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Autor: [s.n.]

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650 YEARS OF SWISS CONFEDERATION.

1291 - AUGUST - 1941.

THE SWISS CHARTER OF 1291.

"IN THE NAME OF GOD. WE THE MEN OF URI, SCHWYZ AND UNTERWALDEN, IN THESE EVIL TIMES AND FOR OUR BETTER PROTECTION, PROMISE AND SWEAR TO HELP ONE ANOTHER WITH ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE, WITH OUR LIVES AND POSSESSIONS, WITH MIGHT AND MAIN, AGAINST ANYBODY AND EVERYBODY WHO MAY THREATEN US WITH VIOLENCE AND INJUSTICE.

UNANIMOUSLY WE PROMISE ONE ANOTHER NOT TO TOLERATE ANY FOREIGN JUDGES IN OUR VALES. NO ONE OF US SHALL HARM THE OTHER'S LIFE AND POSSESSIONS. HE WHO HAS COVERED HIMSELF WITH GUILT, SHALL PAY THE PENALTY. IF DISSENSION ARISES AMONGST US, THE WORTHIEST FROM AMONG US SHALL MEET TOGETHER FOR MEDIATION. OUR CHARTER, CONCLUDED FOR THE COMMON WEAL OF ALL, WITH THE HELP OF GOD, SHALL LAST FOR EVER.

DONE IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD ONETHOUSANDTWOHUNDREDANDNINETYONE, IN THE BEGINNING OF THE MONTH OF AUGUST."

These are the chief provisions, in English translation, of the Swiss Charter of 1291, which was concluded shortly after the Oath of the Ruetli, where the men of the Vales of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden had joined together to form an eternal union. It very probably was preceded by a Charter dated 1240, which though is lost. The Charter of 1291, however, written in Latin, has been preserved and is now deposited in the archives at Schwyz, in a building which has been erected specially for this purpose.