The Lucerne Festival

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WHAT OTHER PEOPLE THINK OF US.

—

THE SWISS WAY.

Lessons of the Zurich Exhibition.

Zürich, though the most populous city of Switzerland, is probably the one least frequented by the ordinary British tourist. In any other country its beautiful situation — with the old town and churches clustering round the junction of river and lake, and the newer residential districts rising, tier above tier, on the slopes of the adjoining wood-covered hills — would be sufficient to make it a centre of attraction for visitors. But in Switzerland it has, from this point of view, too many rivals; and it lies a little off the direct track from England. This summer, however, Zürich offers a special appeal, as it is the site of a remarkable exhibition of Swiss life.

The Swiss National Exhibition has already been visited by over 3,000,000 people, representing 75 per cent. of the population of Switzerland, and it certainly merits the success it has won. It is not an exhibition in the ordinary sense of the word. There is none of the " high-pressure " salesmanship which one associates with exhibition; indeed, to all appearance, none of the pavilions actually offers goods for sale. Nor are there many of those noisier sideshows which seem to be regarded elsewhere as necessary for the entertainment of visitors. Instead, the exhibition presents a dignified and well-arranged picture of all the main features of Swiss life: history and government, education and social services, mountains and sports, agricultural production and industries of all kinds. Though, as already remarked, there is no attempt to sell goods, each of the pavilions relating to industry contains a " pillory " for products of which Switzerland is not proud and which the authorities wish to discourage. Among them are badly made toys, travesties of Swiss national costumes and cheap and shoddy workmanship in general. The various pavilions are laid out in the beautiful parks which stretch along both sides of the lake adjoining the city, and the two sides are linked by means of a *téléphérique* which whisks the visitor over the intervening half-mile in two minutes.

The Pact of 1291.

But what impresses one most is the series of buildings entitled " Land and People " which constitute the main avenue. These buildings present a connected synopsis of the history and national life of the Swiss people. It begins with a display, in the four languages of the Confederation, of the original pact entered into in 1291 between the people of Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden, binding them

in view of the bad times and for their better protection and defence, to stand by one another, with counsel and with action, with life and with property, with united force and strength, against any and all who threaten oppression and injustice.

The treaty proceeds to provide for arbitration of disputes and for satisfaction of damages done, and concludes that " with the help of God, our principles of union, drawn up for the good of all, shall last for ever." And it has, in fact, lasted already some 650 years.

The next pavilion displays, with the aid of a magnificent collection of photographs, the main geographical features of the country. Entering it, one is faced with the challenging text: " Switzerland, a country without colonies and without raw materials, owes its prosperity to the industry and concord of its people." This is surely an object lesson to some other countries which have less cause to complain of the lack of raw materials but which do not appear ready to accept the same solution of their difficulties. And perhaps it is an object lesson to Europe as a whole, for in an adjoining building a massive sculptured group represents hand in hand the four different races of Switzerland — German, French, Italian, and Romansch — who have learnt to live together and " to win their work and bread in amity " under the equitable laws of a free Confederation.

Battles Long Ago.

It has not been an easy task to build up this State; and, as we go on, there are object lessons which we too might well take to heart. In the following building is a series of paintings representing the principal battles of Swiss history and showing how dearly Switzerland has had to pay for the liberty she now enjoys. The pictures illustrate some 17 battles, from Morgarten in 1315 to the Bauernkrieg in 1653. Thus, in these centuries, practically every generation was called upon to shed its blood in defence of its liberty. Yet the spirit which inspired the Swiss in centuries past still prevails. We pass to another pavilion bearing the slogans " Switzerland wants to defend herself; Switzerland can defend herself; Switzerland must defend herself." Here is shown the system of military training which the Swiss people not only accept but are proud to maintain as an essential part of their conception of citizenship. Every Swiss has to serve his period of military training and, when released from service, takes his kit and rifle home, where he keeps them, ready to answer the call, if the need arises. The pavilion, with its vivid illustrations of the life of the Swiss citizen army, ought to be visited by those who opposed national military training here. And it may be noted that the Swiss citizen army receives no pay at all when called to the Colours, though this is a matter which the Swiss Federal Council aims at altering. The displays in these pavilions are amplified once a week by a pageant which reproduces the ancient scenes, songs, and music of Switzerland in a most effective manner and in perfect taste.

We are brought back to more peaceful activities in the next buildings. Passing through a room where the White Cross of Switzerland is draped alongside the Red Cross, we proceed to a model hospital and to the " Paradise " where the children of visitors to the Exhibition can be left to enjoy themselves. There is a model motor racing track and a " fairy restaurant " where the small customers are served with refreshments (needless to say, in the form of milk) from trays which appear automatically in front of them as soon as they take their seats.

When we have visited enough of the industrial and agricultural pavilions to satisfy curiosity or to raise a thirst, we can take a boat which propels itself along a little stream through the grounds, or we can stroll through the gardens to the model Swiss village, threading a way through crowds of fresh-faced Swiss youngsters with their parents, many of whom wear the picturesque costumes of the cantons. We take our seats at one or other of the wine-rooms and beer-halls where the Swiss visitors eventually congregate and sing the songs of their native mountains or valleys. As I left one of these restaurants the rafters were ringing with the Emmental song, sung by a score of visitors from that lovely district:—

Niene geits so schö u lustig
Wie bi üs im Aemmental;
Dört ist aller gattig lustig
Schöni Meitschi überall.

Nowhere 'tis so bright and happy
As with us in Emmental;
There the laddies all are lusty
Pretty are the lasses all.

What they sang of Emmental might be said of Switzerland. And the exhibition at Zürich is a fascinating miniature of the life and culture of this vigorous people who have won their independence and built up one of the most prosperous States in Europe by their energy and industry and by the success with which their system of government has solved racial problems.

(*Times*).

★SWISS NATIONAL EXHIBITION

ZURICH

MAY 6—

OCT. 29, 1939

● See our Country at Work and Play—our Arts and Crafts and Nationhood.

● This truly wonderful Exhibition, staged in a park-like setting along the shore of the Lake at Zurich itself, must not be missed.

ASK FOR THE ILLUSTRATED
SWISS NATIONAL EXHIBITION FOLDER

INFORMATION from the Swiss Railways & State Travel Bureau, 11-B Regent Street, London, S.W.1. 'Phone: WHItehall 9851.

SWISS NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS.

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We again remind all our readers that the 1st August Celebration will take place at St. Pancras Town Hall in Euston Road, N.W.1, on Tuesday, August 1st, at 6.30 p.m.

This important event which will be under the the Honorary Presidency of the Swiss Minister, will doubtless be attended by hundreds if not thousands of our compatriots who have not the opportunity of going to the homeland to celebrate.

The Swiss Minister will address the gather, ing, and there will be short messages in the four national languages.

Singing of Swiss songs, patriotic music rendered by the Swiss Orchestral Society, Swiss Accordion Club, and the Swiss Choral Society, and community singing will be a feature of the evening, which must be celebrated in a true Swiss manner.

Dancing will take place until midnight. There will be lots of Swiss specialities to eat and to drink, buffet as well as bar will remain open until midnight.

Admission by free ticket obtainable from the Legation or from any of the Societies or members of the Committee.

The Committee would be glad to have the assistance of any members of the Colony who feel they can devote some of their time in helping during the evening to ensure the comfort and happiness of the guests. Will any compatriots kindly communicate with the Honorary Secretary,, Henry Bingguely, Bulle House, 187a, Tottenham Court Road, W.1.

THE LUCERNE FESTIVAL.

August 3rd-29th, 1939.

International Stars of the Musical World.

Musicians from all parts of Europe will collaborate to make the Lucerne Music Festival, which is being held from August 3rd-29th, one of the greatest musical events of the year. Arranged at the time of year when the Salzburg Festival used to draw visitors from all over the world, it is hoped to make Lucerne the new summer musical centre of Europe.

The conductors include *Toscanini, Bruno Walter, Fritz Busch* and *Adrian Boult*, while other performers include *Casals, Gigli, Horowitz, Rachmaninoff*, the *Busch Quartet*, and the Choirs of the *Sistine Chapel* and *Strasbourg Cathedral*.

The Festival begins and ends with symphony concerts conducted by Toscanini, at the last of which he is making one of his rare appearances with his son-in-law, Horowitz, as the solo pianist. At the first recital Toscanini is conducting the Overture and the " Liebestod " from " Tristan and Isolde." Wagner spent some of the most productive years of his life in Switzerland, where he first went in 1849 as a political refugee, smuggled over the frontier after a rising at Dresden . For six years he lived at Tribschen, near Lucerne, the scene of his romance with Cosima von Bulow, where he composed some of his greatest works, including most of the " Meistersinger," " Siegfried " and " Götterdämmerung." His son Siegfried was born at this peaceful refuge, Tribschen. Toscanini last summer reconstructed the first performance of the " Siegfried Idyll " by his memorable open-air concert given in the garden of Wagner's house. In recognition of Toscanini's part in developing the musical life of Lucerne he has recently been made an Honorary Citizen of the city. As well as two performances of Verdi's "Requiem," Toscanini is giving an additional symphony concert on August 5th, instead of the Paderewski recital originally planned, as Paderewski is too ill to appear. Toscanini is thus making five appearances at the Festival, and already almost all the seats are sold for these evenings.

An event of great interest will be the appearance of the Sistine Chapel Choir, the oldest established choir in the world. Recitals are rare outside the Vatican, where the choir played an important part in the ceremonies connected with the enthroning of Pope Pius XII. The Sistine Choir, which enjoys the exclusive privilege of singing at all services and church functions at which the pope officiates personally, has a history dating back to the 5th century A.D. Three works by Palestrina will be sung by the choir whose tradition has changed little since Palestrina was official composer to the choir in the 16th century. Some of the most wonderful effects have been maintained for at least three centuries, including part of the famous " Lamentations," which is sung by two high voices in such perfect unision that they are always mistaken for a single singer. The Musical Director of the choir is Mgr. Lorenzo Perosi, and a number of his compositions will be performed. He is one of the few composers whose works have been added to the Sistine Choir's repertory during the last century

A.Z.