

reconciled the Swiss when they were threatening to fight each other over the division of the Burgundian spoils. Unterwalden thus has its past of half mythical and of genuine great men.

Sarnen itself is a beautifully situated little town. Despite its natural attractions and its situation on a leading tourist railway it has escaped the devastating influence of the *Fremden-Industrie*.

In the spring time one is sure to be alone in the excellent "Obwaldner Hof" and free to botanise or climb or discuss after dinner the politics of the approaching "Landsgemeinde." Sarnen has its Acropolis, the Landenberg. Here in 1308 stood a Hapsburg castle. It was pulled down by the confederates and ever since the public business of Obwald has been transacted on its site. The "Landsgemeinde" meets on Sunday in all the cantons. In the Appenzells and the Unterwaldens the date is the last Sunday in April. The assemblies of Uri and Glarus are held a week later. The Obwald, like most of the pastoral cantons, is staunchly Roman Catholic. Early on the morning of the "Landsgemeinde" the peasants troop into Sarnen for mass, coming on foot from the upper Melchthal and the Brunig. The parish church is filled to overflowing and those who are unable to gain admission kneel on the ground without. There is an interval of an hour or more between the end of the service and the opening of the assembly. At 10.30 men began to gather on the Landenberg for the "Landsgemeinde" of 1893. The situation of the meeting place is worthy of the best traditions of any people. In the foreground are the Cantonal Hall, and the Cantonal Armoury or Schutzenhaus with its stirring motto, *Viribus unitis salus patriæ*. To the north of the Landenberg a forest of beeches, now in their first verdure, mounts in gradual terraces: to the south and beneath the hill are the tiled roofs and the gables of Sarnen. A few miles away lie the smart villages of Alpnach and Kerns, with graceful spires, while in the distant background Pila-

tus and the Stanserhorn rise like the watch towers of an Alpine freedom. Whatever be the weather the "Landsgemeinde" meets in the open air amidst the most rural appointments. A dais of turf is reserved for the magistrates. No benches are provided for the multitude as at Glarus, where a large wooden grand-stand is annually erected around the market place. The Landamman sits in a chair carved with the arms of the canton, and a rough canvas canopy protects him and his colleagues in office from the sun or rain. Three benches and a table are all the furniture required by the magistrates. Six benches without the canopy seemed to be occupied by the deaf and the infirm. The mass of citizens kept their feet.

I shall now pass to a short narrative of the proceedings based on notes which I was careful to take. At ten minutes to twelve the square in front of the parish church filled rapidly. The first to appear were the members of the cantonal band. They played while the people were gathering and then on the way to the Landenberg. The arrival of six gorgeous beaules soon made one overlook the band, and the beaules were in their turn supplanted by a pair of Alpine hornblowers in full cantonal costume. They looked like harlequins with the left half of their coats white, and the right half red. They were in knee breeches with white stockings, and a cross on the back signified the part of Obwald in some crusade. Five minutes later two more hornblowers in similar attire appeared on the scene, and the procession formed itself around a few sombre clad officials. The band led the way to the hill: the hornblowers, magistrates, Capuchins and people followed. The distance is trifling, and by 12.10 the twenty-five hundred citizens had settled themselves and were ready for business. A short space of silent prayer preceded the oratorical effort of the day, the Landamman's opening speech. The Landamman was forty years old, large, vigorous, and ready of speech. He was less imposing than the Land-