

The fête des vigneronns, Vevey

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Bundes. Die Isolierung des Tessins ist beispielsweise ein Versäumnis, das uns politisch geschadet hat, ehe politische Erwägungen, die längst wirtschaftliche Erwägungen hätten sein müssen, die Aenderung eines unhaltbaren Standpunktes erreichten.

Der Bericht weist auf die Unterstützungen hin, die in andern Staaten ihren Bahnen oder den Privatbahnen für die durch den Weltkrieg entstandenen Schäden ausgerichtet worden sind: England 4,2 Milliarden. (Der Betriebslänge unserer Bahnen entsprechend ergäbe sich bei uns ein Bundesbeitrag von 385 Millionen.) Schweden 394 Millionen. Holland 280 Millionen. Die Schweiz wird sich neben diese Staaten stellen müssen. Ein anderer Standpunkt ist nach der Lektüre dieses Berichtes der S.B.B. ausgeschlossen.

Felix Moeschlin in "N.-Z."

QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES.

BONDS.	May 17			May 24					
		Fr.	Fr.		Fr.	Fr.			
Confederation 3% 1903 ...	81.75		81.75						
5% 1917, VIII Mob. Ln	102.20		101.50						
Federal Railways 3 3/8 A-K ...	83.75		84.00						
" " 1924 IV Elect. Ln.	102.55		102.75						
SHARES.	Nom			May 17			May 24		
	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.
Swiss Bank Corporation ...	500	774	772						
Crédit Suisse ...	500	823	827						
Union de Banques Suisses ...	500	707	705						
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	2435	2420						
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	3700	3815						
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe ...	1000	2910	2915						
S.A. Brown Boveri ...	350	585	588						
C. F. Bally ...	1000	1315	1325						
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	757	767						
Entreprises Sulzer S.A. ...	1000	1115	1130						
Comp. de Navig. sur le Lac Léman	500	585	590						
Limoleum A.G. Giubiasco ...	100	120	112						
Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon ...	500	735	735						

THE FETE DES VIGNERONS, VEVEY.

August 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th, 8th, 9th, 1927.

Synopsis by H. Challinor James.

The sun is rising above the great amphitheatre of towering mountains, tipping the snow-clad summits with tints of rose, when from the terrace of old St. Martin's church on the hill behind the town a crash of guns announces to the sleeping inhabitants the advent of the long-awaited Fête des Vignerons.

Almost before the echoes of the last salvo have rumbled back from the pine-clad hills the picturesque streets of Vevey are thronged with crowds of eager people making their way to the vast Place du Marché, that great open space where, more than a century ago, Napoleon halted his troops on their historic march across the Alps to Italy. Anglo-Saxons may consider eight o'clock in the morning an unconscionably early hour for a fête to commence. But the Fête des Vignerons comes only once in the lives of many, so not a moment of this unique event is to be lost, not a phase in its kaleidoscopic evolution missed.

* * *

Unlike many national festivals, the Fête des Vignerons has nothing of a military display, or legendary pageant perpetuating conquest or victories of the past. It is an allegorical representation of Swiss agricultural life; a grandiose manifestation of the purest instincts of the race; man's Thanksgiving to The Creator for all the fruits of the soil vouchsafed.

The Brotherhood of Winegrowers, under whose auspices the Fête des Vignerons is held, has its origin in the mists of antiquity.

Records of three hundred years ago already make mention of this "Worshipful Body," whose function it still is to supervise the cultivation of the vineyards, rewarding the diligent for their labours, while administering rebuke to those who have neglected their task.

In those far distant days the Brotherhood used to celebrate its existence in a modest festival held every six years; but each successive decade has added to its importance until it reached its present grandiose proportions. A hundred years ago not more than two thousand people could be accommodated in the primitive construction which served as arena for the Fête. To-day, from the rising tiers of the huge stadium, fourteen thousand spectators may view in comfort every phase of this entrancing spectacle.

* * * * *

There is a hush of expectation as the ancient clock in the little market hall strikes the hour of eight. Then suddenly the limpid air is rent by the roar of another salvo from behind the town. It is the signal for the Fête to begin, and as the first exuberant notes of the Triumphal March swell upwards a stately procession of two thousand performers enters the arena. Slowly out of the chaos there evolves a picture of infinite beauty. Another crash of music and two thousand voices rise to Heaven in a glorious Hymn of Invocation. Then comes the grandest moment in the lives of those who have accomplished their tasks in the vineyards with honour. One by one these proud sons of the soil step up to the rostrum, to receive from the hands of the Abbot the hard-won recompense for their labours.

This moving ceremony over, the arena is left in possession of resplendent groups in allegorical garb of Winter. "Winter, winter, under the great dark pines," chants the chorus as oddly-fashioned sleighs pass by with their attendant companies of huntsmen and dogs.

Winter time is wedding time in the Alps, and soon comes the pretty scene of the peasant "Noce," with the blushing bride leaning timidly on the arm of her beloved, followed by a long procession of villagers in their time-honoured costumes. Once more the music rises triumphant as Winter recedes at the advent of Spring, Spring glorious Spring? Nature's greatest miracle, when latent life begins again its mysterious urge throughout the Universe.

Through the wide Corinthian portals appears the Goddess Palès, enthroned in regal pomp on a great white car, with fauns and multicoloured wood-nymphs grouped about her, symbols of all the glories of Spring. Timid little shepherds and shepherdesses chant their haunting refrains, gossamer-clad fairies flit madly hither and thither, the mowers wield their scythes—a sylvan picture of exquisite colour and music.

Then, as Spring gradually merges into Summer, the stirring notes of the Invocation to Ceres rise in a grand crescendo. On a superb chariot drawn by massive oxen the beautiful Priestess Ceres makes her triumphal entry. Above the pulsing rhythm of the orchestra her glorious voice rings out—"Sun of love, Sun of joy, fill the Earth with thy life-giving rays." Then, while the reapers and gleaners are busy with their tasks, little water sprites and fantastic gnomes glide across the scene in intricate measures of dance; a giant "armailli" with a wonderful tenor voice intones the famous "Ranz des Vaches"—there is a crash of thunder, the "Storm in the Mountains" breaks, and the vast concourse is hushed in silence as the players kneel in a prayer of Thanksgiving for the Lord's protection.

Now the glories of Summer give way to the beautiful tints of Autumn. Once more the lofty portals swing open, and joyful Bacchus, seated astride a huge wine cask with his roystering company of disciples at hand, makes his noisy entrance. "Descend amongst us, Bacchus," declaims the High Priest, "and pour into our hearts thy warmth Divine." Next come the vintagers, stalwart sons of the soil, chanting their quaint folk-songs as they harvest the grapes. Fauns and grotesque Bacchantes join in a wild Bacchanalian dance—quicker and quicker goes the music: wailing, beseeching, triumphant, to blend in one great harmonious Hymn to the Glorification of Labour.

* * *

It is a heart-stirring spectacle, this stupendous effort of a laborious people who garner the fruits of the Earth only by incessant toil and by the sweat of the brow. One marvels at their simple, unflinching faith, until as the glorious vision of the Fête fades, and the eye wanders upwards towards the great alpine summits, one seems to see embodied there the symbol of those sublime ideals which throughout the ages have ennobled mankind, and given him courage in the everlasting struggle for existence.

The Festival of the Fête des Vignerons will be spread over a period of ten days. In addition to six full-dress performances there will be processions through the streets of Vevey in which the entire cast is to figure. At night beacons will glow from the surrounding heights, while the lake-front will be converted into fairyland by the multi-coloured lights of Venetian fêtes.

From all corners of the earth people flock to see this wonderful spectacle, a production unique of its kind. Those who are able to enjoy this great privilege will return to their homes possessed of a souvenir of inestimable charm and beauty which even time cannot dim.

MARIA IVOGUN.

By Sophie Wyss.

Maria Ivogun is sweet. Her soprano voice is sweet, and so are her personality and person. And her art is delightful. She has been singing at Covent Garden this season, and did so two or three seasons ago, but it is doubtful if this is any real introduction to the British public, because the audiences and the occasions are special in every sense of the word, and she could not be said to have appeared before an ordinary London audience until she had sung at the Queen's Hall or Albert Hall.

Last Sunday she did so. It was at the Albert Hall, and her success with a very large audience was obvious. Unabashed by the vast empty spaces of the huge building, she stood beside Sir Thomas Beecham and sang Zerbinetta's air from Strauss's "Ariadne auf Naxos" with inimitable grace. She borrowed from the Opera stage Zerbinetta's coquettish charm, and her voice and manner actually brought on to the Concert platform memories of that delightful scene. There is no more difficult air for sopranos than this, yet her voice did not seem to know the meaning of the word. It cooed in the roof of the building as if it loved to lodge among such uncertain acoustics, it rode jauntily upon the accompaniment of the London

Symphony Orchestra to those heights around E which most of us find so trying. Small and gentle as it was, it carried all before it.

Later she sang the "Blue Danube" Waltz and "Il Bacio" as *bis*. I naturally rather grudged these two items, as there were so many things one would have rather heard. Indeed, she took "Il Bacio" so slowly and calmly that it lost that certain savour which the typical Italian *coloratura* soprano brings to it by a treatment of hectic haste. Nevertheless, her performance was one of perfection in singing, and it is good to reflect that she has now set her little feet firmly upon the English concert stage. I hope she will tour the length and breadth of the land, so that she may set a standard for light soprano singing. But even so, I do not think that the British will ever produce their own *Ivoguns* and *Hempels*. It is a matter of temperament as well as singing.

It will seem a pity to those of us who have heard her give Lieder Recitals in Switzerland that she is not going to do something of the kind in one of the small Halls. Then perhaps the newspaper writers would realise, as they do not know, that she is an exquisite artist capable of the subtleties of Schubert as well as the fireworks of Donizetti.

FETE SUISSE.

A PROPOS DE LA FETE SUISSE DE CETTE ANNEE.

Nous voici à moins de quatre semaines de la "Fête Suisse," et il est temps d'en reparler un brin, dans l'honorable organe de notre Colonie!

Pourquoi donc, se demander certains, une fête au mois de Juin, alors que, de notoriété publique, la fête nationale suisse se célèbre le premier Août?

Question bien naturelle, mais dont la réponse ne l'est pas moins!

C'est que la "Fête Suisse" de Londres remonte à plus d'un quart de siècle avant l'institution par les autorités fédérales, de la célébration du mois d'Août, commencée en 1891. C'est en 1864 déjà, qu'elle vit le jour dans la cité des bords de la Tamise. Et lorsqu'un a le privilège de posséder, dans une Colonie comme la notre une tradition aussi distinctive, il vaut la peine de la maintenir tant qu'elle répondra à un besoin.

Or, tel est bien le cas, nous semble-t-il, n'y aurait-il que l'affluence qu'elle a comme plus d'une fois, particulièrement l'an dernier, pour le prouver. Mais il y a plus: D'abord, nos prédécesseurs ont judicieusement choisi un mois de l'année qui, à Londres, convenait à tout le monde. Et puis, ils savaient que dans une Colonie aussi dispersée que la nôtre, c'était un besoin du coeur de pouvoir, une fois au moins tous les douze mois, se rencontrer avec des compatriotes et des amis qu'on ne réussit guère à voir autrement. Avec son intuition si vive, le pasteur d'alors, à l'Eglise Suisse, Emmanuel Pétavel-Olif, l'initiateur de notre Fête, avait parfaitement perçu ces desirs profonds. Et c'est ce qui explique que le vieux "Thé suisse," soit si vite devenu une institution chère à beaucoup. Ils sont beaucoup parmi nous qui en témoigneraient, tel, par exemple, le doyen de notre Colonie qui n'en a pas manqué un depuis 1865, si la rumeur dit vrai!...

Ce n'est pas, avouons-le, que la "Fête Suisse" ait jamais prétendu rivaliser avec des concerts selects ou des soirées mondaines. A d'autres l'organisation de divertissements de ce genre. Non, tout simplement elle a voulu demeurer la fête de famille de notre Colonie. Et voilà pourquoi elle continue à être appréciée même si, entre temps, d'autres réjouissances ont vu le jour parmi nous.

C'est conscient de ce cachet tout spécial de notre Fête, que son comité a cherché à accentuer encore davantage, cette année, tout ce qui lui garderait son caractère familial et familial.

Il espère, donc, que vous serez nombreux, amis lecteurs, à vouloir vérifier de vos yeux, *Mercredi 22 Juin*, si j'ai dit vrai! *Le Secrétaire.*

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

In connection with the scholastic programme the following lectures were given by the students during last week:—

Miss H. Z'Graggen, Lucerne: "Military Service for Women." Mr. Robert Egloff: "English and Swiss National Characters compared." Mr. E. Hunziker, Winterthur: "English and Greek Empires." Mr. Erwin Knecht, Neuhausen: "Experiences of a Swiss Student on his First Day in London." Miss M. Siegenthaler: "Farewell Speech." Miss Lylie Steiner, St. Moritz: "Social Life." Mr. Pierre Bachmann, Basle: "Air-Mail Nowadays." Mr. Julius Heftli, Glarus: "Internationalism—Militarism—War." Mr. A. E. Staehelin, Basle: "New Office Machines in Banking and Financial Institutions." Mr. Max Ehinger, Basle: "Should Women or Should Men Work?"

The debating classes dealt with the following subjects:—

"Should Switzerland abolish her Army?" Proposer, Mr. August Reimann, Winterthur; Opposer, Mr. Hans Bracher, Burgdorf.