

Notes & gleanings

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CORRESPONDENCE.

E. S., Bèthusy.—1. The address of the "Swiss House" is 34-35, Fitzroy Square, London, W. 1.

2. It would be wise to write beforehand to the Secretary of the Swiss House, stating the time of your arrival. This would probably ensure your being personally met at the station.

3. As regards addresses of English Schools of Domestic Economy and Horticulture, it would be necessary to let us know if you can speak enough English to follow the classes, as this would be essential before starting any training course. We think you might get the information you require by writing direct to the Reading University College, where both courses could be combined.

SOCIAL AND PERSONAL.

Mr. Georges Rueff, of the Banca Commerciale Italiana, London Office, has sailed for the United States on a business trip.

STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.

BONDS.		Sep. 12th	Sep. 19th
Swiss Confederation 3% 1903	...	83.50%	82.85%
Swiss Confederation 9th Mob. Loan 5%	...	103.15%	103.85%
Federal Railways A—K 3½%	...	88.60%	87.80%
Canton Basle-Stadt 5½% 1921	...	106.50%	106.75%
Canton Fribourg 3% 1892...	...	79.15%	78.15%
Zurich (Stadt) 4% 1909	...	101.00%	101.10%
SHARES.		Nom. Sep. 12th	Sep. 19th
Swiss Bank Corporation	...	Frs. 500	Frs. 651
Crédit Suisse...	...	500	685
Union de Banques Suisses...	...	500	574
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	...	1000	1592
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	...	1000	1250
C. F. Bally S.A.	...	1000	990
Fabrique de Machines Oerlikon...	...	500	622
Entreprises Sulzer	...	1000	752
S.A. Brown Boveri (new)	...	500	370
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Co.	...	400	192
Chocolats Suisses Peter-Cailler-Kohler...	...	100	114
Compagnie de Navig'n sur le Lac Léman	...	500	445

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NOTES & GLEANINGS.

The discouraging conditions prevailing on the French railways in connection with the THROUGH SERVICE TO SWITZERLAND still form the subject of critical remarks in the correspondence columns of some of the daily papers. While these discomforts cannot but unfavourably influence the tourist traffic to Switzerland, no blame attaches to the Swiss Federal Railways, who are absolutely helpless in the matter, and perhaps the tourist will appreciate all the more the exemplary conditions obtaining on the latter system. The following extract from a letter to *The Times* (Sept. 14th) are the impressions of one who started his journey with some misgivings:—

"There are, indeed, many features in which travelling in Switzerland is now even pleasanter than before the war. For the purposes of the tourist the electrification of so large a proportion of the railways is a real boon, as any loss of speed is more than made up by the smooth running and the absence of dirt and smoke. The large and easily manipulated windows, the roomy luggage racks, the never-failing and always clean lavatory accommodation, the careful labelling of the carriages, and the courtesy of the conductors, all contribute to comfortable travelling.

The fares are fairly high, and the British or American traveller finds it difficult to smother his resentment at the absence of any allowance of free baggage. But the charges, no doubt, are due to war conditions; and it is an enormous convenience to be able to forward one's trunk, either by post or railway, to any part of Switzerland without railway ticket or other evidence of the traveller's own destination.

The new postal diligences are another great convenience. The hotel charges seem, on the whole, reasonable, and though unexpected (but relatively trifling) 'extras' sometimes appeared in the bill, I met practically no instances of overcharge or extortion. You can live for about a guinea a day in the very best Swiss hotels, and I often had full pension for 12s. or 13s. a day, with comforts that I could not hope to find anywhere else at the price. Cleanliness is, of yore, a pre-eminent Swiss virtue; and the honesty of the Swiss is almost meticulous."

* * *

"GLORIOUS SWITZERLAND" is the title of an enthusiastic article in the *Bolton Journal* (Sept. 8th), describing in superlative terms the holiday trip of a party of 300. "Perhaps one of the most impressive things," the writer says, "is the silence of those vast and snowy heights—a silence broken by the murmur of distant falling waters, and the tinkle of the cow bells of grazing cattle on the nearer hills. The call of the mountain is in some way felt by all, and more than one of our party confessed to secret midnight perambulations to see the moonlit snow-fields. Whence is that impulse to touch and reach the top—the impulse which, in Switzerland alone, leads to many accidents and deaths each year. Is it one expression, implanted in every human heart, of some day reaching the highest and the best?"

* * *

The unique advertisement which GENEVA enjoys by virtue of being the seat of the League of Nations will ere long enable it to lay claim to being the best-known city of the world. The correspondent of the *New Statesman* (Sept. 9th) deserves to be specially honoured by the Genevese town fathers for the painstaking way in which he describes the merits and traditions of their charge. His statements are a rejoinder to what has been—or will be—said to justify a removal of the seat of the League and refute in a most categorical fashion the unkind reflections published last year in one of the great London dailies from the pen of a "fair" contributor. Beginning with the gratifying remark that, if Switzerland had not existed, it would have had to be invented to provide a home for the League of Nations, the writer suggests that—

"the supposed dulness of Geneva is at the bottom of the talk about moving the seat of the League elsewhere. Reasons of economy are alleged for a change, and it is true that the Swiss postage is the dearest in the world, that Swiss railway fares are now excessively high, and that paper and printing are exorbitantly expensive. The general cost of living at Geneva, although protection and restrictions of imports make it much higher than it need be, is not, however, any higher than in Paris (in gold francs)—perhaps it is rather lower. Moreover, it is declining in Geneva, and not in Paris. . . .

But, even if the League would save more money by moving from Geneva than in fact it would, that consideration is completely outweighed by the strong political reasons for remaining. The seat of the League must be in a neutral country where there is no risk of its communications being cut in the event of war. If there were no neutral country, it would, it seems to me, be necessary to neutralise a piece of territory for the purpose. Whether Geneva was the best place to choose in Switzerland is another matter. Geographically, no doubt, Basle or Zurich, or even Berne, would be a more convenient centre. But Geneva has certain international traditions, and, since it has been chosen, there do not seem to be adequate reasons for a change."

The author of the article has never lived in a better conducted town. For the majority of its inhabitants, who are all very fond of music, the wildest dissipation is a concert, a cinema, or a café:—

"The Genevèse invariably sing when they are happy, even when they are also quite sober. They sing in parts, too, and uncommonly well. A singing people is fundamentally sound, and the Swiss are a congenial friendly folk, whose qualities are not always sufficiently appreciated. One of them is honesty. The standard of honesty is higher in Switzerland than in any country that I know, although the Swiss are eminently business-like."

The religious and literary associations and tendencies in relation to the evolution of modern Geneva are placed in strong relief, it being evident that Calvin, Rousseau and Voltaire have left their mark on the Genevèse character. The following are some of the impressions that the writer has gained of the people in modern Geneva:—

"The old Genevèse families have a very marked type of their own, but, on the whole, they are more like the English than the French. They are reserved, rather cold in their manner with strangers, far from emotional, upright in their dealings, and very public-spirited. Genevèse social usages are more French than English, but unmarried girls have for a long time had much more freedom than in France, although not quite so much as in England. Wealthy Genevèse families live much more simply than do people with the same incomes in France or England, and they abhor ostentation. Two things, however, are necessary to an established social position—a house in the country and an 'œuvre.' The country house is often only two or three miles outside the town. Most of the 'first families,' as they would be called in America, are more or less connected with banking, which is the principal industry of Geneva. Never have I seen so many banks in a town of the same size. It is, of course, one of the principal financial centres of Europe."

Like the French, the Genevèse 'families' are exclusive, and do not easily open their doors to foreigners. This is partly self-defence. In a cosmopolitan place like Geneva a good many of the foreign residents are persons for whom their native country has for some reason become uncomfortable. The reasons often have been and are political and quite honourable, but that is not always so, and Genevèse that have opened their arms to foreigners have sometimes been disillusioned. This exclusiveness has prevented any very close relations between the Genevèse and the many foreigners who have been brought to Geneva by the League of Nations. The majority of the latter mix little, if at all, in Genevèse society. . . .

One of the weaknesses of the Genevèse is that, like the French, they are so proud of their past that they forget that the world moves. Just as the French too often content themselves with having made the Revolution and imagine that nothing more remains to be done, so the Genevèse too often content themselves with having been advanced a long time ago, and imagine that they are advanced still. This is true chiefly of the bourgeoisie. . . .

Genevèse opinion should not be judged by that of the Genevèse press, which is for the most part at present strangely out of touch with it. The principal Genevèse papers support French Nationalist policy, in spite of its disastrous effect on

Switzerland, where unemployment is relatively almost as bad as in England. A certain type of Genevèse prides himself on being more French than the French by a sort of 'snobisme,' but the general opinion of Geneva was well expressed by a man who, a fortnight ago, at a newspaper kiosk pointed to a paper called 'La Suisse,' and said it ought to be called 'La France.'"

* * *

A very explicit review of the purpose and aims of the LEX HAEBERLIN is contained in a special contribution to the *Morning Post* (Sept. 15th). In view of the forthcoming referendum we reprint part of the article, which, however, should be read *cum grane salis*, as the writer exhibits a strong prejudice in favour of the proposal:—

"A carefully and impartially worded leaflet has been issued to every elector, explaining to him the precise question upon which he is asked to vote 'Yes' or 'No.' This question is: Whether or no Chapter 3 of the Federal Penal Code, comprising Articles 45 to 52, is to be abrogated and replaced by a new series of articles, and whether or no the above-mentioned additional Article 33 'bis' is to be inserted. The object of the proposed alterations in the Code is to punish the agitators who pull the wires from behind the scenes and to crush any revolutionary movement in the bud."

The advocates of 'the Haebelin law' contend that the existing Penal Code was proved in 1918 to be inadequate for this purpose. Enacted over sixty years ago, when political agitation had not become a fine art and a well-organised profession, the Code punished the actual agents, often misguided individuals of no weight, but failed to touch the real organisers, who had taken good care to commit no overt act of such a character as to bring them within the scope of the criminal law. Consequently 'the Haebelin law' punishes with imprisonment anyone who 'attempts' by 'inciting to the suspension of the public services' to 'modify the Federal or Cantonal Constitution,' or who by an actual or attempted revolt endeavours to hinder the normal functions of the Federal or Cantonal authorities or those of the National Bank, or to assist in the escape of a prisoner. Further new clauses of the Penal Code deal with violence at Federal or Cantonal elections and with the falsification of voting papers. The new Article 47 punishes with imprisonment 'anyone who publicly, in Switzerland or abroad, by spoken words, by writings, or by pictures, provokes, or threatens to provoke, violence against the constitutional order or internal security of the Confederation or of the Cantons,' and more especially if such propaganda be directed to the 'functionaries, employees, or workmen of the Confederation, of the Cantons, of the National Bank, or of the public transport services.'

In Switzerland, since 1902, the railways, with few exceptions, have belonged to the State, and, consequently, the railwaymen are Federal officials. The new Article 48 inflicts a heavy penalty, up to five years' imprisonment, for inciting to disobey military orders, to desertion, or to refusal to serve. The new Article 51 gives, with certain reservations, jurisdiction over the above-mentioned offences to the Federal Courts, exclusively Cantonal and military offences being tried by the Cantonal and military tribunals. Finally, the new Article 52 provides for the confiscation of the defamatory 'writings, pictures, and all other objects exalting, threatening, or provoking the subversion of the existing public order, even when there has been no prosecution or sentence.' Further, any money employed for agitation with these objects is confiscated by the Confederation. . . ."

* * *

The following ingenious advertisement has appeared in the "Personal" column of the *Daily Express* (Sept. 15th):—

AVOCAT

Possédant hautes relations se charge démarches facilitant obtention Distinctions Officielles, Nobiliaires et Académiques.—
Adresser demandes avec biographie à: Case Rhône, 3373 Genève.

And in another page our contemporary has the following ironical reference:—

"Candidates for honours are offered a fine chance of satisfying their ambition. That is, of course, if they do not object to having their titles manufactured in Switzerland, the historical home of democracy."

There is evidently an opening for a lucrative mail order business, and we commend this new "line" to the attention of war profiteers.