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THE REPUBLIC OF SWITZERLAND

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No wonder Switzerland is free. The beauty of the country inspires a love of native land and the mountains form a natural fortress behind which the Swiss people could withstand armies many times the size of their own. Nowhere can one find as beautiful a variety of landscape in a day's ride by train as in Switzerland. The road from Berne via Chiasso, on the Italian border, to Italy passes along the shores of lakes whose transparent waters reflect the precipitous rocks that overhang them; by mountain streams that dash and foam madly as if anxious to escape from the solitude of the hills into the companionship of the larger waters of lake and sea, across the gorges, around the foothills and through the nine-mile tunnel of St. Gothard that pierces the mountain a mile beneath the summit, and then down into the valleys that widen out from the base of the Alps. This day's enthralling ride reminds one of a cinematographic film, so quickly do the views change and so different is each from the other. Along the lower levels are tiny farms and vineyards, a little higher up are terraced pastures and quaint farm houses, with gabled roofs—often residence and barn are under the same roof! The mountain sides are scarred with the chutes down which the peasants drag timber on the snow. One passes through a great variety of climate in descending from the City of Mexico to Vera Cruz, but there one does not see such a succession of picturesque views as greets the eye in the ride across the Alps.

One would suppose that the people of Switzerland could find ample employment in supplying the wants of those who temporarily visit their land, drawn by its unusual attractions for the tourist, but to the industry of hotelkeeping are added two that have made Switzerland famous throughout the world—watchmaking and woodcarving. While watches are manufactured as well and as cheaply in the United States as in Switzerland, this industry is one that makes its presence known in every city of this mountain republic. The genius of the Swiss for woodcarving manifests itself in innumerable ways. The cuckoo cl[illegible]d the bear—the symbol of Switzerland, as the eagle is of the United States—is seen in shop windows everywhere; the bear in innumerable postures, the clock in innumerable sizes. At Berne I found some wooden nut-crackers formed in the image of man, the lower jaw working on a lever and crushing the nut against the upper jaw. I observed one nut-cracker made to resemble President Roosevelt, and another former Colonial Secretary Chamberlain of England. I presume that the manufacturer intended to suggest that these two statesmen have more nuts to crack just now than any other men of political prominence!

More interesting, however, than its scenery or its industries is the government of Switzerland. It is the most democratic government on the face of the earth, if the word democratic is taken to mean the rule of the people, for in Switzerland the people rule more completely than anywhere else. In some of the small cantons the people meet at stated times and act upon political matters in public meeting, recalling the old town hall meeting of New England. In all the cantons and in the federal government they have the initiative and referendum. The latter has been in use since 1874; the former has been adopted more recently.

From the courteous assistant secretary of state I learned that during the last twenty-nine years 235 federal laws have been submitted to the people by means of the referendum, of which 210 were adopted and twenty-five rejected. The total voting population of Switzerland is about 768,000, and it requires a petition signed by 30,000—less than 5 per cent of the voting population—to secure a referendum vote on any bill. Fifty thousand voters can petition for the enactment of any desired law, and when such a petition is filed the federal legislature can either pass the law or refuse to pass it. If it refuses, however, its action must be passed upon by a referendum vote. Since the existence of this provision six petitions have been presented, and in every case the legislature refused to pass the law demanded by the petitioners. In five cases the people at the referendum vote sustained the legislature; in one case the action of the legislature was overruled by the voters. In this instance the people had petitioned for the passage of a law that would prevent the slaughter of animals for food until after they had been rendered insensible.

I found that the Swiss people are so pleased with the popular control over government given them by the initiative and referendum, that there is no possibility that any party will attempt to attack it, although there are some that would prefer the representative system freed from the restraint which the initiative and referendum give. Their arguments are, first, that the legislators knowing that the people can initiate legislation feel less responsibility; and, second, that as the legislators' actions can be reviewed by the people, the legislators are more timid about introducing needed reforms. The friends of the initiative and referendum meet these arguments by declaring that the legislators are really not relieved from responsibility, but on the other hand are incited to action by the fact that the people can act in the event that their interests are neglected by the legislature and that the timidity suggested is only likely to prevent legislation when the legislators themselves doubt the merit of the proposed action.

By courtesy of the American minister, Mr. Hill, I had the honor of meeting Dr. Adolphe Deucher, "president of the Swiss confederation," as he is styled. He is of German blood, as his name would indicate, and he is a fine representative of the scholarly, big-hearted Teuton. He is a tall, slender man, of about 60, with a ruddy face, white mustache and scanty white hair. He speaks with frankness and conviction and is as simple in his manners as the humblest of his people. He has been president once before, and has represented his canton in the federal legislature. He lives very unostentatiously, as becomes an official whose salary is only $2,750 a year. He receives $250 a year more than his colleagues in the federal council. Switzerland has no executive mansion and the president lives in a modest hotel near the capitol.

Three languages are spoken in Switzerland—French, German, Italian. French prevails in the region about Geneva, German in and about Berne and Italian at the southeast near the Italian border. German is perhaps dominant, if any one tongue can be said to dominate, with French and Italian following in the order named. The debates in the federal legislature are conducted in the three tongues, and are reported therein officially. No attempt is made to interfere with the teaching of the language that each of the three communities desire, the cantons being independent in matters of local legislation, just as are the states in our country. There seems to be no jealousy or enmity between the different sections except to the extent of a healthful rivalry between them. The feeling of independence, however, is so strong that no federal government could exist without a clear recognition of the rights of the component states or cantons

As a nation, Switzerland with her five million people does not attract the attention that neighboring nations do, and in a contest at arms, except upon her own soil, she could not hope to achieve much, but in that high forum where conscience dictates and where reason rules she is a conspicuous member of the sisterhood of nations. If we believe the world to be making progress toward nobler national ideals, we may expect Switzerland to occupy a position of increasing importance, for the love of liberty that characterizes her people, the democratic character of her institutions and the industry of her citizens all combine to give her assurance of increasing prestige.

I cannot refrain here from giving expression to a thought that has frequently recurred to me since my arrival in Europe. I found our ambassador to England, Mr. Choate, preparing to leave his residence in Carlton House Terrace, London, because of the imminent return of its owner, Lord Curzon, from India. I learned that our ambassadors to France have often found difficulty in finding suitable houses in Paris, while I found that our minister to Switzerland, Mr. Hill, is living in Geneva because he has not been able thus far to find a residence in Berne, the capital. I was also informed that our ambassador to Italy, Mr. Meyer, was compelled to live in a hotel in Rome for a year after his appointment, because he was unable to find a suitable house for the embassy. The trials of our diplomatic representatives in Europe, together with the high rents they are compelled to pay for their residences, have convinced me that we as a people are at fault in not providing permanent and appropriate domiciles for our ambassadors and ministers at foreign capitals. In the great cities of Europe it is not only impossible to rent at a moderate price a house suitable for our embassy, but it is often difficult to secure a properly convenient location at any price. It is scarcely democratic to place upon an official an expense so great as to preclude the appointment of a man of moderate means; nor does it comport with the dignity of our nation to make the choice of an ambassadorial or ministerial residence dependent upon chance and circumstance. I have been pleased to observe that our representatives in Europe are conspicuous in the diplomatic circle at court functions because of their modest attire, but it is not necessary that our ambassadors' and ministers' homes should