

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: - (1924)

Heft: 136

Rubrik: Literary Page

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LITERARY PAGE

Edited by Dr. PAUL LANG.

All letters containing criticisms, suggestions, questions, &c., with regard to this page should be addressed to the "Literary Editor."

EIN HEIMWEHLIED.

[Ein eifriger Leser bittet uns, das nachfolgende, ihm von einem Freunde zugestellte Gedicht abdruckken, das, wie er meint, manchen Londoner Schweizern zusagen dürfte.]

Wenn du noch eine Heimat hast,
So nimm den Ranzen und den Stecken,
Und wand're, wand're ohne Rast,
Bis du erreicht den teuren Flecken.
Und strecken nur zwei Arme sich
In freud'ger Sehnsucht dir entgegen,
Weint eine Träne nur um dich,
Spricht dir ein einz'ger Mund den Segen.
Ob du ein Bettler -- du bist reich,
Ob krank dein Herz, dein Mut beklommen,
Gesunden wirst du allsgleich,
Hörst du das süsse Wort "Willkommen."
Und ob verweht auch jede Spur,
Zeigt nichts sich deinem Blick, dem nassen,
Als grünbevlöbt ein Hügel nur,
Von allem, was du einst verlassen --
O, nirgends weint es sich so süss,
So weit dich deine Füsse tragen,
Als da, wo still ein Herze ruht,
Das einstens warm für dich geschlagen.

BERNESE HEIMATKUNST.

Of the great number of writers of dialect and semi-dialect which the huge and powerful canton of Berne has produced within the last generation or so, *Rudolf von Tavel* is very likely the most revered and beloved, at any rate, so far as fiction is concerned. To tell the truth, I have not read "Haselmuus," which, it seems, has delighted all and sundry. "Haselmuus" is one of those historic tales in which von Tavel describes, in racy Bernese Deutsch, the period around 1800, the customs and ways of the Bernese people of this time. The "Haselmuus" is no animal, though. It is a girl, the richest and jolliest girl of the whole canton, and "Haselmuus" she is called because she has eyes like this dainty creature. Well, as I have said, I have not read the "Haselmuus," but I have read this year's volume of the prolific writer, "Unspunne" (A. Francke, Bern), which represents a sequel to the "Haselmuus." The writer takes us to the time of the Helvetic constitution and shows us the effect of the political events on a number of persons of high, medium and low rank. There you have representatives of

DER TUEFEL BIM CHARTESPIELE.

(Aus Hans Zulliger: "Unghüürig." A. Francke, Bern.)

Im Riedli z'Bolligen isch synerzyt es alts Spycherli gsi -- es isch jizte längsachte zämehcht -- wo niemer meh brucht het. Weder wil es es Bitzeli näbenuss gstanden isch, u me nid grad alles gsch het, wo zuechen u dünne glüfen isch, so sy de alben im Gadeli d'Pureboeben u d'Chnächte vor Umgäni zämeho, wo sie hei welle männelen u chartespielen u ne die Alten oder d'Meischtersliit nid hei sölle druberyche gheie. Bsungers, wes öppe het e Schlegleten abgetzt, sy sie de a däm abgläggen Oertli bas gsi as z'mitts i de Hüesere. Sie hei enangere gäbig chönnen erdopplen u d'Grünge verschla, bis e njedere sälber unen isch zum Verstag cho, ohni dass der Landjeger het zueche müesse. U we sie na re Chläpfete heigange sy, so hei sie vor em Stägli abgmaht, wenn dass sie ume eso zu ne re churzwylige Dorfete welli zämehöcke, u die, wo-n-enangeren em erschten erspüschtet hei gha, hei nachär zäm d'Häng geschüttlet, wie we sie scho z'mörderisch hätti i ds Amerika ubere müesse.

Weder i bi ne chly vom Trom abcho.

Henu: es Mal sy ren emel ou nes par vo dene junge Chnüesse gsi, die hei nid möge gwarde, bis am ne Samschti z'Abe -- oder gobs ne wägen Runde gsi isch, was wei i -- ytem, die het es scho a de Frytge i sälb Spycherli zoge. Ihrenen es Halbrotze hei mitenangeren abgredt, sie welle de uf ene bsungerbari Art chlopfen u e kem angere säge wie, de wärdi me nid verwütscht u de chöm de nid e njedere cho sy. Schmudernase sueche strecke, u de syg es de gmüetleger bim Bynögele.

Eimisch sy ihrene vier vonne am Tisch ghocket u hei uf die angere wartet. Was a d'Türe dopplet, brüele sie:

"Numen yche, zuechen a Tisch,
We de nid der Geissbock bisch!"

Dä dusse chunnt yche, nimmt us em Gänterli sy Schnapsglesli, schäicht eis y, sürggelet es Schlicheli u zündet ds Tubackgöni a.

"Mi muess aber lang uf e Bäneli göie hinecht," het üse Mälcher uffigärt, dä isch sälbe Rung ou derby gsi -- un äbe vo däm hani die Gscheidt.

"Bis dä ländtwylig Tschalpi chunnt, chönnte mer eigetlech e chly bänke!" meint du eine u luegt im Stübli ume, obs ächt süsch niemer ghört

the old régime, you have the poor tenant farmers, you have French soldiers and officers, women folk and men folk. The plot is that Haselmuus' guardian wishes to prevent her, by hook or crook, from marrying Xandi, her faithful lover. He does not succeed, however, for nothing prevails against a constant love. At last she needs get her Xandi, who has become a captain in the regiment Roverea. The story closes with that great festival of Unspunnen, which took place on August 17th, 1805, and which meant a reconciliation of the different classes of the Bernese people and the joining of hands for a better future. There the Haselmuus dazed everybody's eyes by her charm and her beauty, democratic and aristocratic at the same time.

Von Tavel's book has its value especially in the great number of types with which it makes us acquainted. We do, of course, only catch a glimpse now and then of the inner life of the persons concerned. More often we only see some action and hear the muttering of some more typical than individual remark. Though von Tavel's characters are living in a way, they do not touch us deeply, as they are shaped too much on a ready-made model. What we feel abundantly is the absurdity of petty interests and intrigues in a time of such unrest and decisive changes as he depicts. Yet, this idea never enters the minds of these people. Their whole philosophy consists in the burning wish that the foreigner shall leave the canton of Berne as soon as possible. Nearly all of von Tavel's characters see history from the frog's perspective. But, then, they will find good company amongst many of our contemporaries.

The solid and consistent apostle of provincial writing which von Tavel is has not failed to make quite a number of disciples share his outlook. They all have found a cosy and warm shelter under the publishing roof of A. Francke, Bern. The self-glorification of the peasant and the aristocrat, which is the key of the Bernese Heimatkunst, is for once happily interrupted by a little booklet which we owe to *Hans Zulliger*. It deals with ghost stories. "Unghüürig" is a set of old stories from the Bantigerbiet, collected by one who liked to extract from old, dwarfish women the core of their secrets. It is not so easy nowadays, with radio-telegraphy, the cinema and all those mysteries made by man, but not understood by him, to maintain respect for ghosts. Old shrivelled women must, therefore, be treated with a particular care to make them pour forth the golden tales. They have become shy, because people have grown to laugh at them, and with their shyness their memory has become defective. Hans Zulliger is, however, a particularly clever expert. He has succeeded in setting before us about twenty little tales which have all something to do with ghosts, though none of them is so hair-raising as a similar story by E. A. Poe. Those ghost stories of the

canton Berne are all homely in a way, and they are told by a writer who writes his Bernese Deutsch as though he were talking on a Saturday evening by the huge family stove.

Quite another type of writer is *Emil Balmer*, who has published "D'Glogge vo Wallere, Schwarzbüergerschichte" (A. Francke, Bern). Last year we reviewed this author's book "Friedli" (No. 78 of *The Swiss Observer*) and drew the attention of our readers to the moral and descriptive qualities of the author.

There is a wisdom and an inner harmony in this new book, which is surprising when one considers that Mr. Balmer is spoken of as a young writer. However, he has sucked in most of what is best in the peasant tradition of Berne; its very distinct culture finds in him again a genuine and lovable representative. Balmer's tales contain a good deal of descriptive material and also a good deal of sentiment and moralism. He impresses us, therefore, as being somehow old-fashioned, but old-fashioned must not necessarily be thought of as a depreciative adjective. The old-fashioned writers if they lacked certain artistic accomplishments, at least had a genuine story-telling vein. Their writing often reminds you of the way a story is told orally. If you do not see scenes as plastic as you will, perhaps, in a story by a student of C. F. Meyer, the words which the characters use often ring truer, you hear them better. And it is and will for ever be a question of controversy whether the epic style should impress the eye rather than the ear, or *vice versa*. One thing which can be said with all certainty of Balmer's tales is that they impress the heart, and that seems, after all, to be essential to the craft of a man who is writing for the people and of the people. The stories of this author all being located in a district of Berne which is comparatively unknown, his books mean widening of the Bernese Heimatkunst. It is not only the Emmenthal where Gotthelf has found a worthy successor in Gfeller, that stands for Bernese Heimatkunst nowadays, various other districts of this powerful canton are coming into their own and have started breeding writers eager to glorify them.

We have finally to say a few words on a little "Feriengeschichte" ("Der Glockenmohr" by *Hedwig Kasser*, also published by A. Francke). In this story we see how a happy family of townspeople transport themselves to a chalet in the high mountains to spend their holidays. We learn much about the first explorations of a number of enterprising children. The story is told with a love for all the little events with which children on holiday are confronted and which to them mean as much as exaltations and disappointments in love and business mean to us. It should be the delight of every Swiss school-boy.

heigi, will dennemal ds Bänken as es nütguetzigs Spiel het gulten u die as liecht Täechli sy verbrüelet worde, wo me derby verwütscht het. "Es gschts ja hie niemer u mir sy unger üs -- u so müesse mer nid nunen eso dahocke wie nes Pfung Schmitz!"

Weder gob sie z'grächtem sy rätige worde, polets a d'Türe.

"Numen yche, zuechen a Tisch,
We de nid der Geissbock bisch!"

"Dä sälb bin i nid!" lachtet der Bänz, wo ychetrappet. Er ghört, wie sie vom Bänke stürme, chlefelet mit de Feufedryssger im Hosack u poletet: "Ja my tüüri Gott Seel, hiecht muess öppis loufe! Uesen Elter het dä Aben em Burdelefid es Muneli gäbig chönnen ahäichen, u mir hets du ou öppis möge länge! U wenn i der letscht Batze verchlopfeti!"

Chuum sy sie am Spiel, dopplet es no einisch. Alli sy erchlüpft u hei enangeren afa zwärts aluege. "Wele Mylion . . ." chüschetele eine. Un en angere chnirschet: "Dä was wyters gläferet het, däm wei mer de der Widersicht vo Dach yche strigle sälb, sälb isch sicher!"

Weder vor däm vorusse het kenen öppis welli derglyche tue.

"Numen yche, zuechen a Tisch,
We de nid der Geissbock bisch!"

Da chunnt es schitters Mäneli yche, wo kem vonne chember isch. Es bet es feischters Gsicht mit eme spitze Bärtli u tret e chly tschärpis es grüens Jegerhüethli. Druff isch e chrummi Güggl-fäderen ygsteckt.

Es geit gredi düer ds Gad, hocket zueche, hüschelele:

"I hilfene ou bänke!"

"Jä wär seit de, hie wärdi bänkelet?" ruret Bäneli.

"He-ghe! Wosch es uslougne?" lüchlet ds Mäneli.

"Ueberhoupt--hesch du de Chrusi?" schnuusset nen üse Mälcher füürtouben a.

"He-ghe, däich wohl hani, Reins u Grobs!" seit ds Mäneli u leit bigoscht es Hämpfeli Batzen un es Hämpfeli Dublen uf e Lade, lächlet, won er gseht, wie die Kärlisse d'Ougen ufschryssen u hüschelele ume: "Dörfit der öppe nid?"

"Meinschte, mir lajen is fötzle!" brüelet Bänz

u leit ou nes Hüüfeli Batzen uf e Tisch: "Das setzen ig!"

U du hei sie aag'fange. Dä Frönd het i ein yche gwunne. Das Hüüfeli Gäldt vor an ihm isch gäng wie grösser worde. Die Purschte sy nahdinah schier blutti worden un es isch ne nümme chouscher voreho.

Da lat eine vonne ne Charta gheie. Er chrummt si unger e Tisch u won er se wott ufha, gseht er, dass dä Frönd Geissescheiche het. Er erzeigt der Chlupf nid, won er gha het, weder er leit syner Charten ab u seit: "I muess gschwing voruse!"

Geit u chunnt nümme ume.

Gly druff passiert ds Glychen ame nen angere, dä merkt's, dass öppis nid sufer isch u macht si wie der erscht u der Streu. U so der dritt, der dritt, der viert un all angere -- u z'letscht isch niemer meh bi däm Mandli weder üse Mälcher. Touben isch er, wie nes buechigs Schytt, es stellt ihm ganz d'Ouge vüre, weder er tuet nüt derglychen u spielt wyters.

"He-ghe!" hüschelele albeneinisch ds Mäneli, wes unen es par Batze zu sym Hüüfeli strycht.

"Du bisch der Geissbock!" brüelet nen uf ds Mal der Mulch a, "süsch tätsch nid i ein yche gwinne! Das gloub wär wöll, dass das no mit rächte Dinge zuegai!"

"Nei, dä bin i nid!" lächlet ds Mäneli. "He-ghe, heschten öppen angänds e ke Gäldt meh?"

Weder üse Mälcher het scho ume d'Charten ufno. Du gheit ihm eini achen un er gseht die Geissescheichen ou. Er isch nie chlupfige gsi, un ou das Mal het er sech d'Angscht nid la uber Strumpfbänglen ueche wachse. Langsam het er vom Boden uf, hanget über e Tisch, luegt däm Mäneli stober i d'Ougen u seit ihm gsatzlig:

"U wenn es nid der Geissbock isch,
Su hocket der Tüfel hinger em Tisch!"

Derzue chnodet er uf ds Blatt, dass d'Batzen i höche Gümphen uf e Stüblisboden use fahre.

Das frönde Mäneli lat e Göiss los, wird chlyner u chlyner, u z'letscht gumpet numen e schwarzi Chatz vom Bänkli. D'Türe geit vonihmsilber uf u die Chatz schnuusset use was gisch was hesch.

Uese Mulch het das Gäldt zäm gramisiert un eme njedere vo syne Gspane sy Teel wieder ume gä. Es isch e ke Halbbatze meh un a kene minger gsi, as sie vorane gha hei. . . .