

Here and there

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outbreak of the European War, has recently been overhauled and will resume traffic to-day.

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Charles Bonvin (Valaisan), the author of numerous confidence tricks, has just been sentenced to four years' imprisonment by the Criminal Court at Nyon.

He posed as the Director of an imaginary "Comptoir intermédiaire de la Société des Nations" and succeeded in fleecing quite a number of "enthusiasts" or greenhorns at Berne and Zurich.

HERE AND THERE.

By J. H. Cortesey.

One of the results of the war has been the impetus given to flying. Men now compete very well with the birds, and as every day brings forward new developments in this art, birds will soon be outdone in their own element. Rising vertically in the air is a performance few of them can accomplish, and while Mr. Louis Brennan is still working very hard on his model helicopter, the Americans have not been slow in showing that the thing can be done. In fact, successful trials of a helicopter have, it is announced, been carried out in the environs of Washington in the presence of experts of the United States Navy Department by Mr. Henry Berliner, its inventor. The machine has the appearance of an aeroplane, except that on either side towards the front there are two lifting propellers, while the forward motion is secured by a tilting propeller in the rear of the fuselage. The machine was capable of rising and descending vertically. It did so a few feet, and also remained poised in the air, after which it circled around.

This new feature in aeroplanes is of immense importance, and although in this as in every other sphere of science "know-all" detractors declared it impossible of realization, it is probable that the British "air" departments were awaiting its practical development in order to satisfy, at a later period, the carping critics of the present means available for the defence of the British Isles, means insufficient as compared with the French air force of 220 squadrons.

The direct-rising aeroplanes would naturally possess obvious advantages. Danger in landing would, for example, be considerably lessened, which is of interest, especially in mountainous countries like Switzerland.

* * *

After the heat wave the cold one. Chimneys again pour forth some of their poisonous and destructive fumes. Things are not so bad now as they will be in the autumn, when the remarks of Mr. Stephen Leacock—another Mark Twain—will be opportune: "London people are a little sensitive on the point and flatter their atmosphere by calling it a fog; but it is not; it is soup. . . . One night about four o'clock in the afternoon I saw the sun distinctly appear through the clouds. . . . In practice daylight is but little used. Electric lights are burned. . . . This . . . is called Daylight Saving."

Private chimneys, says a recent official report, produce five-sixth of the total smoke. Industrial chimneys provide the other sixth. Now, if for a given amount of heat the relative costs are 12/9 for electricity, 3s. for gas, and tenpence for an open fire grate, using coal, it is evident that the direct use of coal is the cheapest method of heating, the method which will retain its field for quite a long time to come, irrespective of its inherent present wastefulness through incomplete combustion.

Waste, however, can be cured, and we hear of new legislation on the subject. Anyway, "Brighter London" is asking to be able to partake of its own share of sunshine.

* * *

With the heavens enriched by the appearance of a new double star, discovered by Dr. Plaskett, a star of a mass one hundred times larger than that of our sun, and whose light has taken ten thousand years to reach us, and Mars being at a point nearest to the Earth, the astronomers have their attention much divided. Ingenuity is displayed on various ways to find out whether our near neighbour planet is inhabited by human beings. If the new telescopes, now being built both in France and America, answer their purposes, the confirmation of a great hope would add to our interest in the Universe.

Really, there is no reason to think that the Earth alone has the privilege of being inhabited by human beings.

* * *

If any language is likely to become universal it is certainly English, for it is daily gaining ground. The Bavarian Parliament has decided to make the learning of English compulsory throughout the Middle Schools of the country, and to make French optional.

THE GRASSHOPPER ROWING CLUB AND HENLEY REGATTA.

July 5th—8th.

The main body of the Grasshopper Crew duly arrived at Victoria Station on Sunday last at 3.55 p.m. and were received at the station by Messrs. Georges Dimier, P. F. Boehringer and Henry Senn.

After partaking of a meat tea at the Union Helvetia Club, offered by Mr. Dimier, our sportsmen-compatriots took train at Paddington for Henley, where they are staying at the Catherine Wheel Hotel, as mentioned previously.

The spokesman of the crew, Dr. R. Bosshard, would not be drawn into giving any prognostics, nor would other members of the crew, they simply stated that they were proud of being able to represent Switzerland for the first time at so important a meeting as Henley, and that they would all try to do their best in the strenuous contests which they will have to face in the coming week.

We learn from Henley this morning that the crews are daily practising on the Thames, in the morning from 10 to 12, and in the afternoon from 3 to 5 o'clock.

Once more we wish our plucky compatriots the best of luck, and trust that our appeals for a strong attendance at Henley by the members of the Swiss Colony, will not have been made in vain.

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