

**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:** - (1922)

**Heft:** 69

**Rubrik:** Notes & gleanings

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. 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. [Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.](#)

### **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. [Voir Informations légales.](#)

### **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. [See Legal notice.](#)

**Download PDF:** 25.05.2025

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

The fixing of a maximum 48-hour week was submitted to the electors of the canton of Zurich, who rejected the proposal. This is in accordance with the tendency shown in some parts of Switzerland to return to longer hours instead of reducing wages. Another law which the canton of Zurich put to the vote last Sunday was the imposition of an amusement tax. This was defeated by a large majority.

\* \* \*

Lucerne has remodelled her naturalisation laws, and foreigners can now become citizens after five years' residence in the community. The fees to be paid vary up to a maximum of frs. 3,000 for foreigners not born in Switzerland, or of a Swiss mother.

\* \* \*

With reference to the figures given in our last week's issue as to the results of the International Rifle Competition at Milan, it should be noted that the Swiss team was first in the Pistol Shooting Match. The points given on page 554 refer to this latter match only.

As regards the Rifle Competition, the results, given on our stop press slip, will have been read with some disappointment. The Swiss team was severely handicapped by the indisposition of Hartmann, who was suffering from serious gastric trouble, and though he put up a plucky fight, his results, particularly in the standing position, fell far below expectations; it was practically impossible for the other four competitors to make up for his short score, although Zimmermann and Lienhard shot exceptionally well. Lienhard was an excellent second to the American champion Stokes, his total score being 1065, against 1067, showing a difference of two points only.

\* \* \*

With reference to the Federal Gymnastic Festival, recently held in St. Gall, the best results have been obtained by the team sent by the Swiss Gymnastic Society of Hudson County, in North America, who, with 145.5 points, made the highest score.

\* \* \*

The Grimsel Pass has been closed to traffic on account of the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in one of the neighbouring villages.

\* \* \*

The Swiss Ladies' League of Public Utility is inviting employers all over the country to send them particulars of long and faithful service by their female domestics.

Their devotion is to be rewarded by a sort of honorary degree, a diploma being granted to those who can show five years' service in one family, a badge of honour in the shape of a silver brooch or pendant for ten years' service, and a silver watch or set of table silver for fifteen years' continuous work in one family. The noble order of faithful service well deserves some tangible token of appreciation, if the problem of keeping servants is as acute in Switzerland as in the British Isles, but we venture to suggest that a pearl of varying size, according to the merits of these faithful "Abigails," would more fitly represent such sterling worth.

\* \* \*

While attempting to climb the dangerous eastern slope of the Kreuzberg in Appenzell, Willi Stein, a young student from St. Gall, met with a fatal accident. A young cow herd witnessed the tragedy. It is said that this side of the peak has been ascended by only two climbers before.

\* \* \*

A mason of Kriens, Johann Krütli, aged 51, fell into a barrel. Being unable to extricate himself alone, and nobody being near to assist him, he was suffocated.

## NOTES & GLEANINGS.

A number of reviews of W. Oechsli's HISTORY OF SWITZERLAND (see S. O. No. 63) have appeared these last few days in the English press. All the writers agree that the book is excellently written and indispensable to the student of history, but it is both entertaining and instructive to record the parts that struck their fancy. The criticism of the *New Statesman* (Sept. 16th) is affected by the statement that "except for a few glorious moments "the history of Switzerland has been uninspiring," and it is therefore not surprising that this writer should single out the account given of the Swiss mercenaries, from which he extracts the following:—

"In the war between Louis XIV. and Holland, 29,000 Swiss on the French side were opposed by 9,000 on the Dutch. . . . There were also regiments in Spanish and Savoyard service. Consequently, during the Palatine war there were at least 40,000 Swiss in the field on the two sides. But this did not prevent the Powers from expressly recognising Swiss neutrality. The Swiss mercenaries, in fact, filled the Powers with a quite untrue notion of the military efficiency of Switzerland. In the war of the Spanish Succession there were engaged on the two sides more than 50,000 real or reputed Swiss, which marks the climax of the Swiss mercenary service. . . . At Ramillies and Oudenarde Swiss regiments fought with distinction on both sides, and at Malplaquet there was actually a bayonet struggle between two Bernese regiments. At the outbreak of the Revolution there were still 12,000 Swiss in the French army. The mercenaries returned to Paris on the heels of the Restoration and fought bravely for the last of the Bourbons. In 1824 6,000 Swiss soldiers were guaranteed to defend the kingdom of the two Sicilies. The coming of the July Monarchy practically marked the end of Swiss mercenary service, though a posse of Swiss halberdiers still guard the Vatican, dressed as they were in Raphael's time."

The *Westminster Gazette* (Sept. 16th) dwells on the author's exceptional difficulties, and the impartiality he displays, in co-ordinating the evolution of a nation where individual cantons and factions have often followed a political course of their own. The wish is expressed that it might have been possible to include the history of the last few years,—

"since, purely as a political model or a constitutional experimental ground, Switzerland has been of almost as great interest to Europe during the past fifteen or twenty years as during any previous period in her history. In social and educational legislation, for example, she has been ahead of this country, and several of our social enactments of before the war appear to owe as much to her inspiration as to Germany, their reputed pattern. Even had Professor Oechsli carried his history further, however, this side of his country's activities would, we feel, have secured hardly as much attention as it deserved. Not only the necessity for writing a balanced history of Switzerland for the general historical student—we will not say exactly the general reader—but in addition a decided bias of interest has here given by far the most prominent place to Swiss politics and foreign relations.

What we have, in short, is a Swiss political history with inter-chapters on social conditions and religious, artistic, and literary developments. As such the volume fulfils its purpose admirably, and certainly supplies a gap in English historical literature."

Another survey contained in *The Guardian* (Sept. 15th) enlarges on the relative position and influence of Calvin and Rousseau, and says—

"those who concern themselves with the history of religious thought may well ponder over the story of the faith which has affected so many countries in such different ways. Calvin was not a Swiss, but who shall measure the influence of Rousseau, who found political theory an amusement of the learned, and took it, as Maine says, into the street?"

We confess, however, that we feel greater interest in Calvin than in Rousseau. There are curious similarities between them, as well as obvious contrasts. Both were idealists, but, as Lord Acton has pointed out, Calvin's system had no roots in history; it was speculative, and therefore more consistent and inflexible than any other, the work of a man without a country.

Rousseau's philosophy, on the other hand, constructive, too, in a wild kind of way, is constantly influenced by his unconscious recollection of the city State in which he was first brought up. Calvin has had ample justice done him as a philosopher, but he has not perhaps received his due as a man of letters. In this he compares with our own Cranmer, and with many other men whom the dust of controversy has obscured. A competent authority has placed him next to Rabelais among the prose-writers of the time of Francis I. In this respect, again, we can compare him with Rousseau, whose various gropings after a better system of things we are so anxious to condense into some sort of a system that we are apt to forget the beautiful directness and simplicity of the style he employs."

\* \* \*

Another work recently published and favourably commented upon is Mr. J. B. Winter's FROM SWITZERLAND TO THE MEDITERRANEAN ON FOOT. The author, who is a well-known Brighton physician, describes a five hundred-mile walk from Sierre to Cannes in the winter of 1919-20. The book will prove most interesting to the climber and specially to those who wish to imitate this novel manner of spending one's holiday. Mrs. Winter accompanied her husband on his lonely tour which we venture to suggest as worthy of emulation by honeymoon couples in particular.

\* \* \*

According to the *Daily Graphic* (Sept. 22nd) the party which intends to make another attempt next year at the conquest of Mount Everest is going to be trained in the Swiss Alps in order "to be drilled into every trick and "phase of mountaineering, under the most rigorous conditions."

\* \* \*

Prominent reference has been given in the English press to a report that in Swiss cotton factories the 54-hour-week is being worked. This bare statement should have been modified in so far that the workmen in several trades have preferred to work longer hours in lieu of having their wages proportionately decreased.

\* \* \*

The appearance in Switzerland of some banknotes which have never been officially issued has created a mild sensation. These notes probably belong to the same faulty series which some time last year was destroyed in the furnaces of Messrs. Waterlow in the presence of official representatives of the Swiss National Bank. However, what strikes us as most remarkable in the matter is the fact that Sir William Waterlow, whilst travelling in Switzerland, should have discovered quite by accident one of these notes. According to London reports these notes (about 350 of frs. 50) are supposed to have been abstracted from the safe of Messrs. Waterlow, but the following communication, issued by the Swiss National Bank throws very little light on the matter.

Es wird bekannt, dass 50-Frankennoten der Schweizerischen Nationalbank (mit dem Holzfällerbild von Hodler) in beschränkter Anzahl widerrechtlicherweise in Verkehr gebracht worden sind. Allem Anschein nach handelt es sich um Noten, die vor ihrer Ueberlieferung an die Nationalbank entwendet und nach Einsetzung der Unterschriften "Hirter," "Bornhauser" und "R. de Haller" zur Zirkulation übergeben wurden. Als solche Falsifikate sind ohne weiteres alle 50-Frankennoten, die neben der laufenden Nummer die Serie "4 W" tragen, anzusehen. Im weitem sind sie erkenntlich an der unscharfen und verblasst erscheinenden Ausführung der Unterschriften. Um ihnen ihr neues Aussehen zu nehmen, sind sie überdies, nach den bisher zum Vorschein gekommenen Exemplaren zu schliessen, vor der Ausgabe zerknittert worden. Die Nationalbankstellen sind angewiesen, solche Noten bis auf weiteres gegenüber gutgläubigen Einreichern einzulösen unter Feststellung der Identität der Einreicher. Kassenstellen und Privatpersonen werden dagegen ersucht, vorkommenden Falls solche Noten im Verkehr zurückzuweisen und von allfälligen Verdachtsmomenten, die Anhaltspunkte für eine weitere Untersuchung geben könnten, unverzüglich der nächsten Polizeistelle oder dem Rechtsbureau der Nationalbank in Zürich Mitteilung zu machen.

## Mr. JOHN KNITTEL AND SOME OF HIS CRITICS.

### II.

The wide publicity given by the critics to Mr. John Knittel's new play and the magnetism of Moscovitch's name are combining to attract considerable crowds to 'The Torch.' The following are further Press opinions on this play:—

The *Glasgow Herald* remarks:—

"The author, Mr. John Knittel, has written a part to which a clever actor can do justice. 'The Perfect Lover,' produced about two years ago, was a charlatan play, in which Mr. Moscovitch did no better than any other actor might have done. In 'The Torch' he created an atmosphere, just as the author created a character. It was a happy combination of skilful writing and happy acting. 'The Torch' should shed its bright gleams on the stage at the Apollo Theatre for quite a long time. After an orgy of bad performances a dramatic critic is in danger of losing perspective and praising unduly something which is not altogether bad. Yet 'The Torch' seems to be altogether good."

From the *Nottingham Guardian*:—

"'The Torch' offers Mr. Moscovitch a fine opening for broad and impressive acting, and the revolutionary, Communist, semi-political flavour of the piece endow it with a unique and arresting interest. We have been flooded with namby-pambyness, and I feel sure a large section of Londoners will welcome stronger matter at the hands of a most capable exponent."

The *Sunday Times* makes a forcible objection to the use of the honoured name of Winkelried for the degenerate children:—

"There is one decidedly curious side to this melodrama. The leading characters in it are Jurg Winkelried, his two degenerate sons—one a loafer, the other a Communist, a seducer, and an all-round blackguard—and their sister, the old man's daughter, who is in love with a lazy servant-man on the farm. These people are presented to us as lineal descendants of the great Swiss hero, Arnold von Winkelried, whose self-sacrifice did so much to win the renowned victory of Sempach, in which the Austrians were defeated more than five hundred years ago. The scene of the play, too, is laid at the little town of Sempach—a place consecrated by the name of the hero whose monument, close to the church, is to-day one of its proudest ornaments. It has been said that the author of the play, Mr. John Knittel, is himself a Swiss. If so, he has shown an odd way of honouring one of the greatest of his country's sons. . . . If the author has no authority for giving us such a picture of the degradation of a noble name, his action has really been extraordinary. If he has any authority for it, he would have better served the honour and dignity of a brave country and an illustrious family by keeping it to himself instead of thrusting it into the glare of the footlights."

The *Westminster Gazette*, under the heading "A New Dramatist," declares Mr. John Knittel "hall-marked" English!:

"'I'm not the captain of this ship,' says Abel Winkelried to his father when he tries to rouse the old man's dying pride in the family name in the last act of 'The Torch.' 'I'm not the captain of this ship, you are. If you'll stick to the bridge, I'll stick to the boilers.' Here we have a drama in a foreign and a restrained area, a setting to which the art of Mr. Komisarjevski has done far greater justice than a Swiss background usually gets out of its own country, written with a regard for national history and character only possible to a true-born Swiss and indelibly hall-marked as English by this one little slip in his dialogue. Mr. Knittel is not an Englishman, but 'The Torch,' though it is a serious play of purely Swiss life in a Swiss town in 1922, is not a translation from the German original, but a play written in English for the English stage by an author who has made a deliberate choice of a foreign language as a medium through which he intends to deliver his work to the world.

From the *Newcastle Chronicle*:—

"Mr. Maurice Moscovitch is back in London with a play which might have been specially written for the purpose of enabling him to give a full display of his great emotional and dramatic power, and an exceptionally warm greeting was given