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JAKOB BOSSHART †.

Ueber den am 18. Februar a. c. im Alter von 62 Jahren verstorbenen Schriftsteller Jakob Boshart veröffentlicht die Basler "National-Zeitung," aus der Feder von Felix Meschlin, folgende Charakter-Skizze:—

Er war kein Liebhaber des Kunststückes um des Kunststückes willen, kein Freund des blendenden Gestus. Dieser Mann, der tief genug in die Literatur und in die Sprache hineingeschaut hatte, blieb zeitlebens, in selbstgewollter Beschränkung, ein Freund der einfachen Linie, des wohlgeordneten Aufbaus, des gerühigen Ablaufs. Wenn er seine Geschichten erzählte, so begann er sie dort, wo jedes Gewächs beginnt, im Samen, liess dieses Samen Korn schwellen, sich öffnen, den Keim entfalten, wachsen, sich dehnen, Spross um Spross ansetzen, Blüte um Blüte, zum Guten, zum Bösen, langsam, gewichtig, eindringlich. Er gab die Schicksale und Geschehnisse, wie sie von Alters her gegeben worden sind, mögen daneben noch viele andere Wege offenstehen, ein Menschenschicksal, eine Verflechtung von Kräften, ein Sammeln und ein Zersplittern, ein Aufsteigen und Untergehen erschütternd und hinreissend darzustellen. Es ist seltsam, wie umbeirrt sein künstlerisches Wesen blieb, kaum berührt von der aufreibenden und vielfältigen Tätigkeit eines städtischen Rektors, so dass am Ende seines Lebens immer noch die Geschichten von den Bauern, von der Erde die lebendigsten blieben und die Stadt nur wie eine Station, aber mit viel schwächeren Erinnerungen, mit blässerem Leuchtkraft in der Reihe seiner Werke stand. Seine Krankheit hatte ihn aus der Fruchtbarkeit des Heimatbodens gerissen, aber nur umso stärker war seine Sehnsucht nach dem goldenen Glanze der Kornfelder, nach dem geliebten Geheimnisse des Reifens. O, er wusste um das Berauschende des Fruchtragens, er, der in die alpine Einsamkeit verbannt war, selber getreulich seine Früchte tragend wie ein Baum, der seine Wurzeln so tief hineingesenkt hat in das wahre Leben, dass nichts sein mannhaftes, aufrechtes Menschentum, die zu Herzen dringende Offenbarung dieses Wesens erschüttern konnte. Er hatte die vertrauensvolle Geduld des Bauern, der seine Bäume pflanzt, wenn er auch weiss, dass sie erst in späten Jahren die roten Äpfel und die goldenen Birnen regnen lassen, Geschenk Gottes, dass diese gläubige Geduld in ihm war, sonst hätte ihn die Angst und die Furcht zerrissen, scheiden zu müssen, ohne das geschaffene zu haben, was ihm zu schaffen als drängendes Verlangen in die Seele gelegt worden war. So hatte er sich auch jetzt in Geduld gefasst, hatte Arbeiten von sich geschoben, da die Hand die Feder nicht mehr führen konnte, auf den Frühling hoffend, auf neue Kräfte. Immer wieder war ja das Wunder geschehen, warum sollte es nicht noch einmal rettend nahen? Aber der Atem erstarb, die Hand erkaltete, sein Werk ist uns gegeben, betrogen sind wir um das, was noch Traum war. Doch da er selber milde gelächelt hat, wenn er von dem sprach, was er noch schaffen wollte, und das ihm die Jahre vielleicht nicht mehr vergönnten, da er selber nicht mit dem Schicksale gerechnet hat, ziemt es uns nicht, weniger gefasst zu sein bei seinem Verluste als er, der um die schwermütige Heiterkeit des Entsagens besser wusste als wir alle.

Es gibt in seinen Erzählungen und in seinem grossen Romane Menschen, die untergehen, aber es gibt keine Menschen, die sich fürchten, es gibt keine Menschen, die jammern und wehklagen und sich flüchten vor der Verantwortung dessen, was sie getan haben. Das ist die Religion seiner Kunst, dass sie die Mannhaftigkeit und den Mut lehrt, in einer Zeit, die so oft der Feigheit verfallen ist, dem schwachvollen Sichflüchten vor den Folgen der eigenen Handlung. Wenn seine Helden ein Verbrechen begehen, so wissen sie es auch zu sühnen. Wie sie das Werk zu tragen vermögen, so vermögen sie auch die Schuld auf sich zu nehmen. Seine Männer und Frauen kommen alle aus einer Welt, wo die Sonne hell in die Seele scheint und wo das verstockteste Herz schliesslich weiss, was es zu tun hat. Die Wege sind nicht immer gerade, aber sie führen empor, durch Schmerzen empor. Gebunden sind seine Menschen an die Erde, aber sie sind nie so sklavisch gebunden, dass nicht die Seele aufzulegen könnte in die tröstliche Welt des seligmachenden Geistes. Und diese Menschen, die nichts von der Phrase wissen, spüren dafür umso tiefer und machtvoller, dass es sich hier auf Gottes schwerem Erdboden nicht darum handelt, den Mund zu öffnen zu grossem Worte, sondern die Handlung zu tun, die in jedem Augenblick die wichtige und lebensnotwendige ist, möge sie auch noch so klein und unscheinbar aussehen, ja, möge sie gegen das verstossene, was eigenes Interesse und persönliches Wohlergehen heisst. Das Wort von der gegenseitigen Hilfe kommt in seinen Werken nie vor, aber gerade dieses Wort ist das leidenschaftliche Evangelium, das immer wieder gepredigt wird. Es gibt irgendwo in seinen Büchern eine Geschichte von einem Knechte, der nicht zu den Allerklügsten gehört, dumpfen Gemütes, der aber ohne langes Zögern den richtigen Weg weiss, wenn er seinen Meister in der Not und der Verzweilung sieht. Da kämpft er sich durch seine eigenen Wünsche, die seinem Entschluss entgegenstehen, hindurch, opfert seinen Traum, dereinst im eigenen Heimwesen zu sitzen, opfert seine Frau, von der er durch die Not getrennt ist, schenkt sein

Erspartes, alles ohne Bitterkeit, in Einfachheit. Und man weiss, das ist eine Seele, der die Wohnstätte bereitet ist im Himmel aller guten Menschen. Man glaubt in seinen Erzählungen immer wieder wie hinter einer Verkleidung den barmherzigen Samariter zu schauen, still und ohne grosse Gebärde helfend, weil es sein Wesen und sein Müssen ist, zu helfen. So strahlt in seinem Werke die Tapferkeit des mutig Ertragenen und unerträglich gestalteten Werktags auf, und seine Männer und Frauen brauchen sich derer, die Schwerter in die Schlacht tragen und mit Sensen um das Liebste kämpfen, nicht zu schämen. Die Schweiz seiner Bücher ist die gute und demütige Schweiz, die sich nicht prahlerisch an die Strasse stellt, sondern in der Einsamkeit gross und gewaltig ist, mag sie auch von denen, die nicht in die Tiefe sehen, klein und unscheinbar genannt werden. Seine Sprache aber nährt sich mit altem Volksgut, schafft immer wieder Bilder und Gleichnisse, dass die Schilderung und die Verkündigung in einem neuen Lichte in die Welt springt und der Lesende aufhorcht, weil das Wort so jung und stark und eigenwillig ist.

Jung blieb er bis zuletzt. Es ist der schönste Trost, dass in dem Bande "Neben der Heerstrasse" jene Erzählung vom "Festbauern" steht, die wie in einer einzigen Schale das fasst, was Boshart gewesen ist, wenn er am grössten war. Er schrieb, da es schon dem Ende entgegenging, die strahlende Geschichte vom triumphierenden Leben, vom Glück der Liebe und der Ernte. Noch einmal rief er den Glanz der Jugend, einer Zeit, da noch Musik über die Aecker sang zur Reifezeit, nicht als ein Enttäugter, nicht als einer, der Entschundenem nachtrauert, sondern als einer, der es unverloren besitzt und der daran glaubt, dass diese hinreissende Musik des Liebens und des Erntens nicht verloren gehen kann. Mit biblischer Kraft ruft er seine Verkündigung von dem ewigen Siege des Lebens in die Welt, zu einer Zeit, die sich trübe und umdüstert zweifelnd über den Abgrund des Misstrauens und der Hoffnungslosigkeit neigt. Er, der Kranke, der seit Jahren nur noch den vorsichtigen Schritt des Genesenden und immer wieder Bedrohten, dem genau eingeteilten und karg bemessenen Arbeitstag kamte, könnte jubeln, da die Gesunden leichter die griesrämigen und harten Worte fanden als die frohen und vertrauensvollen. Er, der Kranke, dem die Stunden kostbarer sein mussten als einem andern, fand doch immer noch Musse genug, an das Wohl des Schrifttums zu denken, sich um die schweizerische Dichtung zu kümmern, wie einer, der vom Berge aus alles überschaut, ohne Voreingenommenheit, immer bereit, einer neuen Stimme gläubig das Ohr zu öffnen, einem neuen Worte den Weg bereiten zu helfen. Schillerstiftung und Schriftstellerverein wissen davon zu erzählen. Müsstes sie alles erzählen, so nähme es kein Ende. Denn er war nicht nur lebendig in seinen Büchern, sondern auch lebendig unter den Lebenden. Nie geizte er im Geben.

Es würgt mich in der Kehle, es steigt mir in die Augen, dass ich heute das schreiben muss, statt ihm noch einmal Hand in Hand danken zu dürfen. Die Schweiz hat einen Dichter verloren, die Schweizer haben einen tapfern, aufrechten Schweizer verloren, wir Schriftsteller aber haben noch mehr eingebüsst. Wir haben — ich finde kein anderes Wort — wir haben einen guten Vater verloren.

WENGEN IN WINTER.

Winter Sports have been brought so much before the public this season through the daily and weekly Press that there can be little doubt that next winter will see an unprecedented influx of English visitors to Switzerland. Although St. Moritz, Pontresina and other places in the Engadine have their distinctive features, there is a great deal to be said in favour of the attractions of this little place in the Bernese Oberland.

Hotel accommodation in winter time is a big factor in the success of a holiday, and in choosing Wengen the intending visitor will find as large a selection of hotels there as he is likely to require. For those of expensive tastes, and who desire a certain amount of social life, there are at least three hotels which offer the service and the delights of a first-class establishment at, say, one of our favourite South Coast resorts, while for those of modest requirements there are to be found numerous hotels and pensions of quite excellent worth. I have just brought to a close a short holiday spent in one of those hotels, where English people formed perhaps 90 per cent. of the visitors, and in reviewing the events of that fortnight, let me say that the most formidable of the few experiences I had to encounter was in breaking through the reserve of those folk from my own country. But however stiff and formal the atmosphere indoors may at first seem, one finds a different spirit generated at the sports, and it is one's own fault if advantage is not there taken to cultivate agreeable company.

Wengen lies in the Lauterbrunnen Valley, 4,000 feet above sea-level. It is well sheltered from the north and east winds, and this protection provides that the geniality of the sun is enjoyed under the best conditions. And what glorious views are to be had! From Wengernalp (5,600 ft.) the

view is unsurpassed anywhere in Switzerland: there, in all their beauty, lie before one the Eiger, Mönch, Jungfrau, Silberhorn, Breithorn and others—all giants, and looking in their winter coats less formidable and a little kinder, I think, than they do when viewed under a summer sun.

It has been my privilege to visit many places in Europe, but never have I arrived at my destination with such delightful surprise as I did when making Wengen at the close of a winter's day. Climbing by the mountain railway which runs from Lauterbrunnen, one is enchanted by the diversity of the scenery, when, without warning, the train clears the top of the cutting, and there lies the lower rink with its merry throng, and beyond that the hotels and chalets which one is likely to know so well before the holiday comes to an end.

The opportunities for sport at Wengen are excellent, and are really hard to beat—in the Bernese Oberland, at any rate. The nursery slopes where the ski novice learns that there are at least a hundred ways of embracing the snow, are nicely graded, so that after a beginning at an easy descent he passes on to the next steepest, and again from that to the next, until he finds himself proficient enough to tackle an excursion of some length. The existence of the mountain railway which runs to the smaller Scheidegg (6,000 ft.) is, at any rate, a speedy way to a summit, although I have heard the 'highbrows' of the sport remark that the railway is a lazy person's resource, and that the ascent on ski should be part of the excursion. To those who are eager for a full-size man's job there are several excursions to be made from the Scheidegg, including the Lauberhorn (7,500 ft.) and the Mannlichen (7,000 ft.). The latter affords a splendid run down to Grindelwald.

While there is no bob run at Wengen, there is an excellent luge run of a mile in length. Here again the railway is of service, for all one need do is to place one's luge in a truck provided for the purpose, and remove it at the starting point, which is about 300 feet up. There are two skating rinks of good dimensions, and the surface of these is always without fault. A portion of one of the rinks is reserved for curling, and a club has been established for those devotees of the 'roarin' game.' It is noticed with interest that women are taking to this sport, and quite a number of them are capable of throwing a 'bonnie stone.' Ice gymnastics are held every week and afford plenty of amusement, whether one is a competitor or a spectator. Dancing is, of course, the frolic for the evening. The best hotels are provided with ballrooms and have their own orchestras, while in the smaller hotels the dining-room or hall is cleared, and the music is provided by a small orchestra or by the ubiquitous gramophone. Entertainments indoors are generally managed by a small committee of visitors, and competitions, with prizes, are a regular item in the programme. It would be well if the visitor took with him an assortment of ideas for such frivolities as book and advertisement competitions, and for fancy-dress dances he cannot have with him too large a wardrobe, for these diversions are featured two or three times a week—and woe betide a 'slacker' who fails to turn up in fancy attire!

Just one word to the novice. At Wengen, as at other Winter Sport centres, there are to be found 'knuts' of both sexes who, possessing skill in the various forms of sport, profess to find enjoyment in being out of doors all day and every day, ski-ing, tobogganing, or skating. Such strenuous days may be indulged in for some duration without penalty by those supple of limb and with energy to match, but if one is on the wrong side of thirty, be advised and take half-a-day off once or twice a week. Do not be ashamed to be seen in the lounge smoking your brier, for you will be rewarded at the end of your holiday by a fresh stock of vigour. No frayed nerves for you if you take your sport with discretion.

R. K. M.

SWISS Y.M.C.A.

Extract from report on activities during the year 1923, submitted by the President, Mr. Jean Scheuemeier, at the Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Y.M.C.A., held at the Foyer Suisse on Feb. 21st.

Three members were admitted, but 12 friends had to leave us, their permits having expired, so that we have a net loss of nine members at the end of 1923.

In spite of the heavy decrease in membership, we were, however, quite successful in financial matters, and our Society was able to carry on, on a self-supporting basis, without outside assistance. This is due to the generosity of some of our older and residential members, and to some special donations which we receive annually from old members, now back in Switzerland, but still taking a keen interest in our work.

The attendance at our weekly meetings on Thursday evenings, when we sit round the table for Bible study, has been very good indeed. It is very encouraging to see a good number of young Swiss people, keenly interested in the study of the Scriptures, from which we try to take our strength and moral support for our daily life, while at the same time they help us in our endeavours to further the spirit of true Christian love. We are much indebted to the Pastors of our Swiss Colony, also

Rev. A. Scholten, Mr. J. R. Niklaus (Missionary), now and again some visitors from Switzerland and others, who have so kindly contributed to our spiritual education during the year under review.

A great blessing to us are also the meetings on the last Thursday of each month, addressed in English by the Rev. C. Pummel, on which occasions our lady friends are now also being admitted.

As in the past, we celebrated Dank-, Buss- und Bettag—last year for the first time at the Foyer Suisse—and our Christmas Celebration was held on the premises of the City of London Y.M.C.A., Aldersgate Street, E.C.1. Both these meetings were well attended and highly successful.

During the summer months, various rambles were organised, leading us to some beauty spots outside London. In this connection we may mention our visit to Dr. Barnardo's Home, boy section, at Woodford Bridge. We would recommend to every Swiss, while in London, to pay a visit to this Home.

Our social gatherings are getting more and more popular, and the circle of our lady friends is steadily increasing, especially since we have been able to transfer our activities to the Foyer Suisse, where, since the 1st January, 1924, we possess a nice club-room of our own and where much better accommodation is at our disposal for entertaining our friends.

We take this opportunity to express our best thanks to the Ashburton Club for the kind hospitality we enjoyed in their Club House in Red Lion Square from 1917 until the end of 1923. We shall always look back with pleasure to the years we stayed at their address. Unfortunately, the accommodation at our disposal was not sufficient to develop a greater activity.

The address of the Foyer Suisse, 12-15 Upper Bedford Place, where we are now at home, is known to every Swiss in London, and we would ask every compatriot who is looking for true friendship and who has the desire to develop his spiritual welfare, to come and join our ranks. All will find a hearty welcome, and we are convinced nobody will ever regret having responded to our invitation.

We are in need of more members, active and subscribing, and ladies are now also being admitted as subscribing members.

We hope our efforts for the welfare of our compatriots in London will in future meet with more and more success, and to all those who can lend us a helping hand in our activities we would appeal once more to give us their support by joining our Society.

Dr. LANG'S DEPARTURE.

When Gottfried Keller, in his capacity of Zürcher Staatschreiber, had to represent the Government of the Canton of Zurich at the farewell dinner to a university professor, he is reported to have made the following speech:—"Our experience has often been that when a professor leaves us, a better one succeeds him. Let us hope that the same will happen in the case of Professor Y." Then he toasted the professor.

Well would it be if a similar hope could be expressed at Dr. Lang's leave-taking. But unfortunately there is no gainsaying that this will cause a permanent and sorely-felt loss, not only to the N.S.H., but to the whole of our colony. Dr. Lang has laboured during three years for our intellectual needs in a way which deserves the highest praise. In his various lectures and in the Literary Page of *The Swiss Observer* Dr. Lang revealed himself as a masterly interpreter of the culture of our native country in general and of its literary form in particular. These intellectual tonics were administered with a mixture of humour and witticism which made them palatable to all those who never or very seldom take to poetry. In this regard Dr. Lang has fulfilled a mission in our colony.

The departing Secretary of the N.S.H. however, laid his prime duty in the endeavour to make Swiss culture better known to English people. This activity he conceived in a lofty spirit, and if all his schemes did not bear immediate fruit, it was not due to lack of energy or want of purpose, but to the inherent difficulties in the way of all such efforts.

The three years' experience in our midst will, no doubt, be of service to Dr. Lang in his future career, and the heartiest wishes of the Swiss Colony in London accompany him to his new sphere of activity.

F. By.

SWISS RIFLE ASSOCIATION.

Those of the members whose enthusiasm has been somewhat damped owing to the inevitable delays in settling the preliminaries, will be delighted to note that within a few weeks' time the shooting range at Hendon will be thrown open for practice. Official intimation has now been received from the Secretary of State for Home Affairs to the effect that the Swiss Rifle Association is an approved rifle club under the Firearms Act, 1920. Furthermore, affiliation to the National Rifle Association has been completed, which carries with it certain privileges necessary for the development of the S.R.A.

The ground at Hendon, which is being rented from the owners under an agreement, is undergoing the requisite preparation. Apart from the automatic 100-yards target, two 300-yards "windmill" targets are being erected. The shooting range will be reserved for members of the S.R.A. exclusively every Wednesday and Saturday from 1 p.m. till dusk, and every Sunday from 10 a.m. till dusk. The official opening ceremony will take place on Saturday afternoon, March 29th, weather permitting.

The initial outlay is heavy and is likely to exceed the present resources of the S.R.A., but it is confidently anticipated that a considerable increase in members may be looked for as soon as shooting practice takes place under open-air conditions. It is also hoped that Swiss firms will give their practical support to a movement which seeks to rekindle in the London colony one of our national sports. The Swiss Minister has offered the first challenge cup: another compatriot undertook to bear the cost of a rifle. As regards the latter, some Swiss Service rifles are being ordered, though, for a start, "Sherwood" rifles, adapted to resemble the former, will be made use of.

During the next two Saturdays, March 8th and 15th, a friendly competition will be fought out at the Regent Polytechnic Rifle Range, for which the S.R.A. offers an engraved silver goblet, the President and Vice-President kindly providing two additional prizes.

A general meeting of the members will be held at No. 1, Gerrard Place, W.1, on Thursday, the 13th inst., at 8.30 p.m., when a report will be submitted and details discussed as regards the official opening day at Hendon.

Any reader interested in the Association and its doings may receive particulars and application form from the Hon. Secretary, Mr. P. F. Boehringer, 21, Garlick Hill, E.C.4.

Se non è vero — è ben trovato!

An amusing story has found its way into the Swiss press and has probably been borrowed from one of the great London dailies. At the recent banquet of the Union Helvetia (*vide* last week's S.O.) the President announced that plates to receive the waiters' tips would be passed round, but on being discreetly told that this was not customary at official dinners held at the Hotel Victoria, informed the gathering that this collection would not take place. One of the reporters present, evidently under the influence of the excellent fare, conceived the lofty notion that this *volte-face* was due to the refusal of the waiters to take tips from their own employers (the company consisted mostly of hotel and restaurant managers) and expressed himself accordingly in his paper. The story has been copied by the Swiss press and considerably improved: it is now stated that the dinner party passed a resolution, expressing their appreciation of the kindly feelings exhibited by the waiters.

From the 'Agony Column' of the "Times."

Will the Swiss gentleman who occupied from Basle to Paris Berth No. 14 in the Vienna Sleeping-car Carriage on February 22nd, communicate with this box number, and he will in return receive the back of his gold watch, which has inexplicably turned up in the suitcase of the occupier of Berth No. 13? Basle papers, please copy.—Write, Box 19,471 "The Times," 42, Wigmore-street, W.1.

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SWISS RIFLE ASSOCIATION.

General Meeting

ON
Thursday, March 13th, at 8.30 p.m.,

AT
1, Gerrard Place, Shaftesbury Ave.,
W. 1.

The Hon. Secretary.

Owing to Mr. ROD. GAILLARD'S illness, the Pupils' Concert, announced for Tuesday, March 11th, has been postponed, and will now take place on Weds., March 26th.

EGLISE SUISSE, 79, Endell St., W.C. 2.
Dimanche, 9 Mars, 11h.—Pasteur Lelièvre.
6.30.—Pfr. H. Urner.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Tuesday, March 11th, at 8 p.m.—SWISS SPORTS: Delegates' Meeting at Union Helvetia, 1, Gerrard Place, Shaftesbury Avenue, W.
Thursday, March 13th, at 8.30 p.m.—SWISS RIFLE ASSOCIATION: General Meeting at No. 1, Gerrard Place, W.1.
Friday, March 14.—SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY: Smoking Concert.
Saturday, March 15th, at 6.30.—CITY SWISS CLUB: Cinderella Dance at Gatti's Restaurant, Strand, W.C.
Wednesday, March 19th, at 7.30 p.m.—NOUVELLE SOCIETE HELVETIQUE: Council Meeting at 28, Red Lion Square, W.C.
Thursday, March 20, at 7.30.—UNION HELVETIA: Charity Concert for the benefit of London hospitals, at Steinway Hall.
Friday, March 21st, at 8.30 p.m.—SWISS INSTITUTE: Lecture by J. F. Mustard, Esq., on "The Peace of Europe."
Wednesday, March 26th, at 8 p.m.—CONCERT by Rod. Gaillard's pupils, assisted by Swiss Choral Society, at Morley Hall, 26, George Street, Hanover Square, W.1. (Postponed from March 11th.)
Friday, March 28, at 8 p.m.—NOUVELLE SOCIETE HELVETIQUE: Lecture by the Rev. R. Hoffmann-de Visme: "De Rousseau et de certains aspects de la pédagogie moderne," at 28, Red Lion Square.
Saturday, Apr. 5.—SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY: Annual Banquet and Ball.
Every Saturday, 3 to 5 p.m.—SWISS RIFLE ASSOCIATION: Miniature Rifle Shooting Practice at Regent Street Polytechnic, W.1.

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