

34 years Swiss Observer and why

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34 YEARS SWISS OBSERVER AND WHY.*By an old Subscriber.*

Lord Palmerston on a memorable occasion expressed himself to the effect that "if Switzerland did not exist, it would have to be invented", and the same remark might be applied to the "Swiss Observer", who celebrated on the 4th of last month his 34th birthday.

There are still a number of Swiss in this country and notably in and around London, who remember the time we had no "Swiss Observer", no fortnightly devoted to the affairs of the Swiss Colony in London and in Great Britain, no Swiss paper published in England giving us the important news from home and forming a bond between the Swiss living in these hospitable isles.

Those were the days when we had to rely on occasional newspapers sent us from home and when, in practice, we found that such newspapers provided too much reading matter and were often left unread and even unopened. I remember accumulating piles of the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" unopened and unread. Finally I made a great effort and cut out the articles I particularly wanted to read, and that big bundle of articles littered up our drawing room at home until such time as she, who presides over the amenities of my home, put down her dainty feet and, alas and alack, those articles went into the fire, unread most of them.

With the birth of the "Swiss Observer" a great void was filled. This paper fortnightly by fortnightly, (and for many years, weekly) brings tidings of what happened at home, of all sorts of things. Elections to the Grand Council, elections to the Federal Parliament, votes taken upon new bills, all sorts of minor events and accidents, all these we now find presented to us, as concisely as possible every second Friday of the month in our own Swiss Newspaper published in London. Each fortnight thus we commune with our home land, we get to know what they are talking and thinking about at home, we get impregnated as it were by the spirit of Switzerland, we get over blood stirred by a tingling of the chords, oft dormant during the week, that unite us still to our HEIMAT and, thanks to the "Swiss Observer", we feel Swiss, purely and only Swiss for a span of time, every fortnight.

That alone, dear Readers, is worth a tremendous lot.

As our readers know, the Editor feels EUROPEAN in the first place, i.e., thinks it most important to be a citizen of EUROPE.

"But, in order to be a good citizen of the larger commonwealth of EUROPE", the Editor some time ago, wrote: "One must first be a good citizen of the smaller entity of the country in which one is born. There is no doubt in my mind that that feeling of "home" that we all know and which has for much too long a time been exploited in the pseudo-sacred name of patriotism, is a feeling which has its root in the soil from which we spring."

— Brave words —

To feel purely Swiss for a short while now and again, is vitally important for Swiss living abroad, because they thereby renew their strength of the emotions which can only be got from contact with one's native soil and if such contact is impossible

directly, the next best thing surely is to obtain it through a medium such as the "Swiss Observer" and in the manner explained above.

If we Swiss believed in decorating people who have deserved well of the country, the founders and the Editor of the "Swiss Observer", would receive a medal of honour. To carry a paper like this for 34 years on their shoulders, mainly with the aid of purely honorary collaborators, is a task as difficult as one might well imagine. To shoulder on top of that the financial responsibility and the losses, which during the first few years were inevitable, has put their patriotism to the highest test.

Since the end of the twenties, the Publishers have found a staunch and extremely valuable Editor in our friend Mr. A. Stauffer, known to our readers as "ST". His articles have brightened up the paper a good deal and his biographical reminiscences have endeared him to the readers.

But what of our READERS? They, of course, pay a small subscription which provides them with a fortnightly tonic for a whole year. Good value, to be sure. But why don't they, in their turn, DO SOMETHING for the "Swiss Observer"? Why do not they write articles for publication, letters to the Editor, etc., why don't they send in criticisms and complaints, so that we could read them in our next issues.

There is another way by which the readers may help, that is by getting new subscribers. I am informed that there are still several hundreds of Swiss who are not subscribers to the "Swiss Observer", although they live in England. Shame!

I think a birthday gift from the Readers might well take the form of a resolution whereby each reader promises to find at least one new subscriber! If you, dear Reader, do that, you are serving a double purpose. Firstly, you help the "Swiss Observer" to carry on and to improve, and secondly, you help yourself, because you will in time receive more enjoyment from reading your "Swiss Observer".

And remember, to help the "Swiss Observer" is a patriotic task! Patriotic in the best sense of the word.

U.B.

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