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We again wish our Readers the best of Christmas Cheer and all Happiness and Prosperity in the coming year.

HOME NEWS

It is stated officially that Dr. C. D. Bourcart, the Swiss Minister in Vienna, will retire from the diplomatic service next spring. Most of the older members of our Colony will remember Dr. Bourcart, who represented Swiss interests in this country previous to the late Dr. Carlin. The unexpected news of his retirement has caused widespread regret in political circles.

The rumours about Lieut.-Col. Bircher's supposed participation in the "Hitler Putsch" stimulated the Basle Socialist member Schneider to make some fanciful allegations in the National Council. Federal Councillor Häberlin, in his reply, reiterated the results of the official enquiry, which left no doubts that the attitude of this officer had been correct and above suspicion. Lieut.-Col. Bircher has now challenged his accuser to repeat the statements outside the House, so as to give him an opportunity of defending himself.

The Swiss in Alsace-Lorraine who incurred heavy losses during the late war and who, in order to consolidate their interests, have formed in Colmar an association *ad hoc*, have presented a petition to the National Council asking for indemnification. After a short, but animated discussion the Council decided that the petition should be allowed to lie on the table.

The method of selecting jurors in the town of Geneva is arousing considerable criticism. The juries, which are displaying a notable tendency towards discharging criminals brought before them, are stated to have amongst their members very often former gaol-birds and other persons of ill-repute.

An interesting trade-mark dispute was decided last week by the Federal Tribunal. The well-known firm of cigar manufacturers, Rodolfo Pedroni in Chiasso, sued a competing concern, Mori, S.A., in Ligornetto, for labelling some of their products "Pedroni." In order to establish some right to the use of that name, the latter had found a retired railway servant, called Pedroni, to whom they paid a yearly sum of Frs. 300 for the loan of his patronymic. The tribunal declared this to be an unlawful arrangement, merely intended to circumvent the protection offered by a trade mark.

For improperly appropriating ammunition during their military service and altering to their advantage the official entries in the firing-carnet, three recruits were committed by the Tribunal of the Fourth Division to terms of imprisonment, ranging from seven days to three months.

A farmer, Johann Aschwanden, of Bauen (Uri), was shot from behind by a mountain dweller on a lonely path high above the lake. He is said to have previously had a dispute with the latter over some of his game; the assailant repented and subsequently gave himself up to the police at Altdorf.

A windfall in the shape of death duty and 15 years' accumulated taxes seems to constitute a welcome Christmas surprise for the Cantonal treasury of the Ticino and the municipal coffers of Cepio, in the Maggia valley. Some fifteen years ago Eugen Re returned from California and posed as a poor and broken man, and even applied recently to the authorities for financial assistance. He died suddenly last week, and the official inventory established the fact that he possessed a fortune in cash and stock (deposited at a Locarno bank) of Frs. 386,000.

An insurance company established in Berne is presenting its clients with a miniature world-atlas, in which the special map representing Switzerland exhibits 23 cantons, a new canton appearing under the name of "Kanton Herisau." The atlas was not printed in Switzerland.

NOËL 1924.

Mon cher Rédacteur,—Il y a trois jours, vous m'avez demandé un message de Noël pour l'organe officiel de notre Colonie, et depuis lors j'ai songé à ce que je devrais vous dire. Un sermon? Non, on en prêche assez du haut des chaires. Un exposé théorique et critique de toute la question? Laissons cela aux théologiens et à leurs gros ouvrages... Mais pour "l'homme dans la rue," comme disent les Anglais, qu'est-ce que représente Noël, et que devrait-on faire, pour lui conserver une valeur réelle?

Ce que signifie Noël? Oh, il n'y a qu'à voir: trois ou quatre jours de vacances, de quoi se donner du bon temps, banqueter, bien s'amuser, être "merry and bright" comme on dit ici, et voilà le Noël de la grande majorité.

Mais il y a ceux aussi qui ont gardé au cœur une petite place pour les autres et dont la joie sera de faire plaisir, à droite et à gauche, de soulager ici quelque misère, de faire briller là-bas quelques yeux d'enfants émerveillés par un beau cadeau, de réjouir plus loin tels amis, telles connaissances par une attention délicate. Gageons que, pour finir, ce seront encore ceux-là qui passeront le plus joyeux Noël, car il y a plus de joie à donner qu'à recevoir et ce n'est que dans la mesure où l'on donne et se donne qu'on est vraiment heureux.

Et pour le dire en passant, je crois qu'il y en a beaucoup dans notre Colonie qui connaissent ce bonheur-là, si j'en juge par ce que je sais, par tout ce qu'ils m'ont confié pour le distribuer plus loin. Ils ont voulu faire leur part à Noël, et ils en sont les premiers heureux! Ce qui ne m'empêchera pas de leur redire à tous un merci du fond du cœur.

Mais encore, pourquoi faire des cadeaux à Noël? On peut poser la question, n'est-ce pas? Et si nous cherchons bien, je crois que nous y verrons un bel usage qui nous est venu de nos pères, de bien loin en arrière, des âges où la ferveur était plus grande peut-être qu'aujourd'hui. Alors, dans ces âges sombres où la vie était volontiers triste et désespérée pour les masses, Noël signifiait par excellence une lumière brillante allumée au ciel ténébreux, une espérance rendue à ceux qui étaient malheureux, la certitude d'un Sauveur accordé à l'humanité. Et c'est par gratitude pour cette joie, ce bonheur, cette certitude, qu'on s'est mis à donner autour de soi: de l'abondance du cœur, les bouches parlaient et les mains s'ouvraient.

Que si tous, nous conservons à la fête de Noël ce cachet de la reconnaissance pour ce que nous avons reçu chacun, dans notre vie, de privilèges, de bonheur, de paix, de joie et de certitudes d'avenir, grâce au Christ Sauveur paru comme un petit enfant à Bethléhem: que si tous nous continuons à la traduire en actes de bonté, la fête aimée ne perdra pas son caractère profond. Et ce que nous aurons fait à l'un de ces petits d'entre ses frères, nous le lui aurons fait à Lui-même! Ce sera là notre plus grand bonheur....

Veuillez transmettre à tous nos compatriotes mes vœux de Noël les plus sincères et me croire votre tout dévoué,

RENE HOFFMANN-DE VISME.

STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.

BONDS.	Dec. 16	Dec. 20
Swiss Confederation 3% 1903	74.75%	75.25%
Swiss Confederation 5% 1923	99.50%	99.25%
Federal Railways A-K 3 1/2%	79.35%	79.77%
Canton Basle-Stadt 5 1/2% 1921	100.00%	100.50%
Canton Fribourg 3% 1892	69.25%	70.25%

SHARES.	Nom. Frs.	Dec. 16 Frs.	Dec. 20 Frs.
Swiss Bank Corporation	500	663	669
Crédit Suisse	500	720	707
Union de Banques Suisses	500	555	559
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	2975	3025
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	1887	1893
C. F. Bally S.A.	1000	1162	1167
Fabrique de Machines Oerlikon	500	620	620
Entreprises Suizer	1000	685	708
S. A. Brown Boveri (new)	500	308	320
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Milk Co.	200	207	207
Choc. Suisses Peter-Cailler-Koehler	100	168	166
Comp. de Navig'n sur le Lac Léman	500	325	331

AVVISO.

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THE ALMANACK PESTALOZZI.

It is quite a small book, but what an extraordinary amount of information is packed into its 288 well-printed pages! It is of the kind, too, we all want to know, yet about which, I'm afraid, most of us have but a hazy idea! None of us likes to be asked questions about our country by enquiring Englishmen which we cannot answer, but I hardly think I am the only one who undergoes this unpleasant experience from time to time, so to all those who share it with me I would recommend this excellent little almanack most heartily.

It would really be impossible to give an adequate idea of the wealth of information, interesting, useful and amusing, contained in this booklet. With its numerous pictures and biographical notes of the great ones of this earth, who have made themselves famous in literature, art, philosophy, science and politics, it reminds one of a diminutive Larousse. There is also a list of the principal historical events with their dates, from ancient times up to to-day, so, it will be seen, one can learn from it not only about the famous men and outstanding events of Switzerland, but about those of all countries and of all ages. There are also details as to the important statistics of Switzerland, some being illustrated by pictures, a map of the Swiss railways, a table giving the different monetary values of the most important countries, different systems of weights and measures—indeed, everything one may want to know with regard to Switzerland, a good deal that one might want to know about other countries, and much of the every-day information necessary to all, such as hints on first-aid, and so on.

But, of course, this almanack is not really intended for grown-ups; it is primarily for children, and this year's edition has been compiled in particular for children abroad, to whom Mr. Motta has addressed an inspiring preface, which, one feels, should be read by all Swiss children who are being educated and brought up in a foreign land! The many illustrations—and there are one or two very good reproductions of pictures by the old Masters—are certain to appeal to children who will learn from them a great deal unconsciously. There is also a page of pictures, showing how to make some simple, but attractive *ombres chinoises*, there are others of birds, of the different inventions made throughout the ages, tables for school lessons, fêtes, pocket-money, books to read—everything, in fact, to delight young Swiss girls and boys, including the possibility of winning a watch, or some other prize, in a competition, all details of which are given on pages 8—15.

To anybody in doubt as to what kind of present to give to a young Swiss girl or boy, the Almanack Pestalozzi must be a godsend—they are certain to like it, and, what's more, their parents will like it, too! An announcement appeared a short time ago in *The Swiss Observer* to the effect that copies of this Almanack could be obtained in French and German (French edition, post-free 2/9, German edition, with Schatzkästlein, post-free 2/10), so there will be no difficulty for anybody to obtain this attractive publication, but they should hasten to send in their order, so as to avoid disappointment.

Xmas Presents

that will instruct and educate
you all the Year round.

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