

Celtic numismatics in Switzerland

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CELTIC NUMISMATICS IN SWITZERLAND.

We have before us a booklet entitled "Celtic Numismatics in Switzerland" written by our compatriot Mr. G. Wuthrich, M.I.E.E., and we understand that its contents are reprinted from "The Numismatic Chronicle and Journal of the Royal Numismatic Society."

This well written illustrated booklet is, undoubtedly, of great interest to students and lovers of numismatology, and although this excellent treatise might appeal only to a limited number of our readers, some of the paragraphs are of such historical value to a wider public, that we decided, having obtained the permission of the author, to reproduce some of the passages.

About the origin of Swiss people the booklet gives the following information, based on Mr. K. Keller-Tarnuzzer's learned treatise entitled "Die Herkunft des Schweizervolkes."

" This study repudiates vehemently a misstatement widely propounded to the effect that there are German/Swiss, French and Italian Swiss and Romansch/Swiss grouped round the Gotthard. One only requires to read the study just mentioned to appreciate, nay, to become convinced of, the existence since time immemorial of only one Switzerland, founded on a common stock. The misstatement referred to is contradicted by all laws of inheritance. Language is not synonymous with race; the Celts and the Raetians did not drive away or destroy the previous settlers, and the Romans did not cause the disappearance of the Celts and the Raetians. Such an effacement or annihilation did not occur to the Romans at the hands of the Burgundians and the Alemanni. The fact is and remains that the prehistoric inhabitants of Switzerland were the lake-dwellers, who never actually disappeared, though they had other races superimposed on them.

The mass of the Helvetic people must have rejected Roman Culture; Celtic peculiarities, the Celtic manner of life, retained their deep-rooted characteristics all through the Roman occupation. Blood is thicker than water (so also the English say)! The mixture of blood between prehistoric settlers and successive invaders always makes the original blood assert itself. Climate and deep-rooted manner of life do not permit the original blood to lose its controlling effect, however long the span of time. It is roughly in this way that Mr. Keller-Tarnuzzer argues, and I enthusiastically agree with him."

As to the activities of the Swiss as gold and silver miners in their homeland, the author writes:

" Gold washers were already busy on the rivers Emme and Luthern in the sixteenth century, and indeed long before. The Treasury of the City of Lucern owned on 30 March, 1656, gold derived from the sands of these two rivers amounting to 18,445 gold gulden; on 11 May, 1763, the amount was 26,000, and in 1778 the equivalent of 306 gold gulden was minted. The output of these washings does not appear to have been very important at any time.

In 1813 more than 12,000 gulden were spent in mining without producing more gold than sufficient

to mint 70 Grison Duplones, valued at 16 Swiss francs each, not therefore a particularly profitable gold mining operation!

The Abbey of Disentis, situated in the Grisons, worked a silver mine in the valley of Medelser as early as 1366, but a year later its operation was shown to be unremunerative.

The exploitation of another silver mine at Valdera between Pontalt and Martinsbruck, was let to Ritter Ulrich von Planta — the family I believe still exists — in 1347. In the district of Davos there is a hill-side called 'Silberberg,' where mining, too, was indulged in unprofitably."

We heartily recommend this lucid and competent account of Celtic Numismatics in Switzerland to all students and experts of Numismatology, and Mr. Wuthrich is to be congratulated for the way in which he has treated this matter.

SWITZERLAND'S CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD REHABILITATION.

Switzerland, true to her ancient tradition, to lend a helping hand, when and wherever help is needed, has until now extended their services to altogether fifteen countries.

The following figures (not complete) might prove of interest to our readers:

By :	Sums received in Swiss Francs.
France	17,250,000.—
Belgium	1,126,000.—
Holland	9,456,000.—
Italy	9,953,000.—
Austria	5,371,000.—
Germany	9,278,000.—
Germany (for displaced people)	1,059,000.—
Poland	2,395,000.—
Czecho-Slovakia	643,000.—
Hungary	1,220,000.—
Yugoslavia	2,210,000.—
Greece (for Greek orphans)	1,000,000.—

The Scandinavian countries, principally Norway and Finland, have received several millions worth of garments, linen, underclothing, boots, medicaments, bandaging material, etc., etc.

Thirty million francs have been earmarked for receiving sick people (mostly suffering from tuberculosis) in the various clinics of our country. In addition, the Swiss people have allocated altogether Frs. 145,000,000 for help to needy people in the various countries affected by the war.

As can be seen from these imposing figures, Switzerland is doing its fair share in helping to alleviate the misery so prevalent all over the world.

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