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HOME NEWS

By overwhelming majorities the electors of the canton of Lucerne rejected on Sunday, Dec. 30th, an initiative demand, made by a group of Liberals, which aimed at a reduction of the members of the Grand Council and of the cantonal judges, and the election of the former by the system of proportional representation.

* * *

Mr. Schnyder von Wartensee has taken up his duties again as vice-president and general manager of the Swiss National Bank; at a farewell luncheon in Vienna, offered by Austrian ministers and other high officials, homage was rendered to his engaging courtesy and his outstanding services in the reconstruction of Austrian finances. He was, during the last twelve months, counsellor to the Austrian National Bank.

* * *

Surprise and even disgust is manifested in Zurich and other centres at the number of well-to-do Germans that are at present staying in first-class hotels, with well-stuffed purses, whilst passionate appeals are being made in Switzerland on behalf of their less fortunate nationals.

* * *

The physical institute, attached to the University of Zurich, caught fire on Sunday, Dec. 30th, the roof and the rooms occupied by the family of the caretaker being completely destroyed; little damage was done to the contents, as the collection of exhibits and valuable instruments were removed in time.

* * *

St. Moritz seems to be enjoying a record season, the number of visitors, registered as staying at the various hotels, being about 4,300 — 2,000 more than twelve months ago and 800 more than the pre-war record.

* * *

The heavy snowfall has been the cause of numerous avalanches, which in many places resulted in serious consequences, apart from the excitement and admiration of the crowds of revellers staying at the winter resorts. On the Gotthard line, near Airolo, one of them demolished no fewer than 15 houses. A party of ski-runners was overtaken near Zuog (Engadine), two tourists perishing in the icy embrace before they could be extricated.

* * *

It is reported that the Swiss colony in New York has collected 100,000 dollars for the purpose of producing in Switzerland a historic film, commemorating the foundation of the Confederation.

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The Allgemeine Elektricitäts-Ges. (Berlin) has been awarded, in a judgement just delivered by the Federal Tribunal, Frs. 100,000 for infringement of the "Wolfram" patents against a Basle company, which has also been ordered to suspend the further manufacture of these lamp filaments.

* * *

A dastardly crime was committed at St. Gall in the early hours of New Year's eve. Two young men broke into the bedroom of an 80-year-old lady, Frau M. E. Oberle-Keller, with the intent of providing themselves with the necessary funds for celebrating "Sylvester." The old lady was murdered without much ado, but her cries for help had awakened some neighbours, with the result that the two miscreants were arrested before they could decamp with their booty.

* * *

The 52-hour week has been reintroduced in the factory of the Eisen- und Stahlwerke, A.G. in Schaffhausen, although the workmen had threatened to reply to this measure by the declaration of a general strike.

PEASANT ART IN SWITZERLAND.

This is the title of a volume which, it is expected, will be ready for sale in the early spring. It will be published in English and French (separately), and its compilation is the work of no less an authority than Monsieur Baud-Bödy, the President of the Federal Commission of Fine Arts and of the Commission of Applied Arts. The book will contain about 240 pages, 152 pages of which are covered by black-and-white illustrations, apart

from 17 plates in colours or sepia. It deals with all the aspects of Swiss peasant art and architecture, and its wide scope will include wool-work, furniture, costume, textiles, metal-work, glassware and pottery. It will draw the attention of the reader to the many treasures distributed over Switzerland, and direct the student to the various centres where these art objects are exhibited.

The volume is published by "The Studio, Ltd.", of 44, Leicester Square, W.C.2, which for a considerable number of years has specialised in fine-art productions, and has been responsible for a series of similar books, dealing with other countries. Apart from the libraries, this volume will find a place in the reading-rooms of large hotels, clubs, ocean-going passenger steamers in all parts of the world, etc.

As the book constitutes a first-class advertising medium, it is intended to include a limited number of selected advertisements.

Further particulars may be obtained from the leaflet which is posted with this week's issue of *The Swiss Observer*, as well as from M. Henri Martin, Counsellor of Legation, 32, Queen Anne Street, W.2, who is the connecting link between the Genevese author and the English publishers.

EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

Notre représentation extérieure. — Le *Bulletin de la Nouvelle Société Helvétique*, de novembre-décembre, contient le rapport présenté à l'assemblée générale de la société sur "la représentation extérieure de la Suisse" par M. Georges Wagnière.

Notre distingué ministre à Rome expose, dans cette étude, les origines de nos légations et de nos consulats et signale les critiques que notre représentation extérieure rencontre dans l'accomplissement de sa tâche. M. Wagnière établit avec autorité le caractère des relations de la Suisse avec les pays étrangers et marque aussi les conceptions, différentes de celles de la Suisse, qu'ont les autres nations en ce qui concerne leur représentation diplomatique.

Les intérêts politiques et économiques sont souvent méconnus par ceux qui voudraient voir la Suisse sans agents à l'étranger; ils oublient que, toute proportion gardée, la Suisse est le pays de plus forte production de l'Europe et qu'elle doit écouter ses marchandises; d'autre part, elle est la cliente importante de nombre d'Etats puisqu'elle doit importer une quantité considérable de matières premières. "Elle est, à cette heure, le marché le plus important de l'Italie." A la veille de la guerre, elle acheta à la France cinq fois plus de marchandises que la Russie. Elle vend à l'Angleterre pour 350 millions de marchandises par an, ce qui n'est pas le cas de bien des pays entre les plus vastes.

Mazzini prétendait que les Suisses avaient une tendance à ne rien prévoir. A lire le compte-rendu de certaines délibérations de notre Parlement, il semble que l'illustre Italien ait, aujourd'hui encore, raison. Notre diplomatie, nos diplomates ne sont point assez soutenus par les Chambres qui n'apprécient pas assez leur rôle.

Celui-ci est immense; il est délicat. Pour le remplir il faut un désintéressement d'autant plus grand qu'aucun des postes diplomatiques suisses n'enrichit et que plusieurs d'entre eux coûtent à ceux qui les remplissent; il faut aussi un patriotisme ardent parce que les fonctions des carrières diplomatiques et consulaires doivent manifester sur la terre étrangère la grandeur morale et la puissance de travail de tout un peuple dont la reconnaissance pour ses serviteurs les plus dévoués ne sera jamais égale aux services qu'ils lui rendent.

(*Journal de Genève.*)

Nos champions de tir. — L'Association suisse des tireurs de match qui s'est réunie dernièrement à Zurich, propose à l'Union internationale de tir de ne pas reconnaître la validité des résultats du championnat de Comp-Perry, auquel participeront seuls les Américains, sans contrôle officiel.

L'assemblée a décidé en principe de former, avec le concours de la Société suisse des carabiniers, une équipe pour les tirs des Jeux olympiques.

Le groupe de match sera probablement constitué par l'équipe de Milan, avec Zimmermann et Lienhard (Lucerne), Hartmann (Lausanne), Pfleiderer (Ottenbach) et Rössli (Winterthour). En outre, Widmer (Bienne), prendra part aux tirs d'essai.

(*La Suisse.*)

Die letzten Bündner Bären. — Man schreibt uns aus Feldis: "Zu den Bärengeschichten in Nr. 237 Ihres Blattes sei noch hinzugefügt, dass der Bär, auf den die Churer Schützen im Jahre 1833 Jagd machten, wahrscheinlich über das Emser nach dem Feldiser Gebiet gewandert ist. Denn im Herbst dieses Jahres hielt sich hier, wie man sich erzählt, längere Zeit ein Bär auf. Zuerst sah ihn ein Mann,

der eines Morgens über einen Fussweg zu Tal wanderte. Der Bär lag unter einer Tanne hingestreckt und rührte sich gar nicht, als der Mann mit grossem Schrecken an ihm vorüber sprang. Der Steg heiss noch jetzt der Bärensteg (il trutz dil tuors). Nachher sah man noch hic und da Bärenspuren. Er stieg gern auf Mehlbüüme und naschte die roten Früchte. Man war im Dorf sehr besorgt um das weidende Vieh und machte Treibjagden nach ihm, ohne ihn jedoch zu sehen. Ende Oktober wurden geübte Jäger herbeigerufen, und diese entdeckten ihn in einer Halde gegen Rotenbrunnen. Ein Felsberger Jäger schoss ihn an und verwundete ihn. Nun lief der Bär die Halde hinunter zum Rhein, schwamm durch das Wasser und lief den Rätzinsberg hinauf. Es zogen gerade Italiener Händler mit aufgekaufter Habe Vieh über die Strasse gegen Thunis und bemerkten auch mit Schrecken das Ungeheuer. Dieses tat ihnen aber nichts zu leide und trotztecilends weiter. Die Italiener, darüber froh, riefen so laut, dass man es dieseits des Rheins hören konnte: 'La bestia passata, la bestia passata!' Kurze Zeit darauf soll man im Oberland den Bären erlegt haben."

(*Neue Bündner Zeitung.*)

La population de Genève. — Le recensement de 1922 a accusé, pour la Ville, une diminution de 2,585 habitants sur le chiffre de 1921 (1921: 58,723; 1922: 56,138). Cette population se répartit entre 16,018 Genevois (16,821 en 1921), 37,317 Confédérés (38,538) et 16,821 étrangers (18,185). Classés par nationalités, les étrangers les plus nombreux sont les Français: 7,963 (8,657 en 1921), les Italiens: 5,448 (5,821) et les Allemands: 1,213 (1,385). L'exode de la population étrangère a été dû en partie au chômage, en partie à la faiblesse des changes. Nombre d'étrangers aisés qui vivaient largement ici de leurs revenus n'ont pu maintenir leur train de maison, et sont retournés dans leur pays d'origine.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KYBURG."

Dézaley Clos des Moines de Kyburg :

Sounds attractive, but, believe me, dear reader, makes Kyburg's mouth water, because, like so many lovable and desirable things, ever since old Tantalus inaugurated the cult, it belongs to the visions which conjure up before the thirsty scribe refreshing expanses of drinking fluid. No, it would not have been right to put "drinking water" in this case. As the small boy said, "water is the stuff which turns black when one puts one's hands into it." You must often have come to the conclusion that "Kyburg" must be a confirmed pussyfoot, seeing the dry stuff he pours forth week by week. Let me tell you, in case it is necessary, or rather in case it prompts you to do the proper *beau geste*, that this is not the case. And the Editor-in-Chief—sounds a nice title, this, which one could roll around one's mouth beautifully, if the said mouth was properly moistened!—knows "Kyburg" fairly well and must have felt that a drop, now and then and far between, of course, of "Dézaley" would have made all the difference to the "Notes and Gleanings." Need I elaborate the point?

Chalchère:

To give it its homely name, as pronounced by my good compatriots, of Mostindien (Thurgau), which was mentioned in our last issue in connection with an automobile accident, used to be used by my grandparents as a bogey in my youth. It was, if memory serves me rightly, the last institution in Switzerland where recalcitrants who did not want to work and were, therefore, a trouble and a burden to their village, were forced to tread water in order to escape drowning. And some of my Thurgauer friends will probably remember how Chalchère sprang into notoriety, when Thali, who used to steal, so it was said, from the rich and to give to the poor, was quite a character in Eastern Switzerland. Well do I remember helping to search for him in the neighbourhood of Iselsberg, and I remember how every one of the peasants who were looking for him was secretly bent on giving him the tip which way to escape from the Landjäger. This note may bring forth some long-forgotten memories of early youth in some of my friends.—Now to business—in spite of a growing thirst!

The White Diamonds of Switzerland

are not the ice and the snow of which we have heard so much lately, but our Electric Power, or rather the natural water-forces which can be made to generate it. My readers know, of course, that this power, to call it by this short name, is a tremendous potential asset in our national resources, and our Government has very wisely taken steps to prevent greedy concession hunters from playing "ducks and drakes" with this asset.

