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THE 13th LANDSGEMEINDE OF THE SWISS IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND

Since 1948 our compatriots in the North of England have been meeting annually on the third Sunday of June at Hebden Bridge, half-way between Leeds and Manchester, for a stroll through the lovely hills of the Pennines to a meadow at Hardcastle Crag and to participate in a simple little patriotic gathering there, known as our "Landsgemeinde". It was our beloved Prof. Jean Inebnit, formerly of Leeds University and now, in his retirement, entirely devoted to his important international relief work, who initiated this charming manifestation of our patriotic unity, far from the home-land, which was readily supported by the Swiss societies of Manchester, Leeds and Bradford as well as the smaller groups of Liverpool and Birmingham.

This year the gathering at Hardcastle Crag, which took place on 18th June, was somewhat enlarged by the presence of the presidents and representatives of Swiss societies and organisations in London, as for the first time they had met in Manchester the evening before at a Presidents' Meeting. Thus, some 150 compatriots, including wives and children, forgathered at the starting point at Hebden Bridge at 10 a.m. on this lovely day of June. The weather was kind to us, the grey clouds of the North lifting frequently to allow the sun to light up the woods and pastures along the Hebden brook accompanying the gay groups of Swiss families and friends in the opposite direction. For a fleeting hour or two we could imagine ourselves walking up one of our little Swiss valleys, the friendly mountain stream murmuring sweetly along our mossy path, until we had to leave it below us in order to gain the height of our "Grütli" in Yorkshire, with a cosy "Bergwirtschaft" to complete the happy illusion.

After a copious rest and picnic all around the hillside the company gathered on the small meadow evidently formed by providence for our delegation and our modest act of devotion to the land of our fathers. The Rev. P. K. Wipf, of our Swiss Church in London, conducted a short service and prayer which, to many, was the most moving moment of the day. Thereupon Prof. Inebnit took charge of the little ceremony, consisting simply of calling upon the men and women of each Canton in chronological order of their entry into the Confederation to come forward into the circle of the Landsgemeinde.

It was at the first call for those of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden that a magnificent Landsknecht in red, white and black costume made his surprise appearance with a masterful "Trommelwirbel" which was repeated as each cantonal contingent stepped forward into the ring. It was none other than the famous drummer of Basle, Dr. Berger, who had taken the trouble to make his way north from London for this occasion, where he had participated in a B.B.C. concert of Swiss music. Quite unexpectedly he burst upon his compatriots at Hardcastle Crag, who, of course received him most enthusiastically.

In a few simple words Prof. Inebnit expressed the unique sense of unity that had brought us together, of our happiness in the knowledge of Switzerland's important role in this troubled world and of our gratitude which we can best show by helping other, less happy, countries in relieving hunger and distress. On this sincerely inspiring note the Landsgemeinde without any business of state to transact concluded. The national flag, which for a while had proudly flown above the gathering, was carefully



"Our Grütli in Yorkshire"

rolled up and the company began to wander back to Hebden Bridge in friendly groups and conversation, some taking the high path along the crest of the hillside, some again following the gay brook down the gentle valley.

At Hebden Bridge a sumptuous "high tea" awaited us in the Civic Hall, at which we were honoured by the presence of the presidents of the local authorities on whose territories we had been privileged to forgather: the chairman of the Hepton Rural District Council, Councillor Broome, and the vice-chairman, Mrs. Walton, the chairman of Hebden Royd Urban District Council, Rev. Barnes. The President of the Swiss Club Manchester, Mr. B. Simon, greeted the company and the guests of honour, to which the Rev. Barnes responded with a charming speech in praise of Switzerland. Councillor Broome spoke in admiration of the Pestalozzi village at Trogen as a particularly happy manifestation of the spirit of Swiss humanity. Our Ambassador, Monsieur Armin Daeniker, who had participated with Madame Daeniker in the day's enterprise, expressed his pride in the moving testimony of devotion to the home-country witnessed at Hardcastle Craggs and his gratitude to the people of Yorkshire for lending us their lovely meadow to become "our Grütli" for a couple of hours once a year.

The bonne-bouche of this high tea — in the shape of Guetzli from the Swiss confiseur J. Sohm of Oldham — consumed, the gathering finally broke up, happy and contented. By car or train or bus each one of this motley crowd of unmistakable sons and daughters of Switzerland, however long they may have lived in this hospitable island country or even if they were born here, made for home in all directions.

It was a memorable experience in which we were privileged to share. It was made doubly agreeable for the visitors from London by the kind welcome extended

to us by our compatriots of the North. They will receive any and every Swiss with the same friendliness on future occasions at their "Landsgemeinde". E.

SWISSAIR HOSTESS'S 15th Anniversary

Mile millionaires among airline captains are not infrequent; mile millionaire air hostesses are a little rarer, considering that the average air hostess's working life is around two to three years. Then most leave to get married!

One Swissair hostess, however, Miss Gertrud Keller, has just completed 15 years' flying. In 1946 she joined the Swiss company — in 1934 Swissair had been the first airline in Europe to employ air hostesses — and has since flown more than three million miles and spent 12,915 hours in the air. In her fifteen years she has seen every phase of Swissair's expansion. She served on board the DC-4s when Swissair temporarily flew to Johannesburg in 1947. Two years later she was one of the first hostesses on the North Atlantic when Swissair's DC-4s took 21 to 27 hours to fly between Switzerland and New York. To-day DC-8 jets take seven to eight hours.

Miss Keller now serves on the Far East route and occasionally on routes in Europe.

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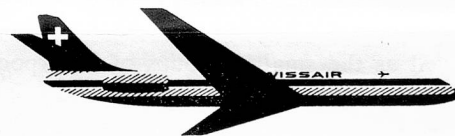


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