

Swiss citizens in foreign countries

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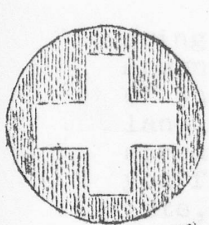
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SWISS CITIZENS IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

Surveying the map of the world, we find our country, far away from every sea and surrounded by mighty Powers, to be very small and insignificant. Nevertheless, it has made a splendid name for itself with its manifold industries, the products of which are renowned in every part of the globe. But there is another reason why Switzerland bears such a good reputation. The wanderlust of the Swiss has been known for hundreds of years. Their conduct in civil life, brave deeds in battle when fighting for foreign rulers, have given our country a name of which we may justly be proud. If we consider the large number of Swiss who live in foreign countries, it is no surprise that some of them have come into great prominence in their adopted countries.

At the end of 1932, about 14,400 Swiss lived in France, equal to the entire population of the Canton of Fribourg. In Germany there are as many as the population of Schaffhausen. England's quota compares with that of Appenzell A.R. Altogether nearly 400,000 Swiss earn their living outside of the Homeland; that is about one-tenth of the population. Supposing the Swiss in foreign countries were entitled to representation in the Federal Parliament, their claim would amount to one Minister of the Cabinet and eighteen members of Parliament.

It is about 500 years since the everlasting exodus began; first, almost solely to fight for foreign rulers. Naturally, high pay enticed them into foreign services, but true to their motto "Honour and Faith" they attained a great name as fighters. When a Minister said to Louis XIV: "Sire, with all the moneys that your Majesty pays the Swiss, you could have plastered the road from Paris to Basle," the Commissioner of the Guard, Stuppa of the Grisons, replied: "Sire, with all the blood we Swiss have shed for you, you could fill a channel from Basle to Paris."

Between the 16th and 17th century, Swiss began to try their luck in other capacities besides soldiering. To distant parts, far away from their Fatherland, they went to find fortune. During the middle of the 19th century, emigration became somewhat irregular, due to economic crisis and other circumstances, but as time went on it increased again very fast. During 1890-1900 about 14,000 emigrated to America alone. Emigration became an epidemic, which threatened the country with great poverty. Just before the great war, it reached such a degree that in the upper Valais and Central Switzerland some villages were nearly emptied

owing to the number of people who departed to the U.S.A., Brazil, Argentine, and New Zealand. In America you find towns, the names of which will remind you of home - Tell City, Glarus, New Switzerland, Vevey, New Berne, etc. With a multitude of 400,000 Swiss spread over all the continents of the world, is it surprising that you find countrymen of great prominence everywhere? Industrialists, of many kinds, too numerous to mention, are settled in all parts. Nevertheless, let us quote some instances where high positions have been reached:

LOUIS BASSETT, after holding the position of tutor in a rich Rumanian family, became the King's private secretary. In 1930 he celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of his position. A hundred years before, Frederic Cesar de la Harpe was the tutor and intimate friend of the Czar of Russia, Alexander II. In England a Hans Heinrich Fuessli (English Fusely) was a Director of the Royal Academy.

In Egypt, we find during the 19th century the name of JOHANN LUDWIS BURKHARDT, an explorer of great renown, who was so well versed in the Arabic languages, as well as customs, that he was very often taken for an Arab. Walter Munzinger of Olten was another explorer. The Egyptian Government made him the GOVERNOUR of the Eastern Soudan. Well remembered is the world-famous ALFRED JLG, who was the right hand of King Menelik of Abyssinia, endeavouring to civilize his country to some extent.

In South Africa we find a celebrity of more recent times, SIR ARNOLD THEILLER of the Entlebuch, who conducted a very successful campaign against Rinderpest, and was knighted by the King of England. About two years ago he visited New Zealand, and will be remembered by some of our members. He died a few months ago. By quoting the U.S.A. we open a very large selection, from which we shall choose only a few. Recently a film was shown in Auckland named "SUTTERS GOLD". It may surprise you to know that Johann August Sutter was a Swiss who settled in California in 1840, when this country still belonged to Mexico. Sutter obtained huge tracts of land which he named "Nueva Helvetica". He was appointed Captain, later Military Gouvernor with the rank of a General. When gold was discovered on his property, miners of all nationalities invaded his land and, in spite of his protests, appropriated it. He died a poor and disappointed man. In New York we find O.H.AMMANN of Schaffhausen, Chief Engineer and builder of the great Hudson Suspension Bridge.

Men of Swiss extraction have found positions of renown in South American States. Eduard Scherrer of Aargau, and Jose Guggiari of Tessin, both held the position of PRESIDENT of Paraguay, the highest office obtainable. Admiral Emil Belart, was the highest Commander of the Brazilian Navy, and a native of Brugg; he died recently in Rio, Brazil. In Batavia, the Dutch East Indies, we find Charles J. Bernard, who held a high position in the Department of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce. Australia knows of a Swiss, Henri A. Tardent, who left his homeland at the age of sixteen, and when 75 was still able to speak his French-Swiss dialect as fluently as when he left. He was a well-known explorer and botanist.

In New Zealand we are not without celebrities of days gone by. Professor Henri Suter of Zurich, a well-known conchologist, wrote a very interesting book on New Zealand sea-shells for the New Zealand Government. At his death, his wonderful collection found its way to the Wanganui Museum, where it is on view at the present time. A son of Professor Suter, I am glad to say, is a member of our Society. Another man of prominence was Mr. V. Senn, who occupied a very responsible position in the Postal Department.

With these two New Zealand Swiss I shall close, although hundreds of others in many lands could be mentioned. But let me say that men of such calibre have given our dear old country the great name and the great respect it deserves. In such wonderful ways have Swiss in foreign countries served their beloved Homeland to which they remained faithful unto death.