

Notes & gleanings

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redoublés joués par la fanfare de Cartigny, le cortège se mit en marche pour défilé au milieu d'une haie de curieux venus de la ville et de tous les points du canton. La longue cohorte qu'accompagnaient d'accortes demoiselles d'honneur ceintes d'écharpes aux couleurs cantonales, fédérales et confédérées tenant des guirlandes de mousse allant d'une extrémité du cortège à l'autre, arriva à midi au restaurant du Stand, où un banquet de près de 600 couverts était servi en plein air. . . .

Au nom du Conseil d'Etat, M. Dusseiller remercie la commune de Bernex pour le chaleureux accueil qu'elle a réservé aux autorités. Saluant M. Jaton, de la Fédération vaudoise, il fait allusion aux bonnes relations qui unissent ces deux cantons. L'orateur dit aussi que ce nouveau drapeau est le symbole de la patrie que vous saurez défendre, vous, jeunesses, qui êtes l'avenir du pays dont vous assurez la sécurité. En terminant, M. Dusseiller espère que les générations futures de la fédération sauront faire honneur à cette bannière et à sa belle devise.

M. Jaton, dans un discours plein d'à-propos, dit tout le plaisir qu'il éprouve de se trouver au milieu des sociétés de jeunesses de campagne. Il est heureux d'avoir été délégué par la Fédération genevoise. Pour sceller cette alliance des deux fédérations, M. Jaton offre une superbe coupe portant ces mots "Restons unis." Après un court speech d'une belle envolée patriotique, M. Jaton porta son toast à la Patrie suisse et aux cantons de Genève et Vaud. C'est M. Duchosal, l'actif président de la Jeunesse, qui clôtura la série des discours.

Notre Fédération, dit l'orateur, groupe actuellement treize sociétés représentant environ 500 jeunes gens et demoiselles. M. Duchosal se fait un plaisir de souligner l'étroite amitié qui unit les jeunesses vaudoise et genevoise. Pour terminer, M. Duchosal félicite "La Gaîté" de Bernex, parfaite organisatrice de cette belle journée de fête.

On s'amusa fort tard et chacun remporta le meilleur souvenir de cette manifestation, qui scella une fois de plus l'amitié qui unit nos sociétés de jeunesse de campagne.

("Tribune de Genève.")

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NOTES & GLEANINGS.

A most interesting review of "Switzerland of To-day," written by Violet Markham, is contained in the *Westminster Gazette* (May 9th and May 17th). A high tribute is paid to the correct attitude of our country during the war and to the skill and tact with which our Federal Council has steered its way through the various perils. The writer points out that in spite of the opposite notions which the German and French Swiss have at times exhibited, they live together on perfectly amicable terms and would, in case Switzerland were threatened, offer a united phalanx against the enemy. The comfortable idleness of the Swiss worker, owing to the lavish unemployment pay, comes in for some criticism, as well as the socialistic tendencies which have produced some very expensive schemes. Administration is costly, and "the State railways, despite their outrageous charges, are run at a loss. The number of officials in Berne is amazing. Every other person in the street appears to be a Government employee grasping an official pouch. To find the money for all this is no light task. Taxation is formidable, and combined with the stagnation of trade and the prevalence of unemployment, the condition of Switzerland to-day is serious." Miss Markham seems to ignore, however, a few vital facts when she asserts that—

"Switzerland, unfortunately for herself, is rooted in the worst errors of protectionism. It is a policy intelligible enough among a race of cautious peasants, but, as every Free Trader will recognise, the policy of high tariffs only means another turn of the screw so far as the existing economic difficulties are concerned. Yet many of the Swiss are passionate Protectionists. At a time when every effort should be made to encourage the foreigner to return and spend whatever money he can spare, Swiss policy seems to doat on higher and ever higher tariff walls which result in all trade coming to a standstill."

Berne she describes as a delightful old town and, after depicting both the architectural and scenic aspects, adds that for a town inhabited by a "Northern race" there is a great deal of colour and decoration. She is, however, not enamoured with the exterior and the interior of the Palais Fédéral, for—

"No site in Europe is finer than that of the great terrace at Berne above which rise the buildings of the Federal Parliament and Government. Yet truth compels me to add, however reluctantly, that the sins of architects have gone a long way towards spoiling the splendid free gift of Nature. The crest of the precipice above the Aar, with its magnificent view of the Alps, should have carried the noblest group of public buildings in Europe. No Government, surely, was ever given such a chance of housing itself under matchless conditions. Alas! the result is a cross between a post office and a prison, with a dome which in an effort to be flighty recalls a cinema in a nightmare."

The Houses being in session during her stay, she availed herself of the opportunity of watching the proceedings in the National Council, where—

"Symbolism has run amok somewhat in an enormous fresco of the 'Lake of the Four Forest Cantons'—shortly known as Lucerne—which hangs above the President. There is no escape from the blue of its waters, the green of its trees, and the patches of woolly white cloud which face the visitor. 'You have noticed the angel, of course,' remarked a kind Swiss citizen, who was explaining the glories of the painting to the stranger within the gate. And, indeed, on closer view, an angel is seen to emerge from the cotton wool vapour waving a protecting hand over the fathers assembled in Council below. 'It is the spirit of Switzerland,' said my friend proudly, and I struggled gallantly to find suitable words of praise which would not perjure me too deeply in my own eyes."

The following impressions of that particular sitting prompt her to some general remarks which detract from this otherwise admirable article:—

"It is no sign of disrespect to Switzerland that the name of her yearly President is, generally speaking, unknown to the

rest of the world. A pleasant-looking, non-Olympian gentleman dealing one day with amendments to a Railway Bill was pointed out to me as the holder of that distinguished office. But Switzerland has no use for Olympians; indeed, has set her face like a flint against the possibility of any superman acquiring too much authority. All the checks of the Constitution are directed to this end. The impression left on me by the National Council was that of a hard-working, mediocre, orderly body. Outstanding personalities of any kind seem altogether lacking, though the speakers were often fluent and showed a good grasp of the subject under discussion. Mediocre—it is a hateful word, and yet it is one which rises to the mind time and again when considering the affairs of this pattern democracy."

* * *

With reference to the acrimonious attack on Switzerland which the *Saturday Review* published some time ago (see *S.O.* March 4th) from the pen of its Geneva correspondent, another retort has now reached the paper from a member of the British Colony in Geneva, and we cannot but respect this review for reproducing same in its last issue (May 13th):—

"As there is no admitted standard in matters of taste, there is little use in questioning the good taste of your 'Geneva Correspondent,' who, whilst earning his living in Switzerland and enjoying Swiss protection and hospitality, finds an exercise for his literary skill in ridiculing Swiss habits as he sees them. He is not the first journalist to imagine that a man writes best about what he knows least, and his letters would be best ignored if, having appeared in the 'Saturday Review' of February 25th and March 25th, they had not been severely criticized here.

Your 'Geneva Correspondent' commits himself to the statements that the people of this city of Calvin 'have dispensed with every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God and have decided to live by bread alone,' that in this famous university there is not one 'well-educated person,' and that good Genevese society, which has always been well known for its hospitality, its elegance and its literary taste, contains no single individual who is 'animated.' It is very evident that your correspondent knows no Swiss worth knowing and imagines that nothing can exist which his eyes do not see: yet this does not excuse his unpardonably cheap remark that 'the Swiss mistress is only as well-mannered as the Swiss maid.'

Here, as elsewhere, things worth the having are not to be had for the asking, and a man must pay his way in Geneva as in London. He may win good friendship provided that he is himself a good friend, and kindly and agreeable society if he himself is kindly and sociable and contributes something agreeable to the common stock.

We who are domiciled in Switzerland, who owe much gratitude to our Swiss friends and who admire the sterling qualities of the Swiss nation, desire to tell you, Sir, that we wish your correspondent would return as soon as may be to 'that immoderate and unaccountable civilization' into which he was born, where he may find other occasions for a display of his verbal niceties, and where his habit of short-sighted and unkindly disparagement may be taken at its own value."

* * *

"The Lake of Geneva" is the title of a guide-book published by Cassells (25s. net) and written by Sir Frederick Treves, the well-known surgeon. The book, which contains a hundred excellent photographs taken by the author, deals in a most exhaustive manner both with the scenery and the "strange glamour of history and romantic story" that hangs over this beautiful district. The publication has been very enthusiastically commented upon in the daily press, see, for example, *The Times* (May 18th).

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The *Sunday School Chronicle* (May 11th), in reporting on the annual meeting of the Continental Mission, gives the outlines of an address delivered by the Rev. Hofmann-de Visme, who spoke on the Sunday School movement and some of its aspects on the Continent.

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An amusing incident in connection with the Swiss post office system of collecting small amounts has found its way into the columns of the *Manchester Guardian Commercial*

(May 18th), but we doubt whether the joker got the best of the victim:—

"Booksellers, chemists and others are fond of posting articles on approval, in the hope that if they are not returned at once they can exact payment later on. My friend related how a too enterprising bookseller was lately 'hoist with his own petard.' He sent several books in succession to a townsman who wrote repeatedly to say that he did not want them, and asked the bookseller to desist from his efforts—but all in vain. At length the victim, who happened to be a manufacturer of bricks, decided to take drastic measures on his own account.

He drove up to the bookseller's shop and deposited a cartload of bricks in the street, right in front of the entrance. The proprietor of the shop rushed out and demanded the cause of this proceeding. 'Oh,' rejoined the brick merchant, 'you have been kindly sending me various books which I did not want, and I thought that I might return the compliment by bringing you some of my bricks.' And the shopkeeper had to remove them at his own expense."

* * *

A long article in the *Yorkshire Post* (May 8th) on "The Future of the Upper Rhine" endeavours to justify the proposal of the French Government. The writer says that a lateral canal has become a necessity for the large industrial concerns in Alsace-Lorraine, which need an export water route to the sea; it seems strange that under the German régime this necessity had never been recognized. The many well-founded objections—chief of which is that transit traffic over a natural free boundary river offers greater security and better prospects of development than if same is diverted into an inland canal controlled by an interested party—are brushed away in the following manner:—

"The fear has been expressed by several commercial and trading associations in Great Britain that the building of the lateral canal by France might involve serious consequences in regard to the navigability of the Rhine. This fear is without foundation, and can only be put down to the inaccurate assumption that France will not observe the terms imposed upon her by the Treaty. The representatives of the French Government on the Commission have, on several occasions, given the assurance that navigation on the principal bed of the river shall not be impaired during the building of the canal. To reassure the British public completely, I can add that when the canal is ready for public use all nations will enjoy the new waterway with the same freedom and the same franchise (incidence of taxation) as on the river itself. If towing should become necessary on certain parts of the canal, it will be guaranteed by the French Government without charge. British traders, therefore, cannot raise any objection to the French scheme, but can view with satisfaction the prospect of being able to send goods in heavy barges up to Basle without transhipment at Strasburg."

Nobody has any doubts about the guarantees of the French Government; but what is to become of the many treaties about the Freedom of the Rhine? Presumably, in French opinion, paragraph 358 of the Versailles Treaty supersedes them all. If the conclusion of the article is correct, it is already a settled matter that the international commission sitting now at Strasbourg will decide in favour of the lateral canal; British and German engineers are supposed to have approved the scheme submitted by the French experts.

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