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HOME NEWS

A pleasant people, those of Berne, not grown too wise for all their status, as I found when I taught myself how to use one of the street

automatic stamp machines. You put a coin in, turn a handle, wait, and then you see that you have, so to speak, posted yourself a stamp. The English, who are sometimes kill-joys, give you no handle to turn an automatic stamp machine. Engrossed in this adventure, I only gradually became aware that a Bernese crowd had gathered round to watch. I cannot think that I was the first man to use the machine, but I suppose that on the whole the people of Berne can lead quiet lives and keep themselves largely unspotted from the outside world even by post. I am strengthened in this belief by the fact that when I once went to the pictures (there are at least five cinemas: a capital city must cater for the mundane taste) the film I saw had been made no further away than Zurich. I had the pleasure of seeing the good Bernese taking their evening joy with a rocking movement. But judged by the hypercritical taste of bloated capital cities, the film was a simple thing. One of the peaks of merriment came when a baby who was being temporarily held in the arms of a comedian did a natural thing, and the denouement of a reel, after which the lights went up on rows of happy faces, was something so simple as the collapse of a pair of trousers. The good Bernese, who have not yet grown so untimely wise that they want to tamper with those entrancing streets of arcades. Bless their innocence.

Even those films mentioned in the above charming article seem too much, and according to the *Catholic Herald* (June 20th) the authorities mean to protect the public against filth in the cinema:—

Switzerland to ban Immoral Films.

As is the case in Ireland, the question of unsavoury films is causing much concern on the Continent. So grave has the evil become in Switzerland that one of the members of the Federal Council has urged that body to compel the cinema to recognise those laws which already exist for the moral well-being of the public.

The Federal Council has undertaken to introduce a form of censorship, and to recommend the encouragement of moral films.

Quite right, too!

Alpine Flowers.

One of the greatest joys for a nature lover is the wealth of Alpine Flowers one meets on the slopes of our Alps. Small wonder that this attracts the attention of tourists from England, the country which spends probably more money and labour on flowers than any other. In the *Baptist Times* (25th June) I find the following:—

Thanking Mr. Hamlin for his fascinating article on "Alpine Flowers," I feel constrained to add a little postscript in praise of another flower, not mentioned by him, now blooming in its millions on the slopes of the mountains at "Les Avants" (where forty years ago my honeymoon was spent) and for miles around and above Montreux.

Recently I have been in the midst of the glory and wonder of the most prolific of Switzerland's blooms, the white pheasant-eye narcissus.

Day by day hundreds of visitors, men, women and children, come up from the valleys, from Vevey, Lausanne, and even from Geneva, by train, on foot or in motors, for the purpose of gathering this wonderful and lovely flower, gathering bunches as big as they can carry, filling their motors so full that the occupants are almost hidden. Without exaggeration, thousands of such bunches every day, especially on Saturdays and Sundays, were carried away: besides, hundreds of boxes at every shop and hotel were filled with buds to send off by post to friends in England and other places. They revive and open in water, and bloom for at least a week or ten days in their loveliness. On our table at this moment such a bunch is fragrant with perfume.

The strange thing is that, though so many are taken, no diminution can be seen in quantity, and the hills are still as white with them as if none had been picked. An enterprising tourist advertiser says: "At Montreux the mountain sides scintillate with the loveliness of the narcissus, and the atmosphere is estatic with its perfume."

The great annual Fête des Narcisses was held at Montreux, attracting visitors from all the neighbourhood round. The flowers are still spreading, and look like hoar frost over the beautiful slopes. In some places masses of forget-me-nots, called by some of the Swiss "Les yeux de la sainte Vierge," spring up amongst the narcissus flowers, so that with one swoop of the hand a bouquet can be gathered fit for any royal princess.

Also the blossoms of the cherry-trees, which abound on the sides of the mountains, are in their beauty now, and nothing more exquisite can be imagined than to sit under one of these trees, and look up and see the wonderful blue of the sky through their branches and rosy blossoms. It is more like heaven than earth, and one cannot imagine anything more divinely fair.

But on returning to England our little island was not to be outdone, for all the way between Dover and London field after field was brilliant

in the afternoon sunshine, with the glorious yellow of buttercups, making a truly magnificent display. Indeed, I have never seen them in such masses and in such glory, making a brilliant and golden end to a never-to-be-forgotten holiday.

English the Language of Diplomacy?

Sunday Chronicle (28th June):—

There is taking place in Berlin a little event which ought to make us feel very proud.

French is the language of diplomacy, and the French have fought hard to keep it so. M. Cambon, who was Ambassador over here for 22 years, not only refused to speak English, but used to pretend he could not understand it.

But now in Berlin the French Ambassador and the German Foreign Secretary negotiate in English, so English has begun to be the language of diplomacy. All over Central and Eastern Europe it has long been the language of Royalty.

After the war, when Switzerland was filled with German and Austrian Royalities who had run away from their own country, I heard them talking among themselves at every hotel in English, without being aware how incongruous it sounded.

We know, of course, that Diplomacy is a necessary evil, that it is held to be impossible to avert war without numerous diplomats helping the various nations to understand each other's points of view by informing them, in a perfectly straightforward manner and in such a clear way as no ordinary mortal could ever hope to be able to do, of the various reasons underlying each nation's particular and general actions, aspirations and hopes. We know, of course, that the language of the diplomats must be clear, to the point and incapable of being interpreted in more than one way. We remember being told, when first trying to become familiar with the intricacies of the conjugation of irregular French verbs, that French was the diplomatic language *par excellence* by reason of its unequalled clearness. We know, having learnt it at school, that no sentence spoken in French can be accused of meaning something else than what it purports to mean, and we marvel how Diplomacy has been able to carry on so far, using French as a medium for its communications. We marvel, not that Diplomacy has produced wars—after all, slight accidents will happen, and a hasty expression of good-will spoken by one diplomat may be overheard by another diplomat and lead to regrettable exchanges of "views," etc.—but we marvel, as I said, that Diplomacy has not produced more wars. Well, Diplomacy is coming into its own. English is going to be the new diplomatic medium, and as English is notoriously the language for saying one thing and meaning another, it should not be so frightfully difficult in future for one nation to provoke a diplomatic blunder or "incident." Why people go on keeping diplomats as tame pets, while all the while they are dangerous intriguers, not by their own personal fault, but in the nature of the thing, baffles small minds like 'Kyburg's.' Mr. Lloyd George said the other day that the nations have not learnt anything from the Great War. They certainly don't seem to have learnt that secret diplomacy is bound to lead to a heating of the political atmosphere sooner or later, i.e., when it suits one of the Governments, and they have not the courage, even if they have learnt something, to enforce its application.

If it is true that the human family cannot live together unless it applies the Ten Commandments, then it is equally true that our civilisation, i.e., our living together, is doomed. What is the use of the individual trying to apply and to live up to the Ten Commandments, when he allows himself to be a party to break them one by one, as soon as he assembles in numbers and forms a corporation, town or state? And *vice versa*, what use is it to hope for a nation to live up to the Ten Commandments, when its component individual members refuse to do it? *Thou shalt not covet!* Only take one of the Ten Commandments and reflect, dear reader, how this one is being kept in family, corporation and State! And then tell me where salvation of our civilisation is to come from!

Lawn Tennis and Golf during Swiss Holidays.

To some of my readers who love the above two games, the following table, which appeared in the *Morning Post* of June 25th, may be of interest. They can perhaps fit in their annual pilgrimage to Switzerland with one of the dates and do a bit of "cup-hunting." Good luck to them!

Lawn Tennis.—More than fifty clubs are affiliated to the Swiss L.T. Federation, and there are hundreds of first-class courts spread all over the country. These are hard courts, true and quick-drying. The Swiss Championships will be played at Champéry (week beginning July 27), that picturesque spot above the Rhone Valley, well known to British visitors. The following is a list of the tournaments to be played during the high season:—

July 20—Klosters, Morgins, Vulpera.

July 27—Champéry (Swiss Open Championships), Arosa, Davos, Maloja.

August 3—Gstaad, Adelboden (Nevada L.T.C.), St. Moritz (Suvretta L.T.C.), Villars.

August 10—Adelboden, Les Avants, Château-d'Oex, Gurnigel, Murren, Schinznach, St. Moritz, Thonne.

August 17—Caux, Engelberg, Flims, St. Cergue, St. Moritz (Palace L.T.C.), Wengen, Zermatt.

August 24—Champéry, Geneva, Grindelwald, Interlaken, Lucerne.

A point worth remembering is that in the higher resorts the pace and flight of the ball are noticeably affected by the lighter atmospheric pressure, the ball coming much faster and its weight feeling less. Players who contemplate entering for tournaments at these resorts should arrive in time to allow themselves a couple of days' practice whenever this is possible.

Golf.—Every year sees an addition to the number of golf courses in Switzerland, and there are now sixteen clubs affiliated to the Swiss Golf Association. The Swiss Amateur Championships will be played for on the attractive course of the Lucerne G.C. (week beginning Aug. 11) at the Dietschberg, reached in a few minutes by funicular from Lucerne. Lucerne is too well known for it to be necessary to emphasise its charms, but it is also the centre of dozens of excursions by boat, rail, and motor-car. To mention only a few, there are the Rigi, Pilatus, Bürgenstock, which is also most suited to a stay of some weeks, and the Stanserhorn, all of which command some of the finest scenery in this beautiful country.

The following is a list of the Golf Clubs registered with the Swiss Golf Association, which has its headquarters at the Montreux Club, Territet:

Axenfels (9 holes), Engadine G.C., Samaden (18), Engelberg (9), Geneva (9), Lausanne (9), Les Rasses (9), Lucerne (18), Lugano (9), Maloja (9), Montana (9), Montreux (9), Ragaz (9), Thun (9), Villars (9), Zurich (9).

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Swiss Confederation 5% 1923	...	99.15%	99.30%
Federal Railways A—K 3½%	...	80.25%	80.60%
Canton Basle-Stadt 5½% 1921	...	101.25%	101.25%
Canton Fribourg 3% 1892	...	73.00%	72.75%
SHARES.		June 29	July 7
		Fr.	Fr.
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Credit Suisse	...	500	706
Union de Banques Suisses	...	500	574
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	3275	3275
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	1689	1683
C. F. Bally S.A.	...	1000	1227
Fabrique de Machines Oerlikon	...	500	635
Entreprises Sulzer	...	1000	860
S.A. Brown Boveri (new)	...	350	351
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