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The Swiss Observer

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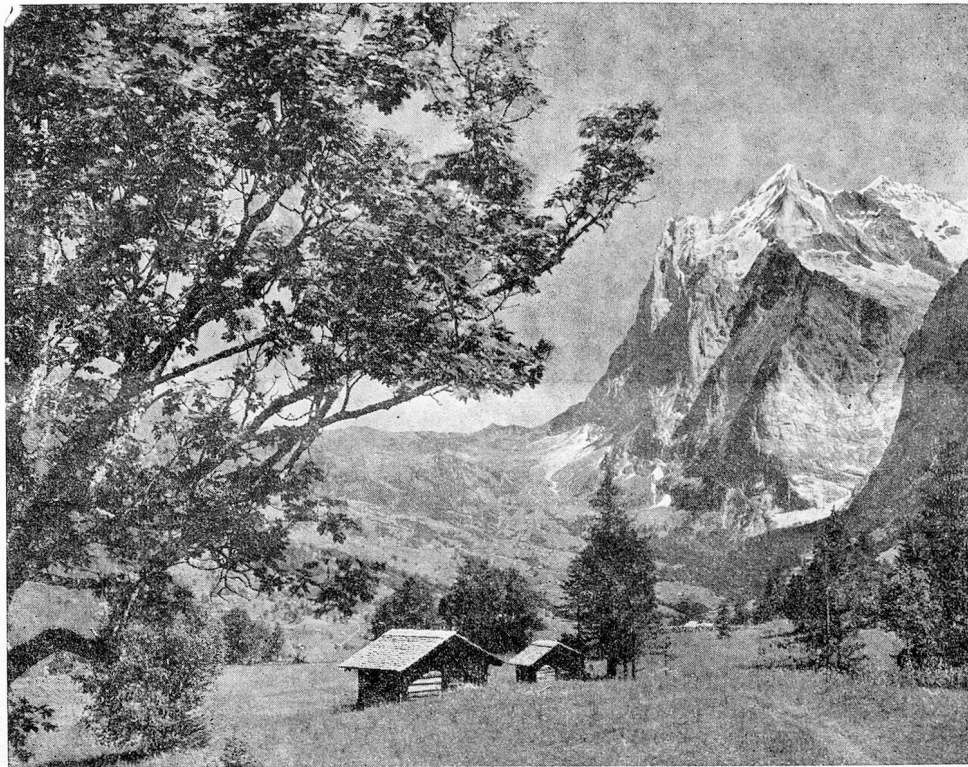
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FIRST OF AUGUST



Near Grindelwald,
Switzerland
(S.N.T.O.)

In all parts of the globe the Swiss will gather on 1st August to celebrate their National Day. In Switzerland, the bonfires will be blazing from hilltops and mountainsides, and everywhere much will be said about freedom, democracy and neutrality. I remember Max Huber's "Du bist Eidgenosse", in which he says that the natural urge in man is for freedom. It is his wish — already manifest in the child — to shape his own life. But such liberty, which is centred purely in one's own self — if that can be called freedom at all — ends in self-disgust. This kind of freedom will knock against the desire for freedom of others and friction and strife result. Real freedom is only possible within a proper order and it is the duty of the state to protect this order. Yet freedom which is only rooted in the state is not only unsatisfactory but also dangerous. Real freedom is only possible when man submits to a higher will which dictates to him through his conscience; in fact it is the freedom of the responsible individual. His personal liberty is tied irrevocably with the freedom of the state.

Our country's history is thronged with fights for freedom and tells of many great freedom-loving men. If we pause today to think about our heritage, we must realize how lucky we have been and we must acknowledge that each of us has a part to play to keep this freedom alive. Our task away from the homeland is different and not always as clear-cut as that of the citizen at home. But nevertheless ours is a duty, too — that of keeping the good name of Switzerland clean. And when we gather on First of August and join in thanksgiving to God for keeping our country free, let us humbly pray for guidance that we may see where our duty lies and recognise what we can do to keep that freedom alive in these days of political upheaval and strife. The true renaissance of a nation which is needed today more than ever is only possible through the renewal of man's obligations in obedience to the will of God.

Mariann.