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SWISS ART TREASURES.

Switzerland is widely known as the land of great Alpine scenery, of glaciers, waterfalls and lakes, but comparatively few people know its towns and less still are aware of the existence of numerous art treasures, comparable to those of the most famous collections in Europe. A hundred years ago, Italy was the goal of every art-lover. Then Dutch art was rediscovered, whereupon the Gothic cathedrals of France and England and the treasures of the French Provence were duly appreciated. Austrian cities, Prague, Nuremburg and Rothenburg then had their turn, and at the present moment the ancient towns of the Dalmatian coast are attracting the interest of the cultivated traveller.

Since the publication of H. Jenny's ' Art Guide to Switzerland " (" *Kunstführer der Schweiz* "), Switzerland seems finally to come into its own. This guide should decide many a tourist, who visits this small Alpine country for recreation, to devote a few days, if not weeks, to the most important art collections and picturesque towns, though they are generally outside the beaten track of the ordinary traveller, the climber or the winter sportsman.

The most valuable paintings and drawings, such as the large Holbein collection, works of Conrad Witz and other early painters are found in the Art Gallery of Basle. Modern Swiss Art is very well represented in the galleries of Zurich, Basle, Berne and Geneva.

Stained-glass windows, ancient furniture, and works of decorative art are so splendidly assembled in the Swiss National Museum in Zurich that it can rival the greatest museums in Europe in this respect. And some of the sections in the Historical Museums of Berne, Basle, and Geneva show equal quality. Private collections, such as the Reinhart Collection of Modern Art in Winterthur, which is one of the leading ones of Europe, are also of great importance. There is a great number of small local museums in Switzerland, one of which has been opened in the most recent building of its kind, the Kunsthaus of Lucerne.

Switzerland is especially rich in picturesque old towns, some of which have retained their mediaeval character. Among these are the famous towns of Stein a. Rhein, Schaffhausen, Zug, Morat, Fribourg, Estavayer, Gruyères, and Ste. Ursanne. Less known are Brigue, Sion, Chur, Sargans, Bischofszell, Rapperswil, Romont, Bulle, Zofingen, and Lenzburg or Beromünster. But the older parts of towns like Lucerne, Berne, Lausanne, Geneva, Neuchâtel, Basle are also worth inspecting, and nobody should miss a visit to the Baroque towns, Solothurn and Schwyz.

Imposing ruins of the ancient Roman period, which are of the greatest interest, from an archæological point of view, have been excavated at Avenches (" Aventicum "), at Windisch (" Vindonissa ") and at Basel-Augst (" Augusta Rauracorum "), the amphitheatres being especially appreciated by the modern traveller. Among the great number of Romanesque buildings we may mention the churches of Payerne and Schaffhausen, the Zurich Grossmünster, the Valeria of Sion, in the Rhone Valley, and San Vittore, at Locarno. The magnificent Cathedral of Lausanne — the finest of Switzerland — and the minsters of Basle and Geneva belong to the group of great Gothic cathedrals of France. Very remarkable are the late Gothic minsters of Fribourg and Berne. Lausanne and Königsfelden can boast of stained glass windows equal to the best that are seen in France. The late Gothic Town Hall of Basle is the richest found along the Rhine, while that of Zug is famous for its splendid hall.

Of the great number of smaller Gothic buildings of high quality, we specially note the convent church of Kappel, the St. Oswald Church of Zug, and the Kirchbühl Church, near Sempach, with its valuable fresco cycle. The best-known mediæval castles are those of the Canton of Vaud — *e.g.*, Chillon, Vufflens, Blonay, etc., while those of the Grisons are the most interesting ones. There are hundreds of picturesque castles and ruins in the country and a society, formed for their preservation, the " Burgenverein," takes its members for visits to these ancient structures.

One of the best examples of Early Renaissance architecture is the " façade " of Lugano Cathedral. The Renaissance is chiefly represented by decorative work, especially on a great variety of fountains. The most beautiful Baroque buildings are the numerous churches and convents, among which Einsiedeln and St. Gall equal the finest Baroque churches of Austria and Southern Germany, while the poetic charm of pilgrimage churches, such as Werthenstein, Hergiswald, St. Jost, St. Ottilien, etc., is most impressive. Of further interest are the octagonal church of Muri and the convent churches of St. Urban, Rheinau, Engelberg, Disentis, Seedorf, etc., as well as the festive late Baroque buildings of Schwyz and Cham and the solemn classicism of the Solothurn Cathedral.

The profane architecture of Basle, Zurich and Berne, and of French Switzerland, show graceful modifications of foreign post-mediæval forms, while the Baroque manors of the Cantons, Grisons and Schwyz and the Freuler Palace of Naefels possess magnificent panalling and other decorative qualities. The original forms of the Swiss peasant-house have only been appreciated recently, thanks to the movement of the " Heimatschutz-Verein." The arts and crafts were also highly developed in this country, and their work is not only found in museums.

The traveller, who strolls through Swiss towns and villages with his eyes open, will soon find an " embarras de richesse." He will discover the fact that Switzerland is ten times richer in good old art than he ever expected it to be.

J.T.

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Thus, Phœnix-like, our mission is re-born.

GALLUS.

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Chrücht über d'Flüss und Bächeli,
Dürs rote Laub, dür gälbi Bletter
Lüchtet bleich der Sunneschy.

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H.E.

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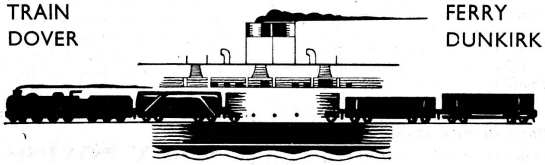
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