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reticent race of people. It is in some respects a model worthy of consideration by larger countries.

A great English dramatist has said, "We are creatures that look before and after; it will be well for us if we look round a little and see what is passing under our very eyes." If we obey this injunction, we find much of which we are in ignorance. The national drama of Switzerland is called the Festspiel. The object of the performances that are held in the open-air is to keep in remenbrance the great historical events of the country. The most popular representations are scenes from the life of William Tell, which have been given at Altdorf, Hochdorf, Cham, Brugg, Altstathem, and Calvin, towns that are associated with the Swiss hero. The Battle of Stoss has been commemorated on the very scene of the fight. Another festival that has been held in recent years is one in memory of the Battle of Sempach. It was in this battle that Arnold of Winkelried performed the deed of valour celebrated in Wordsworth's lines—

He of battle martyrs chief,
Who, to recall his daunted peers,
For victory shaped an open space,
By gathering with wide embrace
Into his single heart a sheaf
Of fatal Austrian spears.

Other representations that have been given are of the birth of the Confederation, the foundation of the City of Berne, the battles of the Swabian War, including the Battle of Dornach, which was played under the walls of the ancient castle from which the fight took its name. The Swiss are proud of their heroic past, and they dearly love the Festspiel. It is part of their lives, and brightens the hours of loneliness no less than the hours of pleasure. They regard it as a solemn act of national loyalty, and the performances are characterised by the greatest reverence. Conspicuous is the impressive genuinness and simplicity in the representations often given by humble peasants.

Switzerland contains a play-going public anxious to see good plays well acted—a public that acknowledges the power of the stage as an educator. The thought always uppermost in Swiss minds is that the generation of to-morrow is largely plastic in the hands of the generation of to-day.

Touring companies, as we know them, which quickly pass from one town to another, are unknown, and would be useless in Switzerland, a country of only 4,000,000 inhabitants, subdivided into three parts, with three distinct languages—French, German, and Italian.

There are but few towns in any part of Switzerland that possess a theatre, and if we take any one of these three sections of the country —French Switzerland, for example—and examine its theatre, we find that the year is generally divided into two seasons—for drama and comedy from October to March, and Opera from March to June. The members of a permanent repertory company are engaged, and usually consist of about twenty artists from the Paris theatres. In the other sections, artists from the principal German and Italian theatres appear.

Performances by the company are given three or four times during the week, together with a Sunday matinée and evening performance. The country long ago opened its doors on Sunday. Weekly or fortnightly a single performance is interchanged with the troupe from another town or with a French touring company.

The plays produced are many and varied, both in style and authorship. From the programme of a theatre in French Switzerland for the present season of comedy and drama, I find 27 plays are produced—12 comedies, 2 musical comedies, 3 melodramas, 3 vaudeville pieces, 2 modern dramas, and 5 classics. The list includes 'Peer Gynt' (Ibsen), 'L'Arlésienne' (Dumas *fils*), 'Denise,' 'Les Plaideurs' (Racine), 'Les Précieuses' and 'L'Avare' (Molière), 'Le Barbier de Seville' (Beaumarchais), and excellent translations of Shakespeare, Wilde's 'The Importance of Being Earnest,' and the evergreen 'Charley's Aunt.'

With reference to the actual comfort of the audience in the theatre, seating accommodation, etc., it can be said of many theatres, it is like the solution of a cross-word puzzle—hard to find, or, in the words of Bernard Shaw, "the people who go to the theatre are not nearly so comfortable and happy as they might have been had they stayed at home."

It is the custom in many theatres—a custom almost mediæval in its quaintness and oddity—for a well-known literary man to deliver a lecture of about thirty minutes' duration before the commencement of the play. It is usually of an interesting and educative nature, but I prefer—for the reason that a Swiss audience is kept waiting from twenty to thirty minutes between each act without any orchestra—that the homily be delivered between the acts. It can be said, however, that the lecturer and manager are mindful of the fact that the best customers are from the middle classes, and the lectures are within the understanding of the ordinary person.

It is to-day in the interest of the foreign actor to take employment in Switzerland, owing to the greater value of the exchange. An average rate of pay is about £50 per month, which is a much better rate than in France or Italy to-day. The number of Swiss professional actors is very limited, and without the foreign artist the Swiss theatre could not exist.

In spite of the fact that the majority of the theatres are in receipt of a subsidy from the towns, it is difficult to finish the year with a profit, although before the war sufficiently large profits were made. The prices are a little below those charged in a first-class English theatre, and the entertainment tax adds 10 per cent. on to the price of the ticket.

At Hertenshein, near Lucerne, there is an open-air theatre from June to the end of August, which, during the past few years, has produced plays that have not previously been given under these conditions. The artists are experienced and enthusiastic members of the Max Grube School, and are well known in Berlin and other important German towns. I have been present at several excellent performances of German and other classical plays. The standard of production and acting is high, and the effort, which is certainly in the direction of a natural and healthy theatre, is worthy of commendation.

The Oberammergau of French Switzerland—Mezières, a village near Lausanne, with its famous Théâtre du Jorat—is well known for its annual productions of plays written by the Swiss playwright René Morax. For the coming summer he has specially written a new play, 'Judith,' a tragedy in three acts, according to the Bible, with music by M. Henri Honegger. 'Judith' is one of the fourteen books of the Apocrypha, and the story is of a beautiful and brave woman, of her entry into the camp of the enemy, of her encounter with and subsequent murder of the Assyrian leader, General Holofermes. The Swiss are justly proud of this theatre and of their famous playwright.

I can speak in admiration of the members of the Swiss theatrical profession, whom I consider the most human, most philanthropic, and most generous in the community.

Personally, I have never been in a theatre where a play was preceded by a 30 minutes' address, and I am fairly sure I would have patronised that theatre once only! But then, "Kyburg" is rather fastidious in his taste as regards playgoing, and prefers something more lively and colourful to a lecture.

International Rifle Match at St. Gall.

Morning Post (23rd Jan.):—

The International Rifle Union having requested the Swiss Delegation to organise the 30 and 50-metre matches in 1925, the Committee of the Swiss Competitions Association has entrusted the organisation of the international matches to the St. Gall Rifle Association.

I think that in the above the distances should be 300 and 500-metres, instead of 30 and 50-metres. St. Gall is famous not only for its embroidery, but especially also for the loveliness of its girls.

Winter Sports.

Like King Charles' head, this subject keeps bobbing up again and again, and won't be kept away. Some of my friends think it funny to send me picture postcards from Swiss alpine centres and little charming out-of-the-way villages, with messages, "Du fehlst nur noch," "You ought to be with us," "Thanks for giving us the tip, we are having a wonderful time," etc. Well, I am glad they are enjoying themselves, of course, only . . .

The City of Queer Trades.

by Victor MacClure in the *Evening Standard* of Feb. 4th has nothing to do with Switzerland, but, in view of the cross-word puzzle craze now raging, I think it might interest a great many of our readers, because it contains a lot of seldom-heard words. Besides, it is interesting and informative.

There must be quite a number of people who could tell right off what a "secret springer" is. To some, however, the name would conjure up a picture of one who got into a corner all by himself and kept on doing secret and catlike pounces.

Then there's the "herald chaser." The herald chaser, one imagines, hasn't much of a job. He waits at street corners until a herald passes, then darts in pursuit. While it lasts, or when it occurs, it must be quite exhilarating, but it can't happen often enough to make the waiting intervals anything but tedious. Heralds aren't seen in the streets more than once in the period made famous by Mr. Wyndham Lewis. Perhaps, after all, herald-chasing is quite a respectable trade—probably concerned with nothing more exciting than engraving.

If you are in the bead and bugle business, you work in romantic materials like erinoid and galalith, but you won't puzzle the uninitiated so much as you would if you were a manufacturer of, say, orchil and cudbear. You might, indeed, manufacture grab—whatever that may be —or you might import box shooks—whatever they may be—but for obscurity the thing to do is to make crinkore.

There's a right fruity old-sherry-and-biscuits flavour about the collection of fee farm rents, and surely the only place where you could put up your brass plate would be Doctors' Commons. If on the same stairway there could be an average stater and adjuster and a genealogical searcher, your office premises would be probably unique.

How does the dye-wood chipper do his chipping? one wonders. His occupation brings to mind the Spanish Main and the buccaneers, who found relaxation from their piratical occasions in the curing of beef and the logging of dye-wood. But if, as one imagines, the dye-wood chipper merely sits on a bench and whittles with a penknife in his stained fingers at sundry billets of inky wood—then the glory has departed indeed. I'd sooner be a buhl-cutter, or keep an eel-pie house.

It is interesting to note that one doesn't make or deal in cheese—one is either a "factor" or a "monger." But, on the other hand, one manufactures chignons and frizettes, while bunion paste is merely made. There's a respectable amount of trade done in anchor-smithing, and one supposes that the anchor-smith is ready enough to hobnob with the lighterman, the granary-keeper, the haulier, and the wharfinger. Somehow these apparently varying trades are linked up.

How does one "throwst" silk? There are quite a number of practitioners of this odd trade mentioned in the "London Directory." The fustian manufacturers are not second in numbers, and it is pleasing to learn that they are ready to deal, not only in cords and twills, but also in moles. One wonders, in this regard, if they employ many catchers.

The fellmonger of Shakespeare's day is still represented in the "London Directory," but he is in the company of pursuits that Will of Avon never knew. There may have been willow merchants in William's time, but what about makers of chrysarobin, carnauba wax manufacturers, cosaque makers, salvage buyers, and compilers of cable codes?

There are hundreds of strange occupations mentioned in the "London Directory"—enough to make cross-word puzzle constructors happy for years. And, by the way, will next year see these gentlemen themselves numbered among those employed in the queer trades of London?

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