Villars - centenary

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WHO'S WHO IN SWITZERLAND 1964-1965

This is modestly referred to as the fifth edition of a "Biographic Dictionary", published by Nagel Publishers in Geneva and distributed by Frederick Muller Ltd., Ludgate House, 110 Fleet Street, London E.C.4. The price of £6.10.0 alone indicates that we have a book of no mean substance and size. It is indeed a handsome volume of 800 pages, with a fully lined cover, in attractive garnet red with gold lettering, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{4}$ inches in size. The text is in English, and the personalities are listed alphabetically.

WHO'S WHO is primarily a reference book directed, as the introductory leaflet says, to libraries, embassies and legations, chambers of commerce, insurance companies, newspapers, national and international organisations, industrialists, merchant companies and trading firms, and as such, perhaps there would be little need for advertising the book in the "Swiss Observer". But it is of very great interest, too, to many individuals, lawyers, hotel keepers, journalists and indeed many individuals interested in Swiss personalities. Eminent foreigners living in Switzerland are listed as well as famous nationals residing abroad. Incidentally, the book covers the Principality of Liechtenstein.

I have found the book not only interesting as regards biographical details of many well-known personalities in Swiss political and diplomatic life, in commerce and industry, the professions and the arts, but I was fascinated by the wealth of information in a short paragraph. I choose at random, say, Georg Sulzer, and I learn that he is Dipl. eng., chairman of Sulzer Brothers Ltd., Winterthur. I discover his birthday, the names of his father and mother, his whole education and training. I find out whom he married and when, his business career, his present duties, address and telephone numbers. Naturally, information varies, and no doubt, if a well-known woman does not wish her birthday disclosed, not even the WHO'S WHO will be able to publish it.

The biography of a famous man like — again I pick one at random — de REYNOLD de Cressier, Louis de Gonzague, Frédéric Marie Maurice, reveals masses of data on his achievements and honours, and in a few minutes I learned more than I ever knew about this great compatriot. Short of reading a whole book on the life of any particular person of distinction, the WHO'S WHO IN SWITZERLAND is the easiest way of acquiring extensive information.

In addition, the book contains three and a half pages of abbreviations which are illuminating when reading the biographies. But they are useful in themselves. I discovered that ASIC stands for Association of consulting engineers — English as well as French and/or German terminology are given. FMH means Foederatio Medicorum Helveticorum (Association of Swiss medical specialists), and anyone finding it bewildering to disentangle the many United Nations abbreviations, finds an easy guide in WHO'S WHO.

Finally, the book carries an index of terms. This elucidates the biographical notes, but again is of great help in finding the correct English equivalent for such difficult words as "Maturität", the difference between a Councillor of State in the singular and a Councillor of States in the plural. It explains just what a licentiate represents in the German-speaking part of Switzerland and what in the *Suisse Romande*.

It would, of course, be idle to pretend that the book is complete. I have found certain omissions and been surprised that some personality or other whom I know myself, should have been included at all. But then, the authors themselves are aware that an encyclopedic work of this nature can never be complete. In fact, they invite readers to notify them of any possible mistakes or omissions, and special questionnaires are attached for this purpose. The Editor announces in his preface that he has included biographical data of about one thousand new personalities in this, the fifth volume (the last having been published two years ago), and that previous biographies have been revised and brought up-to-date.

WHO'S WHO IN SWITZERLAND is a very useful reference book, essential to anyone who needs to know about personalities in every sphere of Swiss public life. It makes an excellent present for anyone interested in biographies.

Mariann.

P.S. How the Editor of the "Swiss Observer" wishes that such a reference book existed of the Swiss community in Great Britain. Any offers?

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VILLARS — CENTENARY

Among the anniversaries to be celebrated during the Year of the Alps is the centenary of Villars in the Lake Geneva region. In 1865, a first small inn was started here on the sunny terrace where there was nothing but a few barns. While the neighbouring localities of Chesières and Arveyes are communities on their own, Villars which has won far greater tourist fame still belongs, politically, to Ollon which includes no less than 25 villages and hamlets. The unique situation of Villars (4,120 ft.) sheltered from cold winds, exposed to the sun, contributed essentially to the favourable development of this resort which today offers 1,500 hotel beds and 400 chalets. A historical parade and all sorts of entertainments in honour of this summer and winter resort's centenary is scheduled for 10th July. The site of the original modest inn, the nucleus around which Villars grew, was built up fifty years ago to accommodate one of Switzerland's six luxury resort hotels, the famed Villars-Palace.

[S.N.T.O.]

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