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Letter

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LETTER FROM THE SAHS-SECRETARY

Dear Members and Friends:

At the Annual Meeting of the reactivated Swiss-American Historical Society, held in New York on November, 1965, "everybody agreed that the SAHS is not only a historical but also a cultural society" (Newsletter of January 1966, page 5). We are glad, therefore, to offer to our readers in our present Newsletter an evaluation of Swiss literature by an American scholar, Professor Heinrich Meyer of Vanderbilt University.

The author of this paper, entitled "Swiss Literature of Our Days. A Try for an Inventory", has been a U.S. citizen since 1935. He was born and educated in Nürnberg; he studied at the Universities of Erlangen, München and Freiburg im Breisgau. In 1928 he acquired his Ph.D. degree at the University of Freiburg. From 1928 to 1930 he taught at the "Schule am Meer" in Juist.

From 1930 to 1942 Dr. Meyer was Instructor of German at Rice University in Houston, Texas. From 1945 to 1963 he was Professor of German at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania. He was Visiting Professor at the Universities of Princeton, Indiana and Hamburg and is a frequent lecturer at various others (University of Pennsylvania, Texas University, University of Toronto, etc.)

Since 1963 Dr. Meyer has been Professor of German at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee.

He is the author of several books, among them a novel, entitled "Konrad Bäumlers weiter Weg", Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, Stuttgart, and of a Goethe biography, entitled "Goethe, das Leben im Werk", Stromverlag, Hamburg-Bergdorf.

Professor Heinrich Meyer is in love with the Swiss and their literature. Among his Swiss friends was the late Professor Andreas Heusler of Basel, the great pioneer in the history of Germanic languages and in the interpretation of their ancient poetry (Edda).
Our relationship with Dr. Heinrich Meyer goes back to a meeting of the American Association of Teachers of German where he gave a paper on German-Swiss literature. The former SAHS-Secretary, Dr. Augustin Maissen, had sent us the text. This gave the impetus for starting a very lively and enjoyable correspondence with Dr. Meyer, who insisted on completely rewriting his paper for our Newsletter to appeal also to unbiased readers outside the guild of the professional language teachers and philologists. We are deeply grateful to Dr. Meyer for this fine contribution. In the same connection, we should like to mention that the Foundation Pro Helvetia, Hirschengraben 22 in Zürich, has been very helpful in establishing links with American scholars interested in Swiss literature. With its help, even books not easily available otherwise, could be traced. The Swiss official representatives are in close contact with Pro Helvetia.

The Schweizerische Landesbibliothek (Bibliothèque nationale suisse) in Bern collects all publications by Swiss and on Swiss subjects at home and abroad. Its Bibliography of 1964, entitled "Switzerland and the United States of America" is available at the Embassy. The Landesbibliothek appreciates communications from Swiss and friends of Switzerland in the United States regarding such publications in this country.

The professional organization of the Swiss publishers, the Schweizerischer Buchhändler- und Verlegerverein (Société suisse de libraires et éditeurs), Seefeldstrasse 35, Zürich, is, of course, also interested in keeping in touch with Swiss and friends of Switzerland abroad.

Again we are adding to this Newsletter a form for the acquisition or renewal of membership in the Swiss-American Historical Society which is developing so well that our goal—its full autonomy as an independent organization—is attainable in the foreseeable future if its private support keeps growing.

Hoping that Dr. Meyer’s paper will provoke fruitful discussion,

I am

Sincerely yours

Lukas F. Burckhardt
Cultural Counselor of the Embassy of Switzerland
and Secretary of the SAHS

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