

# Our fatherland [continued]

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paper and bright coloured strings, and though no one had told them, I think they had a very good idea for whom they were meant. The bachelor girls were also counted as children (for that day only, of course) and they received a little gift, which was a charming thought from our hostess, Mrs. Oesch. The parcels were opened by excited children, who seemed very happy and delighted with their presents, which had been purchased by a Christmas fund contributed by the group. So ended our gay and joyous Christmas party.

Mrs. Oesch has been the mainspring of our Group since its re-formation after her arrival in Wellington, and we are most grateful for her kind interest in us all, and especially in the children.

We would be very happy to see any Swiss ladies, whether visitors or residents of Wellington, when we meet at Kirkcaldie and Stains tearoom on the last Tuesday of the month, from 2.30 to 4.30 p.m.

M.B.

### 34th LAUSANNE NATIONAL FAIR

Each year two great events impart a vital impulse to the Swiss market—the National Fairs of Basle and Lausanne, which, in their own respective parts of the country and according to their own particular specialities, are both representative of the main activities of Switzerland. Through a concentration of trade on a scale in keeping with the size of the country, they have for more than thirty years now been successfully undertaking the two-fold task of providing economic information and acting as a market stimulus.

True to this aim, the 34th Lausanne National Fair will once again be opening its gates, from September 12th-27th next, to display the original products of Swiss agriculture, industry, trade and craft work. This fair, extending over a total area of more than 1,000,000 square feet, endowed with large new buildings, and strong in the individual or collective participation of some 2250 exhibitors, is Switzerland's main autumn economic event.

Although essentially national in character, the Lausanne Fair, in a spirit of international goodwill, has the honour and privilege of setting aside an official pavilion for Brazil, organised by the Brazilian Office of Propaganda and Promotion of Trade.

The Lausanne Fair, departing from its purely commercial character, is presenting to its visitors a special pavilion dedicated to "Atoms and Radiations," under the auspices of the Swiss National Fund for Scientific Research, thus giving science a prominent position within the framework of the exhibition.

The customary advantages granted to foreign visitors are again available through all official Swiss organisations abroad.

## OUR FATHERLAND

(Continuation)

### NEUCHÂTEL AND THE JURA:

Our Western university town is a city of distinction, with shady lakeside promenades, beautiful buildings, up-to-date shops and a great view right across the sizeable lake to the distant alpine chain. With its celebrated schools, the College of Music, the many fine Museums, the University, etc., Neuchâtel is quite a centre of intellectual life. The buildings delight the eye by the texture of their stone, a yellow limestone, and by the dignity of their architecture. On the hill forming the site of the old town, are the Collegiate Church and the Castle, residence of the counts of Neuchâtel, now the seat of Government departments. These two buildings, with their cloister, the shady terrace encircling the ancient keep, and the old street which climbs the hill, form one of the most complete and delightful architectural groups in Switzerland.

Neuchâtel has its beach with a fine lido and the prolific vineyards expand from the immediate surroundings along the entire length of the lake.

The Neuchâtelers seem to speak the purest French anywhere in Switzerland. They are clever people and extremely conscious of their culture and many feel, as far as important things in life are concerned, that the world begins and ends within the confines of their canton. Following the old Swiss tradition of mercenary service, many Neuchâtel aristocrats served under foreign flags. A regiment from Neuchâtel took the city of Seringapatam in India for the British East India Company. In modern times, during the last war, sons of old Neuchâtel families were killed fighting as volunteers in the Royal Air Force.

Along the lake in the direction of Geneva are several charming and picturesque towns, many with their own castles and all surrounded by vineyards: Auvèrner, Colombier, Boudry, Gorgier, etc. A long narrow strip of land lies between the lake of Neuchâtel and the first hills of the Jura. Then come the valleys, cut deep into mountains, like the Val-de-Travers, through which the defeated Bourbaki army retreated from France in 1871 to seek refuge in Switzerland; or the Val-de-Ruz, which again received regiments of a defeated French army in 1940.

To the south-west, in the Jura Vaudois, is Ste. Croix, a small town with a beautiful view of the Alps. The people there are busy with production of cheese, a little watchmaking, as well as manufacturing the famous Swiss music boxes. Further on are the two small lakes of Joux and Brenet, the green surfaces of which, in the middle of a dark, beautiful countryside, produce an atmosphere similar to Scandinavia. This part of Switzerland, away from the large cities, in the

middle of rough and unfriendly nature, has an ancient civilisation all its own. It dates back to the time when monks settled there toward the beginning of the sixteenth century. The monasteries have now disappeared, but at Romainmotier, a fascinating ancient town, there is one of the finest Romanesque churches in Switzerland.

West of Neuchatel the rail brings you to Chaux-de-Fonds, the world centre of watchmaking. This is the largest town in the Jura, is very modern, and often has been compared with American cities of similar size. The climate is very dry and healthy, but severe. The people, known for jovial spirit, claim that they have "six months winter and six months taxes!" Lower down the valley, clustering around an old church, lies the town of Le Locle, where watches and chocolates are made. The population of Le Locle is supposed to be very temperamental. A story goes that, in the fifteenth century, a woman known as Marianne due Cre Vaillant, put a whole party of Burgundians to flight by letting loose the village bull.

North of Neuchatel along the placid lake of Biemme, is the picturesque little town of Neuveville, with its old towers and famous schools. This is a fine countryside for hiking among the lower ranges of the Jura, and plenty of opportunities for sailing, fishing and swimming. At the end of the lake lies Biemme, quite a modern town of over 50,000 industrious people making watches, machines, automobiles, pianos, soap, etc. The town is just on the language frontier of French and German speaking Switzerland, and it is often amusing to hear children mixing their languages.

#### GASTRONOMY:

From Geneva right through to the end of the Bernese Jura, you find a tradition of excellent cooking, much influenced by the cooking of the neighbouring French.

The lake of Neuchatel is famous for its fish, such as the bondelle, which is found only in this lake and which is served deliciously in the inns at Auvernier. Here, in these inns, with their lovely flower-decked terraces, you can enjoy the "brochet" as well as the trout, usually served "au bleu," which are more abundant in the mountain streams. Neuchatel is also famous for its "fondue," the recipe of which you find in the June issue of this paper.

In the whole of the canton of Neuchatel, it is customary for bakeries to prepare a delicious type of small cheese tarts each Monday. And in all the villages of the Jura, the housewives take their large tarts of rhubarb, plums or apricots, each whilst in season, and which they have prepared at home, to the village bakeshop to be baked. Often the people of these districts make their evening meal entirely from a cup of coffee and a large piece of one of these truly delicious and nourishing tarts.

The "Vacherin du Jura," a white creamy and soft cheese, is very popular throughout our country. The Bernese Jura also produces a tasty round cheese called the "monk's head," originally fabricated by the monks of Bellclay.

(To be continued.)

#### IBEX RESTORED TO SWISS ALPS

One of the most remarkable achievements in the revival of a disappearing animal species is the resettlement of ibex in the Swiss Alps.

Ibex or bouquetins were numerous until the sixteenth century, but their number dwindled rapidly, owing probably to the development of portable firearms which enabled hunters to shoot them more easily. Records show that there was none left in 1550 in Glarus, in 1553 in Canton Uri, in 1770 in Canton Berne, and the last were seen in 1750 in the Grisons and in 1770 in the Bernese mountains, while some still existed just after 1800 in Canton Valais. After that the only reminder was the ibex on the coat of arms of Canton Grisons and of Entremont, in the Valais.

Two attempts at reintroducing ibex in the Alps were made in the Grisons, one in 1879 when 13 animals imported from Austria were released on the Arosa Rothhorn, the other in 1886 when four from the Basle Zoo were let loose on Piz d'Aela, above Filisur, in Canton Grison. Both attempts failed and all the animals died from disease.

In 1914, a new attempt was made to settle some ibex bought from the Aosta National Park, but before being released they were kept some time on special breeding grounds near St. Gallen and later on the Harder, near Interlaken. Some were released in the mountains but they disappeared after a few years. (To be continued.)

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