

Notes & gleanings

Objekttyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1922)**

Heft 63

PDF erstellt am: **01.05.2024**

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NOTES & GLEANINGS.

Switzerland is not the only country in the market for holiday visitors from abroad; the competition with other lands favoured with an attractive exchange proves at times a serious handicap, but when gratuitous statements are made to the effect that hotel charges are still abnormally high, incalculable harm is done if these are not promptly challenged. Very often these statements, on closer examination, contain their own refutation, as, for instance, when a correspondent in *The Times* (Aug. 5th) asserts that "hotel expenses are at least fifty to sixty per cent. more than they were ten years ago." The writer evidently ignores the fact that this increase is not even commensurate with the general rise in the cost of living which obtains in all European countries. We are pleased to record that Mr. Arthur L. Jennings (*Times*, Aug. 8th) has taken up the cudgels in the interest of truth and fairness.

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The *Pictorial Magazine* (Aug. 12th) relates afresh the story of mountain climbs that have taken their toll of human life, such as the first ascent of the Matterhorn in 1865, which is described as follows:—

"The Swiss Alps, probably because they are comparatively easy of access, take their toll of human life regularly year after year.

Each separate peak has its own black record. You might fill a fair-sized graveyard with the victims of the Matterhorn alone. The very first ascent of the mighty mountain—which for a long time was deemed unclimbable—was marked by a dreadful accident. It also furnished one of the most marvellous escapes recorded in the history of similar exploits.

Seven men in all constituted the party which essayed the feat. Their names were Edward Whymper, the leader; Lord Francis Douglas, a young man as years go, but a trained and tried mountaineer; the Rev. Charles Hudson, also a famous climber; Mr. Hadow, a young athlete, but without much experience of mountain climbing; and three guides, Croz, and the two Taugwalders, father and son.

Following a day and a half of strenuous climbing, the summit was reached in safety, and a flag which the party had brought with them was hoisted there as a signal to the watchers in the valley below that success had crowned their persevering efforts.

The little village of Zermatt, at the base of the giant mountain, was immediately agog with excitement. Work ceased for the day, and everybody was jubilant.

Everybody, that is, save one little lad of about twelve, who would keep insisting that something very terrible had happened. He had, he said, while watching the summit through his toy telescope, seen an "avalanche" fall from the mountain top on to the great glacier four thousand feet below.

As nobody else had seen anything of the kind, however, he was not believed. But he was right, nevertheless; only the "avalanche" was not rock, nor frozen snow, but a roped-together cluster of living men.

What had happened was this: The climbers, after spending about an hour on the summit resting and admiring the view, had started to descend. They were, of course, all roped together, Croz leading and the rest following in the order named: Hadow, Hudson, Lord F. Douglas, old Taugwalder, Whymper, and young Taugwalder.

Hardly had the downward climb commenced, however, when from some unexplained cause Mr. Hadow fell from the face of the precipice on to Croz, knocking the guide off his feet. These two dropped plumb down the perpendicular side of the mountain, and as the rope tautened, the weight of their falling bodies dragged down after them first Hudson, and then Lord F. Douglas.

Old Taugwalder, seeing what was happening, stooped, and, quick as a flash, twisted the slack of the rope beneath his feet round a projecting pinnacle of rock. This manœuvre would have saved the lives of the others if the rope had held. But the sudden strain proved too much for it. It snapped. And the four men were dashed to death.

The three survivors were so paralysed, with fright and horror that for a long while none dared move. For hours

they clung to the face of the precipice trembling in every limb, the two Taugwalders sobbing like children. Eventually, urged by Whymper, they recommenced the descent, which was accomplished without further incident.

Search parties recovered three of the bodies. That of Lord Francis Douglas, however, could not be discovered, nor has it ever been found since. Somewhere deep hidden in the depths of one of the many fathomless crevasses of the great glacier the brave young man sleeps quietly to this day, frozen solid, his form and face as they were in life, save perchance for the havoc that may possibly have been wrought by his terrible fall."

* * *

Two of our compatriots have received notice in the English dailies. The one is a playwright, Mr. John Knittel, whose forthcoming historical drama is referred to in theatrical notices. Mr. Knittel has restrained us from publishing particulars, but the *Daily Graphic* (Aug. 8th) states that Maurice Moscovitch will take the leading part in a play entitled "Arnold von Winkelried."

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A long article in the *Westminster Gazette* (Aug. 11th) brings to public notice Mr. Buhner, of Upper Norwood, who is a well-known breeder and trainer of Alsatian Dogs, now so fashionable in this country, and who has formerly trained these dogs in Switzerland for police work.

HERE AND THERE.

By J. H. Corthesy.

"Down in the distant hollow someone was making veal in large quantities; and, fitfully on the warm wet wind, there came to me the expostulations of the calves who did not like the process. One there was, a lusty-lunged chap, with a voice like his ancestor of Bashan. He was in an awful funk. "Braaaaar! Braaaaar! Aooooo!" or words to that effect. I think it was his turn next by the row he was making.

"As I listened to the far-off sound of slaughter, all my old love for veal-and-ham pie vanished like snow upon the desert's dusty face; and I was glad I had chosen a fried sole for breakfast. Fish hardly make any fuss when their time comes. . . .

"'Braaaaar! Braaaaar! Aooooo!' . . . 'Calves,' said the tramp, 'killing calves? Oh, I see! You mean that 'Berooooomp' noise . . . But that is not calves. That's the town band practising a new piece!' . . ."

The auditory effect of a brass band exercising on stomachic inclinations, as per the above from the pen of Mr. F. W. Thomas in the *Saturday Star* would be the antithesis of that of music pleasing to the ear of Sir Thomas Beecham or Monsieur R. Gaillard which would soothe any breast, savage or otherwise, or of music such as that heard at the opening of the 28th season of the Promenade Concerts at Queen's Hall and conducted by Sir Henry J. Wood, the programme of which was immensely appreciated, although a daring innovation in the way of novelties was introduced.

* * *

Good music relieves mental tension, raises the mind to higher planes from the hard and bumpus earthly "realities" and leads us to think that the body ought to be able to follow the mind in its ethereal excursions, as in dreams, simply by will-power, that is, without having to incur the cash expense inseparable from travelling in aeroplanes—however moderate it may be for the material value of this means of transport—for it can as yet only be afforded by a few privileged ones.

The public has always been patient. Patience has been