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## AN ENGLISHMAN AT THE ZURICH "SECHSELUETE".

The Zurich "Sechselüte", that time-honoured annual festival, assumed in 1951, larger proportions than usual and acquired a special significance by reason of the fact that it coincided with the 600th anniversary of Zurich's entry into the Swiss Confederation.

Among the foreign visitors to the festival was Alderman B. J. Finnie, recently Mayor and to-day Deputy-Mayor of Bromley, in Kent, a well-known public figure in the Bromley district. In an interview after his return to London, Mr. Finnie gave an account of his impressions.

He was the honoured guest of Hermann Sprüngli (of chocolate fame) Master of the *Schiffleute Zunft*, the boatmen's guild, one of the ancient city corporations whose origin dates back to the middle ages. He seems to have been entertained right royally and to have been able to obtain a good view of all that was going on.

The Swiss have this in common with the Londoner: both are historically-minded and both dearly love a pageant. The Zurich pageant Mr. Finnie witnessed was certainly a magnificent and colourful spectacle. Many highlights of Zurich's historical past featured in it, from 1351 to modern times. The faithfully copied period dresses and uniforms, the glittering armour, the gay trappings of the horses and the many-coloured emblazoned banners, all this splendid pageantry of by-gone days was paraded through the crowded street, a history lesson in its most attractive form.

In the van of the procession, preceded by his heralds and trumpeters, rides Rudolf Brun, Burgomaster of Zurich, the man who, on the 1st May, 1351, concluded the pact that brought Zurich within the orb of the Swiss Confederation.

There is Hans Waldmann, another famous Burgomaster, with the fighting-men he, in 1476, led by forced marches to Murten to the assistance of the Swiss troops struggling against the Burgundian army.

The great shooting festival of 1504 is illustrated, an event of importance to historians because of a register then kept in connection with a lottery, a register still extant, in which the names and addresses of almost the whole population of Zurich are recorded.

Then the Reformation with Zwingli, Bullinger and other Divines; Froschauer with his printing

press; the artists of the 16th century; the men who in 1640—1660 built the great fortifications; Burgomaster Heinrich Waser who negotiated the treaty of 1663 with the French Monarchy, an arrangement which gave France her finest regiments and the Royal guard; Louis XIV with his ministers and generals in all their splendour.

Episodes of 1798, of the Napoleonic mediation, of the 1848 constitution, and many more interesting events in the history of Zurich.

A much applauded tableau shows a replica of the boat in which men from Zurich travelled to Strasbourg, not with fire and sword, but with a cauldron of *Hirsebrei*, millet soup, as a token of friendship and goodwill.

Afterwards, Mr. Finnie saw the traditional bonfire, symbolic, it is said, of the passing of the winter, with the galloping horsemen without whom the ceremony would not be complete.

In the evening, Mr. Finnie was the guest of honour at a banquet given by the *Schiffleute Zunft*. He delivered a speech, in English, which was warmly applauded by all.

At the airport, a few days later, Guildmaster Sprüngli came to bid Mr. Finnie farewell and offered him a draught of wine out of a beautifully wrought silver cup in the shape of a mermaid with a long, slender stem, a prized possession of the Guild.

Alderman Finnie returned to London from this, his first Swiss tour, a confirmed friend of Switzerland. He described his visit as a delightful and unforgettable experience and expressed his admiration, not only for the natural beauties of the land, but also for the wonderful hospitality he had received and the courtesy, the kindness and the simple charm of the people he had met.

### OUR NEXT ISSUE.

Our next issue will be published on Friday, July 13th, 1951. We take the opportunity of thanking the following subscribers for their kind and helpful donations over and above their subscription: W. Allenspach, C. H. Gallmann, P. A. Duvoisin, E. Hirt, Dr. Ch. Hagenbach, J. Dubs, J. Blaser, H. W. Schneider, F. B. Tschudy, Mrs. H. C. Cownie, Ch. G. Steyer, C. Schorno, M. Kirchhofer, A. Strittmatter, Mrs. A. R. Berry, C. E. Seinet, C. Nater, Mrs. F. M. Nussle, J. W. Reber, Ad. Schmid, H. Frederick.

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