

Notes & gleanings

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NOTES & GLEANINGS.

The appeal made by Sir Martin Conway for the re-establishment of a British Sanatorium (see "S.O." Feb. 25) has been taken up by several papers. In the *Pall Mall and Globe* (Feb. 22nd) Sir Henry Lunn expresses the opinion that the vast sums of money spent in England on the cure of tuberculosis would bring double the result if spent in Switzerland; he is naturally predisposed in favour of Montana, which place, on account of its unique position, offers many advantages over other cure stations.

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In spite of the splendour of the pastimes and entertainments of our winter resort hotels, English people still preserve a certain touch of their home life, as is shown by the following article entitled "Bedroom Tea" in the *Dundee Advertiser* (Feb. 22nd). Incidentally it will remind most of our hotel managers that to charge for a cup of tea at a luxury price is a short-sighted policy:—

"Wherever the Englishwoman goes, she carries with her the determination to have afternoon tea.

Tea she must and will have, whatever the customs of the country she may be in, between the hours of 4 and 5 o'clock. Glasses of claret, cups of coffee, or of that thirsty horror chocolate what are they to the woman whose heart cries aloud for tea?

So it comes about that in most Swiss hotels, especially during the winter sport season, four o'clock sees a regular migration to bedrooms, where this British passion for tea can be indulged in. The reason for this is that tea is not usually included in the 'en pension' terms of many hotels. The holiday seeker, knowing how much better it will be if she makes the tea herself than if she rings the bell and orders a 'the complet' from the waiter, chooses to do the brewing herself.

Besides, this tea-making offers an excuse for the merriest of parties among hotel friends. Never, I am sure, do spirit kettles find more blessings descending upon their heads than when they are singing so delightfully at 4 p.m. on frosty winter afternoons in hundreds of English-tenanted Swiss hotel bedrooms.

The room is often small, and the only seats available to offer the guests are the bed and your trunk; with luck there might be a luggage stand; or you may be an artist, and have a camp stool among your possessions.

The hostess will have snatched a moment on the way home from the skating rink to buy in some of those cakes for which Switzerland is famous.

Each guest has, of course, brought a cup—saucers and tea-spoons are seldom required, except for the laddling out of the inevitable condensed milk, which is the only spoiler of an otherwise perfect feast.

In Switzerland, that land of green pastures and of endless cows, it seems always to be difficult—for the visitor at least—to obtain any extra milk, perhaps because it is being so busily exported in tins.

By this time the tea is infused, and its pleasant fragrance is mingled with the clean smell of methylated spirit. To this day, after, I must confess, many, many tea parties in Swiss hotels, the whiff of burning spirit carries me straight to the Bernese Oberland, just as the scent of violets reminds me involuntarily of a part of the shore of Lake Maggiore; while the sweetness of heather conjures up instantly a particular glen in Forfarshire. Curious how these associations persist!

The tea hour in the Alps lingers enchantedly till sundry bangs and bumps along the passages announce the return of those ardent skaters and ski-ers, who pretend that the lure of tea is nothing to them, nothing compared to the intoxication of skimming along the ice, or flying over the frozen, pine-clad slopes.

We smile and agree—for do we not know positively that every one has had a thermos in his or her knapsack?"

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Three articles of topical Swiss interest are contained in the *Manchester Guardian Commercial* (Feb. 23rd). The importation of "Swiss Gas Mantles" is being dealt with in the light of placing this product under the Safeguarding of Industries Act; the heavy import duty so imposed would

probably mean the ruin of this Swiss industry. Another article refers to the British Chamber of Commerce in Basle which has just held its annual meeting at Berne, and which from a nucleus of 32 members a year ago has now grown to a total of 320 members. "The Rhine Navigation" comes in for sympathetic consideration, and it is hoped that at the forthcoming meeting of the Commission on April 25th the solution of this thorny question will be materially advanced.

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The *Times Trade Supplement* (Feb. 18th) draws the attention of English manufacturers to the fact that tenders are being invited by the Swiss Federal Railways and that the former restrictions—on patriotic grounds—to place contracts with Swiss firms only no longer hold good.

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The *Saturday Review* (Feb. 25th) is publishing a correspondence which, we believe, is unique in so far as it is devoid of that fairness and impartial justice which is one of the characteristics of the English press. Under the title "A Paradise of Socialism" a correspondent is giving us the benefit of his impressions; they are cold and heartless, but the writer has been standing, after a heavy snow fall, in the streets of Geneva; he is struck by the ardour and thoroughness with which the snow is cleared away by a battalion of municipal workers. He uses this as a starting point for a lecture on Socialism as it is practised in Switzerland, which country regulates the daily lives of its citizens down to the minutest detail. As an example he says that during the war—

it was impossible to peel a potato without transgression; almost certainly it was unlawful to throw away the peel; and we are convinced that, if anyone ventured to do so, the federal inspector of refuse was bound to discover and report the fact within twenty-four hours.

The writer suggests to some of the English apostles of Socialism, like Mr. Sidney Webb and Mr. Bernard Shaw, to study their doctrine in its spiritual home; they would then discover what has been achieved: hardly anyone is well educated, and although they speak three or four languages fluently, hardly anyone can speak a single language with distinction. He, indeed, seems to be a rare linguist to make such a sweeping assertion, and the lurid picture which he gives of our mentality, as due to the highly socialized system of Government, seems to indicate that our people are already in an advanced stage of degeneration. His epistle terminates with the following gratuitous compliment:—

"In brief, Switzerland has shown that by concentrating on things which are of obvious and immediate utility and interest a nation may achieve happiness if it will be content with mediocrity. But do not imagine that such a nation can also have poets, statesmen, dramatists and painters, or any of the more supreme achievements in intellect, beauty or wit. These things emerge from a community in which the individual is left rather more to himself, where effort and initiative are more insistently demanded, where life is presented rather as a field for his adventure than as a park where all that is required of him is that he should keep off the grass."

BOARD-RESIDENCE.—Comfortable Home offered to business gentleman; breakfast, late dinner; full board week-ends; good cooking; bath (geyser); near park, tennis; young Society; moderate terms.—83, Park Lane, Clissold Park, N.16 (near Finsbury Park).

LADY offers COMFORTABLE HOME to Swiss gentleman; private house; young society; moderate terms.—70, Grove Park, Denmark Hill, S.E.