

"Return to Nature" in the smallest Canton of Switzerland

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700 YEARS "HANDVESTE" THUN

On 12th March 1264, Elisabeth von Kyburg granted civic rights and duties to the town of Thun. This event marked the beginning of the citizen's acceptance of responsibility in public life. The people of Thun celebrated the jubilee in June. On 12th June, the renovated "Rathaus" was inaugurated, and guests from many parts of Switzerland and abroad took part in the main festivities at the Castle.

At the castle, too, there is an interesting exhibition, the first of its kind, devoted to the historic development of all the "Zaehringer" towns in Switzerland and Southern Germany. A number of publications on the history of Thun are being issued in the course of the summer.

(A.T.S. and "Basler Nachrichten".)

PICTURES OF HISTORIC INTEREST ON SHOW

Very few will know off-hand that Emperor Charlemagne, who was favourably disposed towards Switzerland, died 1,150 years ago (on 28th January 814). It is the privilege of the Abbey Library in St. Gall to be able to produce from among its treasures some priceless heirlooms from the intellectual and spiritual life of the past to illustrate the theme "Charlemagne and the Carolingian Renaissance".

In Basle an exhibition will be opened in July to commemorate the 450th anniversary of the building of the Town Hall in the market-place. Although it was less extensive in its original form, the building ranks as the most important secular edifice of historical interest in the town.

At La Chaux-de-Fonds the Horological Museum is illustrating "Four Centuries of European Watches" with original timepieces.

The Graphic Collection of the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich invites the public to enjoy a "Voyage Pittoresque" through Switzerland in the time of the Swiss Lesser Masters.

Martigny in the Valais features a historical and folkloric exhibition in honour of the new Alpine tunnel of the Great St. Bernard until 4th October.

[S.N.T.O.]

"RETURN TO NATURE" IN THE SMALLEST CANTON OF SWITZERLAND

The charming Aegeri Valley by the lake of the same name in Central Switzerland has, during recent years, been able to offer an increasing number of innovations to tourists. Guided by the idea that nowadays the hurried city dweller seeks peace and relaxation far from the beaten track as well as a variety of sports facilities, the authorities of this valley have decided to meet the demands of the visitors. Thus, two new hotels were built while existing ones were remodelled. In Lower Aegeri a pretty Lido awaits the tourists. Upper as well as Lower Aegeri now feature tennis courts as well as riding stables offering exciting cross-country horseback riding to both beginners and experienced horsemen. During the summer season three public dances take place every week.

[S.N.T.O.]

700 YEARS OF CIVIC RIGHTS FOR WINTERTHUR

Rudolf von Habsburg could be well satisfied with his Winterthur citizens, for they have made something really worthwhile of the privileges he granted them in the summer of 1264. This is how the "Basler Nachrichten" began its report on the celebrations in the "Stadt der Arbeit" Winterthur on 19th/21st June. It is a far cry from the modest little market place on the Eulach to the important seat of industry, commercial undertakings and insurance concerns, of art and culture which Winterthur is today.

In 1180, the Counts of Kyburg founded Winterthur. The Kyburg family grew to be one of the mightiest, and as long as they reigned there was peace in Winterthur. But in 1264, the last of the Kyburg Counts died, and Rudolf of Habsburg received Winterthur as part of the estate of the mighty Kyburg dynasty. He needed as many strong points as possible in the Swiss Midlands in order to pursue his own plans of aggrandizement. Winterthur became the pattern for other Swiss towns, though Winterthur successfully insisted on a high degree of independence; they elected their own "Schultheiss" and appointed a tribunal which was competent even in disputes with the Habsburgs. The Winterthur people were loyal to the House of Habsburg, but the latter repaid badly, and in 1467, Count Sigismund, short of money, pledged the town to Zurich. He was never in a position to honour the pledge, and Winterthur remained subjected. It was not until 1798 that Zurich's rule came to an end. Today pleasant rivalry exists between the two cities, both fully aware of each other's importance. In 1869, it was the Democrats of Winterthur who created the Zurich cantonal constitution.

Both the history of Winterthur and the relationship with the Limmat Town and the Canton were brought into the celebrations in June. For three days the town went gay. Friday was reserved for the younger generation, whilst the main ceremony took place on Saturday, following two special religious services of the Protestant and the Catholic Church. The Municipal Orchestra and two choirs took part and gave a first performance of Paul Müller's 148th Psalm. Prof. Dr. Werner Ganz, great expert on Winterthur's history, gave the historic address. There was a banquet, a youth festival on the "Schützenwiese", a torch procession resembling a historic pageant; there was music and dancing and great merrymaking — and not even the rain which fell at times could mar the celebrations.

At the Winterthur Art Gallery, an exhibition of pictures by Winterthur artists of the nineteenth century was opened. Many of these pictures disappeared with the victorious advent of Impressionism, but today they make excellent and interesting study. The Winterthur exhibition include works by Johann Jakob Biedermann, Eduard Steiner and Konrad Grob.

(A.T.S., "Basler Nachrichten", "Echo" and "Switzerland" published by S.N.T.O.)

SWISS BANKS WILL BE CLOSED ON SATURDAYS

An agreement has been made between employers and staff according to which Swiss banks are to have a five-day week as from 1st July. For the time being, many banks will still be closed at lunch time, but the aim is to keep open all day ultimately. Exchange offices will remain open on Saturdays and some even on Sundays.