feet above the sea. A steam-boat plies on this lake, which is much visited by tourists from Berne. The fish which these lakes contain are pike, trout, salmon, lato, and umber, a very delicate fish, occasionally exported to Paris, and sold at a very high price.

The minerals and metals most abundant in Switzerland are porphyry, marble, and alabaster; iron, lead, zinc, cobalt, and bismuth. Arsenic and antimony are found in veins and in masses, rock-crystals are very common, sulphur is col­lected in many places, and particles of gold are found in the sands of some rivers, as the Rhine, the Aar, the Adda, and the Reuss ; strata of bituminous wood are worked in several valleys, and the inhabitants use it for fuel.

Switzerland contains a greater number of mineral springs than any other country in Europe. The most frequented of these are the springs at Pfeffers and Leuk. The acidu­lated springs of St Maurice, in the canton of the Grisons, the baths of Gurnigel in Berne, and those at Baden, are also well known.

Switzerland is the central point where three great Euro­pean races and languages meet, and is not more remark­able for the variety of its physical features, than for the moral and religious diversities of its population. The Deutsch or German Swiss occupy the cantons of Zurich, Lucerne, Uri, Schwytz, Unterwalden, Glaris, Zug, Appen­zell, St Gall, Thurgau, Schaffhausen, and Aargau, a great part of Basel and Berne, a considerable portion of Soleure, Freyburg, Valais, and Grisons, some communes of the can­ton of Vaud, and the commune of Bosco in the canton of Ticino, forming about two thirds of the whole population of Switzerland. The French Swiss occupy the cantons of Neuchâtel and Geneva, nearly the whole of Vaud, part of Freyburg, Soleure, and Valais, and the Jura portions of Basel and Berne, and form about one fifth of the entire population. The Italian Swiss inhabit the canton of Ti­cino, some valleys of the Grisons, and a few places in the Valais. To these are to be added the Romans or Rhse- tians, who are found in small numbers in the Grisons, the Oberland, towards the sources of the Rhine, and the upper part of the Engardine. Their language more near­ly resembles Latin, or ancient Roman, than that of their Italian neighbours.

Before 1798 Switzerland consisted of a confederation of states of three very different kinds: 1. Thirteen cantons; 2. the subjects or vassals of these cantons ; and, 3. the allies of these cantons. The federal bond which united the various cantons and their allies was very loose. There was not in Switzerland any permanent sovereign body, or central government, or standing federal magistrate, equally acknowledged by all. No important question could be de­cided in the general diets, unless it had been previously de­bated and decided on in the councils of each of the can­tons. The cantons were not even allied to all ; the three forest cantons alone were allied to every one of the other cantons. The subjects of the Swiss were either subjects of certain particular cantons, or common bailiwicks subject to all the cantons. The whole population of the thirteen can­tons at the close of last century was about 1,000,000 ; that of their subjects was about 250,000 ; and that of their asso­ciates and confederates, and the subjects of these confede­rates, amounted to nearly half a million more. Altogether the territory belonging to the Helvetic federal body con­tained a population of about 1,700,000.

Switzerland now forms a confederation of twenty-two can­tons, united for the defence of their common liberty and in­dependence, and security against attacks from abroad, as well as for the preservation of order and tranquillity in the interior. They guarantee each other reciprocally their respective territories. For these purposes a contingent of

troops is furnished by each canton when required, in the proportion of one to fifty of its population ; and a pecuni­ary quota, for defraying the military and other general ex­penses of the confederacy, is paid by each canton in pro­portion to its property and resources. A war-fund is also formed to meet exigencies ; and for this purpose a federal duty is levied on foreign goods imported into Switzerland which are not articles of first necessity. The diet fixes the tariff as well as the rates to be paid by each canton. The united federal contingents of all the cantons, which must be disciplined and furnished with clothes and arms, ready to march when required, amount to about 34,000 men, and the reserve, in case of need, to as many more. The gene­ral affairs of the confederation are intrusted to a council or diet, composed of deputies from the cantons, who vote ac­cording to the instructions of their respective governments. Each canton has only one vote, although it may send more than one deputy to the diet. The diet meets for two suc­cessive years by turns, at the capital of each of the direct­ing cantons of Lucerne, Zurich, and Berne, the burgomas­ter or avoyer of which acts as president for the turn, with the title of Landmann. The diet usually meets on the first Monday of July, at the capital of the directing canton, and has the power of making war and peace, alliances with foreign powers, appointing diplomatic agents, and dis­posing of the military force. The ordinary sessions of the diet last about five weeks. Before closing its yearly ses­sion, it gives its instructions to the directing canton, to which the management of the general affairs is intrusted when the diet is not sitting. The directing canton is assisted in its duties by a federal chancery, consisting of a chancellor and secretary, both appointed by the diet. An extraordinary meeting of the diet may be convoked by the directing can­ton, whenever urgent circumstances may require it, or sim­ply on the demand of five cantons.

The provisions of the federal pact are liberal and equit­able in their spirit. One of them states, that “ the enjoy­ment of political rights can never in future be the exclusive privilege of any one class of citizens in any one canton. Free importation and exportation of provisions, or mer­chandise, or cattle, shall be allowed from one canton to an­other without any import or export duties. The property of chapters and convents which exist in several cantons is guaranteed, but at the same time it is liable to the public charges and taxes, like any other private property.” It will be seen by the above statements that the federal govern­ment of Switzerland has, properly speaking, no permanent executive, and the diet is merely an assembly of delegates from the various cantons, who decide according to the in­structions given by their respective governments. Many at­tempts have been made to give more influence to a central authority ; but the resistance to any system of centralization and unity has been so strong, and the apprehensions of en­croachments on the part of any general government upon the sovereign independent authority of the different cantons so widely spread, that all proposals for modifying the federal con­vention have hitherto failed. The independence of the dif­ferent cantons has been singularly preserved. Revolutions which have completely changed the constitution and the laws of one district have had little or no influence upon an­other. The boundary of a canton has bounded the most marked and violent political commotions. Civil war itself has not spread beyond the narrow sphere of local interests. Though in the different cantons the inhabitants enjoy an almost absolute equality of rights and privileges, yet these advantages cease as soon as they pass the narrow local ter­ritory to which they belong ; and thc general character of a Swiss citizen has no immunities spreading over the whole of Switzerland.@@1

@@@, Bowring's Report, p. 5.