Notes and gleanings

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HOME NEWS

In the elections for half of the members of the Berne Municipal Council, the constitutional parties slightly increased their strength; they now hold 40 seats, against 37 held by the Socialists.

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The Federal Tribunal has upheld the decision of the Lucerne cantonal courts, which deprived the Lucerne advocate Dr. Kramis of the right to exercise his profession for a period of five years.

* * *

By a large majority (130 to 25) the National Council has agreed to the proposed abolition of Sunday delivery; the Swiss Post Office will thereby effect a saving of over a million francs.

* * *

The budget for 1924 for the town of Basle anticipates a deficit of over seven million francs.

* * *

Statistics, compiled by the national association of Swiss universities, show that the number of students at our universities has decreasd by about 25% since the year 1913; foreign students, who in the latter year represented 51% of the total, now number 18% only.

* * *

The largest creditors' meeting ever held in Switzerland took place last Monday in Basle, when the affairs of the local "Hypothekenbank" came under discussion; amongst other business, the 1,200 creditors present declined an offer from the Deutsche Bank in Berlin, which, *inter alia*, proposed reducing certain guarantees undertaken by the latter from 35 to 16 million francs.

* * *

During a recent demonstration and conflict in Lörrach, near Basle, a number of Communists escaped arrest by crossing the Swiss frontier. A subsequent request of the Baden authorities for their extradition has so far been successfully resisted by the Communists concerned; their claim to the privilege of free asylum as political fugitives is now being investigated by the Federal Tribunal in Lausanne.

* * *

Novel experiments in traffic control during the dark hours are being made in Zurich. At one of the busy crossings (Bahnhofstrasse-Paradeplatz) the policemen on duty direct the traffic with the help of staves partly made of glass, displaying, when required, a sharp red light, which can be noticed for some distance by approaching vehicles.

* * *

A most fervent appeal is being made in Switzerland in favour of Swiss domiciled in Germany; in some districts a house-to-house collection is being made.

* * *

Dr. Thomas Bossart, the "Abt" of the Einsiedeln monastery, has died at the age of 66, after a long illness.

* * *

On the occasion of the annual meeting of the Zurich Democratic party in Winterthur, Federal President Scheurer delivered an address, dealing with the development of our constitution during the last 75 years. We give below a *resumé*, published by the *National Zeitung* (11th Dec.):—

Nachdem er kurz auf die Kraft hingewiesen hat, die der Erinnerung an frühere Zeiten entspringt, gibt er einen kurzen geschichtlichen Ueberblick über die schwierigen Verhältnisse, unter denen unsere Verfassung von 1848 entstanden ist, und hebt hervor, das Hauptverdienst der Schöpfer derselben sei, dass sie nach Besiegung ihrer politischen und religiösen Gegner diese ausserordentlich milde behandelten und in der neuen Verfassung ihnen nach Möglichkeit entgegenkamen. Nur so ist es ihnen gelungen, das Land von den unseligen Wirren zu befreien und ihm eine ruhige Entwicklung zu sichern. Hierauf geht Bundespräsident Scheurer auf die innerpolitische Seite unserer Bundesverfassung ein. Von diesem Standpunkte aus betrachtet er als Hauptproblem den Bundesstaat. Er weist darauf hin, welch grosse und schwierige Aufgabe unsere Vorfahren durch Einführung dieser Staatsform gelöst haben. Denn es galt damals, mehr als den blossen "Kantönligeist" zu überwinden, wie heute oft behauptet wird. Sonst hätten nicht zwei Männer, die in völlig entegegengesetzten politischen Lagern standen und denen man gewiss nicht Mangel an politischem Weitblick nachsagen kann: Phil. Ant. von Segesser in Luzern und Jakob Burckhardt in Basel, das Verschwinden der Kantonssouveränität tief bedauert. Bundespräsident Scheurer ist der Meinung, dass für die Schweiz in absehbarer Zeit eine andere Form als der Bundesstaat nicht möglich ist, da dieser den verschiedenen Gegenden unseres Landes erlaubt, sich ihren besonderen Verhältnissen anzupassen. Wir müssen deshalb bestrebt sein, einen lebensfähigen Bund und lebensfähige Kantone zu erhalten, wobei eine scharfe Trennung der Kompetenzen von Bund und Kantonen unerlässlich ist. Nachdem der Redner noch kurz auf die Gefahren eines extremen Zentralismus und eines extremen Föderalismus aufmerksam gemacht hat, beleuchtet er die Aufgaben unseres Bundesstaates in aussenpolitischer Beziehung. Erfreulicherweise ist es der Schweiz gelungen, im Kreise der Völker eine achtunggebietende Stellung einzunehmen. Doch müssen wir uns vor jeder Selbstüberschätzung hüten. Als Grundsatz für unsere Aussenpolitik betrachtet der Sprecher folgendes: Wir müssen die auswärtigen Angelegenheiten selbständig betrachten, auf die mannigfaltige Zusammensetzung unseres Landes Rücksicht nehmen und unsere Kraft nicht überschätzen. Deshalb müssen wir alles unterstützen, was zum Frieden unter den fremden Völkern dient. Hierzu gehört auch der Völkerbund, der trotz aller Anfeindungen schon viel geleistet hat und der nach der Meinung des Bundespräsidenten Daseinsberechtigung besitzt. Dann kommt der Redner auf die Demokratie zu sprechen, welche Staatsform für unser Land die einzig richtige ist, wenn sie vernünftig angewendet wird, trotzdem auch sie natürlich Gefahren in sich birgt. Zum Schlusse berührt der Bundespräsident noch kurz das Verhältnis der Staatsverwaltung zum ganzen Land. Wenn wir auch jede unnötige Ausdehnung des Verwaltungsapparates bekämpfen, so warnt Scheurer doch vor allzu scharfer Kritik, da sonst das gegenseitige Vertrauen untergraben wird. Wie schwierig es auch ist, eine einmal verlotterte Verwaltung wieder in Gang zu bringen, können wir im Auslande genügend sehen. Zurückblickend auf die 75 Jahre des Bestehens unseres Bundesstaates stellt Bundespräsident Scheurer fest, dass derselbe die Kraft besass, die an ihn gestellten Aufgaben zu lösen. Wenn es uns auch in Zukunft gelingt, zu zeigen, dass es trotz drei verschiedenen Kulturen, Sprachen und Konfessionen möglich ist, zusammenzuleben und zusammenzuarbeiten, so erfüllt unser Bundesstaat seine Pflicht gegenüber dem Volk und gegenüber der ganzen Menschheit.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "Kyburg."

Well, the elections are over, and the result is in so far satisfactory that it has given Free Trade a clear victory and opened the way for quite an amount of democratic legislation, such as electoral reform, to instance only one pressing matter. As I wrote two weeks ago, an enormous amount of rubbish has been printed during the British electoral campaign on the Swiss Capital Levy proposal of a year ago. I have been snowed under almost by press cuttings dealing with such utterances by candidates of all parties, but, as the matter is not likely to crop up for a while, I propose to do as did those wise little fishes at Greenwich.

Fascism in Switzerland.

Evening Standard (21st Nov.):—

The Swiss Federal Council has just cut the Gordian knot of Fascism in Switzerland by promulgating a decree making it against the law to wear a black shirt! (says the British United Press).

According to the Swiss Federal Council a Fascist shorn of his black shirt has just about as much chance of "getting away" with a revolution as Samson shorn of his locks.

The necessity for this drastic action on the part of the Swiss Federal Government was the rapid spread of Fascism in the Southern Canton of Tessin. This Canton has a large population of Italians, and a certain portion of this public has never failed to conduct an irredentist propaganda for the return of this Canton to Italy.

So stringent is the new decree that even people accustomed to wear black shirts under the regular waistcoat and coat are not exempt from arrest for violation of the decree. All Fascist banners and other insignia are also prohibited, except buttons and neckties.

Our compatriots at home have often very strange notions. Witness the Conradi verdict! Witness also the various Bürgerwehren, formed in opposition to the Swiss Bolshevists. If people would only use their democratic constitutional means of fighting political battles, if they would only remember that two wrongs do not make one right! I am pleased to see that the Federal Government has stepped in, if the above report is correct, and has issued that decree. I hope the Federal Government will have enough wisdom and courage to do the same at all times and against any party or society which is so oblivious of our democratic institutions as to think such means legitimate or even necessary.

My readers know by now that one of my pet theories has to do with the abolition of political and economical frontiers. I welcome all signs which point towards that, to my mind, not only desirable, but, if our civilisation is to survive, inevitable end. In the *Manchester Guardian Commercial* (22nd Nov.) I read:—

Marseilles-Geneva.

At the recent meeting at Lyons of the Franco-Swiss Committee for the Upper Rhône the Swiss were insistent that France should hasten the constitution of the Compagnie Nationale du Rhône, under the provisions of the law of 1921. This is necessary for the execution of the work of adapting the Upper Rhône for navigation between Lyons and Geneva. The law provides that this work shall be carried on parallel with the work of electrification. The Swiss point out that the Germans have made a great effort for the construction of the Rhine-Main-Danube canal. There is also a project for connecting the Danube with the Lake of Constance, which would thus become a great river dock for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. This, however, would place the Swiss in close economic dependence on Germany, and to escape this they want to see the barges coming in from Marseilles to Lake Geneva.

Lyons would benefit greatly by this development of the Rhône. It would become the centre for the waterways from Marseilles or Cette, Bordeaux or Saint Nazaire, and Antwerp via Strasbourg. Marseilles and even Bordeaux are nearer Switzerland than Antwerp is.

These projects are dependent upon an agreement between France and Switzerland on the subject of Lake Geneva. The French have demanded the raising of the level of the lake by 40 to 50 centimetres as a technical condition necessary to the execution of the work. Up to the present the Swiss have raised certain difficulties, but the Franco-Swiss Committee is endeavouring to smooth them away. It has also discussed plans for the improvement of the Rhône-Rhine canal. Works are in progress to make it accessible to 300-ton barges. There is also a project for a new canal of 1,200 tons capacity, that of the Rhine barges. The Committee will next meet at Paris.

Of course, you may think that Switzerland desires "barges coming in from Marseilles to Lake Geneva" in order not to be too dependent economically on Germany. Quite so. But the proposed or desired solution is also inevitably a step towards the drawing together of the Three Nations.

A further encouraging sign, pointing, slightly but all the same distinctly, the same way is the

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following paragraph from *The Financial News* (24th Nov.):—

Speaking in the name of the British delegation, at the Conference on Communications and Transit, called by the League of Nations, Sir Francis Dent said that Great Britain, who up to the present had not adhered to the International Railway Convention of Berne, could now do so without difficulty.

This decision was very favourably commented upon by members of the conference.

Schweizerische Lokomotiv- und Maschinenfabrik.

As a Winterthurer I always feel a thrill of local pride when, upon entering our dear homeland, I see on the locomotives the name of "Schweizerische Lokomotiv- und Maschinenfabrik." Our Winterthurer "Loki," as these big works are called at home, is one of the great works of industrial Switzerland, and many of my readers will, I am sure, be glad to read the following from *The Financial Times* (24th Nov.):—

At the general meeting of the Swiss Locomotive and Machinery Works, at Winterthur, Dr. Denzler, the managing director, made some interesting comments on the general position of the engineering industry and of his own concern in particular. Referring to the effects of passive resistance in the Ruhr on Swiss industry, he pointed out that they did not make themselves felt through any shortage of the coal supplies in Switzerland since measures had been taken a long time ago, when Germany's reparations obligations made it impossible for her any longer to deliver the previous quantities to her other customers. The Swiss engineering firms were, however, seriously affected by the impossibility of obtaining delivery of the many raw and semi-manufactured materials, for the supply of which they had always relied on the great mining and metallurgical concerns in the Ruhr. The business connection was a long and standing one, and the German works understood to a nicety the requirements of the Swiss manufacturers, so that the inability of these firms to continue the supply greatly upset the Swiss engineers. For the company's own works orders for more than a thousand tons of material were held up, and it was only after very great difficulties that it was possible to obtain delivery. Steps were at the same time taken to get supplies from other sources, such as Czecho-Slovakia, France, Lorraine, or England, but the prices were much less favourable.

In going on to deal with the activities of the company in the manufacture of locomotives, Dr. Denzler pointed out that the restricted nature of the market had from the first caused the company to go in for the more specialised branches of manufacture and also to work largely for export. It is now 25 years since the company turned out the first electric locomotives for the Burgdorf-Thun Railway, the equipment for these engines being supplied by Messrs. Brown, Boveri & Co. Latterly the company have gone in for the construction of locomotives capable of drawing the heaviest loads, and special attention has been directed to the development of the manufacture of the mechanical parts. Continual advances have been made in spite of the war, and the company owe a debt to the progressive policy of the Swiss Federal Railways, whose electrification programme has made it possible to continue the manufacture of such electrical locomotives.

The company have also devoted special attention to the construction of aeroplane motors, and have at present received the contract for motors for large military aeroplanes for the Swiss Government.

And, writing of Swiss industry, I will add the following, not because I personally know anything about the subject, but because I felt a terrible longing for the adoption of such heating means when I read the paragraph, and thought of the terribly smoky and unclean chimney fire at my office. *Electrician* (23rd Nov.):—

Electrically Heated Floors.

Electrically heated floors have been introduced into Swiss dwelling houses by the Electra A.G. of Wädenswil. It is pointed out in the "Schweizerische Bauzeitung" that floor heating is best suited to rooms fitted with stone or concrete floors and mosaic flooring. The heater coils are placed within iron pipes which are embedded in the flooring, at suitable distances apart, but closer near the windows than in the middle portion of the room. When the floor is built up of concrete beams with thick webs, the pipes are placed in the recesses between the beams and are packed in these recesses with fine gravel. The concrete is covered with a layer of plaster on which the stone slabs or planks are placed. When the floor contains wooden beams the space between the beams is filled with concrete when the pipes have been fixed, the wood itself being covered with a layer of gravel lest the structure become too rigid. Between the lower surface of the floor and the concrete containing the heaters an air space is left to prevent radiation downward. That a considerable amount of concrete is wanted for the installation is considered advantageous in so far as the concrete stores the heat, so that the current may chiefly be turned on during hours in which it is hardly wanted for lighting. The coils are drawn into the pipes like cables and are built up in links to retain flexibility. It is mentioned that the heaters are mostly fitted with two resistance coils, to be coupled in series or in parallel or to be used singly; this is preferable to providing special switches for separate heaters.

But not only in the heating business do our builders lead. According to *The Times* (Nov. 22) our Swiss installations for slaughtering animals for food are also worth imitating:—

The Duchess of Hamilton presided on Nov. 21st at the annual business meeting of the Animal Defence and Anti-Vivisection Society, held at Princes Restaurant.

The Duchess read the greater part of the annual report, in which the humane slaughter of animals was dealt with at some length. It was stated that between 30,000 and 40,000 animals are killed every year in this country by methods which involve entirely unnecessary suffering. A letter had been written to the Queen submitting that, if only humanely-killed meat were used in the Royal Household and a public announcement to that effect made, the case for reform would receive the greatest possible impetus. A reply had been received stating that the Queen sympathized in all efforts to alleviate any form of cruelty, and that by her Majesty's desire the communication would be made known to the proper authority of his Majesty's Government. The Duchess described visits to the public slaughter-houses in Switzerland, and compared their humanity and cleanliness with the conditions at Islington. The Society had a scheme to start a model abattoir similar to those in Switzerland, which would be run as a business concern to demonstrate the practical nature of this method of killing. The initial cost of the scheme would be about £50,000.

Personally, I rather like a nice cut from the joint or some other toothsome morsel, and I have, so far, not been impressed with the vegetarian cult. All the same, I often wonder whether killing animals for food, not to mention for "sport," is really permissible. It seems so easy to reflect that we may kill and eat the poor creatures in this life, in order to satisfy our bodily wants. But a doubt persists, and being kind to all animals is only one way of easing our conscience, whose still small voice whispers that doubt!

Perhaps I am writing this with my tongue in my cheek. Very likely so, because I, too, am looking forward to a Christmas Dinner with Turkey and Sausages, and I should be very sorry indeed if, upon closer inspection, they were found to be made from vegetable matter. So please don't call me a humbug, seeing that I am confessing so frankly.

Christmas longings turn my thoughts into more gentle directions, and the approach of the carol-singing parties—I have always loved them, even if they only consist of two or three grimy urchins who are after my pennies much more than after wishing me a merry Christmas, and I always make a point of listening attentively to them, very often to their discomfiture, when I discover that they do not know the words even of their song!—reminds me of the following two paragraphs dealing with Swiss Music. *Daily Chronicle* (Nov. 23):

Swiss Music.

The reappearance of M. Ansermet, the Swiss conductor who directed some of the Russian Ballet performances a few seasons ago, gave particular interest to the Royal Philharmonic Society's concert on Nov. 22 at Queen's Hall.

M. Ansermet is certainly a conductor of uncommon gifts, and his performances of both classical and modern works were very fine.

The first half of the programme was devoted to the classics; first the "Egmont" overture, played with dramtic intensity, then a Bach aria (with Miss Dorothy Silk as soloist), in which a small section of the orchestra (strings and flute) gave us some delightfully refined playing. This was followed by Mozart's G minor symphony (also given with small orchestra), of which M. Ansermet's reading was remarkable for its delicacy of nuance and perfect finish of style.

The second half contained a suite from Ravel's ballet "Daphnis and Chloe," brilliant picturesque music of no little charm, and a new "Chant de Joie" by Honegger (one of the Paris "six"), a somewhat pretentious and uninspired work, scored for a large orchestra.

Morning Post (Dec. 5th):—

Apart from works by the veteran Hans Huber, who left seven symphonies and four operas to his credit, and some, showing futuristic tendencies, by Honegger, music of modern Swiss origin is not widely known in this country. In fact, the republic of the Alps would seem to have supplied inspiration to foreign rather than to native musicians. There is, however, a healthy and vigorous younger school of composers who, though curiously open to the external influences of French, German and Russian thought, may yet produce music of international reputation, since their products are founded on a rational basis—that of melody.

The Swiss Composers' Association numbers among its members Othmar Schoeck, born twenty-seven years ago, who has already published, in addition to much other music, 150 songs, indicating a genuine gift that has been compared to that of Hugo Wolf; Volkmar Andreae, born in 1879, the conductor of the Zurich Symphony Orchestra, who has composed a symphony and two operas; and Emil Frey, the pianist, born in 1899, who was sometime professor of the piano at Moscow Conservatoire, and has written a symphony, besides concertos for his own instrument, the violin and the 'cello, and chamber music.

Winter Sports.

Nearly all the British papers publish articles on this "burning" question. I have glanced at the headings only of most of them. Reading them would tax my fortitude too much, and I do not think my readers can legitimately demand that I should undergo, week by week, the tortures of Tantalus in order to amuse and instruct them. Fancy having to sit in a London office and to write about Winter Sports! When the snow-clad mountains call, when the glorious sun beckons through the London fog, when the happy shouts of the tobogganing parties can be heard by looking at pictures in the *Daily Mirror* only, and, last, but not least, when the cosy and warm "Bündnerstube" invites to partake of Veltliner, which one must have drunk up there to understand its value! No, dear reader, I can't write about all this.

ROUND AND ABOUT.

Several readers seem to be missing the little chats which appeared from time to time under the above heading, and suggest that they should form a regular feature of the paper. One of them even writes that, "as I have my finger in every pie dished up in the Swiss colony," I ought to be able to broadcast interesting news, and still have plenty of time for cards and chess. The fact is that, apart from the last two pastimes, I have my business and family to look after, and as this particular correspondent is also a married man, he probably realizes that these constantly demand very insistent attention. Unfortunately, our compatriots do not congregate during the day-time, and it is generally long after dusk that real "news" can be gathered in. During this festive season there is "something on" in every club, and if any of my critics like roaming in the gloaming as a "reporter," I will give him the necessary direction, and I can assure him of a royal reception wheresoever he puts in an appearance.

* * *

A good many subscribers have complained about the late delivery of last week's issue, but—although I got, like other "prominent" people, decidedly cold feet and, incidently, a most persistent cold on Election Thursday—the issue was posted from this office on Friday afternoon at the usual time. Complaints to the Post Office are more likely to prove successful, if voiced through the Member of Parliament for the particular district—the more so as some candidates would probably have lost their seats had it not been for voting cards erroneously but liberally issued to compatriots of ours!

* * *

The advent of the Christmas spirit was clearly in evidence last Tuesday at the meeting of the City Swiss Club. After the customary compliments had been paid to the Organising Committee in connection with the Annual Banquet, one of the members, Mr. H. Bingguely, had the novel idea of presenting the Swiss Benevolent Society with a clock which already ornamented the mantelpiece. As, however, this Society does not extend its activities to looking after deserving cases amongst the products of this flourishing industry, the President proposed an auction. Bidding started at 5s. and was very brisk till it got to the neighbourhood of a fiver, and ultimately the trophy was knocked down for ten guineas to an ex-president of the club. He appeared absolutely resolved to have it, as much for the fact that the "Bulle" clock is reputed to "go for ever" without winding, as for his desire to cheer up our friend, Mr. Georges Dimier, the president of the S.B.S., who, on doctor's advice, has had to take to his bed and will have to go very steady for the next few weeks. Everybody was naturally as much concerned as Mr. Dimier himself, who is thus condemned to withhold his active co-operation in bringing joy and happiness to the homes of our less fortunate compatriots.

* * *

The many friends of Dr. W. Weibel, the correspondent of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, will be pleased to hear that the operation he underwent at the German Hospital was successfully performed by Dr. H. Rast, and that Dr. Weibel is making satisfactory progress towards recovery.

* * *

The wife of Mr. Marius Paschoud, of Swiss Sports fame, has presented her husband with a pledge of their mutual affection, a son and heir—Michel André—having been born last Tuesday.

* * *

Mr. P. A. Carmine is returning from his trip to South America and expects to be in London by Christmas.

STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.

BONDS.	Dec. 3	Dec. 11
Swiss Confederation 3% 1903 ...	74.50%	74.60%
Swiss Confed. 9th Mob. Loan 5%	100.37%	100.35%
Federal Railways A—K 3½% ...	78.75%	78.32%
Canton Basle-Stadt 5½% 1921 ...	101.00%	101.87%
Canton Fribourg 3% 1892... ...	68.50%	68.50%

SHARES.	Nom.	Dec. 3	Dec. 11
	Frs.	Frs.	Frs.
Swiss Bank Corporation	500	645	658
Crédit Suisse...	500	677	686
Union de Banques Suisses... ...	500	540	553
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	3310	3367
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	2270	2362
C. F. Bally S.A.	1000	1091	1082
Fabrique de Machines Oerlikon...	500	627	630
Entreprises Sulzer	1000	585	605
S.A. Brown Boveri (new)	500	258	271
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	178	177
Choc. Suisses Peter-Cailler-Kohler	100	105	107
Comp. de Navig'n sur le Lac Léman	500	478	472

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