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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The public appeal made on behalf of those who suffered from the inundations which took place last autumn in the canton Ticino brought in a sum of Frs. 290,000. About half this amount is reserved for the reconstruction of roads and bridges, and the remainder (Frs. 140,000) will be used to indemnify individual sufferers, for which purpose the Confederation has also voted Frs. 50,000, in addition to Frs. 34,250 taken from the special fund of non-insurable risks. The total of the indemnities amounts therefore to Frs. 224,250, excluding the Frs. 150,000 reserved for road construction. \*\*\*

Widespread opposition is manifested in the canton Basel-Land to the construction over its territory of an overland high-tension line for the purpose of exporting electric power generated by Nordost Schweiz Kraftwerke. The Federal Council has already granted a concession, enabling the electrical undertaking to expropriate the necessary strips of land. \*\*\*

Animated discussions took place in the Basle Grosse Rat with reference to the recent Communist demonstrations, resulting in a number of people being wounded by police swords. A motion by the Communist party to appoint a special committee of investigation was only defeated by the casting vote of the president, the votes on each side numbering 61.

At the police courts, three of the demonstrators, including Dr. Wieser (the Communist leader) were fined Frs. 20 to Frs. 30 each, plus costs, for disobeying orders and throwing offensive epithets at the inspector in charge. \*\*\*

A well-known quack practitioner in Herisau (Appenzel) has been sentenced by the Basle courts to four weeks imprisonment and a fine of Frs. 100 for having pretended to cure by correspondence a local invalid; needless to say, the execution of the sentence remains in abeyance until the impostor chooses to enter Basle territory. \*\*\*

Prof. Ernest Roguin, of the Lausanne University, an authority on international law, has had bestowed on him the degree of *doctor honoris causa* by the University of Lyons. \*\*\*

Three lives were lost in consequence of a remarkable mishap on Wednesday (Feb. 4th) at the cider works Keller at Fahrwangen (Aargau). An employee, named Breitenstein, had occasion to descend into one of the presses or vats, where he was at once overcome by carbonic oxide gas; a colleague of his, bearing a similar name, endeavoured to extricate him, but suffered the same fate. A passing farmer, Jos. Fischer, hearing their cries for help, went down the ladder, but was unable to resist the fatal gases. Later on a properly organised gang extricated the three asphyxiated men; efforts at reviving them, however, were of no avail. \*\*\*

Dr. Michael Bühler, the editor-in-chief of the *Bund*, died in Berne at the age of 71 as the result of an attack of apoplexy. Born in Tenna (Grisons), he studied law in Berne and Leipzig and practised for a short time in Coire. For the last 42 years he has been identified with the great Bernese journal. \*\*\*

A farmer of Olten has been sentenced at Aigle to three months imprisonment and a fine of Frs. 500 for having a few months ago run over with his car and killed a local hotel proprietor, without taking any notice of the accident. \*\*\*

Near the Jochpass a group of skiers was overtaken in the darkness by an avalanche, three of them being buried. Two of these were able to extricate themselves in time, whilst the body of the third was found by a search party the following day. He is an engineer named Beyeler, employed in Innertkirchen. \*\*\*

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## EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

### Sa Majesté l'Empereur et M. le Syndic de Prangins.

Un parlementaire français, passant ses vacances sur les rives du lac Léman (mais à bonne distance de la Société des Nations), fit, l'été dernier, la connaissance du syndic de la commune où résida l'empereur Charles de Habsbourg.

Le syndic de Prangins se rappelait surtout les petits ennuis que lui avait valus la naissance du troisième ou quatrième fils de Sa Majesté impériale. Un chambellan était venu le trouver pour faire la déclaration de cette naissance et en assurer l'inscription à l'état civil.

"Moi, je veux bien, avait répondu le magistrat avec son petit accent vaudois traînant et chantant. Mais la loi est la loi. C'est le père qui doit faire la déclaration. Amenez le père."

Le chambellan essaya d'expliquer qu'un souverain, même déchu, ne se dérangeait pas aussi facilement. Il discuta longtemps sans rien obtenir, retourna au château, revint chez le maire, insista. "Eh bien! vous savez, proposa le syndic, je vais téléphoner à ceux de Berne."

Il téléphona donc à "ceux de Berne," qui répondirent que pour une fois la déclaration du chambellan et du médecin suffirait. Le syndic alla quérir son gros registre et demanda quels étaient les nom et prénoms du nouveau-né. Le chambellan tira un papier de sa poche et se mit à le lire devant le syndic abasourdi: "Ferdinand-François-Louis-Henri-Charles-Rupprecht-Hubert-Georges-Marie-Gaëtan-Pie-Ignace, etc., etc., archiduc d'Autriche, duc de Modène, Plaisance, Parme et Guastalla, prince de Brixen, comte de Feldkirch, vöwode de la vöwodie de ceci et de cela..." Il y en avait une page entière en petit texte.

"Chez nous, dit le syndic, le registre n'a que deux lignes en blanc pour chaque nom. Vous voyez que je ne peux pas écrire tout ça. Choisissez trois prénoms. Prenez les plus beaux, et un ou deux titres, si ça vous fait plaisir..."

Le chambellan se récria, fit valoir que le jeune archiduc pouvait devenir héritier du trône, parla de procès et de complications internationales.

"Bien, dit le syndic. Je vais téléphoner à ceux de Berne."

Berne répondit que le cas allait être soumis au Conseil fédéral, qui rendrait un oracle dans la matinée. Deux heures passèrent, pendant lesquelles le chambellan et le médecin firent honneur à un excellent petit vin blanc. Enfin la sonnette retentit et ceux de Berne parlèrent dans le téléphone.

"Tout est arrangé, annonça le syndic. J'écrirai seulement trois noms sur le registre, mais je collerai votre papier entre les deux pages, avec le sceau de la mairie aux quatre coins. La loi est la loi. Encore un petit coup de vin à la santé de l'enfant?"  
(*La Tribune de Genève.*)

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## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KYBURG."

### To-day's Great Thought.

"To-day is the to-morrow of yesterday's lost opportunities."

### Human Sacrifice.

I take the following pithy line of thought from the *Daily Herald* (10th Feb.):—

It disturbs one's ideas to read that the leaders of a Burmese tribe which keeps up the practice of human sacrifices returned a "polite but firm" reply when they were asked to give it up. "Surely," one thinks, "such benighted savages cannot understand courtesy." They explained, however, with agreeable urbanity, that, if they gave up human sacrifices, pestilence would visit them.

Ridiculous, of course! How can such degraded superstitions be tolerated? Yet on the same day is reported that comical belief of a number of people in America that the world was to come to an end last week; and, if we reflect a little, shall we not be forced to admit that these polite Burmese chiefs have their counterparts in the European statesmen who refuse to give up war, with its enormous holocaust of lives?

"If we abandon human sacrifices in war," say the rulers of Europe, "we shall be visited by all sorts of evils." Just the same argument as the Burmese use! The only difference seems to be that in Burma a few lives are sacrificed, while in Europe the number runs into millions. The futility is the same in either case.

Think it over, dear reader, think it over!

### The Political Outlook.

Discussing political affairs with the Nestor of the Swiss Colony at Gatti's last night, I was impressed that he, an otherwise inveterate Conservative, should be greatly disturbed over the way political affairs are shaping in Europe. He thinks that never during his sixty odd years' stay in London have politics been more disturbed, less open and more dangerous than of late, and, it seemed to me, that my friend was slowly reaching the conclusion that hideous history will again repeat itself before long and new wars again be necessary to bring people to their senses. Personally, I do not take such a gloomy view, but I confess it requires a deal of courage not to be thoroughly disheartened by the sordid spectacle the various Governments give us in their international dealings.

### Baby's Finger Print.

Ament my remarks on this topic in our last issue, I think the following from the *Daily News* (3rd Feb.) is rather good:—

I see that the authorities of the Canton of Argovie—which is in Switzerland, thank goodness—have passed a law that all babies must be weighed, measured and their finger-prints taken within 24 hours of birth. A special form is supplied for the notification of birth marks.

This should effectually put a stop to all that rough-and-ready Solomon stuff for which the old king got such a lot of undeserved credit. But it does not seem to me to go far enough. If the Swiss authorities really want to get a grip on their happy citizens, they must do the thing properly.

A Swiss patriot has drawn up a code of rules for babies, which is to be strictly enforced. It runs as follows:—

1. Babies will be born between the hours of 10 a.m. and 12 noon, or 2.30 p.m. and 5.30 p.m. (Saturdays 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. only).
  2. All babies will immediately attend at the Town Hall for vaccination, inoculation, appendicotomy, and tonsilotomy (but not dichotomy, you notice: that was Solomon's method).
  3. Babies will then be paraded at the local police court for the purpose of finger-print, photography and X-ray records.
  4. A further parade will then be held at the Central Politic Bureau, where the child's reactions to various political symbols will be tested and noted. A national flag, a red flag, a black shirt, a Ku-Klux-Klan nightie, and an income-tax form are among the exhibits for this test.
  5. Babies will attend once every six months at the Town Hall for amplification of details in the above records, and for the graded series of intelligence tests.
  6. When the child is ten years old it will be measured for its first handcuts and leg-chains.
- When the child is judged to be of sufficient intelligence it will be permitted, under super-