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Fribourg

The author

François Gross, born in Lausanne in 1931. Gymnase at Saint-Maurice and Fribourg. Licentiate in political science in Lausanne. Editor and Paris correspondent of the «Gazette de Lausanne». Responsible for the French part of television topicalities «Télé-journal». At present editor-in-chief of the Fribourg newspaper «La Liberté».

There are few Cantons only which have such an attraction for those who have left its territory as has the Canton of Fribourg. For the expatriate and even for the one who cherishes not only good feelings for his homeland because its all too poor soil denied him a livelihood, his Canton remains a homeland dream, the rural community, the green pastures to which one retires from time to time in order to refresh the vague idealistic picture and at the same time to renew one's determination to find one's livelihood and one's environment elsewhere. Yet this is the Fribourgeois abroad who is always willing to join a federation of his compatriots. Many are the examples of Fribourgeois who have either grown wealthy in large industrial towns or who have remained modestly rewarded workers in manufacturing suburbs, and who would not for anything in the world have «their» Canton moved up to the ranks of the wealthier ones. They resent any growth in building even in a modest settlement as the town of Fribourg.

Not many Cantons can prove with such tenacity how deeply rooted is their attachment to folklore, even if this sometimes appears to be an escape from the future. The hereditary dialect, the regional costume, the folksong, preserved by enthusiastic experts, illustrate not only the abundance of traditions, but also the determination, rarely evident elsewhere to such an extent, to keep aloof from injurious influences of today. In this connexion one might easily use irony and hurt the Fribourgeois with it,

for in this he is a genuine Swiss and biting humour offends him deeply. In this trait one rather finds a certain fear. Not that the Fribourgeois is timid! The soldiers of the Canton have given proof of their courage on many European battlefields. And one knows of more than one in its history who might have been a Roland or a Knight Bayard, had there been an epic poet or patriotic narrator to witness their heroic deeds. No, the Fribourgeois is no coward, but he is aware by instinct of the vulnerability of his Canton. The chief city, which can hardly be called that and which nobody would think of calling by the magnificent title of «capital», is a town – and one of the most beautiful in Switzerland – but its radiation hardly extends to the whole Canton. Thus one may be the best of Fribourgeois and still stay aloof from this settlement by the House of Zaehringen. One look at the map is enough to make this congenial weakness quite obvious! Fribourg is a Canton of the Midlands and at the same time of the Lower Alps, neither isolated by its valleys, nor nestling on the shore of a lake. It is a territory of transit, but not of transit at all cost!

At first sight, there seems to be a lack of uniformity. The valley of the Veveyse inclines – almost perilously one might say – over the last hill-sides of the Lavaux, and its inhabitants go down to Vevey both to

Two «armaillis» of whom the first is carrying his «demoiselle»
(Photo Fleury)



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