

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK
Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom
Band: - (1921)
Heft: 28

Rubrik: Notes & gleanings

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 14.12.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

argentinischen Instanzen dazu veranlasst haben, das Schweizer Vieh, das ja Brasilien nur im Transit berührte, zur Ausstellung nicht zuzulassen. Es hätte mit etwas mehr Energie damals untersucht werden sollen, warum Argentinien gerade der Schweiz nicht mehr entgegen gekommen ist. Es fehlt eben immer noch, wie ich es kürzlich der argentinischen Handelskammer gegenüber betonte, an einer einheitlichen schweizerischen Organisation in Argentinien, die dazu berufen wäre, unsere Interessen nicht nur im allgemeinen, sondern auch im einzelnen richtig zu wahren. Ich bin selbst Mitgründer der Neuen Helvetischen Gesellschaft am Rio de la Plata; meiner Meinung nach genügt es aber nicht, wenn sich diese Gesellschaft auch noch mit unsern Handelsinteressen befasst, sondern es ist eine zwingende Notwendigkeit geworden, dass ein einheitliches Bureau geschaffen wird, das sich der Ausbreitung des Schweizerhandels in den La Platastaaten tatkräftig annimmt und das speziell der heute darniederliegenden schweizerischen Industrie neue Absatzgebiete schaffen könnte.

Fast als sicher ist anzunehmen, dass die englischen Züchter, die sich allerdings um die argentinische Viehzucht verdient gemacht, den heutigen anormalen Zustand zwischen der Schweiz und Argentinien herbeigeführt haben. Das Fiasko, das der erste Transport erlitten hat, soll aber die schweizerischen Züchter keineswegs entmutigen; 1922 findet eine grosse internationale Ausstellung in Buenos Aires statt, und die Gelegenheit darf nicht verpasst werden, um das Schweizervieh den argentinischen Züchtern vorzuführen. Die Aussteller dürfen schon heute überzeugt sein, dass der Schweizer Viehpavillon einer der besuchtesten sein würde.

In Argentinien leben immer noch etwa 14,000 Schweizer gegen etwa 20,000 von früher. 70 Prozent davon widmen sich der Viehzucht und Landwirtschaft, und ich möchte speziell an dieser Stelle betonen, dass unsere Landsleute es in dieser Hinsicht sehr weit gebracht haben. Es genügt, wenn man von Rosario de Santa Fé der Zentralbahn entlang nach Esperanza fährt; eine Schweizeransiedlung reiht sich an die andere, die zum grössten Teil auf Existenzen von 50 und mehr Jahren zurückblicken können. Die damaligen Pioniere—vor allem waren es Berner, Aargauer und Walliser—haben es verstanden, durch Energie und Ausdauer sich in dem fernen Argentinien zu Wohlstand emporzuarbeiten. Dabei wollen wir nicht vergessen zu erwähnen, dass unsere Emigranten von seiten der argentinischen Regierung stets jede Unterstützung erhielten; denn es ist ja im ganzen Lande sprichwörtlich bekannt, dass es die Schweizer waren, die den argentinischen Boden zuerst urbar gemacht und im Lande auch das Schiesswesen eingeführt haben.

Es darf als sicher angenommen werden, dass jede Anregung der schweizerischen Landwirtschaft, die es verstanden hat, als einheitliche Organisation die Initiative für Viehtransporte nach Argentinien, das als Zukunftsland für uns Schweizer immer mehr in den Vordergrund treten wird, zu ergreifen, auch bei unsern Landsleuten am Rio de la Plata grösste Sympathie und jede Unterstützung finden dürfte.

RUDOLF RUCH-HEER (Lugano).

The Publisher will be pleased to forward free specimen copies of the *Swiss Observer* to likely subscribers whose addresses may be supplied by readers.

L'ESCALADE

sera fêtée comme de coutume cette année par les Genevois à Londres. Un dîner aura lieu le **Lundi 12 Décembre** au **Café Royal à 7.30 h.** Tous les Genevois de passage seront les bienvenus. Prière de s'inscrire avant le 9 Décembre auprès de

M. R. DE CINTRA, 46, Cannon Street, London, E.C.4.

Prix du dîner, 7/6.

Phone: Central 1321.

NOTES & GLEANINGS.

The international conferences in Geneva having for the present come to an end, the English newspaper correspondents have concentrated their attention on other subjects; a number of very interesting articles are the result. The correspondent of the *Newcastle Chronicle* (Nov. 16th) has been interviewing financiers and bank managers on the present crisis and the outlook in Germany, and retails the information so gained. He commences his article as follows:—

"Although Switzerland is only a small country and is supposed to be merely an enlarged tourist centre, nevertheless owing to her situation, her importance in the world of international finance and commerce is greater than many persons in England imagine.

I wonder how many British towns with a population of 130,000 could boast of 87 banks. Yet Geneva has actually so many. True, it is known as the city of money-changers, and it is a common saying that if a Genevese has four sons, he makes the first a banker, the second a lawyer, the third a house agent, and the fourth, if he is somewhat of a fool a Government official.

As a matter of fact, Lombard Street could learn a good deal from Swiss financiers and bankers. It is certainly the case that not all the banks, whether here, or in Zurich, or Basle, are genuine Swiss institutions. In Geneva many are Franco-Swiss, and some even entirely French, besides which one is purely English.

Some of the banks, although they certainly do transact banking business, are really only financial departments of large electrical and other undertakings in South America, and before the war in Turkey, Mesopotamia, Syria, Russia, and almost all over the world. My point is, however, that it is possible to get in touch with the financial and commercial situation of the world here better than in most other places."

* * *

The *Daily Express* (Nov. 17th) correspondent went to Champéry—the No Man's Land of Happy Women—and sends the following description:—

"It is a little Alpine resort, a community of toiling, happy women—Champéry, the highest village in the Rhône valley, 3,500ft. above the sea level.

In summer and early autumn it is busy with tourists, but now that the last of them has gone, it is a sleepy, manless village, probably the only one in the world. Of the 900 inhabitants the only men are a handful of officials.

When the stranger asks a Champéry peasant woman: "Where are your men folk?" she replies: "There are no men here; we do all the work ourselves, and we don't want men."

The canton of Valais, in which Champéry is situated, is one of the most mountainous in Switzerland, and its inhabitants have consequently a stern struggle with the soil and Nature in order to exist. As a result of this constant fight with Nature the men and women inhabitants of the Alpine villages became hardier and more independent in character. The men of Valais developed into splendid soldiers, who were in great demand in the European armies during the troublesome periods in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Nearly every general in Europe had a Swiss contingent of mercenaries, and even to this day the Pope's Swiss Guard in Rome consists almost entirely of men from the Valais.

Champéry suffered to a greater extent from the exodus of men folk to the wars than other neighbouring villages, and, in addition to this, the arid country and the short summer and severe long winters held out few inducements to the young man to remain at Champéry while he could obtain good wages and better conditions elsewhere.

VERITABLE
LECKERLIS DE BALE (Singer)

Gros et Détail.

C. A. BLANCHET, 168, Regent Street, W.1

This is how the Champéry women began to lose their brothers and husbands, and in the course of years made the Alpine village a manless Eden.

The women did not sit down and starve. With hard and steady work prosperity again smiled on Champéry, and the women started to sell their surplus vegetables, fruit, and live stock at Sierre and Martigny in the valley.

There was one thing the women found in their way, and very inconvenient during hard work in the fields—the skirt. The Champéry women decided definitely to discard female clothes and to wear men's attire. Now, a Champéry woman wears a light red handkerchief on her head, no corsets, a short coat (half waistcoat), trousers, socks, and heavy boots.

The ambition of Champéry girls is not to marry, but to become independent, and lead a simple quiet life in the village. Many do marry, however as they make excellent wives, but they often stipulate that their husbands must not take them away from Champéry. In such cases the man carries on his trade in another part of the country—as there is no work for men in Champéry—and visits his wife as often as possible. When a boy reaches the age of sixteen or eighteen he leaves Champéry simply because his father and grandfather did, and goes out into the world with his mother's blessing.

With their hard life one would think that the Champéry women would be burnt and wrinkled, but the contrary is the case. The young women are more handsome, stronger, and better built—holding themselves upright, and walking with a swinging gait—than in other Swiss Alpine villages. They like riding, ski-ing, singing and dancing. The older women are fond of the pipe, the tobacco for which they grow and manufacture themselves.

There is one policeman in Champéry, and he has not arrested anybody for thirty years."

"The Choice of an Alpine Station" is the title of two articles appearing in *The Times* (Nov. 24th and 25th) in which the writer carefully analyses all the factors which make for a perfect winter holiday. The season of the year, the particular sport desired, the state of the banking account—all receive most careful consideration. The tariffs of the hotels often form the dominant factor in the selection of an Alpine resort, and the writer thus crudely divides places into four categories according to their prices, which may also be largely taken as a guide to their social attractions—the well-known larger resorts offering the advantages of one or more first-class hotels; the "second-class" centres; the more remote and "one-hotel" resorts; and the unknown places frequented by the long-distance ski-ing enthusiasts, mostly Swiss runners.

"It must be remembered that with coal at £13 per ton and heavy transport charges every little luxury counts; so it is the desire of the tourist to expect more and more for his comfort and amusement that is responsible for heavy tariffs. Thus also it might be calculated very roughly that the daily rates of the four categories might, inclusive of all extras and tips, be calculated in tens of francs thus:—40, 30, 20, 10. This is a rough guide, but will apply to all hotels from the first-class hotel at St. Moritz to the mountain inn at Lauenen and Gsteig in the west, where the wood stove replaces the hot-water installation. Nevertheless, other places still stand betwixt and between. Outlying hotels near the fashionable resort, Samaden, near St. Moritz in the east, or Saanen and Zweisimmen near Gstaad in the west, will offer cheaper rates for less luxury.

Among Swiss resorts there is, in fact, an infinite variety. There exist also a far larger range of price than appears at first sight. Let expense then be the first consideration; next the amusements and sports available, or desired, at any resort. But the last consideration should always be—for those of moderate means at least—the social life of the resort."

This is also the key-note of a contribution by Noel Croft in the *Daily Express* (Nov. 25th), who advises the novice to pay special attention to the choice of an hotel. Dancing and other evening amusements are the natural termination to the open-air joys of the day. It is advisable, therefore, to choose either a large hotel or a small hotel

close to a large one. It is better to have a small room in a large room than a large room in a small hotel.

A few afternoon frocks should form part of a woman's kit, and both men and women should take evening wear, and at least one fancy dress. Women, of course, if they have any interest in their complexions, will lay in a stock of face cream."

Another recommendation is that "skaters should make up their mind beforehand which style they intend to adopt—the English or the international. If the latter, much useful practice in gaining the correct positions can be indulged in before a mirror."

Swiss Alpinism has suffered a great loss by the death of Canon J. W. HORSLEY, late vicar of Detling, near Maidstone.

Canon Horsley, who succumbed to cancer on Nov. 25th, 1921, at the age of 76, has visited Meiringen for no less than 26 years in succession; he used to make up parties consisting of friends and members of his congregation. He was well known for his many-sided activities and left enduring memorials in his writings, as well as in his public, social and religious work.

The Manchester Guardian Commercial (Nov. 24th) brings another very valuable contribution towards the expansion of Anglo-Swiss trade:—

"Strong feeling exists in Swiss circles that the Safeguarding of Industries Act is severely handicapping the commercial relationships of Switzerland and Great Britain. An analysis of Swiss exports, particularly of chemicals and scientific instruments, shows that this must be so. The motive of this amazing Act is well understood by the Swiss, but at the same time they realise that in operation it is prejudicial to a country which, while not technically an ally of Great Britain, has always maintained a most benevolent neutrality. The strength of this feeling is, of course, a compliment to the British trader, since it has its rise in a genuine desire to give preference to British firms whenever that is possible. But economic laws work inexorably, and the restriction of exports to Great Britain must be logically followed by a restriction of British exports to Switzerland.

Yet, in spite of the artificial barrier of the Safeguarding of Industries Act, trade is being done, and much more may be done. The demand is chiefly for British goods of a very high quality. The rates of duty are in reality no insuperable obstacle; when analysed they amount to no more than a question of farthings per article. That need not count with high-quality goods. British goods are given preference because of their admirable finish. In Switzerland the style and workmanship of British products constitute a valuable asset.

What, however, of German competition in Switzerland? It is doubtless severe, but to be obsessed by the thought of it is to paralyse enterprise. Switzerland should be studied. As a matter of fact, there are markets in Switzerland in which competition with German goods is not necessary. There are plenty of products not made in Switzerland, and with these British firms may find a profitable opening. Even where the British trader is in competition with the Swiss home market there is still every promise of success. The cost of labour and the cost of production generally is high in Switzerland, so that British goods may even have the advantage in price; and if the goods are of a high-class quality they have an added advantage. British firms have also a margin of about 12½% on the rate of exchange in their favour.

One point, however, needs to be stressed. British traders should pay a personal visit to Switzerland. The British business man is well liked, and will always be given a frank welcome. The tradition of his personal honesty and the quality of his goods stand him in good stead. But he must be seen personally. One personal visit is worth a ton of prehistoric catalogues. The German trader is never off the doorstep. The British trader is seldom there.

It can therefore be frankly reiterated that Switzerland desires to import British goods as much as she desires to export her goods to Great Britain. This goodwill is an asset to British trade. It is a pity that the British trader cannot pay Switzerland a personal visit, bearing with him the good news that the Safeguarding of Industries Act has been

repealed. The channels of trade between the two countries must be freed from every artificial obstacle."

* * *

That there is nothing new on earth, not even the mysterious art of the Canadian rain-maker, is confirmed by *Tit-Bits* (Nov. 26th):—

"It is very interesting to watch the rain-makers at work in the wine-growing districts around Lake Geneva in Switzerland.

Dotted about the country are numbers of little sheds, from the roof of each of which protrudes a great bell-mouthed funnel. If you could examine these sheds from an aeroplane, you would find that they are arranged in great circles.

Inside each is a gun, the muzzle of which is connected with the bell-mouthed funnel. Charges of noisy black powder are used, and the funnel, acting in the same way as a gigantic gramophone horn, magnifies the sound of the discharge enormously.

When rain is wanted, a man is placed in charge of each hut. Presently a small cloud drifting across the sky comes into the circle of guns. Bang! The cloud, shaken by the noise and the shock of the discharge, begins to float towards the other side of the circle. Bang! bang! The cloud is chivvied about for a time inside the circle, and eventually the shaking up which it receives causes it to break up into rain. The writer has seen these rain-guns used with success on dozens of occasions.

They have another use, too. They can be used for driving off unwanted clouds. When the grape harvest is approaching the farmer's greatest foe is hail; the stones cut his vines to ribbons. When hail storms are about, the batteries once more prepare for action! But this time their method is different. They open fire whilst clouds are outside the circle, and by means of heavy firing prevent them from entering it.

* * *

The plight of the intellectual classes in Switzerland is brought to light in an article in the *Westminster Gazette* (Nov. 24th) which, incidentally, is not a compliment to the practical patriotism of Swiss authors, nor to the efficacy of the Swiss publishing trade:—

"Before the war a fair number of Swiss earned a modest competence by their pens. The German-Swiss among them used to contribute to German newspapers and periodicals as well as to Swiss, while a few French-Swiss writers contributed to certain French newspapers and magazines, and the handful of Italian-Swiss writers eked out a living by contributing to the Italian Press. German-Swiss authors of a certain standing published their works in Germany, French-Swiss authors of any repute usually published theirs in France. Thus all the works of Spitteler, the only Swiss Nobel prize-winner for literature, are published in Jena.

All these writers were paid for their work either in German marks, French francs or Italian lire, and even sometimes in Austrian kronen, for some of them used to contribute to the Austrian Press also. When a German-Swiss author received 100 marks, he then had 120 Swiss francs; whereas now he receives about 2 Swiss francs. Similarly 100 French francs were then worth 100 Swiss francs, but now they are worth about 38; while as for the lira, 100 are worth some 20 Swiss francs instead of 100, and the krone is worth virtually nothing.

During the last seven years, therefore, these Swiss writers have been getting deeper and deeper into financial difficulties. In Switzerland itself there is not much market for literature, the country being too small. The result is that their distress has become so acute that a national appeal has just been made for their relief. It is useless to tell these writers that they should learn to engage in some other occupation. They are mostly too old to learn a profession now, even if they had the necessary funds to pay for the training; and as for finding some other kind of occupation, all occupations are now overstocked in Switzerland.

One author of whom I know went to work as a wood-cutter recently at 5 francs a day, but after a week his only suit of clothes was worn to rags, so that the following week he could not leave his house for want of a decent pair of trousers. Some authors who had invested all their savings in forming a library have now had to sell their books to buy bread. Others, who had comfortable, if quiet, and modest homes, have sold their carpets or pictures to provide food and fuel. Now, however, they have nothing left to sell, and are stranded.

The national fund, or Advance Fund, as it is called, which

is now being created in Switzerland, aims at tiding authors over their present difficulties—not all and any authors, however, but only such as have a certain established reputation. Among the 145,000 or more who are claimants for unemployed relief in Switzerland at present all sorts of people are included, but not authors. A street scavenger can draw his eight francs or so daily, but an author is debarred from any such assistance."

The "Pickford Tours" in Switzerland having been referred to in a previous issue, Mr. Ralph Wilson, sales manager for the Saurer Commercial Vehicle Co. in this country, has sent the following amplification to the *Daily Mail* (Nov. 23rd):—

"For those long Alpine gradients, often one in nine for a distance of seven and eight miles, the Saurer provides its own patent engine brake. As coach-owners realise better than passengers, a good brake stands between many a coachload of travellers and disaster. I wish all coach-owners were as sure of their brakes as they should be.

Motor-coaching in Switzerland is largely in the hands of the Government, who own the railways and are now running extensive services of road-coaches as an adjunct to them for both passengers and mails. Distances run are not great, but the nature of the roads and the scenery make each run a picture-tour. The wheel base of these Swiss coaches is narrower than their British prototypes, and the wheels are smaller in order to provide a bigger turning circle.

The best of the Government runs in Switzerland is a journey of more than 30 miles over the famous St. Bernard Pass—where the dogs come from. The coaches carrying mails run as long as the road can be kept open during the winter and daily for the rest of the year. This combination of motor-coaching and mail-carrying is one which might be looked into by Mr. Kellaway and the British Post Office."

* * *

The *Railway Gazette* (Nov. 25th) summarizes the result of the European Time-Table Conference, which was held in Berne on Nov. 9th to Nov. 11th:—

"The discussion, which occupied a considerable portion of the Plenary Session, showed that, at the majority of the European frontiers, two examinations, almost identical, have to be gone through, the former taking place at the last railway station before leaving the country, and the latter at the first railway station entering the adjacent country. This dual examination appears to be caused by the foreign Governments concerned not emulating the example of the French and Swiss Governments at Basle, where, in the magnificent Central Station, the officials of both countries, practically side by side, get through their respective formalities in a few minutes.

Travellers to Switzerland by the Basle route last winter, as well as the previous summer and winter, will remember the inconvenience of the turn out at St. Louis in the early hours of the morning and be thankful for the influences which have brought about the excellent arrangements now working so well at Basle. It is hoped that an amelioration of the conditions at all frontiers will speedily result from these deliberations.

The question of Summer Time was dealt with, and the representatives of the British railways, in common with the French, Belgian and Dutch companies, were unanimously of the opinion that all countries adopting Summer Time next year should begin it and end it on the same dates, as the lack of synchronisation hitherto prevailing in this respect has caused much confusion and interference with International travel.

Among the improvements secured at the Berne Conference for Continental travellers next year may be mentioned a special Easter train to Switzerland via Boulogne and Laon.

A further achievement on the part of the British representatives was the securing of a London connection with the Simplon Orient Train de Luxe, off the 11 a.m. Calais service from Victoria instead of off the 8.30 a.m. This will take place from June 1st next, and as the departure time from Paris will not be altered, it will be possible for passengers travelling to the Near East not only to leave London at a much more convenient hour, but also to save 2½ hours in transit.

* * *

"A new revolution in printing, the importance of which cannot be foreseen" is described in the *British & Colonial Printer* (Nov. 24th). The remark refers to the "Manul" process, the patents for which are held by a Swiss parent company.