

Obituary : Mr. John Schupfer

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The bulk of our readers are immigrants from the four or five central cantons and who of you cannot remember with a heart-throb the countless cherry trees in full blossom in spring with a soft south wind breathing gently through their branches. And as summer advances the fruit fulfils the promise of the flower, for no cherry seems so sweet and juicy as those of Schwyz and Zug.

Or as a contrast, take the climber in the vast upland solitudes, where all the beauties of this lovely land will be fully revealed and where fresh surprises continually appear. Many of you may know a rocky wilderness such as the slopes of the Melchtal Alp, the Madaraner Valley, or many other places where you think yourself alone with nature. There you may happen to see a herd of chamois—the buck running ahead, with all the followers on the look-out—a rare sight indeed for a lover of nature. It seems to us, and we say so with pride, that all men who come to Central Switzerland feel its scenic charm and fall under the spell of its romance and beauty.

Let us take a few excursions through these picturesque districts, perhaps on one of those clean, comfortable steamboats across the Lake. The variation and charm of this lovely lake are unique; along the shores you see soft flower-strewn meadows, green and pine-clad hills, or threatening cliffs—and above them all, the fine mountains, their peaks clothed in everlasting snow. From Lucerne it takes only half an hour to Weggis (you remember the famous song?) renowned for its mild climate. It is a fact that Weggis supplies Lucerne with fresh lettuce almost during the whole of the winter. Three miles further on is Vitznau, also a sheltered and sunny spot. From Vitznau the famous electric railway used by the majority of tourists ascends the mountain. The Rigi is served by a second railway from Goldau at the other side of the great rock. There are several popular hotels on top of the long ridge, high above the lake and commanding extremely beautiful views. An average of 400,000 people visit the Rigi every year.

After passing Brunnen, another delightful summer resort with the twin—"Mythen" as a rugged background, the celebrated Axenstrasse begins. This is one of the most famous examples of highway construction, with a number of tunnels and galleries cut out of the vertical cliffs, with openings overlooking the lake. An obligatory stop is made by everybody at the Tell's Chapel, where our hero William Tell sprung ashore from the boat in which Gessler was taking him to prison. And so the panorama unfolds to Fluelen and the return trip along the opposite shore past the Rutli, the imposing Burgenstock and back to Lucerne.

Engelberg has achieved popularity as a winter and summer sport resort. It is the starting point for several well-known mountains, such as the Titlis, the Spannort or the Urirotstock. Few

of our compatriots will know the origin of Engelberg: until the beginning of the twelfth century the surroundings were a complete wilderness, until a certain Conrad von Seldenburen came to the valley seeking a secluded spot to establish a monastery of retirement from the world. When resting at night, he heard distinctly several times from the mountains, some beautiful songs of angels. To the pious man this was a sign from heaven that he was to build here the cloister which he had planned. Thus the Monastery of Mount of Angels was established in 1120 A.D.

And to conclude this article we must not overlook the St. Gotthard Railway, a triumph of engineering and great international highway, and also one of the most picturesque in Switzerland. You have all heard of the famous spiral tunnels at Wassen. First the track passes way below the village and you might catch a quick glance of the church tower high above; then the line reverses its direction by a sharp curve, disappearing into the mountain tunnel. Then the train repasses the village on the level, and the church is just a few yards away from you. Finally, turning again, into a tunnel in the opposite direction the hide-and-seek church appears a third time, but now way down in the valley.

—E.M.

(To be continued)

OBITUARY

MR. JOHN SCHUPFER

On October 12th, 1953, Mr. John Schupfer died suddenly at his home in Lowgarth, Eltham. With his passing away the Swiss community of Taranaki lost one of its most respected and beloved members. His easy-going straightforward manner made him very popular with the Swiss and English people alike. The unusually large procession and the countless wreaths at his funeral in Kaponga bore witness to this.

John came to this country from the Canton of Zug, 32 years ago. He proved himself a careful and good farmer. In Miss Pauline Steiner he found a perfect partner in life, and together they owned their own farm in a comparatively short time. The very happy marriage was blessed with two daughters, the elder of whom was crowned the proud Queen of Kaponga last winter.

To go back to his beloved Zug in the near future for a well-earned holiday was John's one ambition but Providence decided otherwise.

John Schupfer is the first member of the Swiss Social Club to die since its foundation. He was a member of the Executive, a keen supporter and helper whenever there was something to do. His wise counsel was always appreciated and taken notice of. Sure enough, his absence will be felt very hard.

—W.R.