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**The Story of the Nations**

# **THE STORY OF SWITZERLAND**

**BY**

**LINA HUG**

**AND**

**RICHARD STEAD**

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## PREFACE.

For many reasons, some of which are obvious to the least thoughtful, the history of Switzerland is peculiarly interesting, and not least so to English-speaking peoples. In the first place, the "playground of Europe" is every year visited by large numbers of British and Americans, some of whom indeed are familiar with almost every corner of it. Then to the Anglo-Saxon race the grand spectacle of a handful of freemen nobly struggling for and maintaining their freedom, often amidst enormous difficulties, and against appalling odds, cannot but be heart-stirring. To the citizen of the great American republic a study of the constitution of the little European republic should bring both interest and profit—a constitution resembling in many points that of his own country, and yet in many other respects so different. And few readers, of whatever nationality, can, we think, peruse this story without a feeling of admiration for a gallant people who have fought against oppression as the Swiss have fought, who have loved freedom as they

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have loved it, and who have performed the well-nigh incredible feats of arms the Switzers have performed. And as Sir Francis O. Adams and Mr. Cunningham well point out in their recently published work on the Swiss Confederation, as a study in constitutional history, the value of the story of the development of the Confederation can hardly be over-estimated.

Few of the existing accounts of Swiss history which have appeared in the English language go back beyond the year 1291 a.d., the date of the earliest Swiss League, and of course Switzerland as a nation cannot boast of an earlier origin. But surely some account should be given of the previous history of the men who founded the League. For a country which has been occupied at different periods by lakemen, Helvetians, and Romans; where Alamanni, Burgundians, and Franks

have played their parts; where Charlemagne lived and ruled, and Charles the Bold fought; where the great families of the Zaerings, the Kyburgs, and Savoy struggled; and whence the now mighty house of Habsburg sprang (and domineered)—all this before 1291—a country with such a story to tell of its earlier times, we say, should not have that story left untold. Accordingly in this volume the history of the period before the formation of the Confederation has been dwelt upon at some little length. It should be mentioned, too, that in view of the very general interest caused by the remarkable discovery of the Swiss lake settlements a few years ago, a chapter has been devoted to the subject.

Mindful, however, of the superior importance of the

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formation and progress of the Confederation, an endeavour has been made to trace that progress step by step, showing how men differing in race, in language, in creed, and in mode of life, combined to resist the common enemy, and to build up the compact little state, we now see playing its part on the European stage. The whole teaching of the history of the country may be summed up in Mr. Coolidge's words, in his "History of the Swiss Confederation" (p. 65). "Swiss history teaches us, all the way through, that Swiss liberty has been won by a close union of many small states." And Mr. Coolidge adds an opinion that "it will be best preserved by the same means, and not by obliterating all local peculiarities, nowhere so striking, nowhere so historically important as in Switzerland."

It remains to add a few words as to the authorities consulted by the writers of this little volume. The standard Swiss histories have naturally been largely used, such as those of Dr. Carl Dändliker, Dierauer, Vulliemin, Daguet, Strickler, Vögelin, and Weber ("Universal History"). Amongst other histories and miscellaneous writings—essays, pamphlets, and what not—may be mentioned those of Dr. Ferdinand Keller, Wartmann, Heer, Heierli, Von Arx, Mommsen, Burkhardt, Morel, Marquardt, Dahn, Büdinger, Secretan, Von Wyss, Meyer von Knonau, Schweizer, Finsler, Roget, Bächtold, Marcmonnier, Rambert, Hettner, Scherer, Roquette, Freytag, Pestalozzi, Schulze, and Kern. Amongst the English works consulted are Freeman's writings, the Letters of the Parker Society, Adams and

Cunningham's

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"Swiss Confederation," Coolidge's reprint from the "Encyclopædia Britannica" of the article on the "History of the Swiss Confederation," Bryce's "Holy Roman Empire," &c.

The authors are indebted for most kind and valuable assistance to several eminent Swiss scholars. To Prof. Georg von Wyss and Prof. Meyer von Knonau special thanks are due, whilst Prof. Kesselring, Herr J. Heierli, and others, have shown much helpful interest in the progress of the work. They also owe many thanks to Dr. Imhoof, who has most kindly furnished them with casts from his famous collection of coins; and to the eminent sculptors, Vela and Lanz, who have given permission to use photographs of their latest works for illustration purposes.

Zurich and Folkestone, *July, 1890.*

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