

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: - (1933)

Heft: 600

Artikel: Here and there in the Alps

Autor: [s.n.]

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-690978>

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: 28.01.2026

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

Somewhat this people has preserved an intellectual and social flavor all its own. Genevians speak French and are surrounded by France within a few miles on all sides except the lake front, yet have not lost their individuality. A handful of people — the entire canton numbers only some 173,000, most of them in the city — have clung to their hill through centuries of struggle for political, religious and cultural independence.

Solidarity among such a people is natural, but Geneva's traditions go beyond solidarity. They include sturdy self-reliance and an open door into which refugees have poured from many lands.

Genuine Genevians — the type is clearly marked — combine conservative and progressive ideas in a rare way. Their faces are cast in strong lines. Like many peoples of stern fiber and introspection, they are sometimes dubbed "cold, unsympathetic," by those who fail to see beneath the surface.

More than casual acquaintance is required to understand the Genevians. Their existence is hardly sensed by many who come to see international organizations in action. Geneva in full blast of an arms conference or League Assembly obscures the Geneva of narrow, steep streets on the old hill at night, with fountains always "ker-chunking" into their basins, cathedral bells sounding the hour, and an occasional troupe of singing students on their way home from a soirée.

Summer visitors to the Wall of the Reformation come close to something fundamental in the original Geneva. After most tourists have gone, Geneva itself comes out of a Sunday morning in November to celebrate the Fête of the Reformation.

That night, Protestants without regard to denomination gather in the cathedral. Zwinglians, Lutherans, Calvinists — many sects from many nations — put aside differences of creed in a common service. The Reformation lives again. Calvin's strict, even harsh, rule of the first Protestant religious state seems less hard to understand. It is remembered that he underwent extreme provocation before resorting to extreme measures. Libertines insulted him in public, plotted for more than a decade to ruin plans he regarded as God-given, and finally raised an armed insurrection against his authority. His stern repression comes into perspective in a cathedral that changed hands during a major battle of the Reformation.

Geneva's hill — still the city's geographical centre — wears its age easily. Streets and buildings have been kept in repair. They are clean. Unlike ancient quarters in many cities, this one has no incrustations of soot. Crumbling stones are less frequent than might be expected. Walls are uniformly mellowed. Buildings bear sixteenth century dates as if that were yesterday. Streets twist, rise — break into flights of steps. Eaves project at rakish angles over courtyards. Cobblers bend over their work in half-basements. Their lamps light interiors that hint rude arched passageways leading back into the hill. Barred doors shut off steep flights of steps. Other evidences remain of days when the whole hill was a walled defense.

Everywhere, fountains splash. Many are white marble, with chiseled designs that have taken on the wear of use. For these fountains represent kitchen faucets to many residents of the old hill. A boy dips his pail between flowers that grow at the centre of a large fountain. It is at the terraced junction of two streets. With dripping pail, the boy disappears into an arched corridor.

At a plainer trough, attached to another fountain, a woman with red hands sloshes linen white. No central heating softens the cold of these public watering places. Nor can anything in the way of public fountains exceed the clarity and color of this water, fresh from the lake, and only shortly from the Alps. Within the depth of an ordinary fountain, its liquid prisms break into pale blues and turquoise. In winter, ice forms fantastic patterns around the spouts.

Modern Geneva has expanded from the hill, but has in no sense deserted it. Every building is in use. Cantonal and city government is still centred there in the picturesque "Hotel de la Ville" and annexes. The cathedral is surrounded by headquarters of religious societies. Stores, homes and workshops fill the old city's queer corners. The ancient atmosphere is disturbed only in rare cases. One shop recently superimposed a modernistic front on a medieval interior. The more usual practice is to mark such a word as "garage" on a doorway that could not possibly accommodate a medium-sized car.

Within the narrow limits of the old hill, Geneva of history more than holds its own against waves of post-war architecture. Off the hill, modernism — even futurism — makes sweeping incursions. Apartment buildings — many of extreme design — multiply. These belong to the new Geneva. Journalists and others attracted to the city by international activities occupy them. If these modern buildings draw sufficient residents from houses of the older city, those may be de-

TASTE THE FRUIT

IN

Kunzle

ALSO

CHOCOLATE TABLETS
IN MANY FLAVOURS
at 3d. & 6d. per packet.

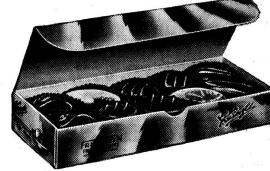
SPECIFIC GUARANTEE OF PURITY
WITH ALL OUR PRODUCTS.

C. KUNZLE LTD., FIVE WAYS, BIRMINGHAM, ENGLAND.
LONDON BRANCH — 101, REGENT STREET, W.1.

"FRUTAMYN"
REG'D.
CHOCOLATES

3d. 6d. & 1/- PER CARTON
2oz. 1lb. 1lb. NET

IN 14 VARIETIES.



molished. This process has begun in some sections of the city, but the hill could only be remade by tearing it down. Fortunately for Geneva's picturesqueness, that is not a probability.

Geneva of the Genevians and Geneva of internationalism have many links, despite their differences. The city has given several officials to the League and International Labor Office. A lively interest is taken locally in doings of these organizations. Their coming has given new impetus to the teaching of international subjects in the university. This means much, because Geneva sets store by the institution which has grown from Calvin's Academy.

With characteristic independence, however, Genevians never lose sight of something generally overlooked by the world — that Geneva enjoyed a satisfying culture centuries before the city became a seat of organized internationalism. That culture goes on, a stabilizing influence for both Geneva during ups and downs of international hopes, fears, disappointments — and gains.

R. H. S. Christ. Sc. Mon.

E PAAR ALBUMSPRUECH.

von Alfred Huggerberger.

's hät mänge Freud am Tadle,
Stöht's Hüfli fertig do;
Und hett er selber's Plänli g'macht,
Wär's tümmer usecho.
So isch es bim Regiere,
's verrysst am mänge's Mul,
Und wenn de sâb a's Rueder chunt,
So goht d'Sach erst recht ful.

* * *
Vom alte Wy hät mänge scho
Viell neu Gedanke-n-übercho;
En andre hät's mit alme Liste
Nid witer 'procht, als zu-n-ere Chiste.

* * *
So lang's no Milch und Alne git
Und Chüs und Ziger, vîll dass d'witt
Cha d'Schwitz sich durebringe.
's hät mänge füf, sechs Bierli truckt,
d'Chind händ diheim's leer Kafi gschluckt,
d'Milch sei jo nid z'erschwinge.
Me meint, 's ist al' de gleichig Märkt,
Was nid vill chost, sei nid vill wert.

FOYER SUISSE

Moderate Prices
Running Hot & Cold Water
Central Heating
Continental Cuisine

12-15, Upper Bedford Place,
Russell Square,
London, W.C.1.

SWISS BANK CORPORATION.

(A Company limited by Shares incorporated in Switzerland)

99, GRESHAM STREET, E.C.2.
and 11c, REGENT STREET, S.W.1.

Capital Paid up £6,400,000
Reserves - - £2,120,000
Deposits - - £44,000,000

All Descriptions of Banking and
Foreign Exchange Business Transacted

Correspondents in all parts of the World.

HERE AND THERE IN THE ALPS.

Miniature Sketches by Barbara Scott.

ST. MAURICE.

When the Christians of the era of the Crusades conquered the Holy Land, Pope Paschal II founded the bishopric of Bethlehem in Palestine in 1109 A.D. However, in 1223 the Mohammedans returned to power and the Bishop of Bethlehem fled to Clamecy in France where he was enabled to establish a temporary ecclesiastical residence in the suburb of Panténor. Since Roman Catholic Church law does not accept the dissolution of a diocese by a worldly power, the bishopric of Bethlehem, in an honorary capacity, never ceased to exist. Panténor became each honorary bishop's seat up to the days of the French Revolution.

At that time Bishop Durant de Lironcourt was requested to abdicate. Upon his refusal to do so, the little diocese of Panténor was dissolved and the bishop barely escaped with his life. After his death the honorary bishopric of Bethlehem remained an unoccupied office until 1840, when Pope Gregory XVI ordered in his own handwriting that the abbot of the Monastery of St. Maurice should henceforth assume the honorary office of Bishop of Bethlehem, and the abbot of St. Maurice is generally a Swiss.

St. Maurice is a town of very ancient origin. Excavations carried on here are continually unearthing old tombstones, inscriptions and archaeological fragments of all kinds. St. Maurice was at first the small fortified market-town of the Nantuates, a celtic people, which inhabited the lower Valais. Later it became a Roman fortification under the name of Agatum.

In 302 A.D. St. Maurice, commander of the Theban legion, suffered martyrdom here with his companions, and pious pilgrims erected soon afterwards a small monastery on the spot where these men had given up their lives for the principles of Christianity. This modest house of prayer was inaugurated by Bishop Theodore I of Oetodurum, the present Martigny, between 381 and 390. One hundred years later King Sigismund of Burgundy journeyed to St. Maurice to do penance, and upon his departure he presented the foundation with such a handsome gift that it was able to build a large new church. Some 500 monks then became stationed at St. Maurice, as the place now was called.

The present church of this Augustinian Abbey was erected in 1611-27, but excavations made in the interior of this large ecclesiastical settlement have exposed to view the remains of foundations and catacombs of various epochs. Priceless manuscripts and works of art are contained in the library and treasury.

Wherever one turns there are vivid reminders of a hallowed past. On their way from their dwellings to the Abbey church the brethren have to walk daily over the last resting place of the Theban legion, and the famous bells of St. Maurice send their ringing messages from a Romanesque tower, which dates back to the days of Charlemagne, mighty protector of the church.

CONCERT NEWS.

We are informed that M. Edwin Fischer, the Swiss pianist of world-wide renown, is giving Concerts in London during the next week. M. Fischer would be especially delighted to see as many of his compatriots as possible among his audience. Particulars as to date and Hall can be obtained from the Daily Press.