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Beauftragter unteroffiziere. — In der "Schweizerischen Militärszeitung" wird von deren Redaktor in einem ausführlichen Artikel die Frage aufgeworfen, ob nicht für die Rekrutenausbildung wieder, wie einst vor dreissig Jahren, Beauftragter unteroffiziere anzustellen seien. Diese würden ermöglichen, dass die neuernannten Korporale von dem Dienst der Rekruten-

ausbildung entlastet und in besonderen längeren Unteroffizierschulen ausgebildet werden könnten. Die Zahl der nötigen Berufsunteroffiziere schätzt der Verfasser auf einige hundert. Nach einer bestimmten Dienstzeit wären sie in der Bundesverwaltung zu verwenden. Der Verfasser des zitierten Artikels meint: "Der alte Unteroffizier fehlt uns in manchen Beamtensphären ohnehin sehr." Wie weit dies wirklich ein Unglück ist, möge der Leser selbst entscheiden. Die Notwendigkeit der gründlicheren Ausbildung des Unteroffiziers wird wie folgt begründet: "Als die Infanterie noch in geschlossener Ordnung auf dem Gefechtsfeld evolvierte, die Schützenlinie und das Feuer noch durch Kommando des Zugführers geleitet wurden, als die Batterie noch ausschliesslich unter den Augen und auf Kommando des Batteriechefs auf- und schoss, diente der Unteroffizier im Grunde doch fast nur als Pfeiler in der Mauer, ohne wesentlich aus ihr hervorzutreten. Wenn er durch sein Beispiel als Mustersoldat, Weitergabe der Befehle und Kontrolle ihrer Ausführung den Zug zusammenhalten half, war man schon sehr zufrieden. Besondere selbständige Aufgaben waren relativ selten, und dafür fand man schliesslich meistens den geeigneten Mann. Das Haupttätigkeitsgebiet des Unteroffiziers war der innere Dienst, und dafür konnte er in der Rekrutenschule allerdings viel lernen. Das ist nun anders geworden: heute sind die Anforderungen des Truppendienstes an den Unteroffizier wesentlich höher als die der Rekrutenschule. Er muss viel selbständiger, unter viel weniger intensiver Aufsicht arbeiten, muss selbst taktische Entschlüsse fassen, oft ohne Befehl oder Instruktion handeln, seinen Leuten in ganz andern Sinne Vorbild und Führer sein, als in der Rekrutenschule oder in früheren Zeiten. Es hilft nichts, es zu verschweigen: wir müssen uns damit abfinden, dass heute vom Unteroffizier nicht viel weniger verlangt werden muss, als noch vor zwanzig Jahren vom Leutnant: folglich braucht er auch nicht wesentlich weniger Ausbildungszeit, als dieser damals; daraus folgt wiederum zwingend, dass wir die Ausbildung anders einrichten müssen, als man damals für zweckmässig oder doch genügend hielt." (National-Zeitung.)

THE TRIPPER'S PARADISE.

Several of our subscribers have drawn our attention to an article which appeared under the above title in the *Evening Standard* on August 15, written by Stacy Aumonier, who is an occasional contributor to that journal. There is nothing remarkable or worth reproducing in his observations were it not for an idiotic reference to our country, when he says that with all our beautiful mountains and "the most concentratedly spectacular scenery" Switzerland has produced nothing but a nation of waiters. Everybody is, of course, entitled to his own opinion, based on what he sees or is able to see, and people who visit our fashionable mountain resorts for the sake of continuing their acquired habits of drinking cocktails in the morning and exercising their minds and limbs in the afternoon and evening under the guidance of jazz bands must be pardoned if their vision is somewhat limited. After all, they fulfil a necessary mission in enabling those who minister to their wants to earn an honest living. That the calling of a waiter should be synonymous with a certificate of low breeding and weak intellect is a gratuitous compliment not made for the first time: it has struck us, however, that waiters have often exhibited an infinitely higher standard of education and tact than some of those lucky ones who command their services.

The writer draws comparisons with Holland, which country, he opines, is on a par with Switzerland as regards size, population and antiquity: it has, of course, "no scenery," but has produced painters, pioneers, colonisers and sailors. The ordinary tourist cannot be expected to visit our museums and picture galleries, but we believe the name of the Holbeins is familiar to every public school boy in England, and we fancy any modern art student will know and value the works of Calame, Böcklin, Koller, Hodler, Segantini, and Wiedland. As regards "colonisers and sailors," we suggest to Mr. Aumonier to look up any old textbook on geography, when the ridiculous nature of his statement will become apparent to him.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

Mars and the Jungfrau.

A thrilling narration of a recent accident on the Jungfrau is published in the *Daily Mail* (Aug. 25th) from the pen of G. Ward Price. Incidentally he gives some interesting details about the work and personality of the astronomers engaged at the observatory for getting more closely acquainted with the mysterious doings of the planet Mars. Here is the article:—

Last night the Jungfrau saw two tragedies. One cost a man's life; the other a man's life's work. At the place where I write this message, the body of the dead Alpinist lies in the next room, while the astronomer whose lifelong hopes have been wrecked sits at the same table.

Last night, when Mars was closer to the earth than at any time during a century (being only 34,000,000

miles away), was one to which Professor Schaar had looked forward through his entire career as an astronomer. His great opportunity has come at the age of 62—and gone by, unavailing, wasted through the weather's whim.

When he was the young son of a Swiss carpenter, Professor Schaar instinctively set his heart on owning the best telescope in Europe. That ambition has made of him a world-famous grinder of great lenses and a specialist on Mars.

To study his favourite planet he has travelled far into Africa. There, at Setif, in the south of Algeria, a brother-astronomer, M. Jarry-Desloges, equipped with one of Professor Schaar's lenses, is observing the planet from among the hot sands at the same moment as Schaar from the green ice of the Aletsch Glacier. The heat-vibrations of the African air in summer are probably preventing the desert astronomer from seeing any more than the Alpine one.

For of the three nights since I joined Prof. Schaar at his 11,600 ft. observatory—the highest in the world—the first was the only one in which he caught a glimpse of Mars. During the last two the air has been filled by a wild blizzard of frozen snow, which shut out the sky like a roof.

Here are the two great telescopes which Prof. Schaar tends like twin babies. Each has a small petrol engine to keep it moving along the right ascension of the star. They are nearer the zenith than any lenses on earth, and laid out by them are records of all former Mars observations, so that the least new feature may be at once recognised.

But the long night has passed, and Mars has marched across the sky at the closest range of the century, completely hidden by his screen of cloud.

Yet the night was by no means uneventful. Early yesterday three Germans, arrayed with climbing boots, rope and alpenstocks had arrived at the hotel at the Jungfraujoch, which is shortly to be opened as the highest hotel in the world.

All three were sturdy figures in the later thirties, and they announced that they were going on alone to climb to the top of the Jungfrau, 2,000 ft. above our observatory. Steuri, the well-known Grindelwald guide, was at the Jungfraujoch and warned them against the threatening weather. He urged them not to go on without a guide, but they replied complacently that they were experienced mountaineers and needed no guide.

So off they started in the forenoon and passed out of sight across the broad Aletsch Glacier, roped together in single file and ploughing their way knee-deep in fresh-fallen snow.

All afternoon the clouds were massing densely round the Jungfrau, and by the time darkness fell a snow blizzard was raging fiercely.

There is a picturesque little wooden restaurant in this curious hotel where I had dined with the two astronomers. It juts like a pigeon-cote out of a precipice that falls to the glacier 700 feet below. Several guides, with faces peeled and tanned to the colour of an old saddle by the sunshine and snow-glare, had been with us there. While the storm howled and rattled outside, these men were playing the accordion and smoking big pot-hook-shaped pipes.

About eight o'clock, while the accordion was silent a moment, one of them, in his odd Swiss-German, suddenly startled. "Wasn't that a shout from the glacier?" he exclaimed.

In a moment the lean frames of his weather-beaten companions stiffened to strained alertness. They knew well how closely danger and death lurk on an Alpine peak, even so familiar as the Jungfrau.

Somebody threw open one of the double windows. A swirl of stinging, frozen snowflakes burst into the warm room, bringing with it, faintly but unmistakably, a wailing, despairing cry like the distant howl of a dog.

Not a word was spoken by the Swiss mountaineers around the table, but they sprang into instant action. They four guides snatched down coils of rope from the hooks on the walls. M. Werner Sommer, the manager of the hotel, wrapped a table-napkin round his throat and picked up an ice-axe from the corner—for in the buttonhole of his black morning-coat he wore the badge of the Swiss Alpine Club.

Lanterns were hurriedly lighted. What had been one moment before a cheerful company, enjoying wine, tobacco and music, had become a rescue party facing danger.

Again the plaintive wail came from the foot of the precipice below. In answer, a lighted lantern was waved from the window.

And then the four guides and the hotel-keeper set out into the bitter, buffeting storm on their climb down the precipice. The jerky light of their lanterns, sometimes hidden by snow-flurries, marked their gradual descent.

It was half an hour before two of them returned, roped together with two strangers.

Drawn-faced, with bloodshot eyes and utterly exhausted, these were two of the German climbers. The third was still on the glacier below, unable to move, said the guides. They were going back to help carry him up the precipice.

That climb of 700 ft. took them two hours, and, when they arrived, it was half-carrying, half-dragging a man whose eyes were fixed and glazed. "He's dying!" exclaimed M. Kolliker, the astronomer-explorer, and two hours later the German was dead.

It was only next morning that we heard from the two survivors the strange story of their climb. They had reached the top of the Jungfrau safely, but, on the way back, the storm caught them, and, in the baffling blizzard, they lost all sense of direction. Till it was dark they halted. Then, in a lull, they saw the distant lights of the hotel and struggled on again.

The third man, Herr Fiege, who came from Breslau and was newly married, missed his footing on a steep slope, and all three, roped together, half-fell and half-rolled several hundred feet. Two were unhurt, but the Breslau man had hit his head badly. After lying a while he said he could go on.

So, in constant danger of falling into the green crevasses of the Aletsch Glacier, they plodded painfully through the snow as far as the foot of the steep cliff to which the hotel clings. There the injured man collapsed entirely. The others had almost lost hope when the keen-eared guide in the room far above heard their shouts.

Yet this morning it is hard to realise that the mountain took a life last night, for the sun shines gloriously about the gleaming head of the Jungfrau, while below in the valleys the whole world looks like one gigantic washing-day.

Catholic Congress in Switzerland.

The *Catholic Times* (Aug. 23rd) contains a short report about the Catholic Congress held a short

time ago in the Protestant town of Basle; the writer is very much impressed by the courteous way in which the delegates have been received by the population of this former "stronghold of aggressive Calvinism":—

All along the Rhine the great cathedrals of the riverside cities are in Catholic hands, with one exception, that of Basle. This beautiful church, built in the fourteenth century, has long been devoted to Protestant worship, and its interior presents the aspect of a hall for public meetings rather than a church, for there is no altar, and the chief object in the former choir is a platform for speakers. Another of the churches built in pre-Reformation days is now converted into a museum. The city and the canton is mainly Protestant. But it gives its title to the largest Catholic diocese of Switzerland, which, thanks to its extending to and including most of the Forest Cantons, has a Catholic population of half a million. This is nearly one-third of the whole Catholic body in Switzerland, which at the census of 1920 numbered 1,586,826, or 41 per cent. of the Swiss people. On Saturday, August 9th, the Catholic Congress of Switzerland assembled in Basle. It was a well organised and most successful meeting, and its success was all the more notable because it was held in the city that was so long a stronghold of aggressive Calvinism. It must be said to the credit of the non-Catholics of Basle that they gave a most friendly welcome to their Catholic fellow-countrymen.

Thousands came from all parts of Switzerland, the Catholic cantons of the centre and south sending large contingents. The meeting dealt with practical matters—Catholic organization, mission work, the Catholic press and education, special attention being given to the disabilities under which the Catholic schools still do their work in some of the Protestant cantons. Switzerland is a country where men of more than one race and language have built up a common nationality, and arrangements had to be made for sectional meetings in which four different languages were used—German, French, Romansch and Italian. There was an interesting exhibition of the Catholic art of the country, and, on the Sunday, a procession of the Catholic associations. Professor de Sury, of Freiburg, writes to us:—

"We have had three memorable days at Basle. On the Sunday, 30,000 men, with more than 500 banners and 50 bands of music, marched through the city streets, saluting the bishops of Switzerland, who looked on from the balcony of a hotel on the bank of the Rhine. The attitude of the people of Basle was that of perfect courtesy. They will remember this day as a demonstration that the most living forces in our country are those that are bound together by unity of belief based on the granite rock of faith."

A Model Chocolate Factory.

Some complimentary references to one of our well-known chocolate manufacturers are made in *The Times* (Aug. 23rd) in the course of an article dealing with cocoa imports and British methods and machinery. We call the following:—

The Swiss authorities consider that the Berne factory of the Tobler company is one of the most representative in the country. The visitor is struck with the extreme cleanliness and orderliness of every process, the perfection of the machinery, and the efficiency of the workpeople, and in particular the wide range of age of the employees. Sometimes representatives of three generations are working almost side by side. There is something of the nature of a bonus system in operation, the minimum earnings of the workpeople being 8½ francs a day, rising to 12 or 13 francs in the case of the thoroughly skilled.

The industry has naturally suffered during recent years from the general depression, and has perhaps been more unfortunate than others, because chocolate is largely a luxury trade. A number of countries which were formerly important markets have raised tariff barriers.

In Great Britain, welfare work has long been a feature of the chocolate industry. At Berne, owing to natural conditions, it has perhaps taken a wider form than has been possible in the United Kingdom. For example, land has been acquired by the Tobler Company, partly to secure a regular and cheap supply of agricultural products for the workers' homes.

There is a benefit club which renders help in case of sickness and death, an ambulance service, provision of nurses for the homes, an annuity scheme for provision against old age, infirmity and bereavement. The company has also organized the purchase and distribution of fuel, especially wood, and of provisions of all sorts. Through the medium of the pig farms, the pigs are supplied with the husks of the cocoa beans, excellent meat, lard, and sausage is available at moderate prices.

The firm has adopted with great success an arrangement which some branches of British commerce and industry are endeavouring to introduce, namely, that of eliminating Saturday as well as Sunday work. The Tobler employees work their 48 hours between Monday morning and Friday evening, and thus have a long week-end for home, garden, and recreative pursuits.

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