

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK
Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom
Band: - (1934)
Heft: 644

Artikel: The Lucerne chronicle of Diebold Schilling
Autor: Ganz, Bruno
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-687185>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. [Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. [Voir Informations légales.](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. [See Legal notice.](#)

Download PDF: 14.03.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

A GREAT FRIEND OF SWITZERLAND

When the present issue reaches our readers, King Albert of the Belgians will have been carried to his last resting-place amongst all the pomp and ceremony which is due to a Royal Sovereign.

His country is rightly mourning not only a great King, but also a great man. He was the constitutional ruler *par excellence* of a democratic State, and as such he has gained the admiration of the whole universe, and especially of the Swiss people.

When in 1914 Belgium's neutrality was wantonly violated, he put himself at the head of his small and gallant Army to fight the intruder with determination; he shared every hardship and privation with the humblest of his subjects. There was only one aim: the aim to liberate his beloved country from foreign invasion.

To us Swiss such an act of heroism touches every heart, especially as we have gained our independence by continuous warfare against foreign oppressors. Belgium's neutrality was guaranteed by all the large foreign Powers, the same as Swiss neutrality; but this solemn pact was broken, and there was no other way open to a country which considers its national honour before any material gains, than to fight. This gallant little nation, though it lost the greater part of its territory at the commencement of the Great War, found a man who was strong enough to be a leader, and this leader was King Albert.

When the terrible struggle came to an end, Belgium's independence was restored, and once again the Royal Standard was hoisted. Many a man might have taken this as the culminating point of his life, resting afterwards on his laurels. Not so this great Soldier Monarch. With new vigour and a ceaseless energy, he set to work to heal the wounds which a merciless war had dealt to his people. Such devotion to duty not only endeared him to his own people, but also to all those who consider liberty to be the supreme inheritance of a free and unfettered country.

All too soon this noble heart has ceased to beat; all too soon these fearless eyes have closed.

Humanity can ill afford to lose such champions who are willing to shed their life blood so that nations can live in peace and comfort.

But what endeared this great ruler to us Swiss more than anything else was the ardent love which he shared with us in the majestic grandeur of our beloved mountains. Year after year he spent his well-merited hours of leisure in the mountainous parts of our homeland. Far away from the hustle of a great city, he sought rest and solace from the worries of State affairs amongst the giants of Alpine splendour.

To the mountains he must have lamented his sorrows; in the stillness of a mountain morn, he must have gained new inspirations to accomplish his responsible task. In the rocky part of his own country he has lost his life, and I feel sure that, had this end been prophesied to him, he would not have demurred. To him these rugged rocks were friends, and they embraced him on his last wanderings, and claimed him, alas, too soon, as one of them.

To history, King Albert will go down as a great statesman, and a grateful country will keep his memory ever-green. Flowers will adorn his last resting-place; Kings and Princes, Statesmen and Politicians will pay their last tribute at the sarcophagus; humbly will they bow their heads before a great King, and in this universal tribute Switzerland joins. Our country has lost in King Albert a great friend, and in many a humble mountain village the name of this Royal Mountaineer will be mentioned with affection and reverence.

Grief knows no boundaries. The sorrow of one member of the human family is the sorrow of all, and it is in that spirit that the Swiss Colony expresses its deepest sympathy to its sister Colony and to the Belgian Nation.

"Though God has raised me high, yet this I count the glory of my crown, that I have reigned with their love."

ST.

SWISS HOME FOR BIRMINGHAM CHILDREN.

A great development is likely in the near future of the Birmingham Children's Hospital scheme for treating delicate children, predisposed to the white scourge, in the health-giving air of the Swiss Alps. If the project fructifies it will be possible to extend the treatment to 100 children at a time. Unless, however, other fairy godfathers come forward to amplify the endeavours of Mr. Christian Kunzle and his work-people, the work will need the co-operation of other institutions of a like kind, for at the moment it looks as though Birmingham's contribution will be a matter of £6,000 a year—only half the total estimated cost—which would limit the participation of Birmingham children to 50 per cent. of the available accommodation.

The extension becomes possible by the availability on long lease of the spacious Montana Sports Hotel at Davos Dorf, with its accommodation for the requisite staff, medical, nursing and domestic, as well as a hundred little patients.

The names of Mr. and Mrs. Christian Kunzle will for all time be associated with this beneficent side of the Children's Hospital, however the work may develop. It will be recalled that in March of 1932 Mr. Kunzle placed at the disposal of the hospital (of which he was the newly-elected president) his château at Davos Dorf, in order that ailing children might be restored to full and complete health. By judicious extensions, the château afforded accommodations for some 30 children at a time, together with the necessary nursing staff, and at the end of the first year's work it was reported at the annual meeting of the hospital that 53 patients had been restored to health.

Mr. Kunzle's decision to devote a large sum to this work was the outcome of his mother's dying wish—that if God blessed him with this world's goods, he would regard his success as a sacred trust and work for others. He was then a lad in his native country, and great as is his love for England, he has always maintained his touch with Switzerland. Hence his acquisition of his home at Davos, with its many acres of mountain slope; this is the delightful place in

which thus far the work he initiated has been carried on, with the unceasing help of his fellow governors and of Mr. Harold Shrimpton, the house governor, and the very loyal staff at the Ladywood hospital.

Next month the Hospital Board of Management will consider in its details the new proposal, with all its pros and cons as to financial responsibility. The monetary aspect of the proposal is, of course, the outstanding one. There is a covenanted subscription of £1,500 a year from Mr. Kunzle, with £500 a year more from his work-people, who take the keenest possible interest in the home at the château. Other sources of revenue in Birmingham, actual and potential, swell the total sum known to be available to £6,000 a year, which is only half of the estimated annual cost. Even if it took a full year to restore each child, the cost would be £120 per healthy child; this takes no account of the offset figure representing a child's keep and care when suffering ill-health. Moreover, the average "cure" is much more rapid.

The Montana Sports Hotel is eminently adapted for the purpose, and beautifully situated. It stands on high ground, very near the mountain railway station, and was originally built as a sanatorium, having been converted into an hotel a few years ago for the benefit of the many who flock to Switzerland for the winter games. The post office of Davos Dorf is near, so is the château at which the work began, and where it is still carried on.

Should it be found necessary to invite other children's hospitals to participate in the benefits of the scheme, there will be no difficulty in finding them. Already a few children from other places have enjoyed the benefits, and letters sent to Mr. Shrimpton—one from an institution operating in the crowded slums of London, for instance—set forth the astonishment of the authorities there at the marvellous benefits accruing from a stay at Davos Dorf.

In any case, the scheme is likely to be worked entirely under the aegis of the Children's Hospital in Birmingham, co-operating authorities contributing the cost of their patients on a per capita basis.

Birmingham Daily.

THE LUCERNE CHRONICLE OF DIEBOLD

SCHILLING.

By Paul Ganz.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the Swiss Confederation was successfully holding its own in European politics, Swiss art reached its most characteristic expression in the sketch-like nature studies of two masters, in whose work the beginnings of modern book illustration may be traced. Urse Graf of Solothurn and Niklaus Manuel Deutsch of Berne, in their pen-drawings have portrayed contemporary life and customs with an acuteness of perception which almost borders on caricature. Every situation is immediately grasped and rendered with dry, crude realism or biting cynicism. The delight in warfare, the hatred of their most dangerous enemies—the German "Landsknechte"—are clearly shown both in picture and in the written word. But the novelty of their work does not lie only in the choice of subject, but in the highly developed power of observation which depicts men as individuals just as surely and correctly as the Swiss landscape with all its characteristic features. Nowhere else at this period do we find work so true to nature, though we must look to the courts of the French kings and princes, especially to the court of the Dukes of Burgundy, with which Switzerland was often in close contact, for the artistic inspiration leading to this development during the course of the fifteenth century. Basel was an important art centre on the Upper Rhine—a centre which produced a number of well-known masters, such as the engraver E. S. Konrad Witz, and a contemporary of the young Dürer who still remains anonymous, from whom is derived the dispassionate element on which this new style—so typical of Swiss art—was modelled.

The temperamental drawings of Urse Graf and Niklaus Manuel, who studied art in Basel, are now universally known, but a large number of their contemporaries still remain anonymous. They are but little known in their own country, although their vivacious representations of the events of the past are often original and strikingly realistic.

The art of illustration properly so-called developed rapidly in the State Chronicles which became so fashionable after the victorious Burgundian wars. The Town Councils of the victorious cities had illustrated chronicles written by their secretaries in which the most important events of contemporary history were portrayed in text and picture. They may have taken as models the numerous illuminated MSS. which fell into the hands of the Swiss during these wars—illuminated chronicles in which Charles the Bold and his ancestors described the wars of the Greeks and Romans as though waged by themselves.

In this way the first famous Chronicle of Diebold Schilling (three volumes), commissioned by the Mayor and Councillors of the town of Berne, came into being. The third volume is largely taken up by the secretary's own experiences during the Burgundian wars, but it is still illustrated in the primitive style of the fifteenth century. Further artistic development is shown in the Chronicles of the town of Lucerne produced a quarter of a century later, on which the author, a nephew of the Berne Chronieler, the chaplain Diebold Schilling the Younger, was engaged during the years 1508-1513. His father, Hans, lived until 1460 as miniature painter and writer in Hagenau, where he worked in the studio of Diebold Laufer and signed a number of illuminated works with his full name.

Through his father and uncle the younger Schilling became acquainted with the art of book illustration evolved in Alsace under the influence of the neighbouring State of Burgundy, and was well qualified to depict with pen and brush anything his superiors might commission him to do. Like Graf and Manuel, Schilling was one of those restless spirits who gave themselves up without restraint to a life of adventure and excess, and therefore often came in conflict with the law. Schilling as artist was keenly alive and represented things as they really were. His narratives are remarkable for observation of detail, and, at the same time, he aims at giving adequate and powerful expression to the subject as a whole. He is especially successful in his portrayal of a crowd, whether gathered in the market-place of a town or in troops about to enter the battlefield. He knew the daily life of the Swiss people, both indoor and out, from his own experience. We hear the columns marching through the streets or carefully along narrow paths over high mountains; we are carried to the battlefield with its clash and roar and to the quiet of the lonely mountain valley in which a monastery stands, or perhaps a poor peasant gathers in his hay.

The Swiss Chronicle of Diebold Schilling of Lucerne is an imposing volume of 453, mostly full-size, illustrations, all painted in body colour. Its reproduction was brought out on the occasion of the 600th anniversary of the entry of Lucerne into the Swiss Confederacy. The great number

(Continued on next page, column three).