

# A short history of Switzerland

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## A SHORT HISTORY OF SWITZERLAND.

The history of Switzerland, unlike that of other European countries, is marked by no clear-cut divisions brought about by dynastic influences and great political upheavals. Rather is it a continuous process of fusion by which vastly different parts have been welded into a whole, a fusion achieved not by coercion or conquest but by the free will of the people concerned. The result is a federal state which, founded more than 650 years ago, has stood the test of time.

To many English visitors, Switzerland is a land of great natural beauty, the acknowledged playground of Europe, a place for holidays, mountaineering and winter-sports. Of its history they often are sadly ignorant except, possibly, for a nebulous notion that William Tell and his apple had something to do with it. It is for them that Miss B. Bradfield has compiled her "*A Pocket History of Switzerland*," published by the Schweizer Spiegel Verlag, Zurich. She has done it admirably.

The author, Miss B. Bradfield, is a teacher of English residing in Geneva. She came to Switzerland when the League of Nations was flourishing and has lived there ever since. For ten years she wrote articles on the League for the "Children's Newspaper" and she has to her credit a history of Geneva and a guide book and history of Switzerland combined. She is one of those cultured English women who have come to know and love Switzerland and who like to tell other people about it.

Choosing the summit of the Rigi as an imaginary vantage point and assuming the ability to see in every direction for a distance of a hundred miles, Miss Bradfield surveys the land and tells the story of the inhabitants. In clear and simple language, using the present

tense, she traces the history of the Swiss people from the earliest times to the present day. She evokes the pre-historical settlements of troglodytes and lake dwellers, the Roman colonisation, the incursions of the Alemanns and the Franks, the scanty records of the dark ages and the coalescence, in 1291, of the forest cantons into the first Swiss confederation, consecrated by the Rütli oath. Thereafter the struggles against Austria and Burgundy, the Reformation, civil wars, the conception of neutrality, the impact of the French Revolution, and finally the constitutions of 1815 and 1848 and the development of the Confederation into the compact and successful democracy it is to-day.

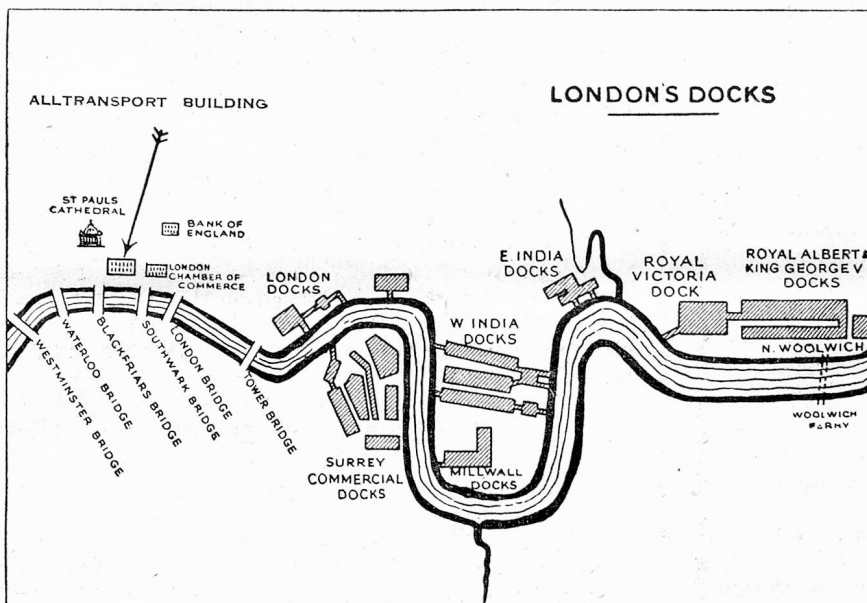
The Swiss, a heterogeneous body composed of different races, religions and languages, stubbornly independent, great fighters, with their internal jealousies and their family quarrels, yet united and filled with an intense love of liberty, such is the picture Miss Bradfield draws. She quotes the Burgomaster of Strasbourg: "You Confederates are wonderful people; even when you are quarrelling you are still united."

Printed in Switzerland, with a pleasing cover illustrating the Rütli landscape surmounted by the red and white Swiss flag, the little volume is obtainable from the distributors: F. Daeniker, 51 Boderstrasse, Zurich and W. H. Smith & Sons Ltd., Kingsway, London, W.C.2. The price is Sw.frs. 3.—

The clarity of style and the skilful condensation of the whole of Switzerland's historical past into no more than 64 pages makes the little book most attractive, not only to the English-speaking tourists for whom it is primarily intended, but also to the Swiss in Great Britain who may wish to refresh their memory by once again reviewing the stirring events that have shaped the history of their native land.

J.J.F.S.

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