

Letter box

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AUSLANDSCHWEIZERTAG AT THE BASLE FAIR.

There is little doubt that the movement, fostered by the "Auslandschweizer" gatherings during the Basle Fair, is gaining in importance year by year; in fact, there seems to be an imperative necessity to broaden the basis in order to secure the active co-operation of wider circles. The originators of the idea—a few enthusiasts of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique—enjoy the unique satisfaction of having, within the space of a few years, obtained complete success in their altruistic aims. This year's gathering was preceded by a delegates' meeting of the N.S.H. on Sunday, April 15th, at which a resolution was unanimously carried, expressing confidence in the League of Nations, coupled with the hope that the latter may finally be called upon to deal with and settle the existing political *impasse*.

Monday, April 16th, was the gala day, and the large conference hall of the Mustermesse proved entirely inadequate to accommodate the large gathering, anxious to listen to the official addresses and take part in the subsequent discussion, the importance of which was enhanced by the presence of Federal and Cantonal representatives. Mr. E. Suter, Swiss Consul at Stuttgart, and Director Bitz, of Bregenz, spoke on the duties of the Swiss abroad towards their country; special stress was laid on concentration of effort and the creation of an entirely independent organisation, working exclusively in the interests of the Swiss abroad. In his discourse, National Councillor Horace Micheli paid a compliment to the editor of the Pestalozzkalender, and suggested the issue, at the cost of the Confederation, of a Swiss history, specially written for the young generation abroad. Dr. Steuri and Mr. Schürch gave a short report, and indicated the lines along which the movement would develop in the near future. While these conferences constituted a most interesting and essential part of the gathering, it was evident that insufficient time was left for the subsequent discussion. Many a delegate from abroad, who had hoped to bring his grievance before the proper quarters, was unable to sufficiently expose his argument or even to obtain a hearing. All the same, we left the hall with a pitiful impression, after having listened to the recital of the many injustices to which a large number of our compatriots are subjected, and to redress which our Federal authorities are apparently powerless; to judge by the pathetic call, made by the Swiss in the Ruhr district, their lot seems to be nothing short of desperate.

A novel and most instructive exhibit was on view in the neighbouring school building. Apart from statistics and tables, the collection contained photographs of Swiss settlements in far-off lands, printed or typewritten reports of practically all the Swiss societies abroad, books, pamphlets and journals which are being published in the interests of the Swiss abroad. The only thing we missed in this museum, arresting as it did for a moment the activities and currents in our foreign colonies, was *The Swiss Observer*.

After the day's strenuous work and inspection, the banquet and concert at the Casino brought welcome relaxation; nothing was left undone by our indefatigable friend, Mr. Stucki, to provide the acme of enjoyment, and he must have been uncomfortably bewildered when about 340 participants insisted on sitting down to dinner—a hundred more than had been arranged for. The galleries of the large concert hall, beautifully decorated for the occasion, were crowded, and, to judge by the dead silence during the rendering of the programme, we could hardly realise that over a thousand people were present. The few speeches, the warmth of which made us wish for more, elevated our patriotic sentiments; straight to our hearts went the words of Federal Councillor Motta when he said that the degree of respect and estimation in which Switzerland was held by other nations was to a very large extent in the hands of the Swiss living abroad, whose sole motto must remain: "Honesty and work." The feature of the excellent programme was the whole-hearted co-operation of the Basler Liedertafel, the Quodlibet and the Bürgerturnverein, who were intent on giving us their best; this common effort was admirably exemplified in the acting of a humorous and partly musical play, specially written by Dr. W. Vischer, describing the meeting and departure of Swiss from the heart of Africa, whither the call to the "Auslandschweizer" had penetrated. The musical side of the programme predominated, and the songs rendered by the Liedertafel, under the conductorship of Dr. H. Suter, were an exceptional treat for the visitors. The delightful folk-lore songs, rendered by a strong choir of girls from secondary schools, took our minds back to the days when we were proud to belong to the 'Elite.' Tableaux-vivants, 'Fahnen-

schwingen,' Jodler quartettes and—last, but not least—a Basle drum and fife band brought us all too soon to the close of this memorable gathering.

Back in London, we feel intensely the wonderful tonic which our short stay in Switzerland in such an inspiring atmosphere, has given us. We are proud that we have contributed our little share to a movement which is destined to be of the greatest import to the Swiss abroad. This movement is gaining in impetus year by year; up till now the Auslandschweizertag has been a clearing-house for a variety of lamentations difficult to redress, but we hope that the organisers at home will succeed in cutting down the diversity of subjects under consideration and concentrate all influence and forces on a few momentous *desiderata* capable of solution in the near future.

CORRESPONDENCE.

The Editor is not responsible for the opinions expressed by his Correspondents

Mr. F. Beyli, of 11a, Osborne Road, Palmers Green, N. 13, asks us to publish the following appreciation:—

The resolution of the Auslandschweizertag in Basle, emphasising the importance of "Kulturpropaganda," synchronises with an activity in this direction by the Secretariat of our N.S.H., which deserves to be duly brought before the forum of our colony.

While preparing a bibliography of all books bearing on Switzerland, published in Great Britain during the last fifty years, of which mention has already been made in "The Swiss Observer," Dr. P. Lang at the same time elaborated another large scheme for intellectual propaganda on behalf of our native country.

He prepared a list of what, in his opinion, constitute the thirty best books published by Swiss writers since 1900, characterising the authors and their works in a few pithy sentences. To sit in judgment over twenty years' book harvest, which even in a small country like Switzerland grows to tremendous proportions, is no light task, but Dr. Lang has often before given proof of his ability and impartiality as a literary critic. All schools are represented, from the Seldwyla tradition to the ultra-modern expressionism, and naturally an equilibrium is observed in regard to our three national languages. A bibliography of this kind would, no doubt, not only be appreciated by potential publishers, but also by many Swiss who are unable to follow the trend of modern literature—let like to bathe sometimes in the sunshine radiating from a book of their native soil.

This list has been sent to all English publishing firms who have previously published translations of books by Swiss writers—and there are thirty in number—with an able introduction, drawing attention to recent complimentary remarks on modern Swiss literature by English papers, recommending to sample one of the books in an English translation, and offering further advice and, if necessary, also a translator.

The whole scheme has been conceived in a way which would do credit to any commercial advertising manager, and our colony can be proud to have such an efficient exponent of the intellectual achievements of Switzerland.

LETTER BOX.

H. S.—We regret that the last issue did not contain any "Mustard and Cress," as you call it. "Kyburg" is, indeed, on a visit to his ancestral seat, but is now rushing back, full of new inspiration, to continue his "Notes and Gleanings," which we expect will appear again in No. 101.

F. B.—We doubt whether there are sufficient stamp-collectors amongst our readers to justify a philatelic column; but we will give the matter our consideration.

K. P.—We shall probably arrange during the summer months one or two trips to Switzerland, similar to our "Basle Fair Party," which proved such a great success. No dates have yet been fixed, and we should like to receive some further indications from other readers.

B. W.—We thank you for the cutting from the "Daily Mirror." We think you are mistaken as to the nationality of the individual referred to; in spite of his Swiss name there is no reason for doubting his own statement that he is French.

SWISS SPORTS, 1923.

The Committee of the Swiss Sports have been making full preparations for the forthcoming Sports Day, on Saturday, May 26th, at Herne Hill Athletic Grounds. There will be the usual races, and entry forms have to be sent to Mr. C. Kiefer, Hon. Sec. Swiss Sports, 6/8, Eastcheap, E.C. 3, or Mr. F. Burgin, Hon. Ass. Sec. Swiss Sports, 74, Charlotte Street, W., by the 12th May at latest.

The Swiss Sports, 1923, should eclipse all previous similar occasions, and all our sporting enthusiasts are strongly urged to reserve this date.

SWISS CHORAL SOCIETY.

A report on last Sunday's Concert will appear in our next issue.

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Amongst the various subjects on which lectures are given by prominent scholars at the University of London, the following may interest our readers: "La Littérature Française au XVII^e Siècle d'après "les plus récents Travaux," by Prof. Abel Lefranc, of the Collège de France, Paris. This course of three lectures will be delivered at 5 p.m., at the Bedford College for Women (Regent's Park—Entrance at York Gate), on Tuesday, May 8th, Wednesday, May 9th, and Friday, May 11th, 1923. Admission to these lectures is free, without ticket.

EGLISE SUISSE, 79, Endell St., W.C. 2.

Dimanche, 6 Mai, 11h.—M. R. Hoffmann-de Visme.
4.30.—Répétition du Choeur. Mr. Rod. Gaillard.
6.30.—Pfr. U. Wildbolz.

Dimanche, 13 Mai, 11h.—Réception des Catéchumènes.
CONFIRMATION.

Ruth Marthe STEINER, fille d'Ernest Steiner et de Marthe née Stähelin, de Winterthur—le 29 Avril 1923.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Tuesday, May 8th, at 8 p.m.—NOUVELLE SOCIETE HELVETIQUE: Informal Gathering at 28, Red Lion Square, W.C. 1.

Wednesday, May 9, at 9 p.m.—SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY: Lecture (preceded by Monthly Meeting) on "Travels through Colombia," by Dr. P. H. Eugster, at 1, Gerrard Place, W. 1.

Friday, May 11th, at 8.30.—SWISS INSTITUTE: Annual General Members' Meeting.

Tuesday, May 15th, at 8 p.m.—SWISS SPORTS COMMITTEE: Important Delegates' Meeting at Gatti's Restaurant.

Tuesday, May 15, at 8 p.m.—SWISS SPORTS COMMITTEE: Important Delegates' Meeting at Gatti's Restaurant.

Wednesday, May 16, at 7.30.—NOUVELLE SOCIETE HELVETIQUE: Council Meeting at 74, Charlotte Street, W. (restricted to members).

Friday, May 18th, at 7 p.m.—NOUVELLE SOCIETE HELVETIQUE: Dinner, with causerie and entertaining programme, at Paganis, 42-48, Great Portland Street, W. 1.

Tuesday, May 22, at 8 p.m.—NOUVELLE SOCIETE HELVETIQUE: Informal Gathering at 28, Red Lion Square, W.C. 1.

Saturday, May 26, at 2.30 p.m.—SWISS SPORTS at Herne Hill Athletic Grounds.

Tuesday, June 12th, at 7 p.m.—CITY SWISS CLUB: Monthly Meeting, preceded by a Supper, at Nuthall's Restaurant, Kingston-on-Thames.

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