

No vote for Swiss women

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d'Aint. The smaller northern part includes the Laschadu group and the Pisoc group. The Park is the richest district in the whole Alpine chain for flowers on account of its great differences in height, its different stony foundations and its position between the east and west Alpine flower boundary. Many rare plants are to be found only here, as well as the usual Alpenroses, dwarf wild roses, Alpine grasses, shrubs and meadow flowers. In the second half of June they are at their loveliest—violets of all hues, gentians, the fiery Leimkraut, the pure white Pyrenean ranunculus, the golden Bergbahnenfuss, the elegant grasses and sedges and, of course, the Edelweiss. Through all the Engadine there is an abundance of wild flowers. Hardly has the last snow melted before the meadows are carpeted with crocus and soldanella, pushing their blossoms through the snow itself. During the month of May, the valleys are covered with millions and millions of white and blue crocuses. Then comes the season of the hairy anemones in pastel shades found on the hillsides and almost before these are over, the blue gentians. Towards the end of June when the hay-making begins, the beauty of the lower meadows is somewhat spoiled, but the flowers of the high pasture land and the mountains remain beautiful through the summer with a colouring far more intense than anything seen in the lower altitudes. The canton of Grisons protects its flowers by forbidding many of them to be dug up by the roots or picked in large quantities.

(To be continued.)

E.M.

NO VOTE FOR SWISS WOMEN

A lot of people express surprise that Swiss women have not got the right to vote. They are all the more shocked as they consider Switzerland as one of the most developed countries as far as democratic rights are concerned.

It should not be forgotten that Swiss democracy is very different from that of other States. The people not only elect the members of Parliament, but are called several times yearly to give their advice on various laws; for instance, they have just been asked to vote on the question of the expense of Sfr.120 million to help the Swiss abroad who have been victims of the war. I choose this example because it is the most recent one. In last December the Swiss citizens had to vote on taxation. This is surprising, but it is a fact. In Switzerland the taxpayers themselves have to decide about the rate of taxation and about the various laws, which sometimes are most complicated. To be a simple citizen in Switzerland is almost equivalent to being a legislator. Public affairs must be followed closely,

new laws studied and opinions expressed in order for voting to be done intelligently. This task takes time if it is to be taken seriously, and most of the citizens do take it seriously. It is evident that all the important questions are decided by the people, whereas everywhere else in the world the feminine vote has been decided by the Governments and Parliaments. In Switzerland it can only be decided by the people themselves who up to now have always opposed it. More than twenty times since 1920, the question has been raised in the various Cantons and more than twenty times the vote has been negative. Men have refused to give the right to vote to the women. Does this mean that they have no confidence in the judgment of their female companions? I do not believe so. On the legal plane the Swiss women have rights that many women of other nations envy. The Swiss civil code practically makes the women the equal of men. Then why, will you ask, such a resistance. The answer is that outwardly the political life has a typically masculine character. Secondly, Switzerland is deeply traditional and modifies her institutions only when it is absolutely necessary. Thirdly, the Swiss women themselves do not show great enthusiasm to demand their political rights.

It does not mean that I do not understand the surprise which is expressed abroad and that I do not wish that my country should grant the right to vote to the womenfolk, all the more as there are no particular reasons for refusing them. As you see, the main reasons for such conditions are first of all subjective and even sentimental.

"Constant Reader."

NEW PROVISIONS IN THE SWISS LAW ON THE OLD AGE, WIDOWS' AND ORPHANS' INSURANCE

The local Consulate of Switzerland wishes to draw attention to certain new provisions as contained in the Decree of the Swiss Federal Council, dated April 9th, 1954, with respect to Swiss nationals residing abroad.

A woman who had lost her Swiss citizenship through marriage to an alien before 1953, but has since regained it by virtue of the new law on Swiss nationality, is at liberty to join the Swiss Old Age Insurance as a voluntary member. The adherence would have to be declared within one year from the date of the reintegration into Swiss citizenship. However, if the reintegration was granted before January 1st, 1954, the term for enrolment expires on December 31st, 1954. (Sec. 8.)