

Notes and gleanings

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NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KYBURG.

The Swiss Observer:

There may be and probably are, many different opinions as to the merits or otherwise of our little *Swiss Observer* and nothing could be easier than to pooh-pooh it with criticism and contempt. But there is one thing the *Swiss Observer* does to me and, I hope to many others as well. It comes into my home, easily pushed through the letter-box-slit in our front-door, making very little noise as it falls to the floor, in the little hall—the letter-box having vanished long ago! And it lies there, a small, wee thing, easily distinguishable by its pale green wrapper and when my eyes spot it, *then it is* that it does something to me that no other paper I receive can do. It stirs a homeland chord in my heart, it makes me realise for a moment that I am a guest in a foreign country, a well treated, welcome guest, but a guest all the same and that there is, far away, but living within my heart, that Homeland of my youth, of my holidays, of my dreams and, I hope, the land that will finally receive my ashes. I am but a poor pen-pusher, but a poor singer of the beauties of our homeland and of the wonderful music its remembrance stirs up within our bosom, but I know that that moment, when my eyes light upon the *Swiss Observer* of a Saturday evening, that moment alone is worth more than many other, more than the trouble it takes to subscribe to this little Swiss Paper of ours. That moment is a moment of Reunion with the Spirit of Switzerland.

And I hope that every Swiss will, in future, subscribe to our *Swiss Observer*, our Swiss Paper written by Swiss, printed by Swiss for the Swiss. Subscribe to it, and if it is only because *you too want to feel that nice, likeable, homely sensation when the little green-wrapped "Swiss Observer" enters your home.*

Now for the week's Gleanings. It may be that this or that Reader should wish to read about some particular Winter-Sports Centre or Winter Sport. If he or she will kindly let me know, I will gladly send him any such press-notices as I may find in the weekly bag of cuttings.

Switzerland has been called the Capital of the World before. I mention this not in a boastful spirit, but in one of due humility, because the name implies great, but wonderful responsibilities. Various international Institutions are housed in Switzerland already, from the League of Nations down to many minor offices.

The latest, and by no means the smallest or least important is the International Bank which is to be located at Basle. In the *Christian Science Monitor* (16th Nov.) I find the following article in which the proposed activities of this international Bank are set forth in simple language and a few glimpses of the hopes which some people, rightly, I hope, set on this new venture.

A Bank for The World

The World Bank is to be a commercial, not a political, institution. That is the outstanding fact emerging from the successful conclusion of the conference held at Baden-Baden to draft its charter. The delegates, representing the banks of seven major powers, firmly resisted every effort to bind the Bank for International Settlements with nationalistic political chains. Its organization, as announced, preserves the distinctive, nonpolitical character particularly desired by the Young Commission, which proposed the bank primarily as a clearing house for German reparations, but also as a potential instrument of international fiscal co-operation. For either function its freedom from political control is essential.

Choice of Basel, Switzerland, as headquarters—after a compromise between three nations which wanted it in London and three which favoured Brussels—insures a neutral site. Rejection of proposals to make the bank an accessory of the League of Nations removes any chance of complaint of political domination by Geneva, while the grant of power to the banks of all nations to veto its operations in their territories or currencies dispels any apprehension of its becoming a monetary octopus with tentacles manacled national fiscal systems. As a further effort to make the bank world wide in scope, provision is made for including in its directorate representatives of nine nations besides the seven organizers.

What the bank may become as a clearing house of international finance will depend on its development. It should, however, from the start, be able to facilitate transfers and lessen the need for gold shipments. It affords also a natural avenue for helpful consultation and co-operation among member banks. It will give to the world some of the benefits each nation now finds in having its own central or reserve bank. But the Bank for International Settlements will not possess the power usually wielded by such central banks. It will not hold the reserves of its members or be able to dictate their policy. Indeed there can be no danger of its becoming an overlord of the

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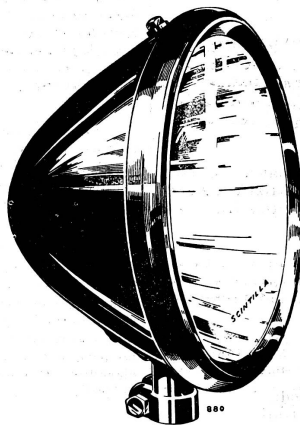
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St. Andrew's—Swiss Invitation:

EXCHANGE OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS.

When I read the first head-line, printed in heavier type, I naturally thought of St. Andrews, the home of the Royal and Ancient Game of Golf!

I wondered whether the Swiss wished to learn more about the Steel-Shift Question? However, as you will read, I was wrong:

The University Court of St. Andrews have approved of an arrangement for exchange of professors with the University of Basel, Switzerland.

Under the arrangement it is proposed that, on the invitation of the University of Basel, Professor Alexander M'Kenzie, of the department of chemistry in University College, Dundee, should give a short course of lectures in the University of Basel, and on the invitation of the University of St. Andrews, Professor Rupe, professor of organic chemistry in the University of Basel, should deliver a short course of lectures in St. Andrews University. *The Observer.*

'Swiss' Pictures made in Alaska.

The Swiss do not seem to appreciate being filmed. A few years ago a big film on "William Tell" was unanimously disapproved of, and last spring the "Conquest of the Matterhorn" was violently criticised. Now it is "The King of the Bernina" that brings indignant protests from all parts of the country. The film is based on a novel by the Swiss author, J. C. Heer, who died a few years ago, and was produced by a Hollywood studio. The right to film the story was given against the will of two of the author's daughters, who are now taking legal steps. The film was made in Alaska, and bears no resemblance to local scenery or Swiss characteristics, the makers having evidently reckoned on the ignorance of the audience.

When the film was produced at Zurich a crowd of students demonstrated in front of the building, and finally invaded it and stopped the performance. They afterwards marched through the city singing patriotic songs.

And I think the young chaps were quite right. After all, why should such films be shown in Switzerland or, for that matter, anywhere else, seeing that they give a distorted and wrong idea of our country and its inhabitants. How would the Americans like a Film featuring "lil ole Noo-Yarrk" made by Studios situated at Toess! or Grandson? or Airolo? And, fancy, risking showing such a film, based on a pirated story by J. C. Heer? Heer, a native of Toess, whose simple grave, high up on the Bruehlberg at Winterthur overlooks his paternal home and who is held in great affection by his countrymen and women. Yea, I regret I was not among those students and, by Jove, I think we should have created somewhat of a disturbance! But here, I call myself off, tick myself off, for exceeding the speed-limit allowed to a contributor of the *Swiss Observer* and, chastened by the Editorial and well-merited reproof, I sink away . . . still mumbling darkly!

But let's forget that unpleasant episode and let us have some fresh Alpine air and read the following from the *Spectator*, 30th Nov.

A Valley in the Alps

The cattle with their picturesque armillars or herds have all come down from the high summer pastures amid shouting and clanging of their many toned bells: they will graze now on the rich meadowlands about the village till the snow comes when they are led to warm stalls beneath the great hay barns for winter. Trees are almost bare, but the larch groves, valiant like spear heads, orange, golden, fox-coloured and amber, are still in flame on the slopes and here and there other patches of vivid autumn linger on the tawny hillsides. Snow has fallen down to timber line and these patches of the coloured dying season, beneath fields of glittering snow, and all against a solid sky of blue, make an effect that only the all-the-year-round residents of Switzerland are privileged to enjoy. For, in fact, Switzerland has more strange and lovely contrasts of landscapes in early spring and late autumn, when few visitors are about, than at any other time.

In another three weeks, perhaps before, all earth colours will be gone. We shall be knee deep in snow, in a strange and delightful winter world, till March comes with daffodil, crocus and gentian. Naturally we think of winter, but without apprehension, indeed, with pleasurable anticipation. We know from experience that it will not be a winter of our discontent, not a winter damp and grey and desolate, full of harsh east winds and fog, as were the winters of our earliest memories, but rather a time of radiant days and happy cloudless skies, of still air, so keen and alive with frost, yet warmed and baked with sun, when, quite apart from the interest and excitement of winter sports, to be alive at all will be a joy to the senses.

Christian Socialism:

One might write a whole article on these two words! However, I find in the *Christian World*, 28th Nov.:

Various "religious-socialist" groups in England, Germany, Switzerland, Holland and Austria sent delegates to an international conference held on the Continent recently, at which an organising committee was set up, under the presidency of Dr. Ragaz, of Zurich.

It is noteworthy, comments *Das Evangelische Deutschland*, that Catholic Socialists are represented in this movement, notwithstanding religious differences.

THE EDITOR'S POST-BAG.

The Editor is not responsible for the opinions expressed by Correspondents and cannot publish anonymous articles, unless accompanied by the writer's name and address, as evidence of good faith

To the Editor of *The Swiss Observer*.

Dear Sir,—I have been hoping that some other correspondents would express their views on the question of speeches on ladies nights, but as no one seems to wish to do so, may I be allowed to reply to those letters which have appeared recently on this subject in the *Swiss Observer*.

I am still of the opinion that ladies do not care for speeches, but prefer, when dinner is over, to proceed without further ado with the main business of the evening, namely dancing.

I should like to reassure Miss Notari that she loses nothing by not hearing the speeches made by the now inferior sex when alone, for as a rule these speeches are just as dull as when ladies are present. I must, however, respectfully decline to have anything to do with psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis spells Freud and we know what that means. The Editor would be obliged to borrow all Mary's blue pencils. Personally I dare not go a step beyond Pelmanism.

Now let me say a few words about the sins of ek. When reading the letter from one who signed himself Bufo, I wondered if the printer had not made a mistake and forgotten to complete his signature, but on referring to my dictionary I discovered that Bufo is the latin for toad.

Mr. Bufo, did you therefore mean to imply that you wished to dip your pen in "fiel" and like the toad to overwhelm me with the bitterness of your venom. If so, when next you wish to make use of invective, permit me to refer you to the Restoration poets. You will not beat them and I will quote for your benefit a few lines of Lord Rochester with reference to someone who had displeased him.

"'Twere labour lost, or else I would advise;
But thy half wit will ne'er let thee be wise.
Half witty, and half mad, and scarce half
brave,

Half honest (which is very much a knave)
Made up of all these halves, thou canst not pass
For anything entirely, but an ass.

And now we come to Mary. I have read her letter several times, but I fail to understand her grievance. Why she should take Kyburg to task passes my feeble comprehension. Kyburg, who of all persons, I have always considered to be the quintessence of Respectability. Never has the idea crossed my mind that his writings could be considered anything approaching vulgar.

I am, however, deeply grateful, Mary, that you do not consider my articles vulgar. Others have used the words 'subtle wit' but let us avoid exaggerations. I should like you to think that I have no evil intentions. I was born of sober, honest and industrious parents and was carefully nurtured on Mrs. Markham, Sandford and Merton, Max and Moritz, and in my early days attempted to warble such innocent songs as "Tannenbaum" until I learnt that it is now the "Red Flag."

I should really like to know what Mary does want. Tot homines, tot sententiae. Most of the people I know seem to complain that the S.O. is too serious and there is not the faintest chance of it ever becoming "comic." If only I knew what to do. Would Mary like me to write about the binomial theorem or Relativity about which I know absolutely nothing or about the heresies in the early church.

Alas, Mr. Editor, I am afraid I am unrepentant and I do not regret any word that I have written and therefore

I have the honour to be
Your humble, most devoted
and most obedient Servant, ek.

Our Weaker Brethren.

At the banquet of the Rifle Association we heard the following new version of the old joke about a certain Argovian weakness: A Bernois, a Zurichois and an Argovian fell in love with the same lady. They agreed to give her a spoon each as a present and let her on the strength of the inscriptions choose between the lovers. The Bernois' inscription was "Forget me not," the Zurichois' "I love you," and the Argovian's—"Bahnhof- Buffet Often." The shrewd lady's choice fell, of course, on the most economical prospective husband. An eminent son of that calumniated canton, on hearing the joke, replied: "I am no longer practicing."—Dr. E.

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A word of advice to the Kiddies: Father Christmas is a busy man these days and liable to overlook things. Remind him in your letters not to forget the ideal Christmas Gift

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