

# Notes & gleanings

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has decided, in conjunction with the Genevese authorities, to devote the granted credit of two million francs for other emergency works which are to be carried out in Geneva for the purpose of combating unemployment.

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Over 200 members of the gymnastic section of the "Schweizerverein New York" and the "Schweizer Turnverein Hudson County, N.Y." who will participate at the Federal Gymnastic Festival, which takes place in St. Gall on the 21st to 25th of this month, reached Basle this week. The "New York Swiss" were heartily greeted at the station by the "Basler Liederkränz" and the "Basler Bürgerturnverein."

\* \* \*

The financial result of the Eidgenössische Sängertag, recently held in Lucerne, under weather conditions which were far from being propitious, will, according to advance estimates show a net profit of 100,000 frs. This amount will be divided among the three Lucerne Glee Societies, who were the hosts on this occasion, and various Benevolent Societies.

\* \* \*

At the South-German Musical Festival in Stuttgart the "Musikverein Harmonie," from Wädenswil, secured First Prize and a Gold Cup.

\* \* \*

#### OBITUARY.

Colonel Hermann Blaser, Chief of the Federal Department for Elementary Military Training and Voluntary Rifle Practice, died at Berne, aged 49, in consequence of cerebral hemorrhage after one day's illness.

His early death is considered a great loss, as he was a gifted officer of rare talent, whose organising abilities and foresight particularly developed and benefitted the physical training and shooting practices of Switzerland's youth.

Colonel Blaser was member of the General Staff during the whole period of the war. For two years he commanded the 13th Regiment, and from 1918 to 1921 he occupied the position of Chief of Staff.

\* \* \*

Lieutenant-Colonel E. Federspiel, from Liestal, was conducting troop operations near Yverdon last week, when he suddenly became unwell. He sat down at the side of a road and expired a few minutes later from heart failure.

#### NOTES & GLEANINGS.

It is a human weakness to deduce general conclusions from particular instances, especially when it helps to relieve one's feelings. A correspondent in the *Daily Sketch* (July 5th) finds Swiss Customs officials a little too zealous, in fact, he bluntly calls it a "Customs Scandal." An Englishman returning from Italy had to pay a duty equivalent to 14s. for an alabaster image which he had bought for 11s. in Milan. We suppose the tax was imposed in accordance with the tariff, and although to stay-at-homes this modern piracy may seem atrocious, those who have travelled about of late have no lack of similar and better tales. The same note is struck in another reference in the *Daily Express* (July 4th), where "according to latest advices from the 'Alps the charge for a hot bath is four shillings, and for 'coffee for two five shillings.'" Alps is, of course, a vague term, but to the ordinary reader this would convey that these are the generally recognised charges; we doubt whether the informant could substantiate his complaint,

unless he stayed at one of the most exclusive hotels. However, this would-be "gentleman with a duster" does not stop at trivialities, for he makes the startling statement that "the number of pure German visitors is simply colossal." We fancy he ought to have a seat on the Allied Committee of Guarantees, where his plausibility might possibly convince the experts that the wealth of the Germans is phenomenal! These press notices are apt to do Switzerland a lot of harm if allowed to go unchallenged; we hope that some readers of our influential contemporary have taken up the cudgels in the interests of fairness and accuracy, and we doubt not that in due course the paragraph referred to will be rectified. In the meantime we reproduce a letter addressed to the *Daily Express* on July 4th by an English lady, who says:—

"With your usual fairness will you allow me to comment on the first paragraph of 'By the Way' in to-day's 'Daily Express'?"

I am an Englishwoman, but have many Swiss friends and a wider knowledge of Switzerland and Swiss conditions than most of my compatriots.

It is true that German is spoken in many parts of Switzerland, but, to a foreigner's ears, the same language is spoken in England, Scotland, Ireland and America, although no one could accuse the inhabitants of those countries of the same characters, characteristics or political opinions.

Last summer I obtained excellent hotel accommodation in the Bernese Oberland for Frs. 12.— per day (roughly 4 gns. per week), receiving food, comfort and a kindly interest not usually procurable in England at far higher rates. It is true that hot baths cost Frs. 3.50 each, but at most English hotels the charge for mere apologies of hot baths is extortionate. In Switzerland one does obtain the real thing, and, further, literally gallons of hot water can be had in one's own room at any hour without extra charge. Coffee everywhere was obtainable at Fr. 1.— per person. Further, during the whole time I did not meet a single German, and they were everywhere conspicuous by their absence.

Switzerland is a wonderful little country of simple, kindly folk. She suffered cruelly through preserving strict neutrality during the war, and any English people who go there now can do so knowing that their money is helping a country worthy of help, and that they themselves will everywhere be welcomed and treated with scrupulous courtesy, kindness and fairness."

\* \* \*

"A Swiss Walking Tour" is the title of a capital article by Carine Cadby in *The Queen* (July 8th), who states that "there is no holiday to beat a walking tour in 'Switzerland; in fact, one is almost led to believe the 'Swiss Alps were designed especially for this purpose.'" Another similar description is contained in the *Gentlewoman* (July 8th).

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The persistent drought at the beginning of 1921 had reduced the Swiss lakes to an unprecedentedly low level, which enabled scientists to establish new theories in the history of the culture of the neolithic lake-dwellers. The results of these recent investigations are recorded in *Nature* (July 1st) by Prof. Eugène Pittard, of the Geneva University. Nothing new has been revealed; it is, however, now definitely established that Geneva is one of the most ancient cities of the world, since man has lived on this site continuously since the neolithic period. It is also conclusively proven that our neolithic forefathers showed a preference for certain of the domestic animals; the species of which they ate most abundantly were the ox and the pig. Civilization in this direction does not seem to have made very great strides.

### HENLEY ROYAL REGATTA.

On this occasion also the Swiss colours were not favoured with success at the first time of asking, and we shall probably have to become a little more modest, for, after all, this is the country where most of to-day's sports first saw the light, and the sporting scions of Great Britain still know how to hold their own at home.

Although the "Grasshopper" Rowing Club has a record of successes at home and abroad of which they can justly be proud, the "strange waters" of Father Thames must have proved too formidable to fathom successfully in so short a time. When, in addition, the health of three members of the crew broke down, necessitating the substitution of reserve men who were not equal to the strenuous task which faced them, the outlook became as bad as the weather which prevailed during Henley Week.

Particularly for the Grand Challenge Cup were the chances of the Grasshoppers' "eight" destroyed, for two men had to enter the boat under conditions which could bring but failure, and, although the Swiss crew took the lead at the start against the Thames Rowing Club, they were easily beaten by the latter in the first heat.

Hopes now only centred in the "fours" for the Stewards' Cup, and, indeed, they received a fillip when on Friday the "Grasshoppers" severely drubbed the "Leander" four, who were considered the pick of the competitive crews for the event.

So easily did our compatriots gain the victory in this heat that it was difficult to see how they could get beaten in the final by the Eton Vikings on Saturday. But, as usual in racing, the unexpected happened, and the Swiss crew was unfortunately deprived of taking home the Stewards' Cup which had seemed well within an easy reach.

"An Old Blue" reports the progress of this race in the "Daily Telegraph" as follows:—

"Both crews got away fast, rowing 41½ strokes in the first minute. Along Temple Island the Swiss led slightly, and were about a canvas in front at the quarter-mile. It was a fine race, both keeping at a fast rate, but above Remenham the Swiss could not stand the pace, and the Vikings shot away at Fawley, which was reached in 3 min. 54 sec. They had a lead of three-quarters of a length at the third signal box, and were right away at the mile. The Swiss tried a spurt above and hit the piles, but went on again. They were beaten easily."

With regard to the effectiveness and power of the style of rowing, as introduced by the "Grasshoppers" at Henley, opinions of experts differ widely. The one convincing test would have been success, and that was certainly not made easy through the misfortune which incapacitated three regular members of the Swiss crew, who were every time instrumental in gaining victories at home and in foreign waters. This quite apart from the inclement weather, which not only interfered with the training, but also with the races.

However, "Qui s'excuse—s'accuse," and there is one redeeming feature in the defeat which is that our oarsmen have not lost courage, but, on the contrary, hope to return on the next occasion, expecting to go one better, having admittedly learnt much during their first visit to Henley, which, they hope, will bear fruit in future contests on the tricky Thames course.

In referring to the Swiss crew's style of rowing, Max Pemberton writes in the "Referee":—

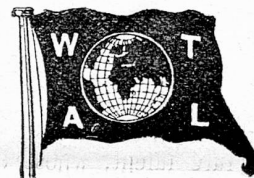
"If the new lawn tennis be more thrilling to watch than the old—which I doubt—the new rowing as witnessed at Henley this week is certainly staggering in the eyes of the ancients. We have seen lusty men picking up their boats anyhow, scrambling into them like children at a school-treat, and rowing away with hardly more swing of the body than a telegraph post in a thunderstorm. Yet their blades were a marvel of exactitude, and their arms shot out like a boxer's left, and soon he who had come to mock remained to pray—that they would crack before the post was reached. For their boats obviously travelled at a prodigious speed, and every disciple of orthodoxy upon the bank was ready to ask himself, 'Can this thing be?'"

I am not presuming to contend for a moment that British style is overdone or that it has any superior when a four-mile course is to be rowed; but I have often wondered if we could not learn something from heterodoxy when Henley is the business, and if our very long backward swing is all we think it to be."

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