

The real Switzerland

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eight members of the Choir to be in the picture, so as to avoid any "Kantonaligeist" repercussions; anyway, whoever it was, did a good job, for the eight certainly were cheerful boys and did their stuff well, but the best looking of the lot was our dear old Mr. Bossert in full Swiss regalia - he was the ninth !

An Englishman told me that he had never seen on Television such a lively and picturesque scene and hoped it would be repeated. Other people have actually written up to Alexandra Palace expressing their complete admiration for the play which Mr. Anderson conceived in Switzerland. However, the Swiss point of view is somewhat different; some of the dialogue was anything but Swiss and I am afraid that was a mistake. The Swiss also criticised the "Schuhplattler" a dance which is typically Austrian and not seen in Switzerland. The producer must be forgiven, however, as he was not aware of the intricate difference of an Austrian jargon as against "Schwyzerdütsch".

In conclusion, I must mention that Mr. Dick's idea of approaching Madame Bolla to produce six Swiss girls in costume was an excellent one. These girls were the neatest, loveliest creatures I have seen for a long time and Madame Bolla is to be congratulated on the choice and on the truly Swiss costumes in which she dressed them. It is a pity that the viewer was not able to see the actual colours of these costumes, they were most beautiful. I must also congratulate the Swiss Male Choir and the Accordion Group on their splendid performance. I would also like to extend warm thanks to Mr. Walton Anderson and his stage manager, Mr. Jackson, whose ease with which they organised and directed the rehearsals and the show was admired by all. If the Television enthusiast enjoyed this refreshing half-hour as much as we performers did, then all is well.

THE REAL SWITZERLAND

Yet another book on Switzerland has appeared, this time from the pen of a Swiss author, brilliantly rendered into flowing, colourful English by Eleanor Brockett. In Great Britain it enjoyed a good Press: it was highly praised by the literary critics. And deservedly so, for it is a work of outstanding beauty, at once informative and enchanting. The author provides the rare and happy combination of geological expert, philosopher, historian and poet and, if it is possible to judge by a translation, is also a talented, skilful writer.

The theme is old, the treatment new. Mr. Epli's book is not a travel book; Hotel life, mountaineering, and alpine sports are scarcely touched upon. Instead the reader is taken behind the scenes, as it were, away from the beaten track, and is shown Swiss life as it really is. The mighty natural forces which have fashioned the configuration of the land and the elements which have moulded the character of the people are explained in lucid, non-technical terms and the variety and contrasts of the geographical and human aspects described in a delightful manner.

There are eighteen chapters which are not inter-dependent; each one is a separate, self-contained study. They are interspersed with 94 beautiful photographs, some of them strikingly unusual.

The first - and longest - chapter is devoted to the St. Gotthard. Previously known as the Mons Troadus, the mountains of terror, the St. Gotthard Massif was once the central buttress of the Alpine structure and probably the highest point, the apex, of Europe. Millions of years ago, the glaciers of the Ice Ages penetrated the two ranges which form the St. Gotthard and opened a way through. But it was only in the 13th century that the Rous was bridged and the St. Gotthard became the main pass over the Alps, linking Northern and Southern Europe. For the Swiss, this development had the utmost importance and it is not by a mere chance that the Confederation was founded in 1291, soon after the pass had been opened. (Continued in next issue).