

Notes and gleanings

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"Will Monsieur turn a little to the left? I must have your hair." He turns a little to the left. "Head a little up—I must have Monsieur's charming eyes! . . . Bien!" And presently—

"Has Mademoiselle really finished? C'est merveilleux!"

To-morrow Mademoiselle will be back again in the Lobby with M. Paul Boncour for sale for two guineas (if a hard American is there it may be ten guineas) and on the look-out for yet another "catch."

During the first Assemblies of the League, sketching in the Lobby was confined to men, but as the news has spread to the art schools of the possibilities which the League Lobby provides, the fair sex has entered into keen and winning competition. For it must be admitted that whilst men had some difficulty in capturing "subjects," the Members of the Assembly capable of withstanding the wiles of these fair artists, are very few—indeed, if the truth were told, they seem to like it!

But there is one thing nobody can understand—these lady artists evince no desire to sketch the women Members of the Assembly! I wonder why?

Electricity Supply.

The interchange of electric energy between countries was one of the interesting questions discussed at the recent international conference in Basle. I suppose before the idea is developed much further, we shall see this energy taking its place in the customs tariff! The following summary is published in the *Electrician* (Sept. 17th):—

Six papers on the "Exchange of Electrical Energy between Countries," were presented at the World Power Conference at Basle. These are dealt with in a report presented by Prof. Landry, of Lausanne, which we summarise below.

In this report, it is pointed out that the exchange of electrical energy between countries is still in the earliest stages of its development, and with the exception of the most recent efforts, is restricted almost entirely to countries with superfluous water power who supply other countries with no water power, or in which the production of energy is restricted to expensive hydro-electric schemes owing to the lack of suitable fuel. The more recent schemes are particularly commendable, because they have the effect of giving the international exchange of electrical energy a wider basis, and a much greater range than it has hitherto possessed, so that there is a combined utilisation of the various sources of electricity regardless of the limits imposed by political boundaries.

Switzerland is a country possessing superfluous water power in spite of the fact that it is very highly electrified, so that it is undoubtedly an exporting country. During 1925, in fact, it exported about 650 million kWh, or approximately 20% of the total energy produced. Of this, about 46% was taken by France.

Canada has supplied altogether about 14.2 thousand million kWh to the United States during the period 1911—1926, or about 35% of the total energy produced by the exporting companies.

Though the statistical data concerning the international exchange of energy is very scanty, it appears that Canada with a population of 9,000,000, exports annually about 155 kWh per head, as compared with 900 kWh consumed, while Switzerland, with a population of 4,000,000, exports about 166 kWh out of every 700 produced.

Dealing with the advantages of and necessity for exchange, Prof. Landry remarks that it is certainly no longer necessary to point out the advantages of interconnection of power stations and supply systems in one and the same country, and that to make it possible to embrace all the sources of energy in any one country, care must be taken that the natural auxiliary resources are distributed in such a way that a steady production of energy is ensured.

As it is in the interests of every individual country to utilise the resources within its boundary as completely and rationally as possible, it is equally in the interests of every country to pay attention to economy, and this leads to the second necessary step of international interconnection being taken in order that there may be exchange in both directions. For these reasons, it seems certain that the number of international connecting lines will be increased as the need arises, and it is to be hoped that the many difficulties in the way on international exchange which are not economical in character will gradually disappear.

The fact remains that there are at present numerous difficulties in the way of energy exchange, both small and great. Some of these are due to the laws governing international trade which have been analysed and discussed by Dr. Trümpy. Another difficulty is that relating to price, and comparisons are often made between the prices for energy in exporting countries, and those which the foreign purchaser has to pay. These comparisons appear to take no

account of the fact that there can be no fixed price per kWh, as this varies with the season, day, hour, method of production and utilisation, superfluity or the reverse of the power resources, possibility of equalisation, security of supply, natural or legal obstacles preventing the conclusion of agreements, the position of power stations, local demand, importance of the supply, and others.

Prof. Landry also reviews the legislation which at present exists in the various countries with regard to the export of power. This exhibits on the one hand broad-mindedness, and on the other hand, growing conservatism or even open enmity. Considering the matter broadly, the hope is expressed that the former policy will obtain the upper hand, and it is hoped that the World Power Conference will take its share in attaining this end.

Whilst dealing with modern technical achievements, here is a description of the **120-ton Travelling Crane**, which has been recently installed in the shops of the Swiss Federal Railways at Yverdon, to facilitate the repair of electric locomotives; it is taken from the *Mechanical World* (Sept. 17):—

Its principal dimensions are as follows:—Span span, 25 m. (82 ft.); height of lift for locomotives, 7 m. (23 ft.), and for single loads, 10 m. 32.8 ft.); load carried by the two main winches jointly, 120 tonnes (118 tons), and by auxiliary winches, 8 tonnes (7.87 tons); speed of lifting, up to 15 tonnes (14½ tons), 3 m. (9.8 ft.) per min., and 15-60 tonnes (14½ to 59 tons), 2 m. (6.56 ft.) per min.; speed of travel of main winches, 15 m. (49 ft.) per min., and of auxiliary winches, 30 m. (98 ft.) per min.; travelling speed of crane with light loads, 52.5 m. (172 ft.) per min., and with heavy loads, 35 m. (115 ft.) per min. The crane bridge consists of two main lattice girders carrying the main winches with two outer girders, the auxiliary winches being carried between the outer and main girders. Each of the two main winches consists of two 30-ton units mounted on a steel carriage. The principal feature of the electrical equipment is the use of the Ward Leonard system of control; each motor or group of motors is supplied by a separate generator, and a very wide range of speed is obtainable with the minimum loss of power.

The Cost of Surgery.

The best comparative article that I have come across for a long time on a matter that concerns us all sooner or later, appears under this title in the *New Statesman* (Sept. 18th). I think those of my compatriots—and I know a good few—who can talk from experience will underline every word; I make no excuse, therefore, for reproducing this correspondence in *extenso*:—

An interesting correspondence in a contemporary some time ago dealt with the comparative costs of surgical operations in England and Switzerland. The evidence appeared to show that in Switzerland such operations, with the incidentals requisite, are obtainable at far less cost than in England, without deterioration of quality. It may be useful to describe a recent experience, and to discuss the meaning of the facts. That they were in no way exceptional I am assured by many witnesses.

During a holiday in the part of Switzerland where I write, a member of my party was attacked by appendicular pains, and consulted a surgeon, who is a man of about forty, holding a high though not the most senior position in the large University city where he practises. He was not anxious to operate, but was urgently asked to do so by the patient and myself. She went into a nursing home, where she found herself in the greatest peace and comfort. The place is perfectly equipped, absolutely clean, as one expects in Switzerland, quiet, with double doors to the rooms, and a pleasant outlook. The nurse was not exceptional, but simply chosen because she could speak English. The patient has been in several nursing homes in London, this being her seventh experience of the kind. She distinctly affirms that she has never been really nursed before. The nurse slept in a bed beside her—when she slept, but in fact cared for her assiduously night and day. In every way she would have adorned the record of the country which gave Florence Nightingale and modern nursing to the world, but she was Swiss.

Amongst the worst features of the nursing homes in London, most of which are a disgrace to the medical profession and to everyone connected with them, is the diet. In this Swiss home the patient was not only fed pleasantly, but suitably to the case. The nurse went downstairs and chose from the menu what her patient could safely take after an appendicectomy. There is so much more to say about the feeding in all our institutions in Britain, and the contrast between it and the pioneer researches of our physiologists that I must refrain from further pursuit of this part of the subject.

But here are the actual charges: Room and board, 16 francs per day; board of the nurse, 8 francs per day; service in the operation theatre,

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40 francs; nurse's fees, 10 francs per day; extras negligible. At the rate of 25 francs to the pound, it will be seen that these charges are, according to our ideas, ridiculously small. The service was, in every way, by far the best that the patient had ever enjoyed.

Now for the surgeon. He was helped by a personal friend of the patient, who made no charge, and who gave the anesthetic. The operation was unusually tiresome and protracted, owing to the previous surgical vicissitudes of the patient. The work was beautifully done, and there were no complications. Three weeks after the operation the patient was bathing in the lake. The surgeon himself visited the patient three times a day for the first three days, thereafter twice daily, the first visit at about 7.30 a.m. Sundays made no difference. He paid at least thirty visits to his patient. No one could have been more assiduous and careful with an imperial patient. The slightest symptoms were studied and dealt with. After and for all this, including the preliminary examinations of his patient, he sent in an account for 250 francs—that is to say, £10. In closely similar circumstances, another lady, the aunt of this patient, was operated upon a few years ago in London. The surgeon never saw her after the operation, and asked for 75 guineas, later reduced to 50, which was very nearly 50% of her annual income. I can confidently aver that in no respect of experience and skill or standing could the London surgeon be counted the superior of the Swiss.

On all counts, therefore, small and great, from the surgeon's fee to the nurse's, including the amenity of the home and its intangible atmosphere, the Swiss record belongs to a different *ethos* altogether from our own: though Joseph Lister as well as Florence Nightingale are ours. Here in Switzerland their spirit and skill were incarnate and available at, say, one-fifth to one-tenth of the cost of services in England, notably inferior in certain essential particulars. What is the explanation?

Here I am by no means sure of my ground in all respects and can only present some considerations to the reader. Of course, no first-class London surgeon could operate at such fees, given his customary scale of expenses. A friend of mine has adequate but very modest rooms in Welbeck Street, which cost him £400 a year, and he is not a surgeon, nor does he obtain any fees like those of a surgeon. The Swiss surgeon has rooms in the very best part of his city, but admittedly the visitor must ascend two flights of uncarpeted stone stairs before he reaches the apartment, which probably costs no more than £60 a year. But his patients think no less of him for that.

No intelligible reason occurs to me why the standard of nursing, feeding, cleanliness, comfort should be so much higher in the Swiss nursing home, and there is much to say regarding the necessity for raising the standard of such places in our own country; but in respect of the fees charged by surgeons it seems probable to me that we are here involved in questions which concern the type and structure of the respective societies in question. Here in Switzerland there is a republican form of Government, with a genuinely democratic form of society. There are no titles. There is no powerful, privileged, favours-and-honours-dispensing, leisured and dominant class. My Swiss surgeon's wife is not concerned to get hold of so much money that she can give such dinner parties as may attract the kind of persons who may later on be induced to present her daughters at Court. (She is herself a doctor, and his assistant). All that sort of thing, which is almost too disgusting to write about, is unknown in Switzerland. If a man is a good surgeon, he is known and spoken of and held in honour as a good surgeon, and that is good enough for him and his family, as it should be. He does not consider it beneath his dignity to visit his patient, even when she is doing perfectly well, and another doctor is also visiting her twice a day. He has no social ambitions, because he has already realised what should be the height of any good man's ambition.

If anyone could obtain the services of a first-class metropolitan surgeon, and nursing, etc., all told for £30 or less in England, the problem of the cost of surgery, as we know it, would scarcely exist. There is an impression that this problem at present concerns only the middle classes. The rich have what they want, and the lucky poor have our glorious and incomparable voluntary hospitals. The trifling circumstance that the poor have their names in many thousands at any one time on the waiting lists of our London hospitals, where they remain often for months, awaiting operations many of which should be urgently and instantly performed—this is forgotten. Meanwhile, large numbers of competent young surgeons eat their heads off because it would not be consonant with their professional standing or prospects to perform abdominal operations for £10. The whole thing, as it stands, is a stupid and cruel scandal. Alas, that its roots are so old and wide and deep!

Iodine and Health.

This is another example of Swiss superiority in successful treatment for preventing the growth of certain diseases; our friend, Dr. Saleeby, the great apostle of the sunlight cure, makes the following appeal in the *Daily Telegraph* (Sept. 21st):—

In Switzerland, whence I have just returned, there has been made in recent years a great advance in the conquest of disease by the simplest, safest, and least expensive means imaginable, which I have been advocating for our own country during some years, and for which I now seek to invoke your readers' interest on behalf of national health and efficiency. The new practice consists in the restoration of iodine to the national dietary. This long familiar element is known to all of us in the form of the tincture applied as a first-aid antiseptic to wounds in the trenches or the nursery. But 31 years ago the bio-chemists discovered that iodine is a necessary constituent of the unique and most potent secretion of the thyroid gland in the neck. Without iodine this gland, therefore, cannot effectively work for us, and we suffer in all the ways—many, various, vital—which depend upon failure of its activity. The most frequent symptom is goitre.

Now in Switzerland and in the United States and Canada and New Zealand and Austria, and many other countries, the practice is spreading of making a small addition of iodine to the usual dietary—which is disastrously depleted of iodine, for reasons of too detailed interest to find room in this brief letter—and thus ensuring that the thyroid shall never lack raw material for its irreplaceable product.

Success has followed success. The first reports were admirable, and the latest are more so. Rumours of the power of iodine reached my ears in 1921, when I happened to be travelling in the "goitre belt" of the United States, the Middle West, where iodine is exceptionally scanty in the soil. Just two years ago, Sir David Bruce, the world-famous master of tropical hygiene, in his presidential address to the meeting of the British Association in Toronto, on "The Conquest of Disease," named the prevention of goitre by the use of iodine as the latest achievement in this life-giving field.

Already those who, like myself, visit Switzerland every year, can observe a marked diminution in the number of cases of goitre in young people encountered in the streets, and it is reported that no more cretins are being born in certain cantons since the regular administration of iodine—as a food, not a drug—to expectant mothers. Far more even than goitre and cretinism is involved. The range of protective and constructive power possessed by the thyroid gland has not even yet been fully measured. For instance, in the Galton Laboratory of National Eugenics at University College, London, Dr. Percy Stocks has shown the co-relation between cancer and goitre, and has suggested the general use of iodine in middle life as a preventive of cancer. Doubtless we all need our share of this vital element at all ages from the womb to the tomb.

The cost, as in the iodisation of salts, now officially practised in various parts of the world, is negligible. In certain of the United States and in certain cantons of Switzerland none but iodised salt is now allowed to be sold. In some other Swiss cantons the price of iodised salt is fixed no higher than that of ordinary iodine-destitute salt. In England a few health and school authorities have made beginnings, and glorious reports have lately come from Cumberland County Council, for instance; but the student can scarcely summon patience who sees hundreds of millions squandered yearly on the "cure" of disease that remains uncured, on palliation and anodynes, whilst so simple and natural and costless and proven a course as I advocate remains a suspected curiosity.

QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES.

BONDS.		Sept. 21		Sept. 28	
		Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.
Confederation 3% 1903	...	79.50	79.12		
5% 1917, VIII Mob. Ln.	...	101.50	101.25		
Federal Railways 3½% A—K	...	83.60	83.45		
" " 1924 IV Elect. Ln.	...	101.50	101.50		
SHARES.		Nom	Sept. 21	Sept. 28	
		Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.
Swiss Bank Corporation	...	500	797	791	
Crédit Suisse	...	500	852	842	
Union de Banques Suisses	...	500	665	664	
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	2337	2360		
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	3850	3957		
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe	...	1000	2937	2920	
S.A. Brown Boveri	...	350	520	516	
C. F. Bally	...	1000	1185	1185	
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	549	557		
Entreprises Sulzer S.A.	...	1000	1010	1010	
Comp. de Navig. sur le Lac Léman	500	560	540		
Linoleum A.G. Giubiasco	...	100	93	90	
Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon	...	500	785	770	

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LETTRE DU BOUT DU QUAI.

Vous savez comme moi le rôle intense qu'a joué dans l'histoire des siècles passés, le petit endroit charmant que l'on nommait et que l'on appelle encore un "boudoir". Il était pour la femme, toutes les femmes, le lieu où l'on commence par causer, où l'on jase ensuite et où, pour finir, s'insinue l'intrigue et même parfois davantage! Que de têtes tombèrent, au moment de la Révolution Française, d'abord dans une conversation de boudoir puis ensuite sur la place publique!

De nos jours le boudoir est un peu "vieux jeu", nos diplomates internationaux ont trouvé beaucoup mieux. Ils ont transformé la Société des Nations en "boudoir select", et le grand bâtiment du bout du quai, n'est plus en somme que le toit bienveillant sous lequel naissent, grandissent, explosent ou meurent les propos bons ou mauvais qui conduiront le monde de demain. Plus que jamais cette dernière Assemblée des Nations a prouvé l'exactitude de ce fait. Et comme elle vient de se clore à la vitesse d'un des nouveaux express du "Great Western" il m'est loisible de vous en dire quelques mots. Lorsque l'on a suivi jour après jour le travail de ces Messieurs, il est bon pour vous comme pour moi de tirer quelques conclusions.

Tout d'abord une chose est très nette, c'est que l'Assemblée est une institution parfaitement inutile. Elle n'est désormais plus qu'un prétexte, un paravent qui voile le vrai travail, — si j'ose employer ce mot pour désigner un fait aussi immatériel! — Cette constatation est un grand dommage, pour l'avenir et de la Société et du monde en général. L'Assemblée ne compte plus parce qu'elle n'est plus qu'un Corps amorphe et sans tête. Il lui manque un chef, une personnalité qui la conduise, qui l'oblige à prouver sa nécessité par son travail, et sa volonté par son contrôle. Or d'hommes semblables il n'y en a plus, ou presque!

Branting, le grand Branting est mort; Lord Cecil, le Grand Lord Cecil, est bien encore vivant, mais il était chef lorsqu'il représentait l'Afrique du Sud; il ne l'est plus, il ne peut plus l'être comme Représentant du Cabinet Baldwin. Il reste bien le Docteur Nansen (et l'on ne dira jamais assez tout ce que l'esprit scandinave a déjà donné de forces vives à la Société des Nations) mais sa manière tranchante et individualiste d'envisager un problème, lui enlève un peu de la popularité que son confrère suédois avait su acquérir. Cependant Nansen est le dernier, le seul, qui cherche encore à examiner les agissements du Conseil sans avoir "a priori" dit "oui et amen! à tout". Vous m'objecterez que les Grandes Puissances ont des hommes de tout premier plan qui de loin, de Londres ou de Tokio, semblent être des chefs. Je vous répondrai que ces hommes existent effectivement et même à foison, mais qu'il n'est pas de l'intérêt des Puissances d'en faire des Chefs, et qu'au contraire, les Omnipotents tentent en ce moment de donner une influence quasi dictatoriale au Conseil (ceci au détriment naturellement de l'Assemblée) tout en laissant en façade ce dernier se réunir en grandes pompes une fois l'an.

Pour le surplus, comme je vous le disais au début tout se passe en petits comités, en parties à deux, à trois, ou sept au maximum; dans quelque salle bien isolée du Secrétariat, ou encore mieux entre la poire et le fromage dans quelque petit café de triste mine au coin de la vieille ville. La fameuse "atmosphère de Genève" est partout, sauf à la Salle de la Réformation, et le Café des débarqueurs de la rade est devenu "le boudoir du monde!" Notre destinée se joue au coin d'une table, et s'équilibre à la valeur des qualités culinaires de quelque brave savoyarde, et tout le monde trouve cela très bien, très "moderne", très "dernier chic"!

Cependant le réveil sera dure et une fois de plus les Allemands l'auront causé! Eux, ont compris ce qu'on pouvait tirer de l'Assemblée; eux, ont compris ce que l'on peut tirer de tout l'organisme de Genève si au lieu de le prendre comme un jouet agréable, on s'en sert comme une machine réelle et qu'on en pousse tous les rouages à fond. Eux, ne se contentent pas de discours, si beaux, si émouvants que... l'on ne sache plus à la fin ce que l'on disait au début. Eux, parleront peu, mais travailleront beaucoup. Ils se créeront une clientèle: tous ceux qui cherchent un chef et qui ne demandent pas mieux que d'obéir. Le temps ne sera plus éloigné alors où un Grand Homme réapparaîtra alors au sein de l'Assemblée, cet homme sera un Allemand. Il sera trop tard alors pour récriminer. Les Allemands auront été les seuls à prendre la Société des Nations au sérieux, très au sérieux, ils en récolteront les fruits, et ce jour là on fermera l'attrayant "boudoir international", une Voix impérative parlera au nom des autres!...

LE "BOY" DE L'ASCENSEUR.

EIDGENÖSSISCHE GLOSSEN.

Gesundheitsamtlicher Jargon.

Im Berichte des Eidgenössischen Gesundheitsamtes über seine Geschäftsführung im Jahre 1925 wird gesagt, "dass sich die Frequenz der übertragbaren Krankheiten in durchaus normalen Grenzen gehalten habe." In durchaus normalen Grenzen! Wenn wir nun untersuchen, was bei uns normal ist, so kommen wir zum Ergebnisse,