

Sophie Wyss back home

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SOPHIE WYSS BACK HOME.

Sophie Wyss, has recently returned from a successful concert tour in Australia. She has been kind enough to give us a few impressions of her extensive travels, here they are:

"I found Switzerland in Australia! It never occurred to me, that I should meet compatriots of ours. One or two perhaps, but no organised clubs, no gatherings, no evidence that Swiss ideals and ways were kept alive in the families which had been in Australia for two or three generations. Yet, I found it was so. The Swiss emigrant families who came to Australia a century ago and those arriving recently have soon become good Australians, and yet never cease to be Swiss. — Blood is thicker than all the water in the oceans.—

All the Australian newspapers headlined me as "The Swiss Soprano." This came as a surprise to me, as I am "technically" British, having lived a score of years beside the Thames, opposite Hampton-Court. I have a son, who is a regular British officer. I suppose I am chiefly known as the protagonist of modern British folk song. No one has ever thought of me as "The Swiss Soprano" for a long time.

Thus I was deeply touched at being labelled in the newspapers of Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth as "Swiss."

During my stay I gave a half hours recital of Swiss songs, which was relayed all over the country. The Australian Broadcasting Commission had invited me to give a series of recitals every Sunday evening, naturally, I devoted one of the programmes to Swiss songs. It was the first time that such a thing had ever happened over the air in Australia. No Swiss singer had ever had such a chance before.

By this time, generous and hospitable Melbourne had taken me to her heart, I sang to Professor's and students of the University of Melbourne, amongst the audience were a number of Swiss, they heard the idiom of Swiss song, and the Swiss spirit reflected in the song, and they loved it. It was there that I met Mr. Pietzker, the veteran Swiss Consul.

But the greatest thrill of my whole tour was, when I was the guest of the Melbourne Swiss Colony. Melbourne is one of the six most beautiful cities in the world. At the top of Collins Street, which is a cross between the "Bahnhofstrasse" in Zurich and the "Champs Elysée" in Paris, you turn to the left and

you overlook St. Patrick's Cathedral and the classic pillared Parliament House of the state of Victoria. You enter a door beside a restaurant and climb a flight of stairs. There you find yourself in a very small Hall, with a little platform, at the back of which a large canvass covers the whole wall depicting the "Matterhorn" and Zermatt, a painting by our famous countryman, Ferdinand Hodler.

There I sang to them and they sang back to me. They knew all the answers, these people who had never seen Switzerland, and whose only knowledge of the homeland had been handed down to them from parents, grandparents or even great-grandparents, and we made the rafters ring.

Afterwards there was a real Swiss supper with sausages and beer. There was a male quartet and they sang as if they (or their parents) had never left Basle, Berne or Neuchâtel. In ordinary life they are good "Aussie Boys"; at home in the family circle, Swiss life continues. There were two "Wyss's" and one "Perret" to shake hands with me, my own family names. Thus they spread across the world — the old names — the old traditions.

My advice is, get in touch with them, there is a future for Swiss youth in this great new continent, which is developing more rapidly than any other land of youth, that is where the future lies."

SWISS JOURNALISTS IN LONDON.

The Swiss Journalists in London, met at a Luncheon at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1, on Thursday, January 27th, 1949.

Amongst those present were: Gottfried Keller, London Correspondent "Basler Nachrichten" and "Agence Télégraphique Suisse"; Dr. H. W. Egli, London Correspondent "Neue Zürcher Zeitung"; J. Menessier, London Correspondent "Journal de Genève"; W. Schütz, London correspondent "Der Bund" and "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" and Madame Schütz; Dr. Arnold Kuenzli, London Correspondent "National Zeitung"; J. Kessler, London Correspondent "Tribune de Genève"; H. Fleig, London Correspondent "Die Tat"; Th. Haller, "Landessender Beromünster"; A. Stauffer, Editor, "Swiss Observer".

There were also present: Mr. Schaffner, Head of the Swiss Trade Delegation, Dr. V. Umbricht, Swiss Legation and Monsieur S. Marquard, Swiss Legation.

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