

# Notes & Gleanings

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## NOTES &amp; GLEANINGS.

Our winter resorts seem to have been given a rest in the English press, which, after the superlative terms in which their virtues have been praised, is perhaps only natural. *Truth* (Feb. 1st) gives a full report of the great matches which have recently been decided at Murren: the ice hockey match has been won in great style by the Oxford team, and amongst the ski races the Norwegian Klavness has easily beaten all his challengers. "Ski-ing is the king of winter-sports, and although one may possibly skate without losing caste, to be seen on a luge means social suicide." In *The Graphic* (Feb. 4th) Arthur J. Ireland gives a few tips to ladies who are arriving in ever-increasing numbers and are amongst the most enthusiastic participants in all the sports.

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The latest contribution about the Electrification of the Swiss Railways is contained in *World Work* (January). The long article, accompanied by photographs, is shorn of all technical references and begins with the following consoling sentence: "In our reflections upon the war we are apt to dwell upon its devastating phases. Yet if it be surveyed dispassionately, many subtle and far-reaching benefits will be discovered."

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*The Railway Gazette* (Jan. 27th) reviews the reduction of passenger fares on the Swiss railways, which come in force on the 1st of May. The writer says the reduction is in no relation to the enormous fall in the price of coal and thinks that, as the chief stretches are now electrified, this fact should have been exploited with an eye to business for the purpose of attracting tourists.

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According to a correspondent in *The Nation and The Athenaeum* (Jan. 14th) the "happiest nations have always been the poorest nations," citing Denmark, Holland, Switzerland, and Belgium.—If we are as poor as we are happy, our poverty must be very extreme indeed.

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In the *Manchester Guardian Commercial* (Jan. 26th) a Basle correspondent gives a somewhat gloomy survey of Swiss trade and industry in 1921. In the same issue, under the heading of "Improvements in Textile Machinery," a minute description is printed of the "Saurer" loom, the phenomenal speed of which invests it with special interest.

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Sir John Foster Fraser has left St. Moritz for Wengen, whence he sends a delightful article about curling to the *Evening Standard* (Feb. 7th). "Curling like haggis, whisky and golf owes its origin to Scotland, and every year troops of Scotsmen with their wives and daughters and other belongings invade the Alps, where they are more sure of good ice than in their own Caledonia stern and wild. . . . To the mere Englishman curling is a stupid pastime, indeed, some of them—especially those who put in a claim to be 'Scotch on their mother's side'—are showing a canty faculty for apprehending the rudiments of the game. . . . Curling is not a game for the young and flippant, and the great thing is to talk Scotch, or, better still, yell it." It is evidently an ideal game for those bridge-players who refuse to be condemned to silence, for the "roaring and Celtic yells at a curling match, no doubt stop the chamois on the Jungfrau munching edelweiss."

A long contribution to *The Daily Telegraph* (Feb. 9th) deals with THE SWISS DRAMA. The author's conclusions are not very complimentary, though probably not far from the truth. In his opinion the non-existence of Swiss Drama is partly due to the fact that Switzerland is badly supplied with theatres. Zurich is the only town that possesses an opera house and a playhouse worthy of the name; the management has nearly always endeavoured to provide respectable dramatic fare and has hardly ever succumbed to the temptation of simply giving the public what it wants and letting Art take care of itself. The repertoire of the Stadttheater during the war is reviewed in appreciative terms, and regret is expressed that no prominent English actor had ever dreamt of paying Switzerland a visit. The writer has no doubt that if the Old Vic Company would pay an occasional visit, it would be warmly welcomed.

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The biographies on the occasion of the accession of Pius XI. all refer to the fact that in younger days his Holiness has been a keen mountain climber, and the *Daily Express* (Feb. 9th) reports that—

several old Alpine guides at Zermatt and Chamonix are enthusiastically celebrating this week the accession of a good sportsman to the throne of St. Peter. About forty years ago the new Pope was a keen Alpine climber; he 'did' the Matterhorn, Mont Blanc, and other peaks, and once he was snowed up in a hut near the summit of Monte Rosa for thirty-six hours during a fierce storm. The guides, my friend says, are unanimous in praising Pius XI.'s qualities as a climber; he was a keen lover of Switzerland, and was one of those who protested strongly against the funicular railways which have spoiled one or two of the slopes.

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According to statistics just published, out of a total of 294,569 alien passengers landed at United Kingdom ports during the twelve months ended December 31st last, Swiss nationals numbered 12,086, while departures accounted for 11,958. The figures show a small increase of 123 in the strength of our colony, whereas there has been an all-round decrease in the number of residents of other nationalities (with the exception of Italian).

## PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

*Schweizer Post*, published by the "Verband der Auslandschweizer in Zürich."—The January number contains a leading article about the organisation and objects of the association. Stress is laid on the desirability of the 375,000 Swiss abroad having a voice in our Government; and a representation in the National Council is suggested. Another article reviews the position of our chief industries, giving causes of the unsatisfactory state of affairs during the last twelve months.

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*Vers la Santé*, the monthly review of the League of the Societies of the Red Cross in Geneva.—The January number contains the history of the "Red Cross," written by Georges Milsom, and details its activities from the time when on the battle field of Solferino in the year 1859 the movement was conceived by Henry Dunant, of Geneva. Other articles deal with child welfare, venereal diseases, etc., etc.

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*Comptoir Suisse—Bulletin Officiel* (Février). — The offering of prizes at the forthcoming exhibition of agricultural live stock is strongly supported; a section for rabbits will be instituted at the third Comptoir. The crisis in the tobacco trade is illustrated by interesting figures: the home consumption of the fragrant leaf has increased