

Our fatherland [continued]

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in constructing a clock driven entirely by light. A prototype of the new invention was recently shown at the annual congress of American jewelers.

Swiss Watches as Quality Gifts

The Government of Geneva has recently presented two gold watches to foreign visitors of high rank. The Japanese Crown Prince Akihito received a gold wrist-watch and the Lord Mayor of London a gold pocket watch. Both watches were produced by the same firm; they are made 18 carat gold and have 18 jewels each.

NEWS OF THE COLONY

Swiss-English Wedding

On January 22nd, 1954, the wedding of Mr. Ronald Alfred Miles and Miss Elizabeth Schlup took place in Tawa Flat, near Wellington. It was the first wedding held in the pretty, brand new Methodist Church, and, besides the invited guests, the service was attended by a good number of local church-goers. The flower decorations in white and pink were exquisite.

Both, bride and bridegroom had come to New Zealand only a few years ago, the bride from Switzerland and the bridegroom from England. Mrs. Miles was first employed by the well-known woman doctor, Dr. Doris Gordon in Stratford, before she worked her way round on the South Island. Three weeks before her wedding she had returned from a visit to her parents in Riehen-Basel, Switzerland.

Mr. Ronald Miles is as keen on mountaineering as his bride. He was mountain guide on the South Island before and after his military service in Malaya.

The wedding breakfast was given by Mr. and Mrs. Jim Schlup in their cosy home just opposite the church. The guests spent a few happy hours in a delightfully informal and cheerful atmosphere. Amongst them were a number of Swiss and New Zealanders of Swiss extraction. Mr. John Schlup who gave the bride away is her father's elder brother. He came to New Zealand about 55 years ago and the Schwyzerdutsch has become almost a foreign language for him. Miss Emmely Volz, the bridesmaid and cousin of Mrs. Miles, is the daughter of a German father and a Swiss mother. Her parents run a beautiful dairy farm in Patumahoe, near Auckland. The three sons of Mr. John Schlup, Jim, Bernie and Basel were born in New Zealand and speak only English, but, nevertheless they are proud of their Swiss origin. Another guest, Miss Irma Neusch from Riehen-Basel is a very old friend of the bride.

After the happy celebration the young couple left for their new home in Christchurch, accompanied by the sincere wishes of their relatives and friends.

I.N.

OUR FATHERLAND

[Continuation]

Canton of Vaud

The Vaudois is happy by nature and his slogan of old has always been "there is plenty of time." When it rains, he looks forward to good weather, but when the sun shines, he expects it to rain shortly. And an amusing story is told of the three men, one from Geneva, one from Berne and one from Vaud, who went looking for snails. The quick Genevese brought back twenty, the man from Berne, in spite of the fact that the Bernese are notoriously slow, appeared with ten, but the man from Vaud returned empty-handed. "What happened?" asked the others. "I did catch one," was the answer, "but he got away."

The Vaud is the principal wine producing Canton in Switzerland and it is only natural that the people love to drink their delicious and famous wine. In fact the drinking of a glass of wine is very important in the Vaud and no ceremony of any kind is complete without it. Along the whole length of the Lake of Geneva runs a belt of about 50 km., of well-protected slopes covered with well-kept vineyards. Dotted along this belt is a chain of fascinating waterside towns, large and small but all very lovely. The climate is uniformly mild and living, generally, is of course more agreeable than in the rugged Eastern or Central Cantons of Switzerland. West of Lausanne is Nyon with the ancient castle, where, from the broad terrace crowning a steep cliff, one looks across the old town's roofs over the shining blue of the lake to the French Alps. The small towns of Morges and Rolle are also very attractive, and East of Lausanne, we come to the "Riviera" of Switzerland, with Vevey, Montreux and Territet as the central part. Books and poems have been written of this pleasant countryside and history relates that already in the Roman epoch several colonies of wealthy, retired Romans, were formed in Nyon, Ouchy, Avenches, etc. The beauty of the lake and mountains is truly inspiring. Vevey, built along the peaceful shore, with its terraces of vineyards above, and behind the narrow belt of orchards, grass fields and grain. And then higher up the dense mass of many pine forests, broken by peaks of rocks and again above, the snow covered mountains.

Montreux is one of earth's favoured spots in a perfect setting and with an ideal climate, sheltered from northern winds, and it offers an abundance of delightful excursions. From Vevey

to Territet are no less than twelve different mountain railways giving easy access to many vantage points with incomparable views over Lake Leman and the Alps.

Geneva

The history of this very small Canton is one that has required great energy on the part of the inhabitants. For centuries surrounded by powerful neighbours, it has been obliged during the ages to struggle hard to preserve its independence. It was first mentioned in history by Julius Caesar in 58 B.C. Whether Geneva belonged to the Romans or Burgundians or to Charlemagne, or whether dominated by the remote emperors of Germany, it has never departed from its spirit of independence. Under the leadership of the famous reformer Calvin, in the 16th century, Geneva became the centre of French Protestantism. It stoutly repulsed the Dukes of Savoy who finally tried to take the town in 1602, an expedition which failed disastrously, and which ever since, gave rise to the "Escalade" celebration each year. Only in 1814 did Geneva join the Swiss Confederation as the last member.

Geneva is a great centre of culture and education. Its university, with a staff of 220 professors, is famous and young people from almost every country come to study at the Faculties of Science, Letters, Medicine, Law, Economics, etc. There are many scores of institutes and private schools, not to mention the famous Interpreter's School, where more than twenty-four languages are taught.

Music is greatly honoured in Geneva. The Conservatoire, the official school of music, organises an International Music Competition each year, at which hundreds of young artists make their debut. Technical instruction is given at the School of Arts and Crafts and commercial teaching is given at the Commercial High School. Students have ample opportunities to attend lectures of every kind, or can visit museums, art galleries, some of international fame.

The Opera House, resembling in smaller proportions that of "l'Opera de Paris" is well known among discerning music lovers. It is interesting to hear some comments by a very popular author, Frank Clune, of Australia when he visited Geneva late 1949. Arriving on a Sunday from Rome he asked the concierge at the Cornavin Hotel "Can you recommend any amusements?". "Yes, there is the Opera." "What, on Sunday nights?" Needless to say the hotel booked a choice seat in a few minutes and shortly after he was seated in the stalls, known as "fauteuils." Mr. Clune continues his description: "The Opera House at Geneva plays six nights a week, including Sunday, and is closed on Monday to give the performers their day off. My ticket was for the performance

of 'Thais,' with orchestra, ballet and singers, all Swiss artists, assisted by two stars from the Metropolitan of New York. The whole performance of the opera was superb. The pure notes of tenors and sopranos soared to the 'alpine galleries' with accomplished artistry. To me there is no entertainment to compare with opera, in the combination of spectacle, acting, singing, music and ballet. Sydney is nearly ten times bigger in population than Geneva, but cannot support a permanent opera, as Geneva and other Swiss cities of similar size do. We have dog-racing, large wrestling stadiums and cinemas by the scores showing imported photo-dramas of poor quality, but no municipal or state opera house to provide all-the-year-round entertainment for civilised people and to uphold the arts of music, drama and ballet—No wonder Australians leave home!"

Mr. Clune has much more to say of Geneva and all Swiss should be pleased to know of such prominent visitor's views. "I was more than sorry to leave this small, beautiful and yet significant city of ideas and ideals. It has given much to the world. Apart from the Protestant Reformers, it was the nursery of the French Revolution, since the great philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau was born there and Voltaire lived there in exile for decades. Many other famous Europeans have sought refuge in this city and evolved their ideas, crazy and otherwise, for the betterment of humanity. There is no city in the World of equal size, that has harboured so many big thinkers, of so many kinds. Nor is there any city, so small, of greater world-repute. In international affairs, all roads lead to Geneva. It is a place where dreamers dream, and schemers scheme, among the vistas of alpine peaks. It is a place that captures the visitor, and holds him a willing prisoner."

The Canton of Valais

Few of our readers are aware that some of the almost inaccessible villages, high up the Valaisan Alps, often at the very foot of some glacier, were built by men who took refuge on these heights from the persecutions of the decaying Roman Empire. These were hardy men with ideals of liberty on the one hand and of neighbourly co-operation on the other. They lived an independent life. In the Middle Ages they founded their own small republic and although closely tied to the Swiss Confederation, they became a member only in 1815. Today many of our compatriots call the Valaisans "backward" and conservative; probably with some truth because they have lived in isolation for centuries. These "backward" folk, however, had some quite progressive ideas. For instance over a thousand years ago, they organised their society on the lines of a naturally developed collectivism and their small corporations for mutual aid came into being even before the Swiss Con-

federation. These corporations, farmers' guilds and partnerships, worked well, and some are still in existence today, such as for instance the corporation for the precious water irrigation system, so necessary in the Valais with the very low rainfall.

Wandering through these remote villages, you find the wooden farmsteads have a blockhouse-like appearance standing on wooden piles, whereas the graneries are distinguished by the circular stone slabs supporting them. In the Valais not an inch is lost in cultivating the soil wherever possible, and the sure-footed cattle graze upland on steep and remote pasture land. Down the plain of the river Rhone, apricots, asparagus, strawberries, peaches, pears and apples are grown in profusion, although these cultivations have only flourished during the last half-century. On the slopes above this plain are extensive and century-old vineyards. In the last two decades the productions increased from eight to over thirty million litre. The mountain farmer lives a simple, almost primitive life, he is constantly harassed by a serious struggle for existence and his sons and daughters often work in factories down the plain to make ends meet. When seasons change he also changes his place of residence, moving to his land in the high mountains, and coming down towards the plain as winter approaches. Often he changes his habitation as much as three times during the year, following the seasons up or down the mountainsides.

(To be continued.)

"IBEX RESTORED TO SWISS ALPS"

(Continued)

Some more methodical attempts were then made under the auspices of the Swiss League for the Protection of Nature, which is now responsible for the whole scheme. The animals were at first acclimatised in the lower regions, in special breeding grounds, before being transported in the higher mountains. There were some failures, but as the years passed the rearing of young ibex was improved and in the end all the settlements were more or less successful.

For instance, the 19 ibex released in 1920 in the National Park, in the Engadine, had increased to 170 in 1949, but of 15 settled on Piz d'Aela in 1914 none was left a few years later. A further attempt at settling them on Piz-d'Alea was more successful and last year there were 15 ibex in that district.

There are now altogether 11 settlements districts whose total herd grew from 1129 animals in 1949 to 1220 at the end of 1952. The smallest

herd is that of the Justistal (Berne), with 10 animals, while the biggest, totalling 500 ibex, is on Piz Albris, in the Engadine. There are now 30 ibex on the Graue Horner (St. Gallen), from 40 to 50 on the Schwarzer Monch and the Engelhörner (Berne), 150 on the Augsmatthorn (Berne), 160 (a decrease of 10, these having presumably migrated to the Piz Albris district) in the National Park, 260 on Mont Pleureur (Valais).

The Piz Albris settlement is the most prosperous. Its herd increased from 480 to 500 between 1949 and 1952. Anyone climbing on the slopes of Piz Languard, near Pontresina, can easily see ibex roaming among the rocks, and sometimes they even come as low as the Morteratsch glacier. The Swiss League for the Protection of Nature has already devoted a sum of over £20,500 to the settlement of ibex, and its efforts and sacrifices have already not been fruitless.

NOTICE TO INTENDING TRAVELLERS

Due to the difficulties experienced in the past by Swiss nationals who have travelled away from New Zealand, and who subsequently have wished to return, it is thought desirable to draw the attention of all intending travellers to the fact that before leaving New Zealand they should make application to a Collector of Customs for a Certificate of Registration authorising their readmission to New Zealand. The procedure is for the travellers to produce their passport with two photographs of passport size and complete a written application. The period of validity of the certificate granted is shown on the face of the certificate, and the holder is permitted to return to New Zealand provided that on arrival back at a New Zealand port they establish their identity and the certificate is still valid.

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