

Fête des jodleurs

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FETE DES JODLEURS
Lausanne, 12-13 June, 1954.

I had the good fortune to be staying near Lausanne this summer, at the time of the *Fête des Jodleurs*, and on the afternoon of Saturday, June 12th, set off to the Place de Milan, which was the official starting-point. The lovely garden adjoining the Place is itself worth a special visit, and as I failed to hear sounds of entertainment, beyond the distant music of a *Cor des Alpes*, I wandered off in search, coming unexpectedly upon the beautiful panorama of lake and mountain to be seen from the summit.

Before long, however, I was in possession of a programme, sold to me by a woman in cantonal costume. Exploring further, I came upon a straggling company of men, marked off from their fellows by a velvet cap and short velvet jacket, one of whom carried a large tubular instrument. I felt hopeful that I was now drawing near to the scene of this little-advertised event, for on reaching street level I saw a group of sturdy-looking youths, wearing the short velvet jacket and white, short-sleeved shirt of the potential yodler. A little more enquiry brought me to the Salle Paroissiale in Avenue Dapples, where I found singing in progress, the principle item of an entertainment which was to last till 2 o'clock on Monday morning.

Consoled by the fact that, although I was nearly an hour late, there was generous promise of more to come, I took a place at the back of the hall, already well filled by audience and performers. There I enjoyed, as I had seldom enjoyed before, the sound

of the human voice. It mattered little that the language in which the songs were versed was foreign to me. I was a stranger in that closely-knit assembly of German-Swiss people, yet nationality was but a superficial bar to the appreciation of an art, so simple and so moving, so national in spirit, yet so universal in meaning, so suggestive, with its yodel pattern and yodel refrains, of life lived hardily and happily in the open air, against a background of pasture-land and mountain, remote from the clash and strain of modern civilization.

E.F.I.

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