

Johann Caspar Lavater, 1741-1801 : a Swiss citizen of the world [end]

Autor(en): **Lavater-Slomann, Mary**

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Growing in many valleys, along protected slopes and mostly on the shores of many lakes, are the homes of various excellent wines. Already during the Roman epoch, vineyards were cultivated in ancient Helvetia.

Wines should be stored at an even temperature all the year around and bottles must be laid flat so that the wine touches the cork. When serving wine you must observe two rules: Always chill white wine, but never add ice to it; never chill red wine, just serve it at the temperature of the room.

E.M.

(To be continued)

JOHANN CASPAR LAVATER,

1741-1801

A SWISS CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

(Concluded)

In his tireless efforts to find an issue to this conflict, Lavater laid himself open to bitter attack. A passionate and venomous polemic broke out over the question of the so-called "miracles," which were actually pure hypnosis and suggestion. In the end a number of physicians undertook to examine Lavater's hypotheses, investigated his "cures" and found that, beneath the surface mysticism, there was a sound core of truth which showed prospects of future development. Thus at a time when the world in general knew nothing about it, empirical psychology was coming to birth among a handful of experts.

Lavater never understood the rationalistic standpoint of the medical men of his time, and would have fallen a hopeless victim to religious delusions if he had not been saved by the two powerful roots of his personality—his patriotism and his world-wide intellectual understanding. At a time when the world had already pronounced judgment on him, in the last years of the eighteenth century, Switzerland was on the point of succumbing to revolution, civil war and foreign intervention.

The old Confederation had collapsed, and in the eyes of its bedazzled citizens, salvation could only come from beyond the Swiss frontiers. At this critical moment, Lavater pulled himself together, looked about him and at once grasped the moral danger that was threatening his beloved country. In spite of the scorn and hostility to which he was exposed, without heeding the criticism that was sure to come, and reckless of the actual danger to his very life, he spoke from the pulpit with all his old fire and eloquence, calling upon men to take thought and remember the oldest of Swiss virtues—the defence to the death of the freedom of their country.

A wave of devotion to the national cause spread over the country. Lavater did not remain alone. In every canton men arose who preferred an honourable end to a prudent fraternisation with a powerful oppressor. Lavater himself wrote an open letter to the Directoire in Paris, and publicly accused the commanders of the army of occupation of all the wrong they had done to a defenceless population. In those years of national struggle he fully made good all the sins against the European mind his misunderstood mysticism had led him to commit. Nor did Europe refuse him his due meed of admiration for his courage in the cause of his fellow-men.

When Lavater was struck down by a French bullet, and, after lingering for a year, was called away from the scene of his earthly struggles, it was not only his Swiss compatriots who followed his body to the grave. Even the French officers and all the foreigners in Zurich walked in the funeral procession of the man who had given the world the example of an unshakeable loyalty to his native land and of a spiritual fraternity encompassing all nations.

Mary Lavater-Slomann.

LETTER FROM SWITZERLAND

AN EXCLUSIVELY LAND-LOCKED COUNTRY, SWITZERLAND NEVERTHELESS POSSESSES A MERCHANT FLEET

An exclusively land-locked country, with no seaboard of her own, Switzerland would probably never have thought of creating a merchant fleet if circumstances had not forced her boldly to find a solution to the problem of obtaining supplies.

The difficulties encountered during the last war made Switzerland realise how useful it would be to have a merchant fleet sailing under her own flag. A Swiss maritime law was then drawn up, which came into force on April 9th, 1941, a date which can be considered as the veritable birthday of the Swiss merchant fleet.

When the war ended, it was unanimously decided that this fleet should be maintained and placed in the hands of private enterprise. Since the outbreak of war in Korea, it has even been found desirable to increase its size still further. This made it necessary to modify the existing maritime law. That is why a new Bill has been drafted and will very shortly be submitted to the Federal Houses.

This Bill placed the Swiss merchant navy under the supervision of the Federal Council, and makes the place of jurisdiction the town of Basle on the Rhine. The owners and builders must be Swiss, resident in Switzerland and with their main offices in this country. Similarly all share-