

# "Our glorious past"

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be interesting to see what cinema experts could do with the beautiful scenery of Switzerland.

#### Vatican Swiss Guard.

Writing about the Ticino and hearing Italian in my ears, as it were—but, unfortunately, not in reality—brings me, quite naturally, to the problem of the Swiss Guard at the Vatican. The following is from the *Dundee Evening Telegraph and Post* (March 19th):—

Now that the Vatican has become an independent State, a question has arisen concerning the Pope's Swiss guard.

This picturesque corps, numbering about one hundred officers and men, has been for centuries recruited in the German and French speaking cantons of Switzerland, its chief duty being to guard the body of the Pope. There is an article in the present Swiss Constitution, however, prohibiting Swiss subjects from accepting service in the army of any foreign Power. Hitherto the Vatican could not strictly be termed a foreign Power, but now the Swiss Guard will come under the ban contained in the Swiss Constitution.

The Guard has a record distinguished for loyalty to the Holy See. It was founded in 1505 by Pope Julius II., who recruited 2,000 men, of whom 250 followed him to Rome. They were butchered almost to a man in St. Peter's, where they barricaded themselves during the sack of Rome in 1527.

I don't think for a moment that the question is important enough to call for an alteration in the Swiss Constitution.

#### Dr. Albert Reverdin, M.D.

The *Lancet* of March 9th publishes the following necrology:—

Dr. Albert Reverdin, who died on January 29th at the age of 48, was one of the most renowned and popular medical men in Switzerland. He was the son of one well-known surgeon, Auguste Reverdin, and the pupil of another, having been chief assistant to César Roux, in Lausanne for many years. In 1912, being greatly interested in the work of the Red Cross, Reverdin went to the Balkan war to assume the direction of the "Vaud-Genève" ambulances. He proved to be an efficient organiser as well as a distinguished surgeon, and received honours from Serbian and from Greece. He returned from Geneva in 1913, and began to build a big, up-to-date clinic. Then the Great War broke out. Reverdin at once offered his services to the French Government, and was entrusted with the charge of the large War Hospital in Bourg, being appointed also surgeon-in-chief and inspector-general of the VIIth region. For his war services he was made an officer of the Legion of Honour. In 1919 he was able to return to Geneva to open his new clinic, which was equipped with X-ray plant as well as fine operating theatres, consulting rooms and research laboratories. Besides his clinical work, Reverdin for some years held the post of chief of a surgical department at the Hôpital Cantonal de Genève. As a vice-president of the International Red Cross Committee he brought about a great number of useful reforms, and he devoted much of his time to this work. The brandard he invented is now used widely in armies.

Dr. Robert Duby, of Geneva, writes: Those who saw Reverdin operate were struck by his great dexterity and rapidity of action. As an inventor he distinguishes himself in many directions. In surgery we have Reverdin's needles, Reverdin's pincers, etc. We owe him also Nitro-cellulose, a malleable substance, which in many cases can take the place of plaster. With his technical skill was associated excellent judgment. Severe with himself, he was severe with others, and there was military discipline in his operating-room as well as in the whole clinic. But he was interested in his patients from the moment they entered the clinic, and he never forgot them. To him the operation was an important part in the treatment of their illness, but not the only thing that counted. He avoided operating when he could. Because he was a master of surgery and yet was never mastered by it his name will be remembered as a great clinician, and his early death will be deplored by the increasing circle of practitioners who relied on him for sound advice.

#### THE SKI DANCE.

When modern measures grow flat and stale  
And the jaded dancing crowd  
Recoil from the Charleston and the Yale  
And voice their complaints aloud,  
The terpsichorean kings devise  
Some new and intricate prance  
Which the foxtrot fans with the weary eyes  
Will simply refuse to dance!

The latest step from the frozen Alps—  
The Ski Dance frenzied and free—  
Will arouse some apprehensive pals  
In people who cannot ski!  
They'll ask with terror, Will skis be bound  
To the light fantastic toe  
To bring the dancer down to the ground—  
A ground that's harder than snow?

Will plunging skis bore a deadly track  
Through dancers stabbed unaware?  
Will the last position be on the back  
With feet stuck up in the air?  
Will jazz bands yodel?—Oh, dancers, dear,  
Take heart, for your fears are false!  
You know you'll dance for the rest of the year  
To the foxtrot and the waltz!

—From the *Daily Mirror*.

#### "OUR GLORIOUS PAST."

(Translated from the *Almanacco Ticinese*.)

It was already known that the villages of the Ticino have been real seed-beds of renowned artists, especially during the period of the Renaissance. To confirm this there were, however, not many definite proofs which could withstand the criticisms of modern historical research.

However, thanks to the studies nearly always made by eminent foreigners, enthusiastic about our culture and the glories of our past, documents and publications come to light from day to day which prove once again how a modest and small population of about 20,000 inhabitants, grouped together in about a score of villages, in the valleys and around the lake of Lugano, with the borough of Lugano itself at the head, especially in the 17th century, was able to produce a veritable "stream of men" learned in all the branches of human knowledge and admired for their indomitable energy and daring. They spread our religious, artistic and scientific culture in Germany, Poland and nearly the whole of Northern Europe, occupying prominent positions in Abbeys, Church, Universities, Army and political affairs, and everywhere they left such a mark that the scholars are compelled to bow to the memory of those great citizens of ours.

The following is a literal translation of what Dr. Alexander Hajdeki wrote on this point in the "Berichte und Mitteilungen des Altertums-Vereines zu Wien," viz.:—

"It is really one of the most notable enigmas of history—or is it merely a caprice of Mother Earth—that a tiny strip of North-Italian country (comprising the neighbourhood of Lugano and the Val d'Intelvi) should have been able at one time to develop such an over-production of men of outstanding intelligence as to be able to provide and cover "half a Europe," as happened to the German-speaking nations and the Slav countries of the North, which were drawing almost exclusively from there for their needs in professors, politicians, medical men and artists of every description!..."

This short paragraph shows again the extraordinary work that our forefathers accomplished abroad, in those far off days, and the enthusiasm with which foreign writers acknowledge their deeds. It would really be a patriotic action if all the publications concerning our great fellow-citizens were acquired by the State and collected in the Cantonal Library in Lugano, to be available to students. The necessary funds could be raised by public subscription.

Unfortunately, in the Ticino, pages were written in times gone by which did not portray the truth, and our populations were depicted as slumbering for nearly three centuries in inactivity and black ignorance. However, modern historical research comes at last to sweep away all such legends and to place a crown of immortal glory on the head of those great forgotten ones.

To better exemplify what is said above we reproduce here a page of history concerning the family Verda of Gandria, taken from the work of Wastler, "Kunstleben am Hofe zu Graz," viz.:—

"The Verdas from Gandria.—This family, originating from Gandria, a village on the lake of Lugano, gave many outstanding men. Just in his "Review of Prussian Art," second volume, says that five artists from the family Verda went to Spain in 1509, led by a certain Michele Carbone from Scaria, Val d'Intelvi, in order to erect the Royal Castle of Calahorra at Granada. They were Magister and Egidius Verda from Gandria, Peter Verda, who was a sculptor in Genoa, and two other of his relatives, also sculptors, who had to prepare the capitals, arches and all other decorations and work in Carrara marble.

One G. P. Verda (brother of the Chancellor G. B. Verda, 1582-1649) was at the end of the

16th century at the service of the Duke of Brunswick as architect and Court Chamberlain. With him were other members of the same family. His brother Anthony erected in Graz, from 1555 to 1558, the front of the royal palace towards the Mur and worked for the fortifications and the university... For some time he was also at the service of the town of Kaerten. Mark Anthony Verda, a cousin of the above, worked from 1571 to 1591 as sculptor for the Mausoleum of Charles II. at Sekkau, and he and Vincenzo Verda were employed as engineers for the works of fortification of the town of Graz, from 1571 to 1591.

Another member of the family, Dr. G. B. Verda, was, in 1620, elected a member of the Austrian Parliament. Later on he became Geheimrat (Privy Councillor) and was made a Baron, with the title of Verdenberg-Grafenegg. Finally, in 1630, with other honours, he was raised to the position of Chancellor of the Austrian Empire and assumed the title of Count von Verdenberg-Namiest. He died in Vienna in 1649, and a sumptuous monument, rich in bronze figures, was raised to him in the church of St. Michael, where he was buried."

With the means his high position provided him, Verda desired to promote public education and founded popular schools and an academy in Gorizia.

It is strange, however, that at a time when the State was not spending a single farthing for public education our villages were producing men of such genius and culture that any praise is always below what they deserve.

#### CHOOSING THE MALE.

In a recent issue of the *S.O.* I read what was evidently intended to be some excellent advice to men readers on the subject of choosing a wife.

As a mere female, I should like to offer a few suggestions to those of my sex about to risk the "matrimonial dive."

Try to see him early in the morning when his hair has not undergone the refining influence of a brush, and his chin is reminiscent of a miniature porcupine.

Note his choice in pyjamas. If, for instance, having red hair, he dons a vivid salmon pink, think for a moment what effect this colour scheme will have on you in the early hours of the morning, especially if your digestion tends to be weak.

Have breakfast with him, and observe what chances you have against the newspaper. You will probably find that your main function is merely to replenish the empty cup, while he searches the columns to discover the winner of the 2.30.

Go walking with him, and note how he regards the more favoured of your sex. If his glance lingers in their direction before marriage, the habit will certainly develop with great rapidity afterwards.

Observe him dressing for dinner, and try to accustom your ear to the exotic choice of language when his favourite stud cannot be found or escapes his fingers to roll away and remain hidden. Listen to his polite remarks about the laundry when it has forgotten to return his favourite shirt, although a dozen similar specimens are submitted for his choice.

Be there when he opens a present from the female members of his family. He will be saying just the same about the ties you have spent a morning choosing for him, this time next year, although he is probably wearing an atrocity you have recently inflicted on him. Heroics don't last!

Invite him to dinner. If he pronounces your Charlotte Russe "good, but somewhat dry," suspect alcoholic tendencies and beware!

Play Bridge with him. If he simply smiles when you trump his trick, it is a bad sign. Such passivity will bore you a year hence. If, on the other hand, it takes both your opponents to hold him down, rejoice, for here is the cave man of your dreams.

Finally, introduce him to his prospective mother-in-law, and if he is truly charming to her, accept him, for you really have found the right "long suffering male." By that time, however, he will probably have such visions of matrimonial shackles that not even that "Spring feeling" will make him relinquish his bachelorhood, and you will find you must start your quest all over again!

G.A.N.

#### QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES

BONDS.	Mar. 18		Mar. 25	
Confederation 3% 1903	82.75		83.60	
5% 1917, VIII Mob. Ln	101.50		101.05	
Federal Railways 3½% A-K	88.05		87.10	
" " 1924 IV Elect. Ln.	102.25		102.00	
SHARES.	Nom.		Mar. 18	
Swiss Bank Corporation	500	813	813	
Crédit Suisse	500	950	941	
Union de Banques Suisses	500	710	707	
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	3475	3440	
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	4750	4680	
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe	1000	4355	4310	
S.A. Brown Boveri	350	572	560	
C. F. Bally	1000	1400	1405	
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	866	842	
Entreprises Suisses S.A.	1000	1255	1260	
Comp. de Nav. n. sur le Lac Léman	500	505	517	
Linoleum A.G. Giubiasco	100	325	338	
Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon	500	860	845	

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