

# Notes & gleanings

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**Die weisse Fahne.**—Frei von Pensionären ist seit kurzem das Bezirksgefängnis in Aarwangen. Seit langer Zeit ist es nie mehr vorgekommen, dass die weisse Fahne auf dem Schloss Aarwangen wehte. (Solothurner Zeitung.)

**Interessanter Fang.**—Ein Fischer von Muntelier by Murren hat im Neuenburgersee einen 32 Kilo schweren Wels gefangen. (National Zeitung, Basel.)

**Die neue Hängebrücke in Freiburg.** die an 109 Meter langen Drahtkabeln schwebt und nur dem Personenverkehr dient ist dem Verkehr übergeben worden.

(Tagblatt für das Birsick, Birsig- und Leimental.)

Owing to pressure on space we regret having to hold over for the next issue the report of the *Secours Mutuels' Annual Banquet and Ball*, and the report on the *Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Mercantile Society*.

## NOTES & GLEANINGS.

Sir Frederick Treves' book on the Lake of Geneva seems to have opened the heart of not a few who have sojourned in this beautiful district, for the English papers still continue to publish correspondence, both in prose and poetry, and one wonders whether anything new can be written about the subject. With the commencement of the summer season no better propaganda could have been conceived, and the way in which the other holiday centres are advertised appears ineffective in comparison. In *The Queen* (June 3rd) Carine Cadby describes the Inner Bernese Oberland than which no other place can offer a more comprehensive summer holiday; you get value for your money, for the charges are reasonable, the food excellent and the accommodation good. According to the *Daily Telegraph* (June 6th) the prospects for alpine climbing are exceptionally promising, for the Alps are now in as good a condition as any time in July in an ordinary summer:—

"Many of the leading guides have gone the length of writing to their 'Herren' in England imploring them to come at once, as the mountains could not be in better condition; and they are greatly distressed to see so many fine, long days speeding by without anyone to employ their services. The hotels in the mountain resorts, which are by now nearly all open, as are all the important mountain railways and mountain passes, are still almost deserted; but a large number of visitors are expected. Indeed, it is claimed that as many tickets for Switzerland have this year been sold in London as in the years immediately before the war. If so, then the Swiss guides will rejoice."

The writer points out the efforts made to attract English tourists and the inducement offered by—

"the mountain resorts, which have cut their prices down almost to pre-war rates. They had perforce to do so, indeed, because during the war certain hotels in the Swiss towns had guests whose expenses were paid by the Governments of the various belligerent Powers. These hotels saw no reason, therefore, why they should not be well paid out of the bottomless purse which, as we all know, every Government possesses. Their other guests were mostly war profiteers—'Schieber,' as they are called in this country—and the hotel keepers naturally did not see why these individuals should not also be made to pay. After the Armistice it was very hard for such hotels to put down their prices, and ordinary persons, who were neither Government officials nor war profiteers, frequently considered themselves 'skinned,' and doubtless in some cases were so. In general, however, I do not think the hotel keepers in mountain resorts can be charged with exploiting their visitors. Climbers, therefore, need not abandon a mountaineering holiday

in Switzerland this year for fear of being presented with hotel bills which they cannot afford to pay. About two years ago the guides raised their fees some thirty per cent., but I am informed now that they are asking only pre-war fees, although the cost of living in Switzerland is still much above what it was before the war. What visitors will find heavy, even this year, will be the railway fares, despite these having been reduced about twenty per cent. as compared with war fares."

\* \* \*

The abnormally high retail prices still ruling in Switzerland form the subject of a recommendation by the Basle correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian Commercial* (June 1st), who states that—

"Switzerland has an elaborate array of protective tariffs; equally is it true that the cost of transmitting goods by post or other means is heavy. The factor that is none the less ignored is the extraordinary scale of profit which the Swiss retailer expects and demands, with the result that people have to pay through the nose both for imported and even for non-imported articles. There are many things that one may order direct from England and, even after paying carriage and Customs duties, find oneself considerably in pocket as compared with buying them on the spot.

Such things as drugs and patent medicines can be delivered from England to a Swiss customer at far lower prices than he would have to pay to his local chemist. Swiss tailors, again, charge perfectly absurd prices for clothes, and, quite apart from the question of cut, it is vastly cheaper to send to England for one's suits. The price, too, at which books and magazines are sold is considerably in excess of the retail price in England plus duty and carriage. So high, in fact, are the Swiss tradesman's notions of retail profit that it would probably be found on analysis that a very long list could be compiled of articles that could be imported more cheaply than they could be bought on the spot. Obviously, therefore, it is to the advantage of British merchants to endeavour to secure direct orders from Swiss residents.

The field for inquiry is a large one. No greater mistake could be made than to assume that duties and carriage are bound to make an article unsaleable. Not only may there be a difference in the price of manufacture as compared with its locally produced counterpart; not only may the quality of the English article be so superior as to commend it to Swiss buyers on that ground alone; but, in any case, the chances are that the Swiss retail tradesman will put on so high a profit for himself that anyone who can approach customers without a middleman will be certain of a market for English goods."

\* \* \*

*Engineering* (May 26th) reproduces some photographs together with explanatory matter of the electric cranes at the railway shops at Bellinzona; these cranes, which are capable of lifting a complete locomotive, have been constructed by the Oerlikon Company. Another similar device is illustrated in *Motor Transport* (June 5th) and refers to a new equipment attached to Saurer lorries which allows heavy weights to be loaded and unloaded with facility and celerity; one of these special Saurer vehicles has recently been acquired by Messrs. Pickfords, Ltd., who are employing it on cable transport work.

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An interesting law-suit over the sale of some rubber tyres, in which two Swiss firms are concerned, has been argued and decided in the English courts in favour of the latter; the case is fully referred to in the *Journal of Commerce* (June 7th).

\* \* \*

The *Evening Standard* (8th June) and *Alien waiters*:

"A visit to many of the leading West End hotels reveals the fact that the alien waiter is rapidly regaining the position he held before the war. For some time ex-service men held these positions, but they are gradually being ousted by the alien.

In very few clubs, with the exception of those wholly "Service," are British employees found to be in the majority.

The British waiter is a rattling good chap, far superior to any of these aliens who are now crowding hotels, but

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somehow he does not seem to get a chance,' said a well-known hotel habitué in reply to an inquiry as to his impressions of the British waiter.

'The fact is that pre-war Heinrich of Bavaria has recently been reborn, and now blossoms forth as Henri, a 'Suisse.'

'There are to-day thousands of men—British men—walking the streets who would be only too pleased to take the jobs now filled by these aliens. Many of these men during the war served as waiters in officers' messes and proved themselves most efficient, but to-day they are not suitable. Why?

'The answer, to my mind, lies in the fact that they are more independent than the alien, and, in addition, will not work for the same small return. What would be almost poverty to an English waiter, means, owing to the favourable rate of exchange, affluence to the German and Austrian who, mark you, is availing himself of the exchange to grow rich in his own country at our expense.'

There is no need for us Swiss to get excited about the above periodical outburst, for it applies to alien waiters who emanate from "allied nations" just as much as to aliens from "neutral" countries.

Neither need we concern ourselves with the merits of our Swiss hotel employees; they can be left to take their chance, as they have done for a good many decades in the past. But the following lines: "The fact is that 'pre-war Heinrich of Bavaria has recently been reborn' and now blossoms forth as Henri, a 'Suisse'" must be challenged, lest the man-in-the-street might assume that Swiss hotel employees might remain indifferent to this cheap sort of dodge.

The well-known hotel habitué who makes the above assertion must be singularly ignorant of the existing immigration restrictions, which make it impossible for German waiters to come over and oust British employees by camouflaging their nationality and sailing under the Swiss flag.

This could only be tried by such German and Austrian subjects as are already in this country. But, surely, this well-known hotel habitué does not suggest that managers of hotels and restaurants here lack sufficient gumption to protect themselves from being deceived by such would-be Swiss.

When in doubt, what's simpler than to demand production of the identity book, which every "alien," be he of an allied, neutral or former enemy country, must possess, and misuse of which is a severely punishable offence.

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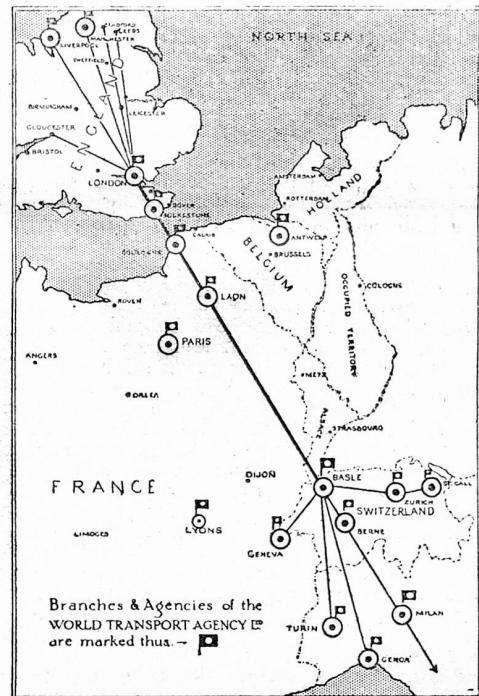
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