HOW BATH SWISS CELEBRATED
THE FIRST OF AUGUST

A few Swiss gathered for the First of August in an
English friend's orchard.
A young Swiss girl brought some lovely red and white
carnations to adorn our picnic table.
Our white cross on the red field was hoisted and we
started at 8 p.m. sharp with the National Anthem. Then
I read the President's message in German, French and
English.
After this we enjoyed several Swiss Jodel records and
our picnic.
Unfortunately the weather was not too kind for our
outdoor activities, so we had to leave sooner than expected,
and we finished at my home.
We are sorry not to see more Swiss in Bath and Bristol
taking an interest in meeting each other on such occasions. Frieda Maddox-Müller.

FIRST OF AUGUST
SWISS CLUB MANCHESTER

The Swiss Club Manchester convened on the evening
of the First of August at Cotton's Hotel near Knutsford
for the traditional bonfire preceded by a "Wurst und
Kartoffelsalat" supper.
The evening was successful in every way. Around the
faithful "old guard" we were all happy to see the
numerous young people who are the life-blood of the
club. After the excellent and joyful supper the dynamic
president, Mr. Simon, invited us to gather round the
immense bonfire, much of whose wood had been contributed
by members of the club.
As the flames rose, our thoughts turned to our beloved
homeland with its long and perilous history. The vice-
president, Mr. E. Berner, read extracts from the Bundes-
brief, which even after more than 650 years makes us
marvel at the level-headed way in which the founders of
the confederation were able to reconcile down to earth
practicalities with sacred ideals. Mr. Simon then read
the annual message of the President of the Swiss Con-
federation to all Swiss living abroad and added a few
words for the occasion. In the absence of our consul,
Mr. Rosset, who was at the Leeds Club First of August
festivity, Mr. Sollberger, vice-consul, spoke to us of the
problems, mainly of an economic and social nature, facing
Switzerland.

After this reminder of our nation's problems we
returned our attention to the bonfire, which was gradually
losing its initial force and sending fewer sparks into the
balmy evening air. Before parting company we all enjoyed
a splendid firework display which was arranged by Mr.
Sohm and which was a fitting ending to a very enjoyable
and harmonious evening.

W.B.

Wer nur Vergangenm lebt,
Verfällt der Schwermut leicht;
Wer nur an Heutgem kletbt,
Wird naseweis und seicht;
Wer Künfigem allein
Sich weht, wird irrigseht;
Der nur wird glücklich sein,
Der alle drei bedenkt.

(O. Sutermeister)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A number of most encouraging letters have reached the
editor, particularly regarding her thoughts on our
National Day. One reader felt that "this inspired mes-
gage is the best thing we as a small nation can give to
Britain and the world at this point". Another reader
says he trusts and prays that the front page message "will
have a deep influence on all that read it". The editor
humbly accepts such heartening praise — her words came
out of her deep love for her homeland, as well as out of
sincere respect for the country we live in.

But then patriotism does not mean the same thing to
everybody.

A letter full of complaint arrived from Paddington.
It contains bitter disapproval of the First of August Cele-
bration at Wimbledon. The writer asserts that it was such
a great disappointment to many because "Chopin was no
Swiss", and why was half the programme devoted to him?
"Are we Swiss abroad or are we Poles abroad?" The
writer expected folk music. (What, if not that, were the
songs sung by the Unione Ticinese? Ed.), yodeling, "2
Schwizeroeengeli, Bassgigge, Clarinet und etwaco nh ein
Alphorn! Und einen anständigen Huddiggegger!

He asks why there was no money for a "really good
Celebration". He and others would be prepared to pay
double for "a decent National Day Celebration in order
to have the feeling at least one day a year that we have
a country which is not only interested in military taxes!"

The writer will let the New Helvetic Society in Switzer-
land have a report of the celebration and threatens with
some boycott (of what is not clear) if that does not help.

"Why can't we have any Swiss music on our National
Day? If we cannot, what is the point of a gathering in
the first place? Does the fault lie with the organisers or
with the Swiss Embassy?" Even the film, he asserts, was
poor according to expert opinion. The writer maintains
that in previous years the "programme came up nearer
to established standards".

The editor considers the criticism unjustified, at least
in most parts. There are quite a number of Swiss to whom
patriotism is not equivalent to the strains of a "Ländler-
musik". She wonders what reaction the writer would
have if some music by Frank Martin, Arthur Honegger
or other Swiss composers were performed. In fact, from
the tone of the letter she cannot help suspecting that the
writer could well have been amongst those who marred
Miss Huggenberg's recital by lack of discipline.

The First of August Committee is only too glad to
receive constructive suggestions for next year's celebration.
But, obviously, it is of no use suggesting a group of artists
from Switzerland which would cost a vast sum of money.
It becomes more and more difficult to support the Swiss
Benevolent Society, the Churches and other institutions
within the Colony. The hundreds of young Swiss who
attend the National Day Celebration are, generally speaking,
not those who give financial support year after year to
the many good causes in the Colony — which benefits
them, too, in quite a large measure. Yet often it is they
who complain first and criticise most. Incidentally, the
writer of that letter is not amongst the subscribers and
supporters of the "Swiss Observer".

THE SWISS OBSERVER

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