

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK
Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom
Band: - (1931)
Heft: 487

Artikel: George Forrer
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-687782>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 22.02.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

the grateful folk of Yverdon. The words are ablaze with fire. They burn with the flame of deathless truth and love.

The first sentence flashing out is: "*Saviour of the Poor.*"

To help the poor and neglected was the supreme passion of his life. Pestalozzi himself

He saw that the greatness of humanity was in the realm of soul and spirit. He proclaimed the right of every man to live this soul-life. His axiom was that each human being, whatever his position was entitled to the full growth of the faculties with which he was born.

He held that every father should be an educator of his child. The careful study of his son's development gave shape and direction to his ideas, and when he failed as a cultivator of the soil, he became a cultivator of the soul, and opened his first school for children of the poor.

So, in principle and practice, Pestalozzi democratized education. The instruments for training he found in rightfully using the daily life and experiences of the child. He taught that "the aim of education is not to turn out good tailors, bootmakers, tradesmen or soldiers as such; but to turn out tailors, bootmakers, tradesmen and soldiers who are in the highest meaning of the word, men."

Pestalozzi aimed to give each poor child a true childhood.

Fichte, the great German philosopher, said of him: "Pestalozzi's essential aim has been to elevate the lower classes, and efface all difference between them and the cultured class; it is not only popular education that is thus realised, but national education, and Pestalozzi's doctrine has enough power to help nations and the whole human race to rise out of the miserable state in which they were wallowing."

But Pestalozzi lacked practicality, and, through this lack, his school at Neuhof had to be given up. Undaunted by the failure, and moved still by a heart of compassion, he became:

"*A Father of the Fatherless.*"

Come, in thought, to the town of Stanz in 1788. See this man gathering together a band of fatherless children. In an age when it was the custom to put orphans with peasants who worked them for personal profit, compelling them to be beggars for the masters' gain, he, with no rules but the law of love, by giving them exercise, games and moral and spiritual training, sought to surround them with the true atmosphere of home. So, by the redemptive service of grace, he won them to God. Among these fifty little beggar orphans he lived. In his poverty he shared his bread with them, tending them in sickness and health. Caring nothing for the opinion of the world, anxious only to win the trust and understanding of the children, this noble man lived like a beggar himself in order to teach beggars to live like men. Loving and training his own boy, he lived too for other people's children, and loved them into the kingdom of heaven.

Once more failure overtook him. Through untoward circumstances, and because he had no administrative ability, his orphan home had to be abandoned. Downcast, but not despairing, he was now for some years to become:

"*Preacher to the People.*"

He embodied his ideas on education in concrete form by writing a novel *Leonard and Gertrude*. With no money to buy paper he wrote it between the lines of an old account book. When published, it soon won for itself a world-wide fame. In it he emphasised his great basal principle, that all true education must begin in the home, and that the greatest educator is the mother. In the following years, book after book, essay after essay, flowed from his pen. Philosophers, educators, monarchs, thinkers, alike recognised his greatness, and from all parts of the world visitors came to examine his theories and methods.

After his death his educational writings were collected into eighteen volumes. Their influence was immediate, and he, more than any other educationist of his time, affected the ideas and methods of teaching throughout the world. He was a seer and intuitionist. Froebel who was for a time one of his assistants, systematised his principles; and Herbart was largely influenced by them in his philosophy of Education. The man himself, however, was greater than all his theories.

The enthusiasm for teaching was in Pestalozzi's blood, and, with all his defects, he was a great teacher, and produced phenomenal results.

His next notable contribution to mankind was as the:

"*Founder of the Elementary Day School.*"

The ordinary day school of his time was often what Comenius in an earlier age described as "a slaughter-house of the mind." Pestalozzi's chief work was with the little children and their elementary education. He introduced the slate into the day school, and also practically created object teaching in the best sense.

John Milton, in his essay on Education, had commended illustrating the word by the thing. Pestalozzi went further. He said you must perforce first give a conception of the thing before you teach the word.

Let primary teachers who pride themselves on being so very "modern" in their "nature talks" take a peep into Pestalozzi's school of more than a century ago. How did he teach geography? Not from a book but by taking the scholars out into the open air, through a valley with a stream, then up the hillside from which point they were helped to note every feature of the landscape. By question and answer he led forth their own powers of observation. Then each child took some clay, and on reaching the school-house each one was placed before a table and had to model in clay his conception of the conformation of the river and the valley. Have we found a twentieth century method better than that for teaching physical geography?

Listen, also, to this: "What we teach is determined by the demands of the developing powers of the child. It is intimately connected with the things he can already do. Learning is for him an affair of life. He is filled with the spirit of it, hence the joy it gives him. Instead of dissipating his activities we concentrate them; instead of amusing the boys, we fill them with enthusiasm; instead of stifling their powers, we breathe with them the breath of life."

SWISS INDUSTRIES FAIR, BASLE.

A modern industries fair is the representative of the progress and of the adaptability to the times we live in, and consequently fulfils a considerable economic and cultural object. Up-to-date business men therefore plan to visit at some time or other, such important fairs as those of London (or Birmingham), Leipzig, Paris, Brussels, Vienna, Milan, Utrecht, Malmö and Basle.

Basle, the city of the Swiss Industrial Fair, is ideally situated for the purpose. A glance at the map at once shows that it is placed at the point of intersection of central European traffic. The railway stations of Basle record enormous figures for passenger and goods traffic. The Basle Rhine Port, too, has made great strides.

Switzerland, as is well known, produces various high-class industrial commodities, and her peculiar circumstances compel her to put in plenty of hard work. The excellence of Swiss manufactures is known all over the world, despite which there still remains a great deal of ignorance as to her industrial capacity. Mention of the fact that at the last industrial census in 1929 the country had a population of 4 millions, of whom 409,000 were employed in 8,500 factories, may help to clear the air.

The supply of samples, classified in twenty industrial groups at the Basle Fair gives a clear illustration of the diversity of Swiss manufactures and of the progressive spirit of the country. Figures speak louder than words. The space for exhibits has more than doubled in twelve years, and the attendance has likewise considerably increased. Last year there were some 200,000 visitors to the fair, from at least thirty countries. The vigorous development of the Fair is expressed in the entirely modern, practical and neat buildings, which were erected between 1924 and 1926 at a cost of over 10 million Swiss francs.

This year's Swiss Sample Fair will be open from April 11 to April 21. Information of every kind concerning it can be obtained from the Direction of the Fair and from all Swiss Consulates. The entrance cards provide for special facilities for visitors from abroad, and likewise for reduced fares, details of which we can supply if required. For the benefit of English-speaking visitors it may be mentioned that interpreters will readily be placed at their service. The Direction of the Fair is indeed prepared to meet visitors in every way, so that business transactions there may be as pleasant and as profitable as possible.

Travellers' Gazette.

Kopie aus der Neuen Zürcher Zeitung, 15.1.1931.

Ein Beispiel Aktiver Krisen-Bekämpfung.

In der gegenwärtigen Zeit, wo die ungünstige Lage der Weltwirtschaft auch die Schweiz stärker als bisher in Mitleidenschaft zu ziehen droht, heisst es lebhafter als je nach Mitteln und Wegen Ausschau zu halten, die geeignet sind, die Zeit der Depression mit möglichst wenig Schäden zu überstehen. Das in der "Schweiz. Arbeitgeberzeitung" geschilderte vorbildliche Vorgehen einer schweizerischen Fabrik, der *Scintilla Aktiengesellschaft* in Solothurn, verdient daher, in den weitesten Kreisen beachtet zu werden.

Diese Fabrik, die stark vom Weltmarkt abbaengig ist—gehen doch 95 Prozent ihrer Erzeugnisse ins Ausland—hatte bereits durch teilweise Schliessung der Betriebe am Samstagvormittag und Freitagmorgen die Arbeitszeit verkuerzen muessen. Infolge der Lohn- und Preissenkungen im Ausland sah sie sich von neuem gezwungen, Einsparungen zu machen. Die Leitung war aber entschlossen, alles

andere zu versuchen, ehe zu einer weiteren Kuerzung von Arbeitszeit oder Loehnen geschritten werde. So vermehrte sie denn in erster Linie das Personal zum Studium von *Verbesserungen, neuen Arbeitsmethoden, bessern Spezialwerkzeugen, Vorrichtungen und Maschinen*, um auf diesem Wege die Produktionskosten zu senken und konkurrenzfaehig zu bleiben. Um aber alle Einsparungsmoeglichkeiten erschoeffend zu ermitteln, wurde auch ein *Aufruf* an das ganze Personal erlassen, in dem auf die Lage des Unternehmens hingewiesen und jeder Arbeiter, jeder Angestellte und jede Arbeiterin aufgefordert wurde, *Vorschlaege* in der Richtung besserer Organisation und zu Einsparungen zu machen. Fuer jeden verwertbaren Vorschlag wurden Praemien versprochen.

Dieser Appell an die Solidaritaet, das Verstaendnis und das lebendige Interesse der Arbeiterschaft hatte einen ganz ausserordentlichen Erfolg. Die Vorschlaege liefen aeusserst zahlreich ein und werden nun, jeder einzeln, auf ihre Verwendbarkeit gepueft. Wenn auch nur ein Teil sich als wirklich durchfuehrbar erweisen wird, so duerfte doch bestimmt ein praktischer Erfolg erreicht werden. Die lebhafteste Anteilnahme an dem Gedeihen der Firma, die durch diese Aufforderung zur Mitarbeit aller angespornt wurde, drueckt sich bereits in einer frischeren Arbeitsfreude aus. Ganz besondere Achtung verdient es aber, dass von Arbeitern ausdruerklich gewisse Verbesserungen vorgeschlagen wurden, um nach ihrer Durchfuehrung die *Akkordsaetze* senken zu koennen. Diese Beispiele zeigen, wie gross unter den Arbeitern das Verstaendnis fuer die Lage der Unternehmung ist, wie viel grosser als unter ihren Fuehrern, die aus sehr durchsichtigen Motiven jeden Gedanken an Solidaritaet und Werkgemeinschaft ablehnen. Insbesondere aber wird jedermann, der in den Klassegegensaetzen eine Gefahr fuer unser Volk und unsere Wirtschaft insbesondere in schweizer Zeit erblickt, sich freuen ueber einen derartigen Erfolg der Zusammenarbeit und wird aehnlichen Versuchen weite Verbreitung wuenschen.

GEORGE FORRER.

Amongst the several Swiss of our Colony who have attained a highly respected old age, ranks a true citizen of Winterthur, let us speak of Monsieur George Forrer.

Born the 18th of January, 1844, he settled in London as a young man of 24, the five years previously spent in France and Italy having given him a widened outlook on life. He entered an Anglo-Swiss firm, one of whose partners was Monsieur H. Vernet, the Consul for Switzerland, and already then, everything seemed to point to ever-growing consular work. Forrer filled the post of Honorary Vice-Consul for 10 years, i.e. until 1885, when further considerable obligations demanded the services of a specialist in such matters.

Meanwhile the "*Fonds de Secours*" had been established, its activity and benevolent work growing from week to week and much beyond the head of the then existing Consulate. Forrer became Honorary Treasurer, and during 33 years unceasingly and with the greatest concern kept things moving until his retirement from City life.

In 1878 he joined the "*Société de Secours Mutuels*" and a few years later was elected President, a post which he held for two decades; many are still living who can well remember his wisdom and moderation in all matters and his proud acceptance in 1902 from our late Minister, Dr. Carlin, at the bicentenary festival held during his term of office, of the embroidered banner presented by the ladies of the Colony. That is no doubt one of his finest recollections, when 322 guests sat down to dinner at the Cecil, alas! some have disappeared for ever and so has the famous hotel, but the 87 years' old veteran and "*Président honoraire*" still enjoys wonderful health, sits by the fireside reviewing the past with Madame Forrer, who has a knack of looking after him with much tenderness and care, sometimes scolding him for disregarding the inclemencies of our London climate.

His continued interest in all Swiss matters and good news from his three sons, scattered in countries far apart in this wide world, are some of his greatest joys.

May he long be spared to the many who see in him an example of devotion to duty and kindness to fellow citizens. CeC.

PERSONAL.

We have just heard that the Paris Winter Salon has accepted several charming pieces of sculpture for exhibition from Mrs. Henry Binguey. The Salon, at the Grand Palais in the Champs Elysées, was opened last week by M. Doumergues, President of the French Republic, and one of Mrs. Binguey's subjects, "*L'enfant au Coquillage*," was greatly admired. We wish her every success and convey to her our heartiest congratulations.