

Raclette - the "national dish"

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): **- (1962)**

Heft 1414

PDF erstellt am: **02.06.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-692210>

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The University of Geneva has bestowed five new honorary doctorates: on David A. Morse, director of the International Labour Office; Xavier Givaudan, industrialist and Hon. President of the French Chamber of Commerce in Switzerland; Pierre Burgelin, professor of philosophy at the University of Strasbourg, for his work "Die Existenzphilosophie bei J. J. Rousseau"; Robert Derathe, professor of philosophy at Nantes, also for his writings on Rousseau; and on Bernard Guyon, professor of French literature at the University of Aix-Marseille, for his commentary on the "Nouvelle Héloïse".

The Italian Society for Obstetrics and Gynaecology has made Prof. Dr. Robert Wenner, Basle, an Honorary Member.

The Medical Faculty of the Swedish University of Uppsala has conferred an honorary degree for medicine on Prof. Hans Goldmann, director of the Berne University Clinic. This doctorate was given on the occasion of the 100th birthday of the famous Swedish oculist A. Gullstrand, a Nobel prize winner in 1911. Dr. Goldmann has considerably improved a special instrument evolved by the Swede and is responsible for the present high standard of biomicroscopy of the eye.

Another doctor, Prof. Dr. Federico Andina, chief surgeon at the district hospital of Locarno and lecturer at the University of Berne, has been made a member of the Senate of the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences.

Pope John XXIII has honoured Wilhelm Fillinger from Kriegstetten (SO), for 16 years Swiss missionary at Paispamba-Cauca (Colombia), by creating him "Papal Secret Chamberlain".

Finally, several honorary citizenships have been conferred recently. The village of Densbueren (AG) has made Miss Hulda Schenker, who retired after 38 years of teaching, an Honorary Citizen of the commune.

The commune of Fluelen (URI) has bestowed the same honour on Regierungsrat, now Landamann, Josef Mueller, Naefels, and his wife.

Lastly, the writer Hermann Hesse has been awarded Honorary Citizenship of Montagnola, the Ticinese village where he has been living for over forty years.

Mariann.

(Based on news items mostly supplied by ATS.)

REMINDER

A number of our subscribers are in arrears with their subscriptions. We should be most grateful if they would kindly send in their renewals as soon as possible. With the rising cost of printing and material we depend more than ever on the support of our readers. We shall gladly send specimen copies of "The Swiss Observer" to friends and relatives who might be induced to become subscribers. May we also suggest that the paper would make an attractive present to Swiss living in this country as well as to English friends who are interested in Switzerland and in the happenings in the Swiss Colony here.

RACLETTE — THE "NATIONAL DISH" IN THE CANTON OF VALAIS

When the people of the Canton of Valais, Switzerland, want to have a good time with their friends, they hike to a beautiful spot, build a fire, and roll up a huge wheel-like Swiss cheese, one of those delicious, melt-in-your-mouth varieties, made with care by hardy mountain shepherds. Then the fun begins. Wielding a mighty knife, the "master of ceremonies" slices the cheese in two semicircular halves, while the others in the party crowd around for a sniff, voicing an expert appraisal of the colour and texture and an equally qualified opinion as to the forthcoming gastronomic delight. Now both halves of the giant cheese are set down near the glowing coals of the fire, the cut face towards the heat. In a few moments, when the cheese begins to melt, the hot sticky mass is scraped off on to a plate and handed to the first in the waiting group. After a grind or two on the pepper mill, the one who is lucky enough to be first winds a bit of his molten cheese on to a fork and begins to eat with epicurean delight.

The native Valaisan will, likely as not, take his first bite with his eyes closed, in a devout silence punctuated by an "ah" of the keenest enjoyment. Meanwhile more cheese has melted, and one after another the members of the party are served, turn and turn about, in strict impartiality. All are happy, and as the evening wears on, the rocks of the mountains round about echo back the sonorous voices of the group singing songs, as they wait for the next round.

Among all Switzerland's culinary specialties, raclette holds a high place, and a holiday in Switzerland is really not complete without a trial of this Valaisan national dish.

*S.B.
(S.N.T.O.)*

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