

Linen

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LINEN



*He neither shall be clothed
In purple nor in pall
But all in fair linen
As were babies all.*

(OLD ENGLISH CAROL)

Linen has always been deemed a „noble“ fabric, the symbol of purity. The beauty of its fibre, its strength and whiteness—because men discovered the means to bleach linen, long before even primitive finishing processes were thought of—made of it, already in remote antiquity, the cloth adopted for sacred rites: shrouds



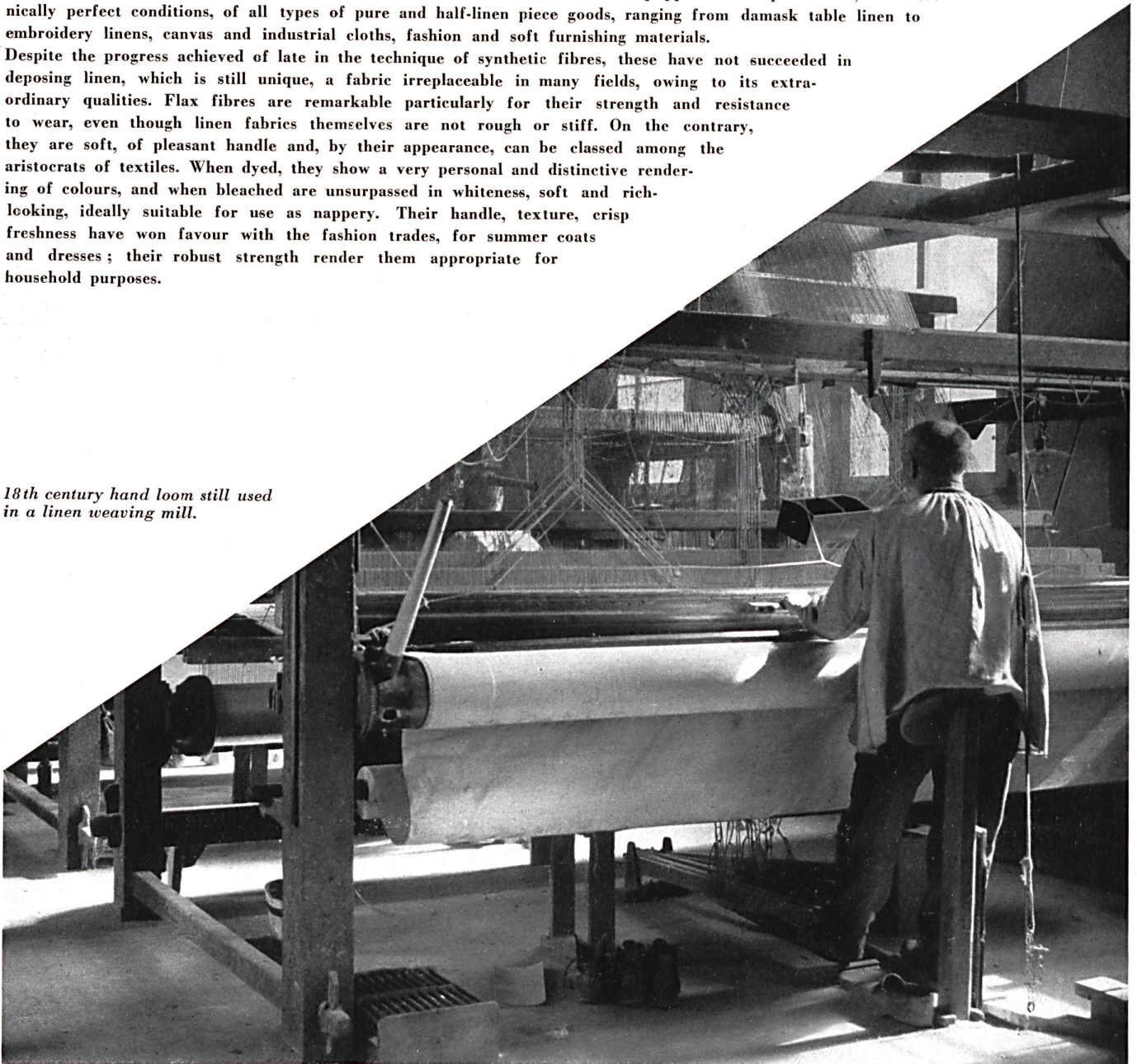
and priestly garments. The Egyptians wound their dead in long strips of linen; their priests wore linen vestments. Later, linen was reserved for the aristocracy. The cultivation of flax was widespread in several regions of Europe where the climate is relatively damp; flourishing, crafts arose, especially in the Lake of Constance district, in Southern Germany. Thence they spread farther south, reached St. Gall and its neighbourhood then, following the road along which hastened the merchants on their way to the Lyons Fair, Spain and Portugal, came to Berne.

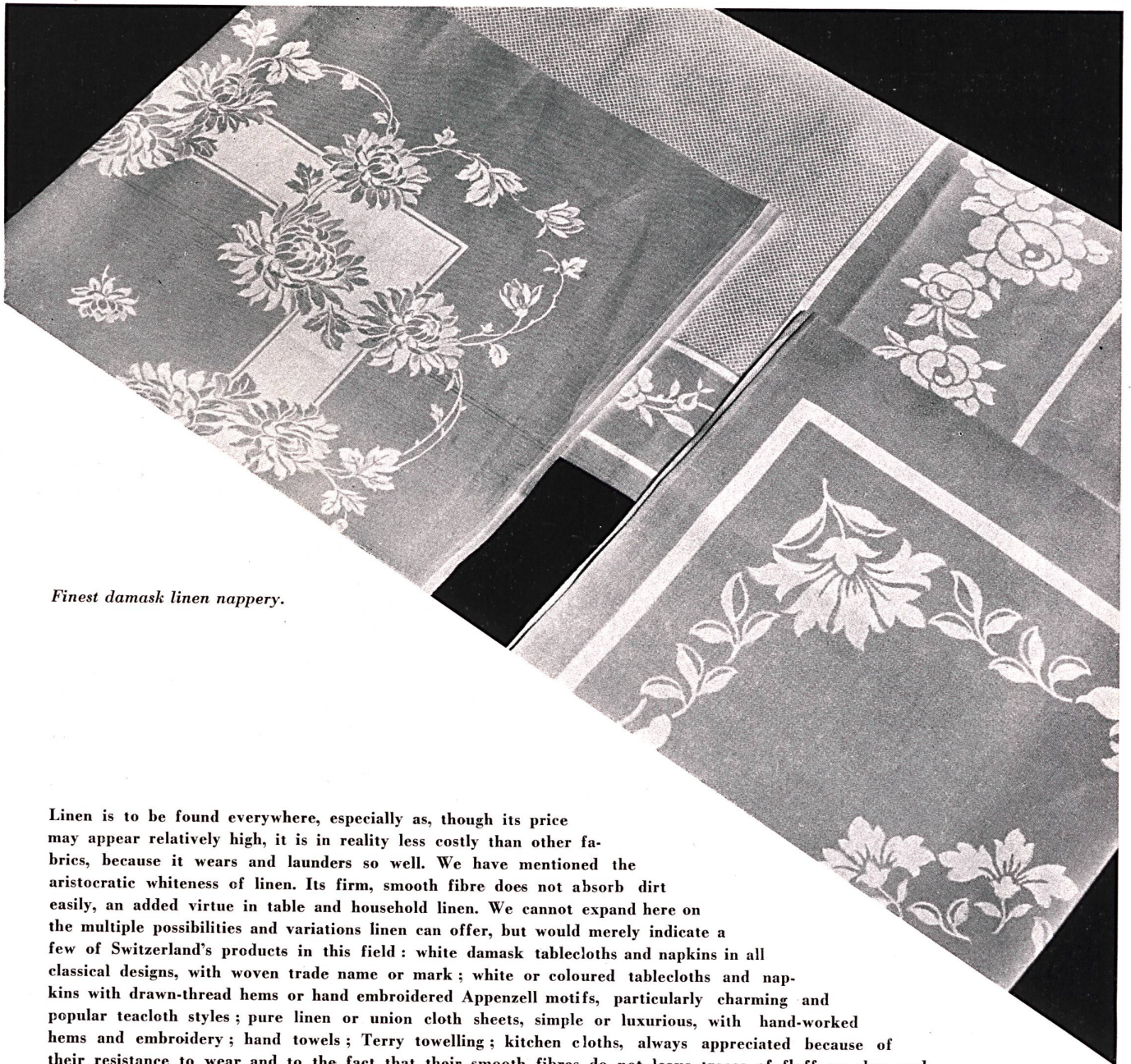
Here the craft took root, for the vicinity of a patrician city, wealthy and a military power, was bound to promote an industry producing luxurious cloth. While the town of Constance lost all importance as a centre of the linen trades, and St. Gall—though it longer retained prominence in the craft—gradually came to specialize in cotton weaving exclusively, the Bernese centres of linen weaving have survived to our own day. As in other branches of the Swiss textile industry, the workers are drawn chiefly from the farming population. In the old days, countryfolk used to weave at home on their own looms, working only part of their time at this craft, and still continuing to toil on the land.

Even today, linen weavers use hand-looms (like the one illustrated here) and the Swiss linen industry bleaches its products in the meadows, as was the custom hundreds of years ago. We must, however, hasten to add that apart from this domestic craft, the Swiss linen industry also possesses ultra-modern mills, which are equipped for the production, under technically perfect conditions, of all types of pure and half-linen piece goods, ranging from damask table linen to embroidery linens, canvas and industrial cloths, fashion and soft furnishing materials.

Despite the progress achieved of late in the technique of synthetic fibres, these have not succeeded in deposing linen, which is still unique, a fabric irreplaceable in many fields, owing to its extraordinary qualities. Flax fibres are remarkable particularly for their strength and resistance to wear, even though linen fabrics themselves are not rough or stiff. On the contrary, they are soft, of pleasant handle and, by their appearance, can be classed among the aristocrats of textiles. When dyed, they show a very personal and distinctive rendering of colours, and when bleached are unsurpassed in whiteness, soft and rich-looking, ideally suitable for use as nappery. Their handle, texture, crisp freshness have won favour with the fashion trades, for summer coats and dresses; their robust strength render them appropriate for household purposes.

18th century hand loom still used in a linen weaving mill.





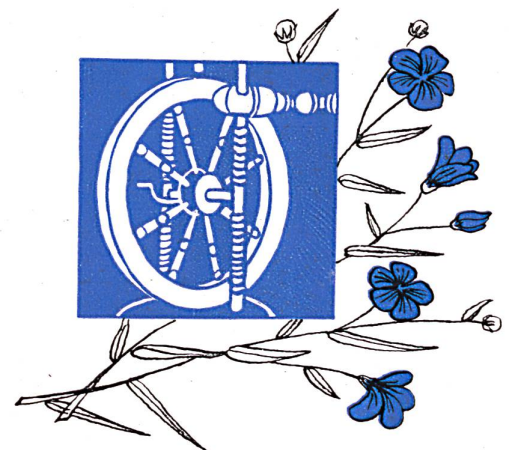
Finest damask linen nappery.

Linen is to be found everywhere, especially as, though its price may appear relatively high, it is in reality less costly than other fabrics, because it wears and launders so well. We have mentioned the aristocratic whiteness of linen. Its firm, smooth fibre does not absorb dirt easily, an added virtue in table and household linen. We cannot expand here on the multiple possibilities and variations linen can offer, but would merely indicate a few of Switzerland's products in this field: white damask tablecloths and napkins in all classical designs, with woven trade name or mark; white or coloured tablecloths and napkins with drawn-thread hems or hand embroidered Appenzell motifs, particularly charming and popular tea-cloth styles; pure linen or union cloth sheets, simple or luxurious, with hand-worked hems and embroidery; hand towels; Terry towelling; kitchen cloths, always appreciated because of their resistance to wear and to the fact that their smooth fibres do not leave traces of fluff on glass and chinaware; cloths for surgical uses. Switzerland also produces linen cloth for aprons and country wear; coloured, coarse weave nappery; écreu table cloths with checks or period designs; cloths for printing, used for the manufacture of upholstery and soft furnishing fabrics; curtains; cloths and canvas for handwork; industrial cloths for various purposes. Among the latter, mention must be made of the cloth used in the aircraft industry.

We have already mentioned two particular virtues of linen: its practical imperviousness to dirt, due to the nature of its fibre, and its admirable resistance to wear. These two properties have made linen fabrics win appreciation wherever there is need for faultless presentation and frequent renewal—that is to say, laundering: in hotels, restaurants, hospitals, where a sheet, a napkin or a cloth, have to be frequently and thoroughly washed and boiled. No other fibre but flax could resist such treatment; these same qualities are required by housewives who want their bed linen, nappery and all household linen to be not only pleasing to the eye, agreeable to use, but also durable.

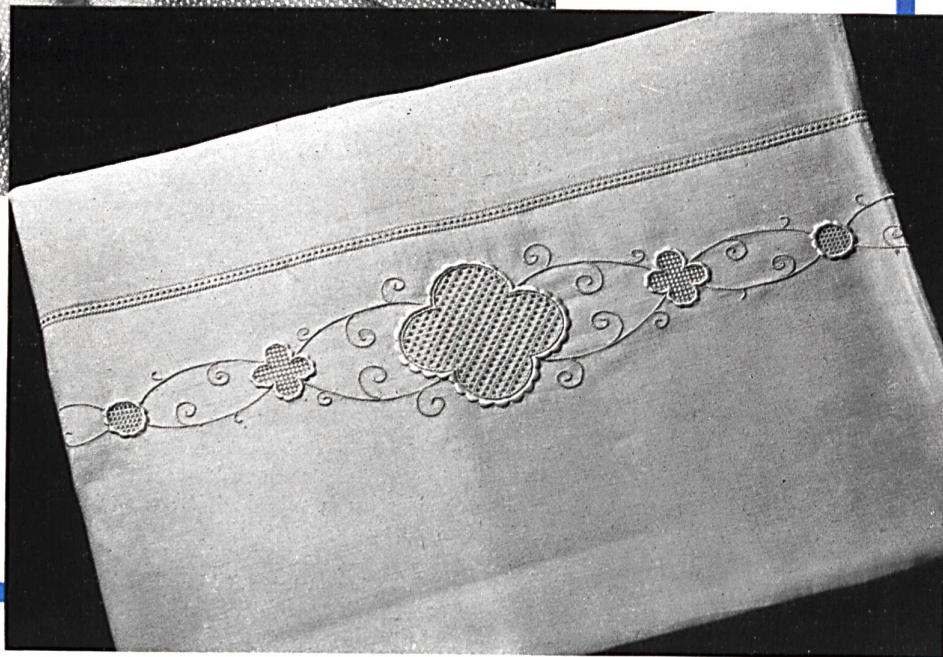
Swiss linen weavers have always succeeded in maintaining their position on foreign markets, because their products are of fine quality. Swiss linen fabrics are to be found everywhere, in every country where good linen is valued; it is found in the best catering establishments and high-class stores.

Linen has been put to the test for centuries: once the material reserved for the privileged classes, it is today at the service of all, in innumerable fields of modern life. The virtues and properties which distinguished it above all other fabrics



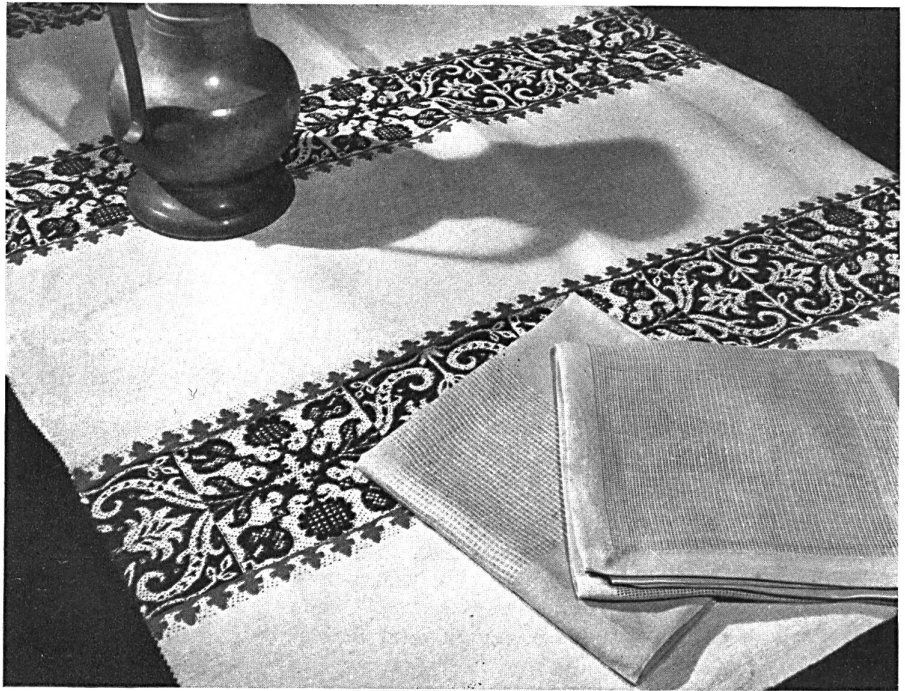


thousands of years ago, still characterize it to the same degree. Technical progress has changed but little in the processing of linen, and only for the better; to the ancient lineage of this craft the modern manufacturer can therefore add the integrity and sincerity of a direct and uncompromised tradition.



*Linen fabric for soft furnishing and upholstery.
Hand embroidered pure linen sheet with open-work hem.*

Les tissages suisses de lin présentent :



Swiss linen weaving mills
present :

Tissage de toile de Langenthal S. A., Langenthal.

Toiles pur fil et méfis pour tous les usages domestiques, l'ameublement et la mode; spécialité de linge d'hôtel. Ci-dessus : toile Renaissance pour nappages et décoration et nappes à thé en couleurs, façonnées.

Pure and half-linen cloths for all household purposes, soft furnishing and fashion wear; specialist for hotel linen. Above: « Renaissance » fabric for nappery and interior decoration; also coloured, fancy teacloths.

Telas de puro hilo y mezclas para todos los usos caseros, la tapicería y la moda; especialidad en lencería para hoteles. Arriba: tela estilo Renacimiento, para mantelerías y decoración, y manteles para te, en colores, labrados.

Rein- und Halbleinene Gewebe für den Haushalt, die Dekoration und die Mode; Hotelwäsche-Spezialität. Oben: Renaissance-Leinen für Tischdecken und die Dekoration und farbige, fassonierte Teedecken.

Las tejedurías suizas de lino
presentan :



Die schweizerischen Leinen-
webereim zeigen :

Baumann-Grütter Söhne, Tissage de toile, Langenthal.

Tissus pour la décoration et l'ameublement, nappages, linge de maison.

Linen fabrics for interior decoration and upholstery, nappery, household linen.

Tejidos para tapicería y la decoración, mantelerías, lencería de casa.

Dekorations-Stoffe, Möbelstoffe, Tischgedecke, Haushaltleinen.



Tissages de toiles Berne S. A., Berne.

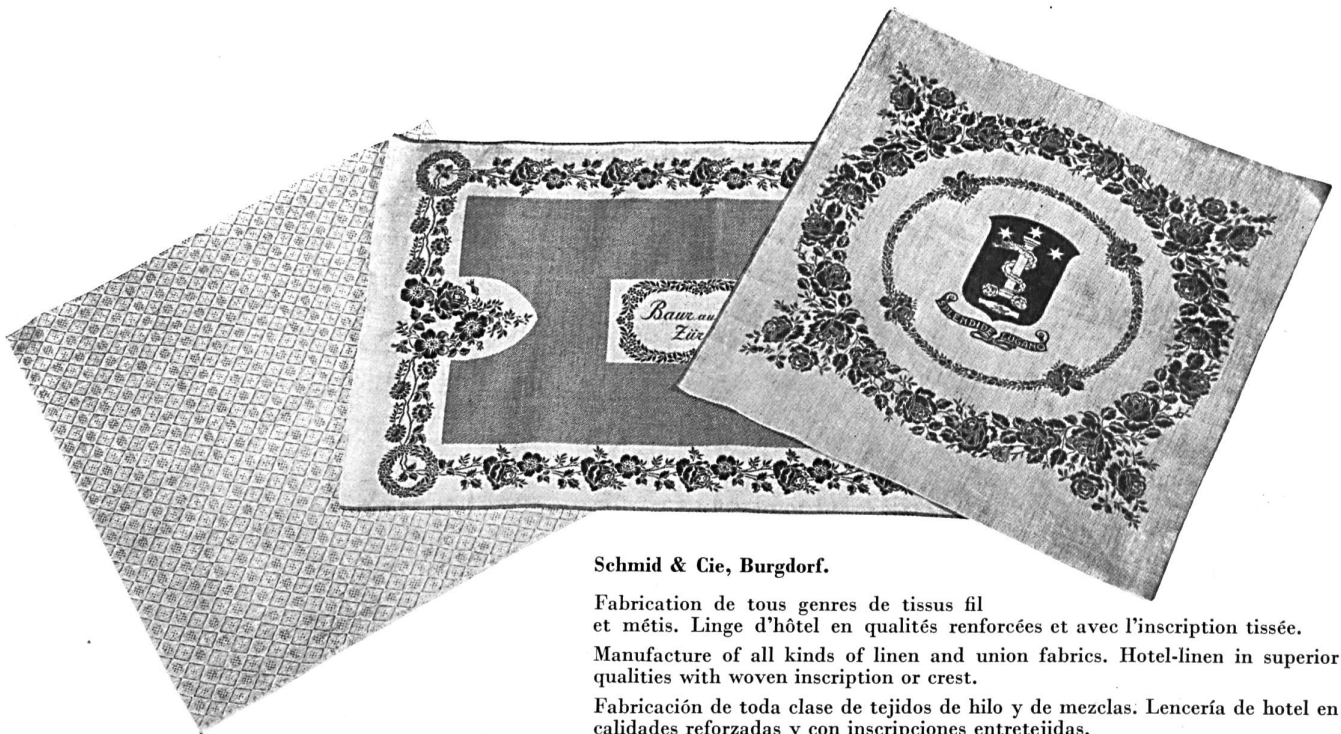
Toiles de Berne fil et métis pour draps, nappages et linge de cuisine ; toutes toiles pour l'industrie.

Linen and union Bernese weaves for sheets, nappery and kitchen cloths. Fabrics for all industrial purposes.

Telas de Berna, en hilo y mezclas, para sábanas, mantelerías y lienzos de cocina ; toda clase de telas para usos industriales.

Rein- und Halbleinene Stoffe für Bett-, Tisch und Küchenwäsche sowie sämtliche Industriestoffe.

Photo : Spreng.



Schmid & Cie, Burgdorf.

Fabrication de tous genres de tissus fil et métis. Linge d'hôtel en qualités renforcées et avec l'inscription tissée.

Manufacture of all kinds of linen and union fabrics. Hotel-linen in superior qualities with woven inscription or crest.

Fabricación de toda clase de tejidos de hilo y de mezclas. Lencería de hotel en calidades reforzadas y con inscripciones entretejidas.

Herstellung aller Arten Reinleinen und Halbleinen. Hotelwäsche in verstärkten Qualitäten und mit eingewebter Inschrift.

Worb & Scheitlin S. A. Tissage de toiles, Burgdorf.

Toiles fil et mi-fil ; linge de table ; linge de lit ; linges de cuisines ; linges de toilette avec ou sans inscription tissée.

Linen and half-linen. Table linen, white and coloured. Sheets and Pillow-cases. Toilette towels. Kitchen toweling on demand with name woven in.

Telas de hilo y de semi-hilo ; lencería de mesa ; lencería de cama ; lencería de cocina ; lencería de tocador, con o sin inscripciones entretejidas.

Leinen und Halbleinen — Tischzeug — Bettwäsche — Küchenwäsche — Toilettenwäsche mit und ohne Namen einwebung.



Photo : Niederhauser.