

London letter

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Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **Swiss textiles [English edition]**

Band (Jahr): - **(1947)**

Heft 3

PDF erstellt am: **08.08.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-798946>

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LONDON LETTER

London

Made in Switzerland.

Not so many years ago, to most of us in Britain the name Switzerland conjured a vision of mountains, lakes, cows, snow, winter sports and a good time.

We recognised and accepted as a matter of course the fact that our favourite watch or clock was far more elegant and accurate than other time-pieces because it bore across its face in tiny letters «Made in Switzerland». And perhaps some of us had a flash vision of mountains and lakes when, in ordering material for a blouse or child's dress from our local draper, we asked for «dotted Swiss» (meaning the finest quality cotton voile embroidered with small dots) or guipure. Apart from that Switzerland spelt happy holidays and we knew little and cared less about the origin of the hundred and one beautiful things for our top to toe adornment which were displayed in profusion at reasonable prices in every good shop throughout these islands.

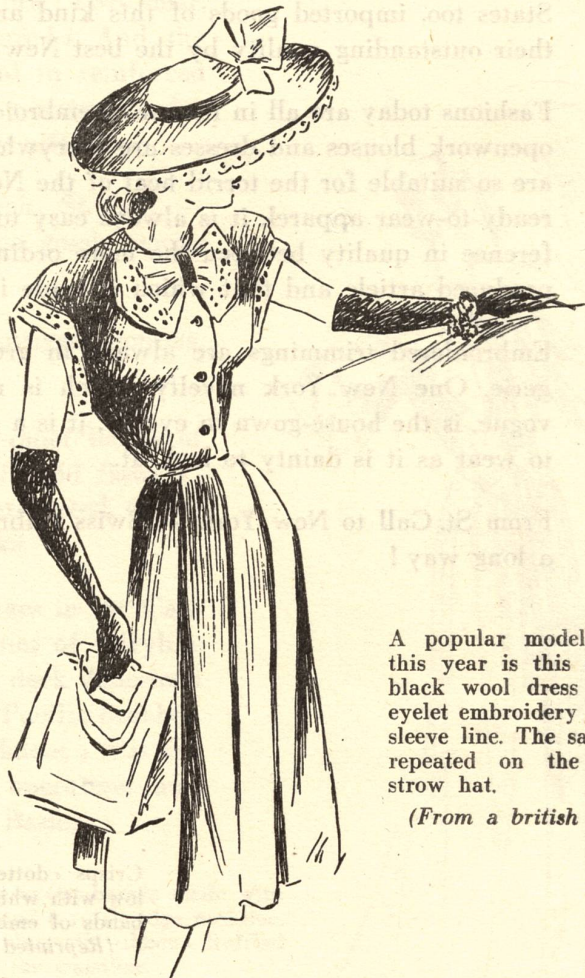
But now all this is changed. Those of us lucky enough to have had a holiday in Switzerland have found that we are much more observant than we used to be. In the old days we returned from our travels with tales of wonderful scenery, sunshine and luxury, while now we tell of shops we have seen filled with wonderful shoes, silks, embroideries, muslins, straws and accessories — all the things we used to take as a matter of course and now miss at home so sorely.

It is no doubt because of this new awareness that we are now so quick to recognise the small quantity of newly arrived Swiss merchandise which is slowly but surely arriving on the counters of our shops at home. Here at last are the fine qualities and exquisite designs which we prized in the good old days, and so admired when we saw them afresh in the Swiss shops.

Latest arrivals.

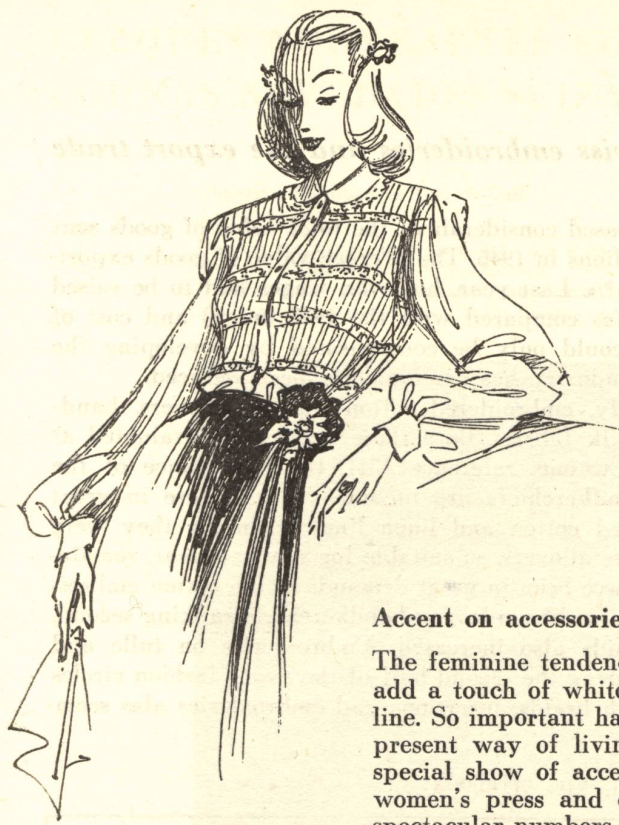
The very latest arrivals in Britain are some really exquisite rayon satins, moirés, and poults of a quality only Switzerland knows how to make. So long is it since we have seen and been able to buy such high grade materials that when these new arrivals were shown to me by their London agent before he sent them to the shops, I handled them with reverence and wondered who would be the lucky women who will find these treasures.

And the colours? Here again the Swiss rayons will stand out from the background of other materials. Their lovely clear shades add to their distinction. Bottle green, cardinal red, steel gray and a new colour known as «faded water lily green» are all bound to be immensely popular with British women. There was also a marked tendency to accent the greens, and apart from the shades mentioned above I noted two others as specially attractive for the average fair skinned Englishwoman; they were Apollo green, and a very lovely pale Eau de Nil.



A popular model in Britain this year is this simple little black wool dress with Swiss eyelet embroidery at neck and sleeve line. The same motif is repeated on the big black straw hat.

(From a British newspaper).



In his «Rendez-vous» model shows Peter French (London) a blouse in crepe with neatly tucked front and delicate lace insertions worn with a formal Georgette skirt.

Accent on accessories.

The feminine tendency these days is to slip into a «little black something», add a touch of white at the neck and a sparkle in the hair or at the waist line. So important has this fashion become in London, where it well suits our present way of living, that an important dress house recently arranged a special show of accessories only, and it was crowded with members of the women's press and other interested spectators. Naturally there were some spectacular numbers such as buttons of real iridescent beetles and epaulettes made of brass horse trappings with matching pockets swinging from a belt. But the accessories which drew exclamations of admiration from all the women present were the dickies, dainty white jabots, bows, collars and dainty kerchiefs of Swiss guipures, muslins and embroideries which were shown to perfection on plain black or navy dresses. We realised when we saw them how easy it is to furbish our often shabby dresses and suits so that they gain a new lease of life and once more we felt grateful to little Switzerland for sending materials to Britain that are both beautiful to look at and high in quality.

London dress collections.

An important London event is the bi-annual fashion week when the ten top-ranking couturiers, Molyneux, Peter Russell, Bianca Mosca, Creed, Angèle Delange, Norman Hartnell, Hardy Amies, Victor Stiebel and Digby Morton — all members of the Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers, show buyers from overseas their latest Export Collections.

This year the winter collections will be shown shortly after this letter has gone to press, so a full report must be held over for a later edition. But rumours persist of the exquisite materials now being fashioned into new lines by our leading dress artists, and I can predict with certainty that several of them will be sending abroad beautiful clothes made in materials of Swiss manufacture. One of the designers whom I met recently told me of his choice of two handsome Swiss sequin embroidered laces which are now in his workroom being made into luxurious evening dresses, while another designer is reported to have chosen seven different designs in Swiss guipures and laces for inclusion in her new collection.

Royal engagement.

How happy are the tidings of our popular and beloved Princess Elizabeth's engagement to the handsome Lieutenant Mountbatten. And now we are all speculating about her wedding-dress, and which dressmaker will be chosen to design it. It is thought that the choice will lie between Captain Molyneux and Norman Hartnell, both of whom have designed clothes for Her Royal Highness for some years. One thing is certain, the already overtaxed workrooms of all our dressmakers will be buzzing with activity for many weeks ahead in preparation for the pageant of the first Royal wedding we have seen in London for many years.

Enid Grand.