

Swiss treasures

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SERVIR!

Servir! un petit mot-capable de soulever un monde. Aujourd'hui plus que jamais, alors que de toute part souffle un vent de désordre, d'égoïsme et de violence, le besoin de soumission fraternelle à un idéal librement accepté, le souci de faire passer avant le sien propre, l'intérêt général se fait sentir. Les meilleurs rejettent tout un ensemble d'affirmations orgueilleuses, nées d'un individualisme exaspéré et s'efforcent de revenir aux principes qui malgré tout, demeurent les pierres angulaires de notre civilisation. Le Mouvement d'Oxford témoigne des préoccupations renaissantes. En Suisse également un idéalisme nouveau, se marque de plus en plus. L'autre jour parlant à Zurich à un auditoire composé d'étudiants, M. le Conseiller fédéral Pilez-Golaz a magnifiquement exprimé les nécessités de l'heure présente.

"L'ordre nouveau a-t-il déclaré, que vous recherchez a pour condition inéluctable le rétablissement d'une morale, individuelle et collective, d'une foi désintéressée. Traquez les profiteurs et les démagogues. Ne vous battez pas pour des textes ou des mots mais recherchez avant tout les caractères. Faites confiance à vos chefs, en montrant un peu plus d'indulgence à ceux qui vous ont précédés dans la carrière. Ce qu'il faut au pays, c'est une véritable élite, et non une caste, une élite capable de commander et de travailler pour les autres dans un esprit désintéressé. Servir, voilà le salut de l'homme, et vous le constaterez un jour, son plus grand bonheur."

Cette affirmation se rapproche de celle faite tout récemment par un groupe de "jeunes" au cours d'une déclaration reproduite par la "Gazette de Lausanne."

On réclame de toutes parts une réforme de l'Etat. Mais ce qu'il faut changer au préalable, c'est l'esprit qui anime la société moderne.

La réforme que l'on vise doit être d'abord, doit être surtout, spirituelle et morale.

C'est ce qu'exprime avec concision et netteté l'admirable programme suivant, qu'ont élaboré récemment d'importants groupements d'anciens combattants. Il constitue, sous une forme aussi éloquente que condensée, une charte, un bréviaire politique et social d'une magnifique inspiration. La voici :

Servir au lieu de se servir.

Remplir ses "devoirs" avant de réclamer ses droits.

Placer les valeurs morales au-dessus des valeurs matérielles.

Réagir contre l'improbité, la démoralisation et l'égoïsme.

Combattre le sectarisme sous toutes ses formes et d'où qu'il vienne.

Retrouver le sens du foyer familial.

Restaurer la dignité humaine.

Restaurer l'autorité, la libérer de l'intolérable tyrannie des partis et des groupements, des appétits et des forces d'argent.

Il n'y a, dans ce programme, rien à quoi nous ne puissions souscrire. On objectera peut-être qu'il y manque un mot : la liberté. C'est vrai. Mais la chose importe plus que le mot.

Et qui ne voit que, pour être une réalité vivante, un bienfait dont tous les citoyens puissent jouir et sentir le prix, la liberté doit pouvoir s'épanouir et régner dans un terrain débarrassé de tous les obstacles qui l'empêchent de se distribuer d'égalité façon pour tous et d'être pleinement elle-même?

Sachons, les uns et les autres, reprendre à "servir." Tout ce que l'humanité recèle de beau, de fécond, de généreux, de désintéressé est dans ce mot ; à nous d'en faire une réalité vivante dans l'intérêt commun.

THE CATHEDRAL OF LAUSANNE.

A group of buildings time-worn and grey, surmounts Lausanne like a stately crown, clustering round the ancient Episcopal Palace; but the finest gem of this citadel is assuredly the glorious Gothic Cathedral, whose fortunes are closely allied with those of the city lying at its feet.

The history of Notre Dame of Lausanne extends far back into the previous millenium; remains of a baptistry have actually been excavated near the present choir. On the other hand, no traces are found of the Romanesque Cathedral which was built on the same site as the present edifice. The latter was commenced about 1175, probably by Bishop Landry de Durnes. When we consider the speed with which the largest buildings are often completed in these times of hurry and bustle, it is a matter for astonishment how long this work was under construction. Periods of indefatigable energy and vigorous toil alternated with others of weariness and discouragement, whilst twice at the commencement of the 13th Century the structure was visited by fire. Eventually all difficulties were overcome and on the 19th October, 1275, almost 100 years after the building was begun, Lausanne celebrated one of the most splendid days in its

history. Pope Gregory X solemnly consecrated the practically completed edifice, surrounded by an illustrious company, which included the Emperor Rudolf of Hapsburg, seven cardinals, seventeen bishops and other high spiritual and temporal dignitaries.

And the completion of this work was quite worthy of such a brilliant and solemn celebration; for even in these days, no one entering the lofty vaulted spaces of Lausanne Cathedral can refrain from being deeply impressed. Although here and there certain inequalities, due to the long period of construction, may be observed, for instance, in the variously fashioned pillars of the nave, the whole effect is imposing and harmonious. In these lofty spaces, illumined by shafts of light, one is conscious of an exalted inspiration which characterizes this edifice as the finest medieval creation of Switzerland.

The style of the Cathedral of Lausanne inclines to the perpendicular Gothic. It only borrows from the northern French Gothic what it considers a advantage, and in other respects speaks its own dialect, which indicates the influence of the native soil on architecture in these districts.

When we leave the interior and contemplate the exterior edifice, we observe the same characterization. Here, the latter is not broken up, as is usual in the perpendicular Gothic, into an elaborate tracery of piers and flying buttress; but the masonry nevertheless gives tongue to its broad speech, and above all, the entire profile is of more ponderous character. As in the Romanesque period, the edifice is crowned by lofty towers, of which two were projected on the right and left of the western façade, whilst two others rise east of the transept and a large central spire dominates the quartette. Of these towers the northern façade tower was never completed. Can this be a matter for regret? We hardly think so, taking into consideration the developments during the course of centuries and as matters are to-day. Much rather do we feel that the people of Lausanne were well advised when, unlike other towns in these times, they resisted the temptation of redressing the omission. For the result would have been that we should only have acquired an academic architectural pile, whereas the profile of these hoary towers recalls to us not only the periods of brilliant effort and high self-reliance, but also those of dejection and trial. And this is what makes us so akin with this glorious edifice, that makes such an appeal to our innermost hearts.

Lausanne Cathedral has preserved many relics of value from the period of its ancient endowment. Wonderful is the rose-window with its refraction of light in the rich colours of the old glass painting; also the Apostles' Porch with its early Gothic statues on the pillars (now replaced by replicas) and the relief of the sepulture and resurrection of Mary in the lunette of the porchway. The elaborately decorated west porch is more recent, and is certainly only a restoration of the work executed at the commencement of the 16th Century, with a good many modern additions. Inside the Cathedral are several tombs dating from various periods, the remains of the oldest choir stalls in Switzerland (of the early Gothic period) and particularly elaborate choir stalls of late Gothic times.

Lausanne Cathedral contains some of the most glorious treasures of ancient art and architecture, and any visitor will for ever cherish the memory of its uplifting beauty after he has once feasted his eyes upon it.

Dr. S. Guyer.

SWISS TREASURES.

In a decorated basket — are flowers of rich repose — Edelweiss and gentian — arnica and rose. From Pilate there's a nosegay — with such profusion spread — but what d'you think from Berne there is? Why, a bear with a cut out head!

There's a chunk of peak from Mythen — and a lump from Rigi too — I've got a stick from Titlis — it's branded just like new. Tiny ski's from Meggen — from Zurich a cactus plant — a silver chain from Wengen — and a boat that sails on the slant. From Engleberg there's a cowbell, and a wooden tray from Zug — From Buochs — there's a marble well and a fishing rod from Stoos — I've a pen with views of Brunnen — and a doll from Bürgenstock — from a wooden hut we bought her right at the very top. She's all poshed up in her mittens — in a skirt of pink with dots — a Tyrolian hat on her "napper" — and a few forget-me-nots. From Treib I have a bunny — and a bottle of scent for Ma — from Altdorf there's a rucksack — and a filet mat from Baar. There's an Alpenhorn from the Jungfrau — and a blue bird made of wood — and an old Swiss house at Rütli — on a sacred hill it stood! A snap book full of beauties — peaks, lakes, and valleys rare — of Cecile who so cute is — with thick, blond, curly hair. They do not speak these treasures — their worth their weight in gold — invaluable — they lie there for when I'm growing old.

(Miss Mary E. Brandwood)

FATHERLY GOVERNMENT.

Sumptuary Laws for Dress and Deportment.

COSTUME AND CONDUCT in the Laws of Basel, Bern and Zurich 1370-1800. By JOHN MARTIN VINCENT. Johns Hopkins Press, London: Milford. 11s. 6d.

Professor Vincent's book, as his title indicates, is a detailed study of the actual working of the laws regulating dress and conduct in the three Swiss cities of Basel, Bern and Zurich from 1370 to 1800. He has been pursuing extensive researches in the sumptuary regulations of France, England and Germany, and now publishes this small section of his material because the "recorded action" of the judicial tribunals of these cities is "exceptionally extensive and illuminating." With the nature and intent of sumptuary and moral legislation in general all who are interested in the subject will have some acquaintance. What to many will be entirely new are "the records of the courts which punished infractions of these laws," and the conclusions which may be drawn from them "as to the value and effectiveness of sumptuary measures."

Apart from the regulations affecting clothing Professor Vincent deals with the control exercised over the celebration of weddings, christenings and funerals; with profanity, observance of the Sabbath, sleigh-riding and journeys to Baden. He has a couple of chapters on the recorded work of the Courts at Bern (1681-94) and at Zurich (1710); and a number of valuable appendices, showing in tabular or graphic form the incidence of cases, convictions, &c., over selected periods of years. With the end of the eighteenth century comes the end of the practical application of these laws; and even during the centuries of their most stringent enforcement he is quite clear that "the dictates of fashion were more powerful than the orders of councils."

Profanity Professor Vincent finds most severely dealt with in the sixteenth century, when at times it might be visited with capital punishment. For "ordinary everyday swearing," however, the offender was let off with a public apology and acts of penance, and sometimes with a fine. Sabbath observance was regulated on similar lines in all three cities until the end of the eighteenth century. No buying or selling was allowed during service hours, when mill-wheels had to be stopped and the slaughtering of beasts was prohibited. Wine shops were closed after three o'clock, and no drinks could be served during the time of evening service. Running repairs to the vehicles of bona-fide travellers were permitted, but not during the service hours. The regulations governing weddings, christenings, and funerals show "paternal" government functioning at its fatherliest. The general idea was to prevent extravagance in expenditure on gifts and festivities. Not only was extravagance in funeral flowers and wax candles prohibited, and liable to a fine, as was the extravagance of covering walls with black cloth — partly because it was dangerous in times of epidemics; but in Basel in 1677 even the length of funeral speeches and funeral sermons was regulated to avoid excess! At Zurich in 1531 dancing at weddings was forbidden as "dancing is unseemly and awakens the wrath of God." Basel in 1637 fined bridegrooms who were late for the ceremony the sum of one mark: the last course of the wedding dinner had to be put on the table by three o'clock, all drink orders had to stop at four, and every one had to rise from the table at five.

With the regulation of costume, both for men and women, and for all classes, Professor Vincent deals in considerable detail, and it is obvious both from his appendices and from his chapters on the cases brought into the courts that costume offences preponderated. The intention of these ordinances was not only to restrain extravagance and immodest dressing, but to affirm class distinctions, upon which was based the proper ordering of society, and to maintain both national costume and home-manufactured articles and materials. The really sharp restrictions — and in consequence most of Professor Vincent's materials — belong to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Within small compass Professor Vincent has concentrated a really considerable body of valuable material, and perhaps only those who have themselves investigated the same kind and the same number of documents can fully appreciate the labour of selection involved. Not the least of the book's merits is its short and select but very adequate bibliography; and mention must also be made of its clear and useful illustrations. Among these latter there is a delightful Zurich family of 1643 at table, saying grace before meat, complete with father and mother, fourteen children of properly graduated sizes, a baby in the cradle, a stove in the corner, a cook in the kitchen and every other possible detail of a domestic interior that the heart could desire.

Times.