

Notes and gleanings

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TERRIBLE ORAGE EN AJOIE.

Vendredi à 19 h., un orage d'une grande violence s'est abattu sur la Baroche. A Vendinécourt, une trombe d'eau accompagnée d'un fort vent a transporté une centaine de mètres cubes de terre et de boue d'un bois situé près du bâtiment des douanes sur des terres cultivées, qui présentent un aspect lamentable. Les récoltes sont détruites. Il y a cinquante ans, le même phénomène s'était déjà produit à cet endroit.

UN DRAME A LA CHAUX-DE-FONDS

Vendredi après-midi, le 7 juin : une mère de famille a jeté ses quatre enfants dans l'étang dit "Crux-Perdu", près de la ville. La mère se jeta ensuite elle-même dans la mare, mais, grâce aux prompts secours, les cinq personnes ont pu être retirées encore vivantes et ont été conduites à l'hôpital.

UN FILOU SE CONSTITUE PRISONNIER.

M. le juge d'instruction Foex avait décerné il y a quelques jours, un mandat international contre un sieur Gaston Ch., représentant de commerce, inculpé de détournements au préjudice de la maison Kimmerlé, rue de Lausanne.

Ch., qui avait pris la fuite et avait passé la frontière, s'est constitué prisonnier mardi matin. Dans un premier interrogatoire, il a reconnu avoir commis pour 30 000 fr. environ de détournements ou d'escroqueries, soit 6000 fr. de détournements au préjudice de la maison Kimmerlé, 8000 à 9000 francs de chèques sans provision et une escroquerie de 15 000 fr. commise à Chamoni. Ch. a ajouté qu'il avait perdu au jeu la plus grande partie de cette somme.

LE CENTENAIRE DE BENJAMIN CONSTANT

On sait quelle réussite éclatante vient d'être le centenaire de Victor Cherbuliez, et qu'il a permis aux écrivains genevois d'attirer chez nous des écrivains français.

Encouragée par ce succès, et désireuse plus que jamais de favoriser de semblables rapprochements, la Classe des beaux-arts se propose de célébrer, le printemps prochain, le centenaire de Benjamin Constant qui, né en 1767, est mort en 1830.

Ce sera, si l'on songe aux rapports de Genève avec le château de Coppet et de Benjamin Constant avec l'une et l'autre, la fête du romantisme en Suisse française.

Et, peut-être, la Classe des beaux-arts, dont le projet a déjà reçu les plus flatteuses adhésions, trouvera-t-elle le moyen d'ériger un monument à l'auteur d'Adolphe dans la ville qui fut pour lui, à plusieurs reprises, un lieu de séjour et un centre d'études.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KIBURG.

'Lac Leman,' 'Lac Anglais,' 'Lake of Tears,'—which?

The *Evening Standard* recently had a truly interesting article entitled "Britain's Lost Legions," by R. H. Bruce Lockhart:

Time was when Lake Geneva was the love-liest of pilgrimages for Englishmen. Every young man, setting out on the grand tour, included in his itinerary those narcissus-clad shores where Protestantism and the French Revolution were born, where Rousseau wrote his Social Contract, where Byron and Shelley loved to linger, where Gibbon wooed in vain the lovely Suzanne Chuchod, and consoled himself by writing the Decline and Fall, where Madame Récamier and Madame de Stael held court, and where the tragic and beautiful Empress of Austria sought a peaceful refuge from the pompous trammels of the Viennese Court, until the awl of a shoemaker assassin ended her life.

To-day, the laughing throng of young English girls and boys, who in their thousands travel to Switzerland every year, has no thought for the sun-kissed glories of this jewel among lakes. Speed has made them blind to beauty, and, laden with skis, skates and luges, they make their way to England's new playing grounds in the mountains.

The lake, however, has become more English than ever, until to-day it shares pride of place with the Channel Islands, the Italian and French Riviera, and the coast of Normandy and Brittany as the home of England's lost legions.

These lost legions are the new poor who have imposed on themselves a voluntary exile in order to avoid the taxation of a rapacious government. What their numbers are must be a matter for conjecture. Probably their total European strength is not far short of half-a-million. On the shores of Lake Geneva alone they number several thousands.

New Swiss Electric Power Station.

Switzerland marching at the head of all nations, as far as the exploitation of Electricity is concerned, is shortly beginning work on a new Power Station. From *The Times* (20th May):

Work will begin soon in the Val des Dix, south of Sion, in the Valais, in preparation for the erection of a large hydro-electric plant.

A dam across the higher part of the valley will make it possible to form an artificial lake

containing about 150,000,000 cubic feet of water. The water accumulated in the lake, and that supplied by the Dixence torrent, will be led through pipes to the Rhône Valley, where, after a fall of 5,300ft., it will drive the turbines of a power station situated near Champsec. It is estimated that the station will yield some 120,000 kilowatts, and that the cost of construction, which is likely to occupy three years, will be nearly £2,400,000.

162-Year-old Piano of Swiss make.

From the *Star* (18th May):

One of the three oldest pianos in America belongs to a 14-year-old girl, Sara E. Criedler, of Chandler, Oklahoma, says the British United Press.

The instrument was made in Switzerland in 1767. It has a keyboard with a compass of only five octaves. The soft "pedal" is operated by hand and is placed on the player's left.

Of the other two pianos of the same date, one is in the Metropolitan Museum and the other in a house in Mount Vernon, once the residence of George Washington.

Golf in the Snows

(*Burton Evening Gazette* 24th May)

The remarkable growth in popularity of golf in Switzerland within the last ten years is at once a tribute to British sporting influence and to that marvellous adaptability to tourist needs that has made Switzerland the foremost holiday country of the world.

To-day in many parts of Switzerland the golf bag is in summer as familiar a feature, both with natives and with visitors, as the alpenstock.

Switzerland's twenty-six magnificent courses are to be found at her principal resorts. Mountainous topography has presented no difficulties to the course architects. Rather has it aided their task. For even at 4,000 feet in the Alps—open undulating, grassy plateaux are to be found which enable the best type of course to be laid out amid superb mountain scenery.

Foreigners are allowed to take part in all the competitions organised by the Swiss Golf Association. It is this which gives to Swiss golf such a pleasantly exciting international character. And mountain grass for greens—one can do prodigies with a putter there!

Zürich Millenary Celebration

(*The Times* 25th May)

The town of Zurich, the largest in Switzerland, is this year celebrating with appropriate festivities the millenary of its foundation. Lake dwelling remains prove that the site of Zurich was inhabited in prehistoric times, and at the time of the Romans there existed on the spot a fortress named Turicum. The first regular settlement was in 929. From an early date Zurich was the intellectual centre of German-speaking Switzerland. It was the home of the reformer Ulrich Zwingli, and became the focus of the Reformation movement in Eastern Switzerland. It is now the centre of the silk and machinery industry. From 1400 to 1800 the population of the town increased from 8,000 to 30,000; it was 94,000 in 1888, and it has now reached 227,000.

It is not easy at all to think of human beings living in Switzerland, building villages and yet not knowing anything about agriculture and cattle-rearing. And yet, such folks lived there, in many parts, and they are referred to in the following from *The Observer* 26th May. ...

Lake-dwellings in Switzerland.

As a recent examination of its banks has shown, the Lake of Constance must have been greatly in favour with the lake-dwellers. The remains of no fewer than forty-eight different villages have been discovered, in the water as well as in the adjoining fields. Ten thousand years ago the surface of the water must have been a dozen feet higher than it is to-day.

One of these villages has been reconstructed for some years and can be visited. It is situated near Uhlenisdorf on the German bank. Another, near Sipplingen, is being dug out and reconstructed now. It dates back to a time when man was unacquainted with agriculture and cattle-rearing. The finds are exceptionally rich.

Owing to the projected regulation of the lake, which will render research work much more difficult, the next three years will see the paleo-archaeologists very busy at work all round the lake.

Since that time, and more especially so, of late years, progress has been swift in Switzerland and where our fore-fathers thought they had done very well by guarding their habitations as much as possible against avalanches, fire and other calamities, our modern compatriots go further and take to

Insuring against rain

(*Manchester Guardian Commercial* 23rd May)

The introduction of insurance against rain in Switzerland marks a new departure for the assurance business in this country. The initiative has been taken by the Allgemei-

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ne Versicherungs-Aktiengesellschaft (General Insurance Company), of Berne, which recently obtained the Federal concession for undertaking this new work. A few days ago the Union Suisse, of Geneva, also secured a concession, and it is expected that other companies will follow the example of these two houses.

The insurance applies mainly to outdoor gatherings that may be financially affected by rain. The policies are divided into two general classes: (1) covering losses through a drop in anticipated receipts owing to rain; (2) covering losses arising from the abandonment of the event. The first class applies in the case of horse races, football matches, &c., which might be held in spite of bad weather. In such cases the policy is based on average receipts in ordinarily fair weather. The second class provides for meeting the costs of any event, such as a tennis match, which has to be cancelled in the case of rain and thereby loses the sole source of income.

Even further progress is indicated by the following, which, incidentally, might serve also as an illustration of the old saw "laziness is the mother of invention":

Fifty-two week watches (Catholic Herald 25th May)

A Geneva watch and clock maker has invented a clock which, once wound up, will run on for a whole year without requiring any further attention. The invention is to be submitted to the Geneva-Observatorium for the annual test of watches and clocks. The inventor claims that his device, said to be quite simple, can be supplied to all forms of clockwork, and that within a short time annual watches will be placed upon the world markets.

Motoring has long ceased to be a privilege of the rich alone and nowadays nearly everybody either has a car of some sort or then uses a friend's car as often as he needs doing so or, again, trust himself to Char-a-bancs transport. As regards the latter, I have been told by several friends who have actually "done" big journeys in them, that there is no means of transport more comfortable and at the same time more interesting. However, one of the chief questions which agitate us very often is the question of accidents and, even if we are very careful drivers, we are always liable to be run into by "the other fool." It is, therefore, extremely interesting to read the following from "Motor-Transport" 20th May:

Causes of Involuntary Road Stoppages.

The Swiss Department entrusted with the running of the Alpine combined mail and passenger carrying road services have issued returns showing the number of breakdowns of the vehicles and their causes during the past two years. The aggregate mileage for 1928 was 514,701; thus there was one breakdown in every 11,679 miles, the average duration being 48 minutes. In the case of tyres alone, there was only one puncture or other defect in every 73,530 miles run, the total time lost owing to tyre troubles being 170 minutes.

In 1927 the total mileage run was 427,575, when there was one stoppage for all causes every 9,217 miles, and for tyre troubles one for each 47,507 miles, the average delay for all causes being 32 minutes and the total lost due to tyre troubles 131 minutes. Thus, with the exception of a slight advance in the average time lost, last year showed a notable improvement over 1927, although the record for both years is one of which those responsible for the vehicles over the difficult roads which obtain in Switzerland are to be congratulated.

It may be noted that there is no reference to either steering gear or brakes. In view of the comprehensive character of the table—seventeen causes of road stoppage being dealt with—we presume that no troubles were experienced in these important directions, a further testimony to both the efficiency of the vehicles employed and the care and attention they receive.

Intelligent Anticipation.

Daily Mail 28th May

The relatives of a Zurich woman, who for many years had lived alone in a flat, were startled to read a few days ago in a local paper the following notice:—

"Madame X informs her relatives and friends that she has passed away after a painful illness, valiantly supported. She takes this occasion therefore of bidding them adieu. The body will be cremated at Zurich to-morrow."

Feeling that the end was near, the old lady had drafted her own obituary notice and sent it by messenger to the newspaper before walking to hospital, where she died shortly after admission.

The Mechanical Industry in Switzerland.

The Swiss themselves have no exact idea of the importance of the mechanical industry of their country. Apart from watchmaking, which has for two centuries become a typical Swiss industry,

which means that one speaks of the Swiss watch in the same way that one says "Paris Fashions," does one sufficiently know the other industries which furnish watchmaking itself with the necessary industrial equipment, cutting and drilling machines, etc? All these machines of precision come from numerous works distributed throughout the whole of Switzerland, and of which the important production is often misunderstood. A recent enquiry has established the fact that although the total amount of salaries paid by metallurgical and mechanical industries in Switzerland was estimated at 160 million Swiss francs, this sum in reality attained in 1928, 300 million Swiss francs. This represents almost 100 francs per inhabitant, and all Swiss are far from exclusively occupying themselves with the manufactory of locomotives, looms and automatic folders. When one recollects that Switzerland yields no metals with the exception of iron from the Jura, which is wrought in one sole furnace, one is astonished at the prodigious development of this metallurgical industry, deprived of raw material and founded almost exclusively on the ability and seriousness of the workmen.

Limited Companies in Switzerland.

The figure for the total capital of limited companies newly founded in Switzerland during 1928 has risen to 367 million francs, and that for the increase of capital by already existing companies, to 450 million francs. On the 31st December, 1928 Switzerland numbered 11,559 limited companies with a nominal capital of more than 7,000,000,000 francs. On the same date the number of companies with "holdings" amounted to 710 with a nominal capital of almost 2,000,000,000 francs.

Swiss Participation at the International Exhibition at Barcelona.

More than 150 of the foremost Swiss concerns participate in the International Exhibition at Barcelona. The chief branches represented are: Watches, tourism, machinery, electric apparatus, textiles, automobile-lorries, foodstuffs and chemicals.

An enquiry office has been organised by the Swiss National Tourist Office and the Swiss Office for the Development of Trade.

How the Swiss People Live.

Tourists travelling rapidly through Switzerland, where, at first sight, all activities seem to centre around the hotel industry, are seldom able to acquire a correct notion of the comparative importance of other Swiss industries and trade in general. It is of interest to mention that if one reviews the figures which constitute the labour income of the entire population, the percentage due to the various productive groups is the following:—

	No. of persons occupied.	% of Total Income.
Workers and artisans ...	635,000	29.1
Agriculture ...	484,000	17.2
Employees of commercial enterprises ...	182,000	12.9
Person exercising independent activities ...	264,000	21.9
Persons employed in the hotel industry, including servants ...	166,000	5.1
Sundry activities ...	137,000	13.8

Statistics thus show that the hotel industry, however considerable its development may appear, provides the Swiss people with but a twentieth of its subsistence.

The Cigarette Price Guarantee, An Infringement on Free Trade.

The decision of the Swiss Federal Council to include a price guarantee in the Bill for the introduction of a new Cigarette duty has come as a surprise and is not expected to receive undivided approval of Parliament. It is of great importance to realise the meaning of this change, which amounts to nothing less than the abolition of free commercial intercourse and the recognition of a price-ring or the compulsory fixing of prices by the state.

No doubt a law regulating price-rings, cartels and trusts will have to be introduced in Switzerland sooner or later. The recent report of the committee on prices concerning the Cement Industry has clearly shown how deeply entrenched the cartel-system already is, to the detriment of free trading. It seems unfortunate that the principle of free trade, which is still endangered by an ordinary fiscal law. The time will come when it will have to be definitively decided how far Free Trade will be or can be maintained. Such a decision would, however, be seriously prejudiced through the linking up of the Cigarette Duty with a price guarantee. What is just for the Cigarette Trade is also right for every other trade, and in place of free competition we would soon have state-controlled price regulation in all other trades.

(From the *Luzerner Tagblatt*, translated by Miss H. Maurer.)

On the Necessity for Speeding up Swiss Railways.

It is universally admitted that the tracks and running conditions of the principal lines of the Swiss railways are first-class. But why is it that the same excellence does not prevail in all other respects of the railway administration? Why are there no express trains running from Basle to Zurich, why no direct trains from Zurich to Berne, why not even a non-stop connection between Zurich and Lucerne, a distance of 54 km. only? In Switzerland we have supplementary charges for express trains, but with very rare exceptions no non-stop trains at all. For instance Olten is, indeed, a nice little town; but why just at Olten all Swiss trains not only have to stop, but often even to wait for a quarter of an hour, neither a Swiss nor a foreigner can understand.

The sleepy time-table, which once upon a time was proverbial in Swabia, seems to have found its way into Switzerland in order to lead here perhaps an ideal but somewhat untimely existence, supported by all influential politicians from the Capitals of the minor Cantons, who would decidedly be offended if not every engine stopped at their town and paid them homage.

The last News Bulletin issued by the Swiss Federal Railways contains an interesting article on the huge modern steam locomotive No. 4472 of the London & North Eastern Railway Co. She covers the distance of 632 km. between London and Edinburgh in a non-stop run of about eight hours, and this journey is covered twice daily. This feat is the more remarkable as England has gone through a long period of industrial depression. Meanwhile, in Switzerland we have no through-trains at all. The policy underlying our time-tables is still the same as in 1890 or even 1870. This question will have to receive full consideration sooner or later, as these slow transport conditions offer undoubtedly no advantage to a country which claims to be a tourist and transport country, such as Switzerland is and would like to be.

SWISS SUCCESSES ABROAD.

The British Admiralty has just made a contract with an important Swiss firm for the supply of condensed cider, known under the name of "Pomol" which is particularly prepared for export, like condensed milk and which is certainly destined to enjoy a great popularity.

* * *

In order to develop navigation on the Rhone, the Compagnie Générale de Navigation in Lyons has ordered from the well-known firm of Escher-Wyss & Co. at Zurich, a turbine tug-boat of the latest type. This new craft, which will sail on the Rhone, is 65 meters long and 15 broad; its draught, with a load of 1,500 tons of coal, will not be over 1.08 meter. A new proof of the efficiency of a Swiss firm of universal fame.

* * *

The management of the Municipal Tramways of Warsaw (Poland) has, after a tender, in which the chief firms for construction of motors were competing, placed an order with the Ateliers de Sécheron, Geneva, for: 80 tram-motors, type auto-ventilation, of a power of 20 H.P. average tension 550 V. 20 cam controllers. This important order is a real success for Swiss industry.

* * *

The Euboelith Works Ltd., Olten (Switzerland), who have laid a lot of floorings in England 25 years ago and supplied His Majesty's Office of Works, has received an order for 15,000 sq.m. for a Mitcham factory and 3,500 sq.m. for a new factory in London, from clients who have used this flooring for many years.

New Flying Records.

We hear from the other side of the Atlantic that a new achievement has been attained by the two American fliers Mr. R. L. Robbins and Mr. I. Kelly in the single-engined Ryan monoplane, which remained in the air for 7 days, 4 hours and 40 minutes, thus breaking the previous record by 22 hours.

It is further reported that on May 25, the United States Naval Flying Officer Lieut. Tomlinson broke all existing speed records over the River Potomac by flying at an average speed of 175 miles per hour. In both cases the airplanes were equipped with Swiss "Scintilla" Magnetos, which have been adopted as standard by the United States Army and Navy for a number of years.

An Enormous Power Station in the Swiss Alps.

Hydro-electric installations are now in course of construction in Switzerland, near the Grimsel Pass which unites the Rhone Valley with the Valley of the Aare, a tributary of the Rhine; these will, when completed, be the most powerful on the continent of Europe and will develop a total of 360,000 HP. The different installations, reservoirs, conduits, power stations, etc. will extend for 20 km. (about 12½ miles) and will utilize a fall of 1,200 m. (3,936 ft.) at different levels.