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Strawbraids for Millinery

The strawbraid industry of Switzerland has produced and exported goods for centuries. In that domain, as well as in other branches of Swiss textiles, we can see the evolution of ancient homecraft modernised and mechanised to become in the course of time an important industry. At the moment, the manufacture of this commodity is progressing steadily in about twenty factories in the region of Wohlen, but nevertheless, home-made braiding still exists on a small scale.

In years gone by, straw was plaited from oats grown in the neighbourhood, then other materials were used such as raffia, cuba, ramie, horse-hair, etc., and finally thirty years ago there was a sudden boom in artificial silk permitting the creation of a large quantity of new raw materials easy to dye and lending themselves admirably to the strawbraiding process. In the canton of Aargau this industry has but one goal, namely, to produce and to put on the market a continuous stream of new products at the same time varying the mode and presentation of the raw material in every possible way. In an industry of such long standing the production of good quality articles both in regard to material and work is held as a point of honor, while the great strides made in mechanical processes (harnessed to the service of life-long traditions) have rendered it possible for Swiss strawbraids to maintain their reputation on international markets.

The factories in the canton of Aargau still produce straw shapes, but, generally speaking, only finished strawbraids are supplied to the leading fashion centers and naturally subordinated to the designers' ideas and the predominating tastes of the feminine clientèle. In short, let us state that the strawbraids of Wohlen are suited to all tastes and are always adapted to the dictates of Fashion.

Studying the modern trend of fashion we find that the hat of synthetic straw fibre has come into its own again as an indispensable accessory to all chic and elegant ensembles. This tendency is but a just recognition of the genius and good taste of the designers, of science, of the great care taken to produce goods of the highest quality, and the untiring efforts of the manufacturers to find attractive novelties.

The strawbraids reproduced on this page were kindly supplied by the Argovian Association of Hatbraid Manufacturers, Wohlen.

