

# Forthcoming events

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Germany and Austria, and from Rorschach, where there is a fine beach, a white ferry was puffing across to Friedrichshafen. After agreeing to meet us at the Lion Tavern at eight, Hans left us at the Casino and went on to meet his ruddy checked Gretchen.

It was past midnight when we got to Rehtobel, and the night was inky black. They go to bed early here in Appenzell and the village was already a long time asleep. The only light came from a feeble, yellow beamed street-lamp far down the road. The air was alive with the persistent chirping and low whirring wings of countless night insects, and the tall trees whispered to the wind.

We entered the house as quietly as we could and went into old Mr. Rietmann's study. It was one of the nicest rooms I have ever seen. There was a divan against the far wall, and two leather covered chairs faced each other, one on either side of the divan. In the corner was a writing table, and next to it was an oak cabinet filled with trophies, all of them prizes won at rifle shooting contests. The room was chock full of stuffed animals and animals heads: hawks, squirrels, ibex, chamois, marmots; and on a small table all to himself, a red fox with a magnificent flowing tail was surveying the scene. From the centre of the ceiling a large chicken hawk hung suspended on a long thread, and the light air currents in the room swung the bird slowly around so that it gave the illusion that he was circling slowly with outspread wings, waiting to swoop down on his prey. Peter told us that his father had bagged every specimen himself.

Nine o'clock church bells woke me in the morning, and sunlight was streaming in the windows. After the customary Continental breakfast of coffee, rolls, butter and jam. Peter led Dick and myself to the living room and introduced us to his parents. Mr. Rietmann was a robust white-haired patriarch, and though he must have been almost seventy, he still stood very straight and his blue eyes were sparkling clear. His wife, in a grey dress with a cameo brooch pinning the lace collar round her throat, was sitting in the corner knitting. Both of them had a simple dignity and unconscious grace that was at once charming. Peter told them that we were going to the sport field and watch the gymnastic team try-outs, but that we'd be back at twelve for dinner. His mother laughed and said we better be prompt or there wouldn't be anything left to eat.

Gymnastics is the Swiss national sport, and along with soccer and ski-ing holds a top rank in the country's sport world. It was no surprise, then, to see the athletic field full of young men and boys. Most of them dressed in gym shirts and white ducks that fastened tightly around the ankles. They were all ambitious and eager to qualify for the team that was to go to Winterthur in two weeks and compete in the National Gymnastic Tournament. Hans had already been there since eight o'clock, and just now he was working out on the parallel bars with marvelous dexterity. Others were performing, before judges, on the bars, rings and horse.

Now and then large boned countrymen and their wives and families, all dressed in their Sunday best, stopped for a moment on their way to and from church and watched the exhibitions. Occasionally one of the youths would run over and talk briefly with a group of acquaintances or

relatives. Only the judges remained stolidly implacable as they stood rooted to their places and scribbled in their score-pads. Obviously they took their responsibilities very seriously.

From the town came the sonorous pealing of church bells. The sun climbed higher in a clear sky, and from the high hills a breeze swept, heavy laden with the scent of the fields, the forests and the damp earth.

That afternoon we all drove to Appenzell. This picturesque little capital of its canton is situated in the middle of undulating meadow land and hills, and today it was teeming with people. The butcher, the baker, the candle-stick maker—they were all here.

There was a Singing Festival going on, and male choirs representing cities and towns all over Switzerland were competing. The streets were so crowded that the few automobiles could scarcely make any headway. The quaint old gabled houses were all gayly decorated, and bright coloured flags and banners fluttered from windows and roof tops. There was laughter and singing everywhere.

The main part of the festival was taking place under a huge, circus-like tent placed in the middle of a large field. Inside there were long rows of tables and chairs, and at the far end was a stage where just now the Lugano choir was singing a Tessin folksong. Although there was an amplifying system, you could hardly hear the singers because the whole audience seemed to be talking at once. Almost everyone had a glass of beer and something to eat. On one side of the tent was a row of stands where you could buy all kinds of sausages, cheese and sandwiches. And there was beer, oceans of amber beer that flowed ceaselessly from dark brown barrels. Waitresses were scurrying madly around trying to fill the orders that came from all sides with machine-gun rapidity.

All the natives were proudly sporting their colorful Appenzell costumes. The woman and girls wore white silk blouses black velvet bodices embroidered with silver, and light blue skirts that reached almost to the ground. Most of them had on small fan-like hats that were kept in place by a ribbon tied under the chin. The men had on yellow breeches and white stockings, and over their short sleeved shirts they wore brilliant red vests. Rosy-checked, freshly scrubbed children squealed and chattered; others sat silent, gazing with wide-eyed wonder as their usually so earnest and serious elders smiled and joked. It was a happy and care-free day for these hard working Appenzell country people and they were making the most of it.

At sundown, in the public square where Appenzell's annual open-air parliament is held, a sturdy lunged youth huffed and puffed, and finally succeeding in blowing a sonorous tune out of a huge alpine horn. This is an instrument used by Swiss herdsmen, and it is so large that the end of the horn must rest on the ground. The crowd applauded him generously, and as a reward for his efforts, someone handed him a huge stein of foaming beer. The reward was ample.

People started to go indoors in the cool of evening, and soon the various taverns and restaurants were overflowing. Groups of natives got together and sang their own folk-songs, always so easy to recognize by the lilting, yodeling refrains which only the Appenzell songsters can really sing. Bits of melody played by accordions and fiddlers drifted through open windows that were decorated with vari-coloured lanterns.

It started to grow dark rapidly, and the cobble-stone streets were now almost empty. It was time for us to leave. Long shadows of night crept over hills and changed the scarlet splashed clouds in the west to violet-grey, and then to rich purple. We started out for St. Gall, and soon a curve in the road left Appenzell hidden behind a fringe of pine trees looming dark against a deep sky that was a sparkling dome of stars.

#### MISCELLANEOUS ADVERTISEMENTS

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August—Swiss Mercantile Society—No Meeting.

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## SCHWEIZERKIRCHE

(Deutschsprachige Gemeinde).

St. Anne's Church, 9, Gresham Street, E.C.2.

(near General Post Office.)

Sonntag, den 22. August 1937.

11 Uhr morgens, Gottesdienst.

Kein Abendgottesdienst.

TAUFEN.

Am Sonntag den 15. August wurden getauft : HEIDI Jessica MEIER, geb. am 1. Juni 1937; Tochter des Walter Meiser von Glattfelden (Zürich und der Mariann geb. Gysin von Liestal (Baselst.)).

RUTH Pauline COMPAIN, geb. am 26. April 1937; Tochter des James Eugène Compain von Boulogne sur Mer (France) und der Gertrud geb. Sommer von Rätterschen (Zürich).

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