about the embroideries of St. Gall — the familiar "Swiss net," "Swiss embroidery," and so on — but while the St. Gall fabrics are well known in themselves, little has as yet appeared in print about them. The following brief notes may therefore help to make this section of the exhibition more interesting to the visitor.

The name of St. Gall has been associated with textiles for centuries past, and as early as 1500 we find mention of linen-weaving. It might be mentioned here that St. Gall has a very ancient tradition of fine handicraft. In the 7th century Irish monks settled there to found the great Abbey, bringing with them a superb illuminated Gospel, now in the Abbey Library, which was the model and impulse for an art which was to flourish in St. Gall for a long time to come. The cultural life of the place was completely dominated by the Abbey, and it is therefore not surprising to find the St. Gall linen-weavers renowned far and wide for their skill. Linen-weaving remained the staple industry of the place until well into the 18th century.

About 1720 the first records of the hand-weaving of muslins make their appearance, and in the course of time this industry completely ousted the linen-weaving. By the middle of the 19th century, we find the St. Gall muslins largely replacing the superfine fabrics imported into Europe from India. The fashions both for men and women prevailing at the time promoted their use and they reached a degree of delicacy almost unknown to-day. Their beauty, however, might well recommend them to the attention of our contemporary fashion dictators. Not so very long ago connoisseurs used to take a delight in passing these muslins through their fingers simply to appreciate the fineness of their texture.

The linen, and the later cotton fabrics were prepared for the market in the neighbourhood by bleaching and dressing, and the latter industry steadily developed and improved. The simple bleaching of the plain material yielded to more complicated methods. A process was invented in St. Gall by which ordinary cotton muslin was hardened and made translucent by dressing. This new fabric, called *organdie* or *transparent*, was produced both plain and embroidered, and is still high in favour for summer dresses. A further process was also invented here for producing artistic designs in this material; the *organdie* finish was applied only in parts, the resulting opaque patterns being left smooth or worked into crepon effects. The whole either remained in plain colours or was printed in colour-designs. These stuffs, known as *imago*, *crêpe organdie*, *organdie cloqué*, *hetex*, *crêpe bosselé*, etc., manufactured in our neighbourhood and exported all over the world, rightly go by the name of "St. Gall materials," whether they were prepared for the market on plain or fancy fabrics. The weaving and finishing are equally important and share equally in the beauty of the finished article.

As regards the development of the embroidery industry the first records in St. Gall go back to 1753. According to some accounts, St. Gall merchants who had settled in Lyons and employed Turkish women to embroider for them there, introduced the industry into their native town. One of these Turkish women is said to have been sent to Appenzell to teach the women there to embroider as a means of livelihood. Other accounts say that the art of hand-embroidery which had flourished in the local convents for centuries past inspired the linen and muslin weavers with the idea of industrialising the em-

broidery of their materials. About 1780 some 30,000 women are said to have been regularly employed in hand-embroidery. It was, however, a slow and expensive process, and hence inventive spirits devised the embroidery machine which was destined to undergo so remarkable a development. Nowadays hand-embroidery still goes by the name of "Appenzell embroidery," and is as delicate and rich as ever. Machine embroidery and the designing connected with it are centred in St. Gall itself and its products are exported all over the world.

The simplification of women's dress due to the war, the long crisis and the popularity of sports fashions led to a practical total decline of the industry. For some time past, however, girls and women have begun to realise that trimming adds charm to dress and that lace and embroidery lend it a feminine note. This change in fashion-feeling has brought about a revival of the use of St. Gall materials.

Last year, at the Paris Exhibition, we were able to display some of the achievements of our industry. Next year, at the Zurich Exhibition, we hope again to show what St. Gall fabrics and embroideries are, not only in the piece, but made up in dresses, blouses, collars, flowers or whatever may then be in fashion. We even contemplate setting up an embroidery machine, so that visitors may see the filmy stuffs growing before their eyes. We hope too that a few Appenzell women, in their beautiful and becoming local costume, will let us see them at work on their exquisite hand-embroideries. There will also be a display of hand-woven materials from Appenzell.

FR. HUG.

Commercial Director of the  
Chamber of Commerce.

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Sunday, October 16th at 4 p.m. — Union Helvetia — Annual Memorial Service — at Hendon Park Cemetery (Private bus will leave 1, Gerrard Place, W.1, at 2.45 p.m.). Service conducted by Pastor C. Th. Hahn.

Wednesday, October 19th, at 8 o'clock — Union Chrétienne de Jeune Gens de Langue Française — Conférence publique en anglais avec Projections lumineuses, sujet "Soviet Russia To-day" by Mr. W. J. Wiseman, agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society, at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1.

Thursday, October 20th — Symphonic Social Choir — Weineisefest — at the Swiss Club (Schweizerbund), 74, Charlotte Street, W.1.

Friday, October 21st, at 7.45 p.m. — Monthly Meeting — Nouvelle Société Helvétique at Swiss House, 34/35, Fitzroy Square. The meeting will be followed by a causerie by Fred. E. C. Ferraris, Esq., on: "The Swiss Watch Industry," illustrated by a film.

Thursday, November 3rd, at 8.30 p.m. — Swiss Orchestral Society — introducing Mlle. M. de Siebenthal, Pianist and Violinist at a Concert given in Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1.

Saturday, November 12th, from 3 to 5.30 p.m. — Nouvelle Société Helvétique — "A Traverses La Suisse," Film Show at Kingsway Hall, Kingsway, W.C.2. Admission Free.

Friday, November 25th — City Swiss Club — Annual Banquet and Ball at the Grosvenor House, Park Lane, W.1.

Tuesday, November 29th — Unione Ticinese — Concert and Ball in aid of the Fonds de Secours, at Pagani's Restaurant, Great Portland Street, W.1.

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11h. — Culte. — M. M. Pradervand.

11h. — Ecole du dimanche.

6h.30 — Culte. — M. M. Pradervand.

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St. Anne's Church, 9, Gresham Street, E.C.2.  
(near General Post Office.)

Sonntag, den 16. Oktober 1938.

11 Uhr morgens, Gottesdienst und Sonntag-  
schule.

7 Uhr abends, Gottesdienst.

8 Uhr, Chorprobe.

Am 6. Oktober wurden getraut :

Erich Ernst Schneider von Berlin und  
Elisabeth Barbara Schatzmann von Lenzburg  
und Windisch (Canton Aargau).

Anfragen wegen Religions-bezw. Confirmanden-  
stunden und Amtshandlungen sind erbeten  
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Dienstag 12-2 Uhr in der Kirche.

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