

A Cultural Survey -

Now that the long hoped-for Armistice Day has become a reality, a deep feeling of gratitude arises in ^{our} hearts here in Switzerland, for the protection we have enjoyed throughout these years of strife and bloodshed. We think of our cultural life, especially and are astonished to find it intact and practically untouched.

True, there have been restrictions. When the war broke out in Sept. 1939, and when, in May 1940, it came close to our frontiers, ~~all~~ cultural exchanges stopped, but not for long. The Swiss Exposition ~~at~~ Zurich in 1939, the greatest ~~show~~ ^{manifestation} of its kind that our country had ever seen, was reopened after a very short interruption, and the artistic achievements and undertakings continued. The motto, though not published by any official authority but generally accepted, ~~was~~ "let life continue just as normally as possible," has been put into practice in an exemplary way.

There is no doubt that in some things we had to manifest a spirit of sacrifice. The friends and fans of cultural education, have had to miss for more than half a decade their great favorites. Valuable relics of museums had to be hid "somewhere in Switzerland" in order to preserve them from destructive bombs. What this means may best be

understood when one thinks of the valuable Conrad Witz and Hans Holbein Collections in the Museum of Basel, which have had to go into involuntary hiding. How necessary this security measure was, can be readily realized when we think of what happened in Schaffhouse. At that time of this accidental attack on first of April, 1944, an irreplaceable portrait of the great reformer, Martin Luther, by Lucas Cranach, was destroyed in the Aller-Heiligen museum. Other smaller works, as well as creations from the Schaffhouse master, Tobias Stinner, were severely damaged. Yes, there have been some restrictions, but they have had some advantages, for room has been made to exhibit works of lesser importance but worthy of notice.

The friends of music have had the same experience as those of art; they suffered no want and yet they too, have made sacrifices. In the larger centers of Switzerland, during all the six winters of war, from ten to twelve symphonic concerts were held; a large number of choral recitals and plenty of chamber music were furnished. In the smaller towns and villages the traditional Good Friday and Christmas programmes ~~were~~ always took place. True, sometimes orchestra and choirs

were disturbed by military services, but rarely stopped. What the musical world missed most was contact with countries abroad. During the first world war our country was literally submerged by propagandists of all kinds from belligerent countries. This time our authorities fought against such abuse, and rightly. But the Axis states sent their messengers again and again. ~~However,~~ musical exchange was not possible. This was against our Swiss way of life for everything worthwhile is admitted and discussed. But new discoveries were made right in our country, and many a young artist reached high attainments earlier than he would have done in peace time. ~~But~~ ^{nevertheless,} our outstanding artists did not have the privilege of traveling abroad. Similar conditions were found among theater players, and opera and operette singers. So many returned to Switzerland that they could not be employed on our stages. But many grouped themselves together and have been having success in traveling about the country.