

# Swiss folk songs

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# Swiss Folk Songs.

(Rendering in English.)

We learn that Mr. S. JACKSON COLEMAN, F.R.G.S., F.R.A.I., F.Z.S., etc., the President of the Folklore Club of the City Literary Institute has been struck with the characteristic beauty and melodious charm of our Swiss Folk songs during a visit to our native country.

This gentleman, therefore, approached Mr. THEO RITTER, from whom he had already received valuable help in the past in his Folklore activities, as he was anxious to introduce the Swiss Folk Songs to the students of his Club. He found it impossible, however, to get his choir to master the original texts and therefore approached Mr. THEO RITTER for suitable renderings into English. It was a question of 7 selected songs but, although Mr. RITTER has never been known to shirk any task entrusted to him, in this case he preferred "to pass on the baby," parking same on the well-worn lap of "GALLUS."

The latter's attention was being drawn to the fact that, in tackling the job, a service would be rendered not only to the Folklore Club, but equally to the Swiss Colony itself, especially for such occasions as the "Pête Suisse," etc. "GALLUS" realized that he had no easy task to perform in "translating" verses from (say) Schwyzerduetsch into English, without losing the lift and without making them appear stilted and he frankly said as much. Still, he was asked to "get on with it and hope for the best," which he did.

How well he succeeded we must leave our readers to judge but, in fairness to "GALLUS," let it be said that he ventured to submit his efforts to the Swiss Minister, before releasing them for publication. Monsieur PARAVICINI approved these English renderings in a most kindly way and expressed himself to the effect that he would look forward to hearing them sung to the dear old tunes. Mr. COLEMAN also expressed his pleasure and appreciation at now being able to have these Swiss songs introduced. We certainly share the view that it will give more joy to have words in English for those who, otherwise, must have been content with singing "La la la."

Ed.

## I AM A SWISS BOY. (Ich bin ein Schweizer-Knabe)

I am a Swiss boy and my heart  
Beats for my native land,  
Where snowy peaks like sentinels  
Of ancient freedom stand.

That gold-kissed, wondrous, mountain chain  
For ever calls me back again.

I am a Swiss boy and my heart  
Beats for my native land.

I am a Swiss boy and my heart  
Is light and free of care;  
'T would never do to sulk and frown  
In yonder gladsome air.

The cow-bells' homely ding-a-dong  
Re-echo our own sweet song.  
I am a Swiss boy and my heart  
Is light and free of care.

I am a Swiss boy and my heart  
Knows nought of vanity;

I want to treat all folks alike  
With love and sympathy.

We are a modest, kindly clan  
With good intent to ev'ry man.

I am a Swiss boy and my heart  
Knows nought of vanity.

Transl.  
GALLUS.

## THE PEASANT FROM BRIENZ. (S' Brienzer-Buur).

The happiest soul upon this world  
Is our Brienzer peasant;  
He carries neither watch nor purse  
And hard work he find pleasant.

O heydy heydy hey,  
O heydy heydy ho.

It is no joke, for sure,  
To be a "Brienzer Buur."

In spring his solitary goat  
He leads to Alp, for grazing;  
He'd have you think it was a cow  
Or bull — It's most amazing!

O heydy heydy hey,  
O heydy heydy ho.

It is no joke, for sure,  
To be a "Brienzer Buur."

Transl.  
GALLUS.

## NOSTALGIA. (Schweizer-Heimweh).

Tell me, Dear heart, why this sadness,  
Why so tearful and depress'd?  
Strange lands, too, know joy and gladness  
Why not share them with the rest?

Wish that I could join their laughter,  
Be like others, bright and gay;  
Yet, in vain! — I'm longing after  
That dear home, so far away.

And that call grows ever stronger,  
For those hills and dales I yearn;  
Father, Mother — How much longer  
Till, at last, I may return?

Transl.  
GALLUS.

## FROM LUCERNE TO WEGGIS BAY. (Weggiser Lied).

From Lucerne to Weggis bay  
You don't need your shoes, they say.

Ride by boat upon the lake  
And watch the fish, for pleasure's sake.

Land at Weggis — there begins  
Strenuous climbing, lift your shins.

Upon the Righi you'll get tea  
For a Milk-maid has been following thee!

Transl.  
GALLUS.

## THE FERRY-MAID. (La Batelière).

Now is the time for mating,  
Beautiful ferry-maid,  
My castle stands a-waiting,  
Come and be not afraid.  
When in the morning sun you are basking  
I will bring flowers to you,  
Dresses and Jew'ls be yours for the asking,  
Blanche, to you I'll be true.

No, no, I prefer my ferry boat,  
Watching my oars on the still waters float  
And my dear cottage, so remote ...  
Lala lala lala la.

Beautiful water maiden,  
Your song rings sweet and clear,  
Whether the skies be laden  
Or else the stars appear.

If you will but give in and surrender,  
You will find once again  
All that you hold so dear and so tender,  
Come, Blanche and be my ain.

No, no, I prefer my ferry-boat,  
Watching my oars on the still waters float  
And my dear cottage, so remote ...  
Lala lala lala la.

Troubles you know not, dearest,  
Nothing yet touched your heart,  
When I myself feel nearest,  
Farthest you seem apart,  
Please, do not torture me any longer  
Or treat me with disdain,  
With ev'ry day my love's growing stronger,  
Pray, let me be your swain.

Ah, ah, this time I cannot withstand,  
Lala lala lala la  
Lala lala la la.

So take my heart and hold my hand  
Lala lala lala lala la.

Transl.  
GALLUS.

## WHAT DO THEY NEED? (Was brucht me-n-i de Schwyz).

What do they need, the Swiss?  
What do they want in Switzerland,  
The well-belov'd mother land,  
What do they need, the Swiss?  
Rich milk, in gleaming urn,  
From which the peasants churn —  
The choicest butter — no mistake —  
For mother dear her cakes to bake,  
That's what we need, we Swiss,  
In our well-belov'd home land,  
That's what we want in Switzerland,  
Just what we need, we Swiss.

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# Swiss Observer 16th Birthday.

By KYBURG.

It seems a very long time since our Swiss Minister, M. Paravicini, did some of us the honour to ask us whether we would agree to do our bit to make the Swiss Observer a living link to help keeping the Swiss Colony together.

There was, I remember, Mr. Boehringer who, for some time, had spent quite a good deal of money and time on our Swiss Observer in an effort to keep it going. There was Mr. Egli who represented the *Bund* in London and who agreed to take over the Editorship for a time. There were others who agreed to help, some in the capacity of administrators, advertisement-getters, publicity Agents, subscription, i.e. new Reader hunters, or as in my case, who consented to contribute occasional copy to the paper.

Yes, we all, who were there in that small room at the Swiss Legation in Queen Anne Street, and who had listened to the remarks of our Minister, we all agreed to help. It was made quite plain to us too that, as in the past, so in the future, at least for some time to come, all such assistance would be given voluntarily, "pour la cause" as it were and "la cause" was nothing else but that solidarity which is supposed to bind all of us Swiss together in one common family, true to the famous Swiss Motto — "One for all, All for one."

That, so many years ago, was how the Swiss Observer, our beloved London *Chaesblättli* was saved at the time and that was the spirit which animated its collaborators.

Some of the latter are getting old. Not old in spirit, but old in the sense that they feel that it was time some of the younger bloods of our Colony took over their work. After all, there must be now, some quite brilliant chaps who like us, at that time, are qualified and eager to do something for the good of our Swiss Colony in England. Surely, there must be some?

Of course, we still have our young and energetic Editor, A. Stauffer, at the helm. We still have our old friend Mr. Boehringer in the background, no doubt grumbling like anything if the revenue side of the Swiss Observer's P. and L. a/c does not come up to his most sanguine expectations, and, let me add, still watching over the Paper which, after all, was his very own child at first, like a motherly hen over her chicks. Well, and have you watched his smile when anyone says a good word about the Swiss Observer? It's almost worth paying a fee to watch that smile stealing over his face. Our friend Boehringer has

"bien mérité de la patrie" in founding the Swiss Observer and we are all grateful to him.

And what a feast the Swiss Observer provides! Not in one, not in two, but mostly in *Three* languages!

The austere German, the clean cut French, the *Lingua di Dante* which melts in the mouth and, occasionally, even the *Romantch*, all spread out before you, *Reader*, for your delight, your information, your pleasure and erudition.

If I had the gifts of the reporters of the English *Yellow Press*, I would take you behind the scenes of the Swiss Observer and give you a glimpse of how the Paper is being prepared, edited, "put to bed" and finally sent out in his saucy green wrapper. I would show you the countless reporters who toil all the week to get all the news together. I would show you the frightfully busy Editor, armed with scissors and a big blue pencil and yet managing to shout instructions into the telephone and to sack the office boy every now and again. I would show you the proof-readers, always too late with their work, nerves on edge like the sub-editors, resignations following heated altercations, but re-instatements following a cooling drink taken just round the corner to soothe the ragged nerves. I would show you the collaborators praying of an evening that they might be favoured by a telephone call from friend Stauffer asking for an article for next week's issue for which "as it is an especial issue, I must have one of your fine articles in it." In short, I would show you how the whole thing is actually done and believe me or not, the actual thing is being accomplished in a very much quieter atmosphere than the hectic reporters afore-said would make you believe.

Publishing the Swiss Observer week by week means hard work for quite a few, but mostly for friend Stauffer, and when you read his often brilliant articles you may well wonder how he does it all and still manages to smile at you when you see him.

I think not one of you *Readers* is still harbouring the illusion that the people behind the Swiss Observer are making a fortune out of the paper or even buying Austin Sevens out of their Dividends, what?

I am informed that Advertisements during the past year have been somewhat better than before, but that at least another

200 NEW READERS ARE WANTED to get the Paper to the stage when a small profit may be earned and when some of the contributors may look forward to a small remuneration for their work. Even then, alas and alack and Alaska! I understand that any such remuneration would not be retrospective! Well now, dearly beloved Reader, — that is if you listen and forthwith resolve to do your bit — your task is as plain as day-light.

Instead of thinking, as you probably do, what on earth is the fellow driving at and am I not paying 12/- yearly for the little paper which, as far as paper-weight goes is certainly not worth half that money, and, instead of grumbling because you do not particularly care for this or that article or feature in the paper, in short, instead of being the opposite of *Helpful*,

*You Should* spread the fame of the Swiss Observer,

*You Should* get at least *one* new subscriber within a week,

*You Should*, if at all possible, send in "copy" to the Editor and not mind his blue pencil,

and, in my opinion, *You Should Do All This*, because

*We are celebrating the Swiss Observer's 16th Birthday*

and

WE SWISS ARE JOLLY GLAD WE HAVE SUCH A PAPER TO KEEP US IN TOUCH WITH OUR HOMELAND.

I might and probably ought to have stopped here. Let me, however, add just one more thought.

For very many of the Swiss living in England and surrounded by English friends, contact with Switzerland would be difficult to maintain, at least to keep alive so regularly and effectively, if it were not for this little weekly paper of ours, this Swiss Observer. I know, because I well remember the time before we had a Swiss Colony Paper in England.

Therefore and although I am not, as you well know, a super-Nationalist, I feel that in supporting the Swiss Observer one does one's little bit towards maintaining the relationship with the Homeland, with one's own kin and folk and, what is sweeter in our human life than to be really aware of and alive to the kinship with one's own people? Therefore, please do try and assist

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The days are rife with pageantry and state,  
A nation's grateful tribute to her King;  
May all these fervent hopes and wishes bring  
That sense of peace which outcasts fear and hate.

Grave are the times in which we congregate,  
But faithfully to long tradition cling;  
Coming old friends to greet — old songs to sing,  
With our home land re-communicate.

Dear land, where hard-won freedom had  
its birth,  
Where toleration knew a sacred shrine  
And persecuted souls asylums found —  
To them your soil must have been  
hallow'd ground ...  
May so it e'er remain — by God's design —  
The cradle of His peace upon this earth.

GALLUS.

15th June, 1935.

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"Venir se ne dee gih  
tra' miei Meschini."  
Dante, Inferno, C. xxvii.

What do they need, the Swiss?  
What do they want in Switzerland,  
The well-belov'd mother land,  
What do they need, the Swiss?  
God's peace and unity,  
Man's strength and chivalry,  
For our forbears mighty deeds  
Inspire us with noble creeds,  
That's what we need, we Swiss,  
In our well-belov'd home land,  
That's what we want in Switzerland,  
Just what we need, we Swiss.

What do they need, the Swiss?  
What do they want in Switzerland,  
The well-belov'd mother land,  
What do they need, the Swiss?  
Not much is left beside,  
Of wishes that abide;  
We pray Good Health for beast and man,  
God's best gift since the world began,  
That's what we do, we Swiss;  
In our well-belov'd home land,  
That's what we do in Switzerland,  
God grant it to us Swiss!

Transl.  
GALLUS.

**THE EMMENTAL.**  
(Emmenthaler Lied).

Nowhere is it half as jolly  
As at home "im Emmenthal;"  
We indulge in harmless folly,  
Come and join us — one and all.

Maids and girls with nice complexions,  
Well-built, sturdy, ev'ry one;  
There's no time for long reflexion,  
Which of them shall be your own?

Ceremonial is not needed,  
Each one calls the other "thee,"  
Favours equally conceded,  
Be he rich — or just poor me!

Transl.  
GALLUS.