

Notes & gleanings

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to the damsel at the station buffet for 50 Swiss centimes, which, converted into Austrian currency, represented 700 kronen, so that he was 200 kronen in pocket by having drunk a bottle of Tirolean wine.

* * *

The Philatelist Society of Geneva will hold an International Exhibition for Stamps from the 3rd to 12th September, 1922.

* * *

In the week December 25th to 31st 513 cases of scarlet fever had to be registered in the city of Geneva. In consequence the reopening of the Municipal schools had to be postponed.

* * *

Basle's influenza epidemic involved over 1,000 fresh cases from January 1st to 7th. Fortunately, the symptoms of the illness prove to be of a mild nature.

* * *

Charles Genillard, director of the Villars Palace Hotel, also the founder and president of the association "Pro Lemano," met with a tragic end, succumbing to a fracture of the skull, caused by the fall of a block of ice from the terrace of the hotel, the clearance of which he was supervising at the time.

* * *

On Monday evening last the 10 o'clock train from Berne to Schwarzenburg dashed into a van which showed no lights, at the level crossing near Moos, instantly killing the driver and his three horses.

* * *

The employees in a large textile factory at Ziegelbrück, who were called upon to decide between a 52-hour and a 48-hour week, have decided, by a four-fifths majority, to return to a 52-hour week so as to avoid a reduction of wages.

* * *

A watchmaking factory at Gaillard, near Geneva, has been completely burned down, and the damage amounts to £30,000. There was no water available for the firemen.

* * *

Although the world situation has not yet begun to improve, "the downward tendency may almost be said to have ceased," states the current number of the monthly statistical bulletin of the League of Nations. It is noted that prices have risen lately in Japan, India, Switzerland, and probably in France and in other countries where the circulation is in a less healthy condition; but they are still falling in the United Kingdom, the Scandinavian countries, and in the United States. A favourable indication of the improvement, it is pointed out, has been the increase of production not only of coal, but also of iron and steel.

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.

E. Steiner, J. Schmid, W. Frick, L. Chapuis, A. Renou, H. Pfirter, H. Veyrassat, M. Ernst, Miss L. Naef, Ch. Haag, J. Graf, G. A. Heinzelmann, H. Epprecht, J. B. Brutsch, F. O. Walty, G. Engesser, J. G. Sigg, H. Dürler, E. Robert, W. E. Gattiker, Mrs. C. Müller, F. Graf, Schweizerbund, R. Hangartner, F. Th. Freund, F. E. Caspar, S. Jeker, M. Pachoud, E. Ziegler.

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NOTES & GLEANINGS.

All the reports from the winter resorts seem to indicate that this year's season will be an excellent one. The largest contingent of visitors is supplied by the English, who are not only favouring St. Moritz, at which place some of the hotels are so crowded that bookings have been refused, but also Murren, Grindelwald, Gstaad, Engelberg, Wengen, Montana, Davos, Klosters, etc. The New Year's Eve festivities and fancy dress balls, arranged by the various hotels, are in no way behind the attractions offered at this season by our fashionable West End restaurants. In the midst of these gaieties money is of little consequence, stock-taking follows the dénouement, and Schiller's words: "Einen Blick nach dem Grabe seiner Habe sendet noch der Mensch zurück" are brought back to our minds by a correspondent in the *Sunday Times* (Jan. 1st) who complains about the high prices. He spent a few days at one of the minor resorts in the Engadine and writes:—

"My hotel bill for four days totalled 174 francs 30 cents—£8 14s. at present exchange. The food itself was very unappetising, monotonous, more or less tough, and ill-served. One had to take the best of someone else's leavings.

I was informed by the hotel-keeper that Government war restrictions on food were still in force, but I have since heard from other sources that the restrictions have been removed long since, and that the food at the Palace, St. Moritz, is up to its pre-war reputation at a minimum price of 25 francs per day.

I would say, however, that at the Railway Station Hotel at Chur below, the food was excellent, a 6s. table d'hôte dinner being served with dishes specially cooked for each guest."

* * *

The *Motor Cycle* (Dec. 29th) comments on the decision to again run the International Six Days Trials in Switzerland, which offers the finest facilities in the world for a motor cycle test. The event will take place from August 3rd to 9th and, starting from Geneva, will take the competitors through La Chaux-de-Fonds, the Jura, Laufen, Basle, Zurich, Klausen Pass, St. Gothard, Altdorf, along the lake to Lucerne, Berne, Interlaken, Meiringen, Grimsel Pass, Martigny, Château d'Oëux, Jaun Pass, Zweisimmen, Aigle and back to Geneva.

* * *

The Ex-Empress Zita's visit to Switzerland is somewhat uncharitably referred to in some of the English papers. It is even asserted that none of her children require an operation, and if the trouble were appendicitis such an operation could not be indefinitely postponed without endangering life; it is hinted that the journey is connected with certain crown jewels, kept in a safe of which the Ex-Empress alone has the key.

* * *

"Topsy-Turvydom" is the title under which the correspondent of *The Westminster Gazette* (Jan. 6th) reports his recent discoveries about exchange pranks in Switzerland. According to this authority there is too much gold in Switzerland, and the Mint has been so overwhelmed that it is unable to cope with the coining. He proceeds:—

"These avalanches of gold are coming mainly from Stockholm, but it is not stated how they originally reached the Swedish capital. It is clearly cheaper for anyone in Stockholm to send gold to Switzerland than to the United States. Not only is the cost of transport and insurance less, but there is less loss of interest, for the time of the journey is so much shorter. Experts calculate that there is a net profit of 30 Swiss francs on every kilo of refined gold sent from Stockholm to Switzerland, and a kilo of such gold apparently yields 3,390 Swiss francs, after deducting the cost of transport, insurance, and coining. This, however, is the case only if the gold is coined at once, and does not lie a long time in Switzerland without paying any interest.

It is a fact that a Swiss 20-franc note is now of more value to a Frenchman or an Italian than 20 francs in gold. Supposing a Frenchman enters a post-office or bank in his own country and produces a Swiss 20-franc gold piece, he will receive in exchange a 20-franc French note; but if he produces a Swiss 20-franc note, he will receive about 50 French francs. Similarly in Italy with regard to the lira, except that here for a 20-franc Swiss note he would get nearly 100 lire.

Again, if a Frenchman crosses the frontier into Switzerland with a 20-franc gold coin, he will receive in Switzerland a Swiss 20-franc note or a 50-franc French note; but if he brings a 20-franc French note into Switzerland he will receive only 8 francs for it. The result is that, despite the fact that no gold is allowed to be taken out of France into Switzerland, there is a good deal of smuggling of gold going on.

It might almost be said, indeed, that the present state of the European exchange is a kind of Arabian Nights entertainment. Thus, an Austrian coming into Switzerland with 100 kronen in gold coins will receive 103 Swiss francs; but if he offers an Austrian 100-kronen note, he will receive only 10 centimes. Similarly, if a German presents 100 marks in gold, he will receive 120 Swiss francs, but if he brings a German 100 mark note, he will receive at most 3 francs. Even the English £5 note, which before the war was worth 25.25 francs per £, is now worth at most 22 francs per £, and generally less; but for an English sovereign I believe that even the banks will give 26 francs.

Even if an English person, however, succeeds in getting a sovereign out of the country, it will be taken away from him when he leaves French territory to enter Switzerland; English people, therefore, should beware of having any gold coins in their pockets before leaving for Switzerland.

An American woman, ill versed in the topsy-turvydom of European exchanges as they are at present, arrived recently at the Swiss frontier via France, with two children whom she was going to put to school in Switzerland, and a plentiful supply of gold. At the frontier the French Customs officials asked her whether she had any gold. She replied that she had, and produced on demand a large quantity of American gold dollars, which were exchanged into French francs at the pre-war rate of exchange.

She received accordingly a bundle of dirty, dog-eared French notes, which in Switzerland were, of course, 60 per cent. less than their face value in France. She protested, but the officials smiled at her. Thus she arrived in this country with much less than half the amount of money at her disposal which she had intended to have."

* * *

The African World (Dec. 31st) in detailing the impressions and discoveries made during a twelve months' European tour of study and research by Sir Arnold Theiler contains the following appreciation of our distinguished countryman:—

"It appears that Sir Arnold's visit became the means of getting the Swiss Government to copy the example of the Union. A new Onderstepoort—a State laboratory equipped for the investigation of livestock diseases—is arising at Berne. On the day when Sir Arnold left Switzerland, as he was taking leave of the Principal Veterinary Officer, the latter showed him plans of laboratories after the Onderstepoort model, for which a substantial credit was to be voted in the next session of the Swiss Parliament.

During this visit there fell to Sir Arnold perhaps the most gratifying recognition of his life. He had the great compliment of being elected an honorary member by the Swiss Association of Natural Sciences, a distinction bestowed in any year upon only two or three of the leading scientists out of a world selection, and now conferred on a veterinarian for the first time. The Berne Cantonal Scientific Association also admitted him. Various countries have marked by decoration and diploma their sense of the value of his contributions to veterinary science. Switzerland, the last to do so, atones for the tardiness of her tribute by its freeness and fullness. Sir Arnold has now received honour in his own country—that in which to any high-minded man it is sweetest. He was previously not much known there outside the circle of the scientists. But his lectures brought him publicity. All classes attended them, and the papers gave full reports—not a usual practice in Switzerland in connection with the doings of learned bodies. It would thus appear that the discovery made in Switzerland of his qualities must be credited to the general body of his countrymen, and

that the eyes of the scientific coteries were guided to discern his worth by following the gaze of the multitude. The people saw for themselves; the savants had to be shown. Of the finding out of genius this is no new story.

From mediæval times down to the days of the French Revolution, Switzerland might almost have been called the intellectual clearing house of Europe. Through her valleys flowed the currents of new ideas passing between North and South; the world's great thinkers met in her learned societies and built, some of them, literary monuments by her lakes. She still breeds and trains great scholars, of whom the outer world usually entices some by the facilities for research, the emoluments, and the honours that are obtainable at its seats of learning. . . . Of emigrant learning and over-spilling science out of Switzerland, South Africa has had her own share of benefit. But never did she so markedly receive the boon as when, to quote the recent words of Mr. F. B. Smith (our late Secretary of Agriculture) to the Royal Colonial Institute, "there came to the Transvaal an extremely able veterinary surgeon, then Dr., since Sir Arnold, Theiler. He soon became famous through his effective work against the rinderpest." From that time to this our agriculture has benefited frequently by his discoveries. This country has paid him what honour it could, and now gladly sees the endorsing tribute which his native land has at length bestowed upon him."

Switzerland has indeed been tardy in her recognition, and the old saying that "a prophet is not without honour save in his own country" is amply confirmed by the fact that the "Dictionnaire Suisse des Contemporains"—the Swiss "Who's Who"—does not, so far as we can see, contain the name of a single Swiss resident abroad who has been honoured and distinguished by the country of his adoption.

* * *

The Times Literary Supplement (Jan. 5th) describes MAX PULVER, who has just published in Munich his latest work entitled "Das Grosse Rad—Eine Komödie" as a promising German-Swiss dramatist who appears to have left behind his special Swiss interests and directs his attention exclusively to the German Republic.

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