

# Swiss Mural Poetry

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6,636 Protestant missionaries, against 2,440 Roman Catholics; in India, Japan and Corea the comparison yields a no less significant result.

"Such is the truth," says the missionary in conclusion. "An immense effort in men, in money and in foundations. These facts are indisputable; these figures are undeniable in their formidable eloquence. And if the proportion continues to increase we shall be submerged in twenty or thirty years."

We have quoted these figures with all reserve, and certainly from no desire to see the "submergence" of any Christian effort. History affords sufficient testimony to the heroic pioneer labours of Roman Catholic missionaries in Canada, China, Japan and other lands which lay in heathen darkness. But there is a tendency in some quarters to undervalue the great work of the Reformed Churches in the foreign field, and it is time that the truth should be known.

And to follow up the above, I think the following article from *The Observer*, 22nd Sept. is also interesting:

#### Marburg and the Reformation.

It is now four hundred years since the great dispute on religious matters took place at Marburg. In September, 1529, the two reformers, Luther and Zwingli, accepted the invitation of Count Philip of Hesse to meet for a "friendly talk." Recently there was a celebration of this historic anniversary at Marburg, and in the German and Swiss Press there were articles pointing out the true meaning of the event and the century-old errors and misinterpretations that prevailed in the history books about it. Luther and Zwingli drew up "fifteen points," on all of which they agreed, except on one, namely the question of transubstantiation, in which Zwingli could not believe, whilst Luther wrote in Greek the words "it is" on the table before him. Up to recent times historians used to put all the stress on this dramatic quarrel, constructing out of it an unbridgeable chasm between the confessions and characters of the two reformers, calling Luther the man of faith, and blaming Zwingli as the obstinate politician.

It is the merit of Professor Köhler, formerly of Zurich, now of Heidelberg University, to have pointed out the immensely greater importance of the fourteen points on which agreement was reached and by which a common front against Rome was created. Thanks to his teaching the "religious dispute" of Marburg is no longer considered a keen quarrel between two unyielding spirits, but recognised to have been the "friendly talk" it was intended to be. Some of the recent Marburg orators appealed to this spirit of tolerance and reconciliation which has seen a splendid revival in the Stockholm negotiations of the World Federation of Churches. Satisfaction is felt in Switzerland that the somewhat distorted character of the Swiss reformer, Ulrich Zwingli, has been restored to its true nobility.

It was on his return from Marburg, and doubtlessly strengthened by the fourteen points of agreement, that he took the decisive steps to bring about the reformation in Switzerland. This autumn will see a number of festivities celebrating this event, especially at Wildhaus, his native village, where his birth-house still stands.

Religion is to a great extent emotional. So is music and the latter's softening influence on the savage breast is well known. But, still more softening than music—and not only to the body, but also to the head (wou-wou!)—is bottled sunshine and what could be more interesting than the following account of

#### The Vintage

*Manchester Guardian*, 28th September.

There is always poetry in the gathering of the vintage, and of all the grape harvests that of Burgundy most nearly approaches the English spirit. Our hop-pickers from Kent would not feel out of place there, for the arrangement of the grape vine, which is the least artistic in Europe (the grape is not allowed to grow higher than a large-sized currant bush), follows the same lines as the hopfields. Rag-tag and bob-tail predominate in the vineyards; tramps, gipsies, peasants from the wild Moran, with a sprinkling of respectable villagers. There is no romance save in the lovely names of the stations through which the P.L.M. roars—Chambertin, Beaume, and Nuits San Georges.

In former days before ever a grape was picked the Mayor of Dijon and the Sheriff called the "bandes des vendanges," riding from village to village ceremoniously accepting bread and salt. To-day a paragraph in the

paper suffices, and a man can start picking in July. In "Le Côte" a vine-yard is an investment, gilt-edged and as sound as War Loan and where we buy railways or colonials, the Burgundian invests in a "clos." The clos may provide sufficient wine for two or two hundred; either way every Sunday sees the citizen in the country personally superintending its health.

The vintage in the Tyrol still has much of the atmosphere of an old folk-song. When Merano was its capital and the vintage started in October the grapes were the best in the district. Clad in a Napoleonic hat garlanded with trails of goose, turkey, eagle and hen's feathers the guardian of the vines patrolled untiringly. His short breeches were of leather, the tusks of the wild boar dangled from his chest, and he was armed with switch and pike which he was forbidden to use. Officially, the paths through the Tyrolean vineyards are closed from mid-August to the end of October, but the guardian has his own methods of prohibition. The hedges are ablaze with red berries, so he breaks off the crimson-tinted branches, shapes them like a star, and in the centre carves a hand with outstretched fingers pointing away from the vineyard. The watcher is entitled to "Tobaks Kreuzer," while at the same time he adds to his income by fining trespassers in the adjoining chestnut woods, which are also closed. To-day the guardian, though preferring less original headgear, still lives in the vineyards for weeks on end, sleeping in a rough hut and eating food sent by the farmer. He must be a man of good character, strong and lusty, able to attack or withstand trouble.

During the next few weeks the mountain roads in the Valais will be swarming with peasants migrating for the vintage. The youngest citizens toddle ahead with the grandmothers, men carry beds on their heads, women are bent double under cooking pots, yet they are obviously content—almost gay. Last time they passed this way it was to water the vines and the work was hard and dangerous, for they are irrigated by glacier water which the vintners say "becomes alive" as it flows through the wooden conduits carried along dizzy heights over fearful ravines. In bad weather the conduits get smashed or carried away by avalanches, yet repairs must be made if the vines are to live. So perilous are such repairs that the presence of a priest with the Sacrament is as much taken for granted as part of the equipment as timber for mending. Now, in the vineyards they have saved, weather-beaten men and women gather the grape harvest. Half-naked babes shout and sprawl, dogs superintend, old crones sort the grapes, mountain and lake are lost in a shimmering haze, and the poetry of the Swiss vintage is almost lyrical.

In the Romagna the vintage is the culmination of the year. As early as August the grapes were stripped of their leaves so that they could bake in the sun till their hearts are like syrup in their tight-drawn black skins. Soon after dawn great wooden carts lumber down the vine alleys, creaking mournfully, drawn by meek white cattle who plunge up to the fetlock in the loose rich soil at every step. The vintners creep through the vine rows clipping, and they sing the vintage song of Servius Tullius. In white head-dresses with blue skirts and scarlet kerchiefs, the women move smoothly and graciously, basket on head.

How different is the Tuscan vintage, which has the calm purity of the hills of Umbria, ascetic, yet tender. From the terrace one is at the apex of a net of deep wide grassways with avenues of vines trained along mulberry trees. The grapes are muscatels—great globes of jade speckled with agate. With branches two feet long they distil the perfume of the white rose of Rome.

#### Top-hatted Sweeps!

I am afraid I am not sufficiently au fait with comic songs to know if anyone has written a song about top hats on the lines of the well-known ditty, "Where do flies go?" The top-hat is not the present wear, although it retains its dignity and is never likely to be superseded in its special sphere. I am interested to learn, however, from the Rev. W. Galpin, Vicar of St. Mary's, Summers-town, that the borough chimney sweeps at Davos, in Switzerland, wear top-hats as they ride their cycles, and carry on their shoulders a ladder, a long thin rod, and a huge coil of rope, with a weight attached to one end and a brush to the other. Presumably the Swiss sweep is a person of some importance, for he is an official. The mayor sends to each hotel-keeper and householder a regular notice, with information that on a certain date the sweep will call. On his arrival he proceeds to reach the roof from a specially provided trap-door, climbing the chimney by means of the ladder, and drops down therein the weight, pulling the rope to the bottom of the chimney, where his assistant drags the brush and soot to its desired haven.

#### CITY SWISS CLUB.

"Regular Subscribers" who of course are also "Constant Readers" of the S.O. will have noticed that no account of the September meeting of the C.S.C. appeared in these columns. I do not know if this omission is to be taken as a compliment to the Club's Special Reporter or if it is to be attributed to the laziness of the members present. Passions! I was unable to be present and I will therefore do my best to give a true and faithful account of what took place at the September meeting.

Twenty-five members and three guests were present. One new member was elected. No resignations. The consideration of the Rules was once more adjourned. Apparently the meeting now came to an end, even the opportunity afforded by the "faits divers" not producing any subjects capable of exciting an animated discussion, but Mr. Barbezat came to the rescue and gave an exhibition of his skill as a prestidigitator which, as I am informed by the dictionary, means "one who is skilled in legerdemain" which means "light of hand" but which on further investigation would appear to have no sinister meaning but merely designates a "juggler."

But here the dictionary has let me down as I understand he did not juggle but conjured much to the apprehension of Pagani for among other curious, audacious and magic tricks, he put lighted cigarettes into napkins and burnt them not, but history does not relate what was found next morning.

Thirty-five members and one guest were present at the October meeting. Two new members were elected. No resignations.

The President proposed the health of Mr. C. Chapuis who was with us once more after his recent severe illness. We were all delighted to see him looking so well and heartily congratulate him on his magnificent recovery which almost makes me believe in the efficacy of the art of medicine.

The question of the Cinderellas for the coming session was then discussed and after the discussion had threatened to assume the proportions of the debate on the Rules, it was settled that the January and March dances should be held at the Metropole Hotel and the February dance at the Mayfair Hotel.

And once again the Club bravely tackled the question of the Rules and the article concerning the Club House Fund.

Many were the speeches and long was the discussion (absent members do miss such a lot) but finally an agreement was reached and at the next meeting a final vote will be taken and the Rules adopted en bloc. The meeting was closed at 11.15 p.m. ck.

#### SWISS BANK CORPORATION.

The savings bank accounts which may be opened at the West End Branch of the Swiss Bank Corporation at 11c, Regent Street, S.W.1, have always enjoyed favour with members of the Swiss community in London and many others who have appreciated the generous interest terms offered. The increase of the rate of interest on these savings bank accounts to 4½ per cent. (following the rise in the London Bank Rate), will therefore be welcomed by holders of the savings books and by all who contemplate availing themselves of this very attractive form of investment for their liquid funds.

Full particulars about the opening of such accounts can of course be obtained upon application to the Regent Street branch of the Swiss Bank Corporation, next door to the Office of the Swiss Federal Railways.

#### SWISS MURAL POETRY.

(An einem Haus bei Adelboden. 1744.)

Leb stes vergnügt  
Wie es Gott fügt.  
Hier baute ich nach meinem Sinn  
Doch jedem nicht gefällig bin  
Wenn es nun eben nicht gefallt  
Der denk er hab es nicht bezahlt.  
Dreieinig alleinig preiswürdigste Lieb,  
Dir dank ich sehr herzlich und innigst voraus.  
Ich bitte geleite mich ferne und gieb  
Allwegen den Segen zu Felder und Haus  
Den werthen Guthäitren auch dank ich sehr schön;  
Gott reichlich sie zeitlich und ewig belohn.  
Ein jeder trachte doch zu bauen seine Hütten  
Auf solchem guten Grund und fester Fundament  
Das Jesus selbst ist der für uns hat gelitten;  
So ist die Wohnung gut und nimt ein End.  
Wachet.  
Auf Gottes Hoffnung und Vertrauen  
Hat Gilgan Schmid allhier gebauen,  
Und Madlena Zenften sein Ebgemahl.  
O Gott, erfüll es überall  
Mit deiner Gnad und reicher Segen.  
Daran ist alles gar gelegen.

Please reserve FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 22nd,  
for the BANQUET and BALL of the  
CITY SWISS CLUB.

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