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HISTORICALLY CONSIDERED



Whoever approaches Switzerland from the Rhine or the Rhône or the Po is prepared to find a miracle of Nature rather than a homeland of culture. Yet it is true that sciences and arts always had a home here where they were assiduously cultivated and where, in an especial sense they may be said to have been formed. The population of the country amounts to no more than a two-thousandth part of the human race. The foundation of Swiss self-respect is not to be imperilled by reference to these unpretentious figures. A long historical development, the conquest of many a difficulty, the enjoyment of many a favour granted by destiny—all have imparted to the Swiss the feeling of a right to their existence as well as a sense of their capacity to face the strains of life. They do not appeal to any

community of languages or creeds in order to find an exponent of their national characteristics, but to certain fundamental ideas which, though applicable beyond their frontiers, are particularly congenial to them. They are aware, besides, that the eyes of the world have often been upon them and that disappointment has not necessarily been the result. In this sense readers outside of Switzerland may avail themselves of this short inventory, drawn up by a Swiss, of those values which seem to him to have European validity.

WILLIAM TELL

The XIIIth century federation of the inhabitants of the valleys in the core of Switzerland had already grown to be a considerable power in consequence of the adhesion of the cities near by a century later, when the story of the true founder of freedom spread over the country and also over the continent. According to this presentment a simple countryman, driven by his violated sense of humanity, transformed all the wrong into a new right. William Tell refused to do honour to the hat of the domineering bailiff in the square at Altdorf. He succeeded in saving his life, which had thus been forfeited, by piercing the apple on the head of his own child with the bolt from his crossbow. But, on confessing that a second bolt was ready for the bailiff if the first one had gone astray, he was seized

and led away. Another ordeal was waiting for him and a second time he mastered it. His prowess as a boatsman enabled him to snatch the bailiff's boat out of the peril of a storm—but only to save himself by leaping ashore and shooting down the inhuman despot from the first ambush that offered. From this single-minded action of one individual came the rising of a people, and from that their free federation. . . . This story, the truth of which is of a symbolical nature, manifests many striking qualities: it is deeply human, opposes morality to violence, unites physical power and dexterity and has the most impressive of natural framings as its background. So we have no reason to be astonished at its growing popularity. It appeared in songs and dramas. The Humanists compared Tell to Brutus. Zwingli considered the neat-herd of Uri a proctor of God. The scenes of his deeds became centres of pilgrimage, and weapons associated with him were revered as relics. His portrait, his story appeared in frescos, on the earthenware of stoves, on fountains and on the signboards of inns—not merely in the territory of the Federation in the strict sense, but also in that of the confederates and even in

tributary territory. Not only in the German language, but in French, Italian and Romansch as well. Whoever belonged to the federation in any way, sooner or later participated in the federal religion and its doughtiest champion, William Tell. He became the symbol and measure of all Swiss policy. In the XVIIth century, when the peasants were struggling for better conditions, they rigged themselves out as Tells and about 1800 the revolutionary transition from the old to the new confederation was carried out in his name. But even our neighbours could not shut themselves off from participation in such an obstinately recurrent myth. Especially the French of the period of Enlightenment were penetrated by it. Voltaire quoted him in his *Annales de l'Empire*, Mercier did homage to him in his utopia: *L'an 2440*, Raynal erected an obelisk to him on his islet close to Lucerne, Florian devoted a novel to him and Lemierre a drama. During the French Revolution he was a rhetorical theme, his portrait appeared in busts and paintings. Even Napoleon the First Consul did reverence to his memory. As a mediator between the Confederates when they were split up by civil

war he appealed to them in the words: "The title of a renewer of liberty among the children of William Tell is more precious to me than the most splendid of victories." Under such circumstances how could there be any lack of interest on the part of Germany? Jurists, historians, geographers, pedagogues and publicists have given proof of it. Frederick the Great made his contribution to this chorus: he put a Swiss visitor into a state of no little embarrassment by asking if there were any descendants of the master-marksman still alive. But above all there are two princes of the spirit to be thought of in this connection. It is true Goethe's plan of making William Tell the hero of an epic was not realized. And we shall not be inclined to regret overmuch this negative issue. Though the great poet knew Switzerland thoroughly as the result of three journeys, numerous friendships and wide reading, his magnificent individualism and his conception of an aristocracy of genius imply a certain limitation of approach to the idea of democracy. We Swiss should have regarded Goethe's bailiff, who was meant to have been an easy-going tyrant, with very mixed feelings. And so we

may call it a particularly favourable whim of fortune that Goethe ceded the subject to his friend Schiller, supplying him with the necessary details as to the landscape and the people. And he even stood godfather to the play when it was completed. The internal necessities of the piece and Schiller's pathos were mutually complementary. The might of his poetic creativeness seems to preclude any other treatment. Our ideals live in these marvellous lines. The biography and the aesthetic system of an individual poet are forgotten in face of the stage-play—Schiller comes to us as the trustee of a timeless tradition. One limit, to be sure, is set to the effectiveness of this incomparable drama—that of language. Only music can transcend such limitations. And as a matter of fact it was the music of our third great neighbour-state that secured universal resonance for Schiller's poetry. Rossini's *Guglielmo Tell* carries the scenic simplification very far and is much more remote from the soil on which the song is sung than that of the dramatist who supplied him with his subject-matter. But in its central core—the apotheosis of liberty—the composer has never been and can never be sur-

passed. And that is the reason why this opera has from the very beginning been sure of a chorus of gratitude. Rossini's younger contemporary, Bellini, found an outlet for his unbounded enthusiasm by exclaiming: *Tutta l'opera è un'altra Divina Commedia.*

RENAISSANCE

Amongst those nations which contributed to the rebirth of traditional arts and sciences, Switzerland had a share which should not be forgotten. But only by considering the more immediate circumstances can we grasp the significance of the fact that there was only one way in which such participation could be effected. Natural resources and the leisure they bring with them were lacking. The largest towns had populations of a few thousands. University life was represented in one single instance: Basle, founded in 1460. At the end of the XVth century, when a Humanist recounted the qualities of the Swiss, he put bravery in the first place. And when, towards the end of the XVIth century, a Swiss Humanist accounted for the belated state of Swiss participation in cultural matters it was in exactly

the same spirit that he appealed to the fact that his compatriots had spent the best part of their time on bravery. Such utterances make it easy for us to understand why, even for an office as simple as that of a town-clerk, it was frequently found necessary to look abroad. Swiss participation in the Renaissance is bound up with studies outside of the mother-country as well as with the settlement of foreigners here. And yet the atmosphere which results as the consequence of these conditions was particularly favourable to a very definite type of *homo helveticus* with a predilection and aptitude for a certain cosmopolitanism. It was only the heightened and concentrated awareness of that period which made it possible for the characteristic features of the hermit Niklaus von Flüe—canonized in our century—to be handed down to us. And it is not a matter of chance that the veneration and love shown to the man of God through the intervening centuries were due to services rendered by him in a political crisis—as a peacemaker between the contending confederates. For the rest we have to regret the fact that an over-jealous democratic mentality, even in a period so devoted to portraiture

as the Renaissance, stood between us and the living image of many a great confederate. What would we not give for an authentic monument to the period of Adrian von Bubenberg, the unforgettable defender of Murten against Charles the Bold, or of Niklaus von Diesbach, the gifted father of the Burgundian wars. Fortunately for traditional consecutiveness there were not a few individuals in unassuming situations who eternalized themselves by self-portraiture, Thomas and Felix Platter, for instance, the indigent goats-herd and the well-situated, youthful *fils à papa*, both, when taken together, amounting to the veriest monumentalization of the theme: father and son. It is quite a general rule for those generations to be knitted together by the most mutual and intimate bonds, as may be seen and tested by the example of our chroniclers who continually avail themselves of one another's writings up to the point at which their contributions are organically united in the patriotic text of the Swiss Herodotus, Gilg Tschudi, the author of *Chronicon Helveticum*. There followed quite a number of meritorious achievements which appealed to the attention of the outside world or are

still waiting for their opportunity to do so. The first systematic description of the Alps originated in Zürich—Josias Simler's book: *De Alpibus* (1574), a new edition of which in monumental dimensions was published as late as the present century. In Basle, Sebastian Münster (born in the Palatinate) brought out a new edition of the Ptolomaic *Geographia universalis* (1540) and four years later it was completed by his own *Cosmographia* (1544). In this way there was a decisive dissemination of knowledge of the antique and of the modern world proceeding from the city on the outskirts of the Alps. The considerable number of medical men is characteristic, though it is frequently the case that their achievements were concerned with other domains than medicine. Vadian, for instance, is chiefly appreciated today as a geographer, while Conrad Gesner made a deep impression not only on his contemporaries but on later generations, as a research worker in natural science. But a leech, the resonance of whose achievements is still to be felt in his own domain must not be left unmentioned—Paracelsus. He was a German by origin but was born at the foot of the Etzel, near the Lake of

Zürich, and pursued his vocation among us for many years. Nor was this spiritual vitality restricted to German-speaking Switzerland. Geneva possessed an idiosyncratic chronicler in the Savoyan, François Bonivard, and Lugano boasted of Francesco Cicereio, who, though of lesser calibre, had the advantage of being a native. The contact which such men maintained with the wider outside world was considerable. The universities along the Rhine, in Vienna, in Paris, in southern France and in northern Italy were the goals of their travels. Several Ticinese artists found distinguished fields for their activities in Rome, Domenico Fontana of Melide, for instance, who erected the obelisk in the Piazza di S. Pietro for Pope Sixtus. Thomas Platter roamed across half the continent and a Zürich theologian, Josua Maler, travelled as far as England, though he said that he was not prepared to learn the language (*die recht wahr englisch Sprach*)* until he found himself in Heaven. On the other hand the attentiveness of the outer world was not lacking. Pero Tafur of Córdoba, who crossed

* *englisch* meaning *angelic* as well as *English*.

Switzerland from south to north in 1440, records his approval of the civic sense of liberty in Basle. Pope Pius shortly after presented the same city with the charter of its university. Erasmus in Holland, having an intimate personal acquaintance with the Swiss city on the Rhine, extolled science as cultivated there, and the Belgian Vesal entrusted to Basle printers his famous collection of anatomical diagrams, while Montaigne was fascinated by Felix Platter's contribution to natural science. In Benvenuto Cellini's ever-vivid autobiography we encounter the variegated phases of Swiss landscape from east to west, in the midst of which there is Zürich "a glittering jewel." And the best of these men and the works we have had to speak of maintained a resonance beyond the limits of their lives in the countries round Switzerland. Goethe in his old age gave Gilg Tschudi's Chronicle a place amongst biblical books, Ranke promised himself much profit from a study of the Bernese chronicler Valerius Anselm, and Byron eternalized Bonivard's years of suffering in his Prisoner of Chillon.

THE REFORMATION

In the history of Switzerland the Reformation was one of the most decisive events, both in an internal and in an external sense. To speak first only of the former—we must remember that Switzerland might either have been completely transformed by the Reformation or brought near to dissolution. Neither one thing nor the other really happened. On the contrary, the Confederates set out to seek and finally found, though after violent struggles, a new state of equilibrium. General von Zurlauben of Zug, an officer in the service of France, found a fine formulation for this at the end of the *Ancien régime*—*tolérance patriotique*. If we look at the Swiss Reformation from a geographical point of view, we discover a more or less regular distribution of the two creeds. The central valleys as a whole

kept their hold of the old faith, the towns nearer the periphery for the most part went over to the new creed as far as the German-speaking and the French-speaking territories were concerned. The Italian-speaking Swiss did not take any considerable part in the Reformation. A small but significant Protestant minority of Locarnese emigrated to Zürich and Berne. This was the first case of a redistribution of the population within the Swiss frontiers, though such movements later on assumed ever-increasing dimensions. Of valleys where Italian is spoken Val Bregaglia is the only one that permanently accepted Protestantism.

What the Reformation meant in its essence was confirmed by Zwingli and Calvin in forms which they made valid for the whole of Protestant Christendom. Neither of the two reformers was born in the place destined to be the scene of his labours. Zwingli came to Zürich from the Toggenburg and Calvin migrated from Picardy to Geneva. In both cases the decisive factor was not the birthplace but the sphere, more precisely even, the city in which the work was realized. The frame-work of Luther's influence was a monarchy, his work culminated

in the organization of a national, monarchical church. For Zwingli and for Calvin the background was a city and their labours culminated in a democratic, congregational form of Christianity. The people and their representatives kept pace with the new reforms and in their own way helped to carry the re-constituted church. This, much more than the dogmatic aspect, however individualized that may have been, made the decisive distinction between the Zürich and the Genevan Reformation on the one hand and the Papacy and the Lutheran form of Protestantism on the other. The Calvinistic ecclesiastical constitution, in particular, speaks with no uncertain voice on this point. Of its four offices—ministers, doctors, elders and deacons—only the first-named are spiritual, the other three being lay. This meant that church and people were identical without any line of demarcation, something had been created which Roosevelt in our own century called "God-fearing democracy".

The fact that the Swiss Reformation made its way into England, Scotland, and, by way of Puritanism, into North America implied a fundamental influence exerted upon Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical

history and, through it, upon universal history. John Knox was a pupil of Calvin. The Protestants who fled from Mary Tudor's persecution found a place of refuge on the Limmat; Cromwell hoped at one time for an alliance with the Swiss. Even without touching on matters of such moment we shall find enough that is historically significant. The Zürich Bible, it is true, did not prove able to hold its ground, and thus the German-speaking Swiss were—happily—saved a barrier in their intercourse with the world such as would have been raised up by a localized literary language. But the Geneva Bible which sought its inspiration in classical French from the very outset, had its own repercussion on the expression of the entire French-speaking world by reason of its clarity and definition. This spiritual link evidently proved an aid in connection with more general human intercourse. It is astonishing how numerous and how successful the Huguenot fugitives were who settled in French Switzerland. A considerable part of the intellectuality of French Switzerland is to be referred to Huguenot descent. This is true of Calvin and after him of Jean Jacques Rousseau, of Bonnet and

Saussure, of Sismondi and Amiel. The Swiss Reformation created the conditions for rights of refuge with all their world-wide effects.

THE PERIOD OF ENLIGHTENMENT

It would seem that nations have their good and their bad centuries just as individuals have their good and their bad days. But the preferences and the antipathies of late times are apt to add their contribution and to heighten the contrasts between the various periods. The XVIIth century in Switzerland does not enjoy a very good reputation. Its political achievements do not stand out in the round and its cultural aspirations did not advance beyond their first stages, so that their true significance could not be seen till later on. Let us exemplify in a comprehensive way. The portrait of Switzerland, more especially that of the Alps, was and remained throughout the XVIIIth century down to the days of Schiller, that drawn by J. J. Scheuchzer, whose *Uresiphoides helveticus* (The Swiss Mountain Wanderer) was published by the Royal Society in London in 1708, and bore Isaac Newton's imprima-

tur. It found readers even in Spain and though Scheuchzer's comprehensive activity should not be under-estimated, we must not forget how very much he owed to his predecessor in the office of city physician in Zürich: J. J. Wagner and his *Historia naturalis helvetica curiosa*, a work which appeared in 1680. The case is not very different in relation to the phenomenon of home-sickness which grew to be a disease and, under the name of love of country, occupied the minds of friends of Switzerland in Germany, France and Italy. The symptoms were usually described in terms deriving from Scheuchzer, who, in his turn, went back to the doctor's thesis of a Basle student from Mülhausen, a town which at that time was allied with the Confederates. Thus, in this case too, our XVIIIth century was not original but reposed on an unassuming booklet that the Mülhausen doctor J. J. Hofer published in Basle under the title: *Dissertatio de Nostalgia* (1688). In other cases it was chance which refused to the XVIIth century the honour of having made a creative contribution. Thus we all have to quote Beat Ludwig von Muralt's *Lettres sur les Anglais et les Français*, one of the earliest examples

of comparative psychology of the peoples, from the first edition of 1725. And, as a matter of fact, the decisive influence of these witty letters and their imitations in Italy and Germany began with this date. But in fairness to the original author it should be stated that he made his independent observations in connection with a short journey to England in 1694 when he was a young Bernese officer in the French service and refused to be dazzled by the brilliancy of the *Roi Soleil*.

After having thus linked up the XVIIIth century and the greatness of its achievements in research and taste with the century preceding it, the next task must be to give a comprehensive characterization in connection with the general history of culture. In Germany the period in question is often referred to as the age of Enlightenment, the implication being that the triumphant critical ideas of the time are its peculiar and almost exclusive property, thus making of it a definite epoch with clear demarcations. We, for our part, prefer not to ascribe to it a predominantly rationalistic character, and still less a sharply defined thematic limit. We see, much rather, the totality of spiritual and emotional life

drawn into one crescendo of the productive processes in which the great nations took the lead, while the smaller ones contributed their complementary share to the interchange of ideas. Merely to give an approximate suggestion we would name as the exponents of the total revision: in the England of that time John Locke, in France Voltaire, in Germany Kant and in Italy Beccaria. How very much is implied by these four names: the theory of knowledge, political science, aesthetics, pedagogy, criminology, historiography, religiosity. . . . But what was the part assigned to Switzerland in this struggle? A specific attachment to the soil, an impressive self-limitation, a primitiveness which sometimes rose to the sublime, always adapted to the given conditions, not infrequently with a European resonance. In abstract sciences, it must be admitted, the Switzerland of that time—or more strictly speaking, the Basle of that time—was only distinguished in the field of mathematics. The Bernoulli family produced a whole dynasty of mathematicians, and Leonhard Euler, even when taken alone, weighs fully as much as all the rest of them taken together.

ROUSSEAU

The question as to whether Rousseau should appear in connection with our theme—that is to say, as a Swiss—is open to discussion. His birthplace Geneva, had, it is true, been either allied with the Confederation since the Reformation, or had cultivated friendly relations. And that he himself had no doubts as to the profound influences emanating from the city between Lake Lemane and the French Rhône, is evident from the loud way in which he boasted of his citizenship of a free state. On the other hand the ramifications of his attachments to the whole of French and to a great part of English literature were so deep and far-reaching that there would hardly seem to be any justification left for considering Rousseau as a Swiss. Yet for some time there has been a tendency to assert his organic union with the Swiss world and not the least of the aims of these present lines is to bring forward new

arguments in its favour. First we have to think of his passionate attachment to our natural landscape. Immortal pages scattered through the whole of his works depict the Lakes of Geneva and Biel, the Jura and the Alps. Rousseau opened up the way for Alpinism inasmuch as he strengthened in his readers that sense of the sublime and the majestic which is appropriate to the world of mountains, without by any means neglecting the loveliness and the picturesqueness of the Central Plateau. And he aroused that other sense which joys in physical contact with Nature and direct conquest of her remoter aspects—explicitly inculcating on his exemplary pupil Emile the advantages of a foot-tour as compared with mere travelling. The second element, which with Rousseau proves to be constitutive, is Swiss history. Already in his first work, the so-called *Premier Discours*, we are aware of his intimate acquaintanceship with the heroic age of Switzerland, in which he saw the realization of one of his favourite conceptions: the superiority of pristine power and simple-mindedness over the whole armament of civilizing forces. Consequently Rousseau's ideals—and this is our third point—

coincide with the scale of values of Swiss authors. We shall have to refer to this fact in more than one case. For the moment it is enough to mention his instinctive approval of the author of *Lettres sur les Anglais et les Français*, calling him *le grave Muralt*, a term to be understood in the light of Rousseau's own view of life. Even more comprehensible is the binding ethical force of Swiss traditions. Of the proofs which are at our disposal we will mention only the most striking. Diderot's closest collaborator in the *Encyclopédie*, D'Alembert, in his article *Genève* in the great work of reference, besides numerous praises of the genius of the municipal system, expressed one single regret: that patriarchal severity precluded the maintenance of a theatre. Rousseau, then staying in Val de Travers in the Canton of Neuchâtel, undertook the defence of his native place in the *Lettre à D'Alembert* which was afterwards to become famous. In it the suggestions of the encyclopaedic advocates of civilization are rejected with arguments drawn from the ways of life in the Jura. What would become of these simple-minded watchmakers—wrote Rousseau—if in addition to the cost of their modest households

they should have to cover the expense of theatre tickets, appropriate clothes, and the loss of working hours? The fifth and last of our points however, is what carries most weight: Rousseau's attitude to Swiss institutions, whose greatest champion he was. The Genevan philosopher submitted the project of a constitution to two peoples—the Corsicans and the Poles. What alone interests us in this connection is the spirit in which they were conceived, and this was definitely Swiss. The form of state proposed by Rousseau was the structure of Switzerland, viz. federalism. For the organization of the army Rousseau proposed the Swiss system—a militia. For the art of education Rousseau put forward the Swiss method, more particularly that of Berne, where, in his day, the future duties of citizens were demonstrated by means of an artificial model. Though Rousseau's suggestions for Corsica and Poland could not be made good during his lifetime, his posthumous influence on the re-constitution of Europe was fundamental. The French Revolution transferred his bodily remains from the rusticity of Ermenonville to the Panthéon in Paris. No other Swiss ever had such a career.

NATURE AND NATURALNESS

Apart from Rousseau everything that can be said of our XVIIIth century seems secondary—it is either a preparation or a complement. This need not prevent us from reviewing a considerable number of men and works, in the first place two poets, Haller and Gessner, who have contributed to make Swiss landscape a universal asset. To take Haller first, let us not forget that his supernational reputation rested, in the first instance, on his renown as a physiologist, as a comprehensive intellectual genius. When a child he was a prodigy and he remained a prodigy all his life. Gibbon, who during his stay in Lausanne was able to gather an intimate impression of the great savant, entered the followed characterization of Haller in his diary which he kept in French: *Une application soutenue lui fait tout dé-*

vorer, une conception facile le fait marcher d'un pas rapide, une mémoire heureuse jusqu'à tenir du prodige ne laisse rien échapper de ce qu'on lui a confié. There is an anecdote recorded by Goethe in a letter to Reichardt the musician, which demonstrates how far from the everyday level were the matters with which his acute head was occupied. "It is said that Haller, having fallen head foremost down some stairs, immediately began to count up the names of the emperors of China in their proper order, so as to be sure that his memory was unimpaired." The didactic poem to which Haller owes his fame was the fruit of a ramble through the spurs of the Alps when he was twenty. It appeared in the format of no fewer than five hundred alexandrines under the title: *Die Alpen*. In it, parallel to the description of a countryside remote from the noise of the world, there is the glorification of man struggling with the paucity of the soil—the *Aelpler* (man of the Alps) presented both in his soul and his body, his work and his relaxation, his week-a-day and his festival mood. Unambiguously Switzerland is characterized as the last remnant of a felicity which elsewhere had disappeared from the earth.

“Ye disciples of Nature”, the Alpine poet apostrophizes the sons of the Alps, “the golden age is still yours”. In Germany the poem proved a first impulse both to Schiller and Goethe, in France it was taken to be an unexpected proof that the poetic is possible even in the German language. An ingrained prejudice had lost its validity. Beat Ludwig von Muralt, a near neighbour of Haller’s, presented himself ironically as: *un homme grossier, un Suisse*. But Madame du Boccage under the influence of Haller’s poem, wrote that Parnassus was no longer situated in Greece nor on the Seine, *mais vers les Alpes*.

In patriotic pride Haller preferred a seat in the Council of the Two Hundred in Berne to the brilliant position of a chancellor of the University of Göttingen. Salomon Gessner, his more celebrated successor in the function of depicting Swiss landscape and Swiss children of nature was not called to the office of *Sihlherr*, as the superintendent of the Sihl Forest was called, until late in life. In 1756 he supplemented the top-heavy and momentous alexandrines of *Die Alpen* (1729) by the dainty prose of his *Idyllen* and in 1736 he added the

Central Plateau with its wealth of woodland and pasture to the sublime world of the mountain heights. It was no chance that one of the most frequently quoted scenes is called *Die Gegend im Grase*: “Thou lofty black pine-grove, lifting thy dun, dart-like trunks high in the dark of thy shades! Tall, slender oaks, and thou river, gushing forth with the dazzling glamour of silver from behind grey hills, ye are not what my eyes now seek. Today let the grass round about me be my realm. This admirable world in miniature, limitless in its manifold beauty, endless types of plant-life, millions of various inhabitants, some flying from blossom to blossom, some creeping or speeding to and fro in the mazes of grassblades, limitless in their manifold forms of beauty, each one finding its food and each its joy, fellow-citizens on this earth, each perfect and good in its own way.” More important than the slight geographical displacement as seen between Gessner and Haller there is the citizenship of the selfsame dreamworld of the “golden age which assuredly used to exist” as the preface to the *Idyllen* says. And that is how Gessner was understood. Rousseau praised him: *une touchante et an-*

tique simplicité qui va au cœur. Gessner's portrait decked the study of grave thinkers, the Utopists quoted him in support of their arguments, a duchess wished him to go to Paris, a Czaritsa had a gold medal struck in his honour. His native place became a centre of pilgrimage. His death was celebrated in the academies and a young Russian, Karamsin, who was destined to become an historian of some note, took leave of Gessner's shade in these words: "The hand of all-destroying Time may well expunge the city in which the poet lived, in the flood of the centuries Zürich may well go under, but the blossoms of the muse of Gessner will never wilt and their perfume will last and refresh the hearts of coming generations."

THE CONCEPTION OF INDIVIDUALITY

The self-evident correlative of Haller's and Gessner's landscape poetry is the descriptive study of mankind. And in fact the XVIIIth century in Switzerland achieved a very definite conception of the human individual, the validity of which was not confined to our frontiers. This conception is not oriented towards genius nor even towards exquisite intellectuality but towards spirituality in itself, considered as an inalienable constituent of human nature. In this sense the life and works of Ulrich Bräker, the poor man of Toggenburg, are highly significant. After a fruitless struggle against poverty and misery in his own homeland he fell into the hands of a Prussian recruiting officer and took part in the early phases of the Seven Years' War. Then, after deserting, he aimed at a purely

human promotion in his mother-country. In his autobiography he depicted the course of his development, the chief significance of the whole consisting in the way in which it is demonstrated that the very poorest possess an individuality of their own. In his remote valley he even procured for himself the works of Shakespeare, which he analyzed to the best of his ability and with such independence that in 1877, a hundred years after the completion of the Ms., the annual report of the Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft printed: "The king of the modern stage never received a more admiring commentary than that of the impecunious Swiss peasant."

If we can hardly avoid a certain uncomfortable feeling of disapproval of his neglect of immediate duties, however much we recognize the intellectual energy of Ulrich Bräker, no such reserve need be made in regard to Jakob Gujer (dubbed Chlijogg in his family circle, since he was the second bearer of the Christian name Jacob) who attracted to himself an ever-growing attention precisely because of his exemplary loyalty to his trade. The fact that he had rescued a farmstead from its crushing debts

induced the government of Zürich to have him take part in the so-called peasant-talks, this being a semi-official commission of experts entrusted with the amelioration of farming. The circumstance that one of the finest state farms—the idyllic Katzenrütihof just outside the city—was granted to this thorough husbandman brought him still more into the limelight. But real celebrity was assured for him by the fact that the medical officer of the city of Zürich, J. C. Hirzel, testified to their friendship in his literary works. Hirzel's treatise *Die Wirtschaft eines philosophischen Bauers* (The Husbandry of a philosophical Peasant, 1761), obtained world-wide success by the mediation of the French translation which bore the title *Le Socrate rustique*. Hamann, Herder and Goethe honoured him. The translated text won for him enthusiastic admirers in the persons of the Venetian senator Angelo Quirini and the English economist Arthur Young, the king of Poland and the North American colonists. Most of it is now forgotten, but Rousseau's blessing remains: "Heureux le pays où les Klijoggs cultivent la terre, et où les Hirzel cultivent les lettres."

To two Zürich contemporaries, both born about the

middle of the XVIIth century though unequal in their term of life, we owe the definitive elucidation of the individual as then conceived: Johann Caspar Lavater and Heinrich Pestalozzi. In spite of all their divergences in other respects they deserve to be bracketed together here for the sake of their agreement on this ground. But it would be unfair to do so without explicitly admitting that the talents of the former have begun to lose their hold on the minds of present-day readers, while the genius of the other gains an ever-increasing number of adherents. Lavater's last official position was that of pastor of St. Peter's in Zürich and his influence in religious circles, both in Switzerland and abroad was very great. Today we cannot study his theological works without a considerable effort. In the four volumes of *Aussichten in die Ewigkeit* (Prospects of Eternity) published in 1768 and favoured with a review by Goethe, we are enlightened as to the language used in Heaven and the social pleasures to be enjoyed there. But the most famous of his godchildren, Johann Caspar von Orelli, the spiritual founder of the University of Zürich, when accounting for the short friendship and the long

enmity between Lavater and Goethe, did not hesitate to appeal to God, who did not desire to make the All-human appear in a single being, but preferred to create two contrary individuals who misunderstood and supplemented each other. Everything that Lavater left us had a Christian and even a christological foundation, more especially his four folio volumes of the *Physiognomische Fragmente* from 1775 onwards. He claims the human face to be the image of the divine countenance and while seeking the earthly variations he does not lose hold of the supernatural unity. Consequently he feels himself justified in building up a system of physiognomics from the consideration of individual physiognomies and means it to lead us to an understanding of the cosmos. The sub-title is no less important than the main title of this epoch-making work: *Zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntnis und Menschenliebe* (For the Advancement of Characterology and Love towards Men). Lavater's original impulse and his particular aim did not, it is true, produce more than a restricted effect on the world of his own times. But the general intellectual suggestiveness emanating from him lasted for more

than a century. For France this has been demonstrated beyond doubt. Amongst Lavater's French eulogists, critics, followers and exploiters of all kinds and degrees we find Mirabeau and Chateaubriand, Balzac and George Sand, Vigny and Théophile Gautier, Flaubert and Zola, Bourget and Barrès.

Against the background of Lavater's career which was mostly successful and was even crowned with an heroic end, the gloomy path of the friend of his boyhood, Pestalozzi, stands out in strange contrast, failure in the outward sense being an integral constituent of his life. Every stage of his existence rests on the ruins of its predecessor. He was an unsuccessful farmer and an unsuccessful tradesman. He lost the workhouse in Neuhof by his own ineptitude and war deprived him of his orphanage in Stans. The school in Burgdorf had to be given up by reason of political changes and the institute in Yverdon collapsed after a fruitful prime of blossoming and promises. A remote friend, considering the octogenarian when he had lost wife and child and earthly possessions, called him a second Job. Yet in this long life, without ever thinking of his own

distress he had one single aim: to save the human element in human beings, to bring back fools to reason and criminals to right living, to strengthen the weak and make the poor capable of independence. And above all to lay a solid foundation for the whole structure of life, to see that in childhood the house of life was erected on a basis firm enough to defy the storms every human being has to expect. And that is the sense in which he was understood—an elementary school-teacher for the human race. Pestalozzi's influence was all the more durable because his practical struggles were always accompanied by a written word, sometimes obscure, never without depth: in addition to memorable treatises on pedagogy, moral philosophy, criminology and politics he gave to the German language its first village story in *Lienhard und Gertrud*. Fichte, the first continuator of Kant's thought, who had been made well-acquainted with Zürich by his wife and also by an early visit of his own, proposed the re-constitution of the Prussian state after its collapse in Napoleonic times, according to Pestalozzian principles. Rober Owen, the founder of the early form of English socialism, was not too late

to meet the aged reformer of popular education in Yverdon. And a son of the United States was most unexpectedly caught up and won by the enthusiasm for the new gospel. William McLure, a North American research-worker, during a stay in Paris in 1804, went to see the examination in a school in the Faubourg Saint-Marceau, not in order to study the Pestalozzi method as practised there, but to make the acquaintance of the illustrious inspector—the First Consul. But it was not the victor of the Pyramids, it was the spirit of the pedagogic reformer that overwhelmed him. In this way McLure took back to his own country the noblest present from the smallest republic in the world to the greatest.

THE CONCEPTION OF A NATION

It was in Switzerland that, while the continent saw the decline of the *Ancien régime* which had consummated absolutism, next in order after the idea of the individual, the idea of the nation was developed. Not, it is true, in her constitution and her institutions, but in the first place as a pure concept. And Swiss thought on these lines broke new ground so decidedly that an Italian savant, occupied with the pre-romantic table of categories, began his work with the chapter: *La Svizzera e l'idea della nazione*. Though continually changing its forms, the presence of the people was at all times a given factor in our history and it was evidently this principle, aided by the dramatic and impressive surroundings, which especially qualified us for the achievement in question. Let us pass over the stages

of gradual crystallization so as to seize the idea as it was most perfectly realized in the person of Johannes von Müller. His little native town Schaffhausen was not able to offer its ambitious son any appropriate occupation. He embarked on a restless search for it from court to court in Germany and Austria, finally taking service—unfortunately for himself—under Napoleon. For this he has been censured, and beyond the measure of what he deserved, without sufficient appreciation of the fact that in all the offices he ever filled he followed up his same ideal with the same enthusiasm but not always with the same success. And this ideal was liberty, by which he understood the condition of freely creative personal responsibility. This ideal is also the common denominator to which the reader must reduce Müller's two chief works: the *Universal History* and the *History of Switzerland*. The former has only come down to us in a brief version, written in 1796 but not published till 1810, after his death. The title of this abbreviation ran: "Twenty-four Books of General History, with especial Reference to European Humanity." The fact that these volumes attempt a beginning in pre-historic times

is comprehensible, and that they conclude with the origin of the United States is worthy of an historian who openly claimed that "the idea of exclusively European history had been out-dated since the irrepressible formation of a new transatlantic state had developed the germ of a fermentation which had long been nourished by the European nations." According to Johannes von Müller a process was once more consummated in our continent which had long been accomplished in himself, that is to say, the correction of all arbitrariness and exaggeration. In this sense the whole course of history appeared to him to be informed with immanent ethical values. This conviction lent him wings for the latent pathos of his presentment, prompting him to conclude with the threefold maxim: "Wisdom, moderation and order."

There can be no doubt that Johannes von Müller thus pronounced the quintessence of our national history. This, consciously or unconsciously, was also the fundamental idea of his *Universal History*. One might even be inclined to say that his fatherland was the only country which was in no need of a transformation to make it entirely what it should

and can be. "Freedom and federation came to it" we may literally read in Chapter 28 of Book XVII of the Universal History, "from Nature at first hand". The historian was only able to carry out his "History of the Swiss Confederation"—published as a first sketch in 1780 and then continued till his death—down to the end of the XVth century. Consequently the Swabian and the Milanese wars are missing, for the particular circumstances of which he would have been an incomparable delineator. But as far as the fragment goes it was imparted with all the splendour of his style and his epic genius. Love of truth might very likely be carried to a higher pitch but not the enthusiasm for his own people. Entrancing prose cannot show a more compelling example in the German language. Is there a Swiss reader—or indeed any reader of a certain degree of cultivation—who is not deeply moved by Müller's appeal to all confederates: "If God had not approved of our covenant, he would have ordered the circumstances otherwise; and if our forefathers had been mean souls they would have let these circumstances pass by unused. Both of these assertions are demonstrated in this History: the former to the

end that ye have no fear of artillery and soldiery, calmly looking to the God of your forebears; the latter that ye may know to whom he sends aid—to watchful, reasonable, courageous men. This, o confederates, consider: bear in mind what ye have been hitherto; stand firm; fear naught." Johannes von Müller thus laid claim to knowledge which he did not draw from the sources of which an historian usually avails himself. For this reason his work calls to mind another that belongs to a super-temporal category. At a culminating point of the Middle Ages Dante drew up a plan of the world. In it he subjected the indivisible human race to a just Lord and set the title to his philosophical dream: *De Monarchia*. At the zenith of a modern epoch Johannes von Müller visualized a small number of freemen who, following their own inner laws, had established themselves on a narrow strip of earth and eternalized what he saw in the form of a timeless bequest such as might well be entitled: *De Republica*.

The best minds of his time rallied round Müller's work. Friedrich Schiller in his Swiss drama raised a special monument to Müller's memory. Leopold

Ranke took Müller's categories as the starting point for the elaboration of his own. Madame de Staël in her book on Germany entitled a whole chapter *Des historiens allemands, et de J. de Müller en particulier*. During Müller's lifetime Joseph Planta published the first history of Switzerland in the English language, it being dedicated to the King of England and confessedly inspired by Johannes von Müller. Its title was: *History of the Helvetic Confederacy*.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST NAPOLEON

That a people with undoubted national principles and a praiseworthy history should in a few days become the prey of a hostile force no stronger than two divisions is a fact worth making more generally known. The French Directoire needed no more troops than that to bring about the fall of Berne, and this meant the fall of the Confederation. Politics is not only an ideal, it is a highly realistic affair. And even the liberation of Switzerland from the foreign dominion was only to a limited extent the result of her own power; it occurred as a subsidiary detail of Napoleon's fall. His dictatorship in Switzerland, it is true, was relatively mild and the defensive reactions in the minds of men found extremely weak expression. All the same the two most splendid manifestos ever written against Napoleon must un-

doubtedly be attributed to Swiss authors—if in consideration of their origin we are to call Madame de Staël and Benjamin Constant Swiss, although Paris was certainly the homeland most suited to them. Humanly taken they may be bracketed together, since their lives, following the course of the same ideals, intersected one another passionately. And in the historical sense they are not to be separated, seeing that the moral, political and denominational atmosphere of the Lake of Geneva stamped such characteristics on both of them as are hardly to be thought of in natives of the Ile de France. Germaine Necker's father was a Genevan who had migrated from northern Germany, her mother was a native of the Canton of Vaud. She called Switzerland *la patrie de mes parents*. That she attached much importance to the fact was attested to in many ways, amongst other things by a wish, in which she did not stand alone, to see the Tyrol joined to the Alpine Republic for the good of both. Still it is correct to say that her true home and country was where the best entertainment was to be had—and that, in her opinion, was Paris. Two feelings that culminated in the Romantic period are most

strikingly pronounced in her: an avidity for happiness (“*cette ardeur d'être heureuse*” are the words she puts into the mouth of her counterpart Corinne) and then her belief in *perfectibilité* as she was fond of naming the triumphal progress of cultural movements towards the future. Here we cannot enter into the question as to how far both factors were linked up with the influence of her spiritual father, J. J. Rousseau. But we may point out how manifestly the ambivalence of north and south in the romanticism of her own father was repeated in her. Homer and Ossian were for her valid antitheses. She dedicated novels to Italy and to Germany with or without an epic fable. But all this is not quite to the point of our present discussion, what concerns us here is her pamphlet against the man who threatened to disturb European balance, of which she was an embodiment. This by no means excludes the element of wounded self-esteem in her attack on Napoleon. But how little weight can be attached to this ingredient in view of the historical form she imparts to her feelings. How easily her polemic against the master of the world might have moved us to a smile. Nothing could be farther from readers

of her works, they must be convinced of the undeniable dignity of a personality, for the violation of which no power could claim justification. If, for aesthetic reasons, everything else that Madame de Staël wrote should ever be consigned to oblivion, anyone who has faith in liberty will find a moving plea in her memoirs which were published after her death under the title *Dix années d'exil*.

Sainte-Beuve, who had the best of rights to a verdict in the matter, called Benjamin Constant: *ce produit le plus distingué de la Suisse française*. And as a matter of honest fact we cannot succeed in separating the descendant of French Huguenots and a Valaisian mother from the Swiss exile of his family. The Lausanne Memorial of 1930—the centenary of his death—cannot be seriously read without making one feel the indissoluble bonds that united Benjamin Constant and his birthplace. Neither the historian of religion, nor the psychologist, nor the critic of German literature, nor even the theorist of Liberalism is to be given a detailed description here. We will only mention a confession that unites him in a remarkable way to Helvetian tradition. B. L. von Muralt had once written: *Une des beautés de l'uni-*

vers, c'est la diversité. Benjamin Constant intensified this adage and asserted: *La variété c'est la vie, l'uniformité c'est la mort*. Anyone thinking in that way cannot subordinate himself to an authority in any internal or external politics unless the foundation on which they arose was organic and legitimate. Up to this point he was the born ally of Madame de Staël in the struggle against Napoleon. But when he appeals partly to the historical moment and partly to human nature, both of which, he says, were violated by the Corsican, we cannot repress a certain protest. He was still an adherent of rationalistic optimism and this prevented him from giving sufficient weight to that remarkable sense of “discomfort in civilization,” as it has brilliantly been termed. Which does not signify that the profound contempt he expressed for certain barbarous forms of civilization has not been increasingly justified during the century that has since elapsed. A highly disciplined historical conscience gave him a keen flair for the boundaries that separate dignified and unworthy systems from one another. This places him amongst the most sincere and the most constructive of thinkers on politics. As a complement

to Madame de Staël's subjective protest, Benjamin Constant created the objective polemics against the dictatorial dominance of Napoleon in his pamphlet of 1813 entitled: *De l'esprit de conquête et de l'usurpation*.

THE XIXTH AND THE XXTH CENTURY

A Swiss looking back on the last hundred and fifty years of our history cannot help being filled with satisfaction to a very high degree. Without losing or gaining a foot of land the Confederation has more than doubled its population since 1815, has renewed its constitution twice and its legislation continually, has brought its constituent members closer and closer together by means of commercial and social intercourse, has uninterruptedly increased the number of scholastic institutions of all levels, has developed a considerable industry and attained a standard of life that until recently would not have been conceivable. And in every department of culture it would seem that we have made good. To keep to the limitation we have throughout maintained—the literary—we may merely mention that Berne pro-

duced a peasant Homer in Gotthelf, Zürich two poets, Keller and Meyer—who were equally great as lyrists and as novelists. Geneva had a Toepffer and Lausanne a Vinet, that the Ticino gave birth to an author in the person of Chiesa who is respected in all Italy, while even the fourth national language, Romansch, found its representative in Peidr Linsel.

Nor was all this achieved in an enclosed space, cut off from the rest of Europe. On the contrary the achievements described were made, partly with the collaboration of foreign countries and partly for their benefit. Only by way of example we may mention that Mommsen was a member of the juridical faculty of the University of Zürich and De Sanctis of the department for facultative subjects at the Federal Polytechnic while Sainte-Beuve gave a course of lectures on Port Royal in Lausanne. Foreign thinkers repeatedly deduced positive consequences from Swiss data. The life-work of a Risorgimento Italian like Carlo Cattaneo is not to be thought of without the influence of the Swiss ideal, and the Catalan Pi y Margall explicitly founded his solution of the problem of nationality on the Swiss

model. Gerhart Hauptmann has stated in so many words how he obtained impulses which were incorporated in his life-work from the psychiatrist August Forel, then in charge of the state neurotic establishment in Zürich. And the Russian social revolutionaries Bakunin, Krapotkin and even Lenin found stimulation, associates and a refuge in Switzerland. What then can be adduced to account for the idea, occasionally expressed by Swiss, that the merits of their fatherland are nowadays insufficiently appreciated, not to say misjudged as compared with former times?

There are some few convincing reasons that may be advanced to explain the idea that the surrounding world is backward in showing its understanding. Since the Romantics began to identify the language and the genius of a nation there has been a danger of our best achievements' being attributed to our mighty neighbours who use the same languages, so that these achievements, though obtaining recognition, have not been connected with Switzerland as such. This is a many-sided problem for which there will never be a comprehensive solution. Then we should remember that the discovery of Switzerland

in the XVIIIth century could not be continued indefinitely and that—as in nearly every other case—enthusiasm has its temporal limits. The history of the journey to Switzerland, as a traditional European fact, will supply us with many a helpful hint. Tolstoy's critically conceived short story *Lucerne* may be cited as a typical example. And finally we have to admit that, for all the excellence of Swiss achievements, a certain decline of originality was inevitable in the course of the XIXth century. The ideological approach to European life did not mean an ideological capitulation for us, but it did imply that we were shunted into the general trend of history where we have honourably maintained our position without indeed making ourselves indispensable. Two nineteenth century Swiss authors of striking originality, though antipodal one to the other, were not denied universal success: Henri-Frédéric Amiel and Jacob Burckhardt.

AMIEL AND BURCKHARDT

Amiel would not be conceivable without Calvinistic Puritanism. The statement does not pretend to be exhaustive. He did not devote valuable pages to J. J. Rousseau and to Madame de Staël by chance. To the former he is related by his pronounced egocentricity, to the other by his mature cosmopolitanism. In spite of this world-citizenship he was a Swiss patriot and gave to his fatherland in a perilous hour a song which is usually called a Swiss *Marseillaise*. All this does not characterize the essential content of his life. The real content is the problem—one might rather say the tragedy—of understanding between man and the world. Any admixture of oneself when attempting the portrayal of another seemed to him reprehensible, contemptible, shameless. In order to attain his goal purely it

seemed to him necessary to renounce every kind of national, or professional, or family preconception: "I am no longer even a member of my own race." He describes the path of his intellectual metamorphosis and once expresses the whim, that he would not be surprised if he should awake one morning and find himself a Japanese, a woman, a madman, a child, a camel, an inhabitant of the Moon or of Jupiter. He even claims to have been an animal or a plant out of "sympathy towards the universe." We well understand the name by which he finally dubs himself: Proteus. But we also see the state in which he must eventually end, as he himself says: anarchy. He wrote letters to acquaintances asking them "Who am I?" Without having lived he faded away, without dying he became a ghost. And throughout all this torture he was able to say: *Je sentais que j'étais pardonné*. This drama forms the contents of his *Journal intime*, which he prosecuted daily during the last thirty-four years of his life and brought up to 17,000 sheets. The complete publication has recently been undertaken, it bids fair to fill dozens of volumes. If ever they should be completed it is not improbable that the older selec-

tion in two volumes will still be given the preference. This is the form which was given to his work by the thoughtful care of friends shortly after his death, and it is the version which represents his measure in the world of literature, within which he may hold his ground, not without dissidence perhaps, but yet with critical appreciation. We believe that Matthew Arnold's verdict will always have its weight. In 1887 he wrote of the Genevan: "I cannot join in celebrating his prodigies of speculative intuition, the glow and splendour of his beatific vision of absolute knowledge, the marvellous pages in which his deep and vast philosophic thought is laid bare, the secret of his sublime malady is expressed. I hesitate to admit that all this part of the journal has even a very profound psychological interest: its interest is rather pathological." But this truth is not the whole truth. Amiel's raising of himself above the ego is also a serious attempt to get above egoism, his thirst for transformation is also a sincere concession to that dissolution that is in wait for us all. And this is what drew Tolstoy towards our poet in his old age and induced him to add to the Russian version of the *Journal intime* which his

daughter Maria had undertaken on her father's advice, a panegyric on Amiel which concludes with the words: "Throughout the thirty years of his diary he feels what we endeavour so constantly to forget—that we are condemned to death, and the execution of the sentence is merely postponed. That is the reason why the book is so sincere, so serious and so important."

To place Jacob Burckhardt alongside of Amiel requires a certain amount of justification. We would not claim to have made this good by stating that they were contemporaries, that both were professors at Swiss universities, both were geniuses who contributed to the universal fame of their native towns. We much rather take their juxtaposition to be a confrontation. Jacob Burckhardt too had his Protestant background. As the son of a Basle pastor he was not only drawn into a retrograde denominational development, he also bore in himself a heritage of the most intimate responsibility that led to negative results and was never quite shaken off. To put it into theological terms: it is highly probable that he never freed himself from Christian eschatology. If we pass over to the consideration of the

course of their studies the complementary relation between the two comes out even more strikingly. The Genevan student spent five decisive years in Germany and the Basle youth confessed that he had found a second home in Neuchâtel, a French-speaking home which was soon to be supplemented by a third in Italy. Yet all these data are subsidiary measured by the fundamental difference between them: one sought to grasp the truth of the world by annihilation of self, the other by a princely enrichment of consciousness in a sense that was thoroughly interior. Apart from a brief interruption when he stayed in Zürich, all Burckhardt's lifework was devoted to Basle. He was not even to be tempted by the possibility of succeeding to Ranke in Berlin. He went so far as to put a check on his reputation as an author; in the second half of his life he hardly appeared in print. The numerous volumes of his complete works consist to the extent of two thirds of posthumous papers. It was in his own despite that he took his place in universal literature. But the echo to his genius was inevitable since he built up an irreproachable culture round the central core of a personality. Immense knowledge of his own

subject matter, originality and power of vision like his, could hardly be found in any other thinker. Of all who thought historically in the last century he may be considered the most far-sighted in respect of what has happened since. And the culminating charm of his view of life consists in this: for him the beauty which milleniums have brought to light is the only possible compensation for the relentless march of power, which fills his ears more than anything else he gathers from history. And all this profound knowledge and these dazzling formulations have the genuine ring of the deepest, most saving necessity. As he once said to a friend after a first lecture on Greek cultural history—Now at last it was given to him to die in peace. If we make a survey of his labours we see that their attractiveness varies from one case to another: sometimes we have the presentment of periods of transition like his *Constantin* and his *Cultur der Renaissance*; sometimes monographs or systematic guides to art like his *Cicerone* or his *Rubens*. Today it would seem that posterity will turn most readily to his academic introductions to history, entitled: *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen*, which were post-

humously published from his own notes for lectures or from those jotted down by his hearers. In these Burckhardt's spirit appears to us in its most sovereign form. And in them too we see his starting point and his aim: the beginning when he establishes the frontiers between periods and peoples, and the end when he distinguishes spirits after they have been refined in the course of historical processes by the fact that they "are completely oblivious of fortune or misfortune and live out their lives in a pure craving for this knowledge."

NEUTRALITY AND COMMUNITY WITH THE WORLD

What is the nature of Switzerland's community with the rest of the world? Comparable to the direction of our rivers: westwards. The Rhine, the Rhône and the Ticino flow towards the Atlantic, the Mediterranean and the Adriatic. Only the Inn, a narrower stream, moves towards the Danube and the Black Sea. Germany and Italy, France and England, to a lesser extent the Iberian Peninsula and Scandinavia, and, in the course of the XIXth century, the United States of America have represented the field of our spiritual contacts. Our history shows no parallel to the Russophile cult in Germany or to Byzantinism in Italy. But these undeniable data by no means lead us to the conclusion that Switzerland has been unconditionally given up to a solidarity with the occidental world. One of

the principal reasons being that the western world neither was nor is at one with itself. However highly we esteem the autonomous powers within Switzerland, one reason—and not the weakest—for the origin and continuance of the Swiss Republic, has been the historic rivalry between the Great Powers. It was even true that in the XVth century this rivalry brought the temptation to our doors to assume a place in the ranks of the great powers—a dream which dissolved at the honourable defeat of Marignano in 1515. The practice and somewhat later the theory of neutrality were the immediate consequences, and this attitude achieved international sanction in 1815 in Paris and in 1919 in Versailles. What does Swiss neutrality signify? The inviolable rule not to intervene in others' disputes, particularly those of our immediate neighbours, whose language and culture form a close bond with our country, or more strictly, with one section of it. This abstention from military intervention applies *a priori* to powers at a greater distance, on whose weal and woe we could not under any circumstances exert any decisive influence. But to the same extent to which this concept of neutrality became incor-

porated in our ideology it found a highly practical correlative in the building up of an effective popular army. The history of our mediaeval wars has been treated by so many native and foreign historians that it would be superfluous to go deeper into that aspect of the matter. The services of our mercenaries from the XVIth century to the storming of the Tuileries on the tenth of August 1792 have put our military efficiency beyond any doubt. Yet our greatest achievement in matters of military organization is certainly to be looked for in the last 150 years. The problem was to supply a small nation, needing peace and desiring peace, with a military instrument which could be so handled as to make a violation of our territory too expensive for the assailant and at the same time to make this relative security a bulwark for each of the adjacent powers. To build up this instrument demanded both a readiness for sacrifice in the people and a number of highly gifted organizers. We will mention only two of the latter. In the first place General Dufour, who, schooled in the Napoleonic tradition, gave proof of brilliance combined with temperament and expert knowledge joined to comprehensive culture

and showed that the handiwork of a soldier is not incompatible with pure humanity. In the second place there is General Wille, whose orientation was towards Moltke, uniting clearest concepts with strength of character and whose spontaneous joy in training men towards a heightening of their valour, up to the point at which the ideal of morale would be attained in equal readiness for life or death. Above all we owe it to him that great masses of the population have come to respect the ethical efficiency implied by military service—a quality without which the whole structure of the nation would be imperilled. The Swiss popular army, which even in times of peace claims to include in itself all able-bodied men, and recently a great number of women too in the auxiliary services, and to be ready for action at a day's or even an hour's notice, is in its own sphere what a masterpiece is in the world of art. To such an extent is this true that we may doubt whether we have achieved anything else of equal significance in any department. There is one strict limitation, it is true, that is inseparable from this popular army. By its very nature and spirit it is a national means of defence,

the use of which in any international trial of force would be psychologically unthinkable. The Swiss army, our most national achievement during the last century and a half, and in its present form the product of the last fifty years, has secured to the nation, during the period named, peace and the prospect of future security. But more and more we have come to recognize the truth that, seen in relation to the human race, this solution is not sufficient. And that was the reason why Henri Dunant created a second institution in the form of the International Red Cross whose principle it is to intervene in matters outside of our boundaries—though in a sense that is assuaging, nurse-tending, healing. Even if the realization of such an idea must always be in arrears, it still retains the validity of an openly confessed standpoint. And in this connection we are not inclined to forget that human endeavours were never other than inadequate. What is more, we may trust our nation to recognize the fact that there is no prospect of successfully intervening in unproved forms of life and making use of unknown rules, unless one has sincerely endeavoured to realize the given traditional forms of life

by the application of traditionally transmitted laws. If Switzerland should ever see herself obliged by the course of world-wide events to give up her neutrality, a conscientious retrospect would enable her to do so without regretting her past.