

Though Alpineland lies in the heart of Europe, thanks to its height it enjoys a heavy rain and snowfall. Sometimes a peculiarly warm dry wind blows in the northern valleys of the Alps, and is known as the Föhn. Its warmth is due to the wind having deposited its moisture on the seaward slope, and thus set free latent heat.

Vegetation on the Alps varies with the altitude, passing from the vineyards and orchards of the warm valleys to the bare rocks and snow-fields of the summits, through intermediate belts, in ascending order, of summer pastures devoted to a breed of small fawn-coloured cattle, of pine-forests, and of stunted bushes, mosses, and such characteristic Alpine flowers as the 'rose des Alpes' and the edelweiss. The whole region is necessarily but sparsely populated, save in the lower valleys.

SWITZERLAND.

Switzerland occupies a very central position in Europe, and the chief routes by which it is connected with Italy on the south, France on the west, and Austria on the east, have been already mentioned (see pp. 46, 65, 74); on the north the frontier between it and Germany is mainly formed by the Rhine and Lake Constance. The central position of the country is reflected in the diverse character of the inhabitants, those in the north mainly speaking German and those in the south-west French, while Italian is spoken by most dwellers in the valley of the Ticino, and a few in the east speak Romanisch. The country is composed of the Alpine districts in the south, the scenery of which has been already described; the folded limestone ranges of the Jura in the north-west; and the plateau between them, which is, commercially, the most important part of the country. A great deal of this plateau, like the lower slopes of the mountains, is devoted to cattle-rearing, much of the milk being made into cheese, or preserved by condensation. Manufactures are, however, important in the towns, and lack of coal in the country is partly remedied by the great supply of water-power furnished by falls and rapids. The goods produced are mainly of high value and small bulk, partly on account of the difficulties of transporting heavy goods, and partly because of the high standard of technical instruction in the country, and consequent amount of cheap skilled labour to be obtained. Thus many of the cotton goods made at Zürich are embroidered before they are exported, St. Gall being noted for this industry. Linen goods