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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The accounts of our Postal Administration show a profit of 5.44 million francs, the highest figure ever reached.

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The Town Council of Geneva received a delegation from the National Association of Mayors of Japan, who are travelling in Europe and the United States for the purpose of study. The members of the delegation were also the guests of the Lucerne Town Council and attended the Landsgemeinde in Sarnen last Sunday.

\*\*\*

The Town Council of Lucerne has decided to name the new quay, in course of construction on the right bank of the lake, "Carl Spitteler Quai."

\*\*\*

The electors of the Canton of Zurich have voted in favour of a reduction in the number of members of their "Grosse Rat" from 257 to 220.

\*\*\*

The electors of the Canton of Berne decided last Sunday in favour of a loan of 12 million francs for the Power Works "Oberhasli."

\*\*\*

On the occasion of the "Auslandschweizertag" in Basle, the announcement was made that the Swiss Chambers of Commerce of Brussels, Genoa, Paris and Vienna had constituted themselves an Association which, it is hoped, will help towards a more satisfactory settlement of problems of common interest. Any other Swiss Chamber of Commerce abroad can join this Association.

\*\*\*

The Zurich Männerchor returned home after a highly successful tour in Spain, where they gave concerts for the benefit of the Red Cross.

\*\*\*

The centenary of the birth of Federal Councillor Emile Welti was celebrated last Sunday in Aarau in the presence of Federal Councillor Schüttess and the Argovian authorities.

\*\*\*

Dr. Joseph Jäger, President of Baden Town Council, is resigning his membership of the National Council. He is 73 years of age and entered Parliament for the first time in 1896.

\*\*\*

The ceremony of presentation of the marble statue "The Prisoner of Chillon" from the Alsatian sculptor Philip Grass, which the "Comité alsacien d'études et d'informations" decided to offer to the Federal Council as a token of appreciation of the hospitality which the French civil prisoners and wounded, and in particular the Alsatians, received in Switzerland during the war, took place last Sunday in Chillon. Federal Councillors Häberlin and Chuard, the French Ambassador, General Pau and the poet Benjamin Valotton were amongst the official guests.

\*\*\*

Mr. Simon, honorary member of the Swiss Alpine Club and author of the Jungfrau Relief, died in Berne at the age of 68.

## WER HILFT SÜS, WER HILFT BOSCO?

Zwei Gemeinden in unserer Heimat haben in der letzten Zeit grossen Schaden erlitten. Bosco im Ticino, dann Süs im Engadin, wo in der Nacht vom 19.—20. April '79 Häuser niedergebrannten. Bosco ist um 100,000 Franken geschädigt, Süs um einen weit höheren Betrag.

Es gilt nun den Betroffenen zu helfen, damit aus den Ruinen neues Leben erstehe. Als Mit-eidgenossen wollen wir den Verzagten Mut machen zum Aufbau. Die Leute in Süs und Bosco sollen spüren, dass das Wort "Eidgenosse" kein leerer Schall ist, sondern verpflichtet zur freudigen Hilfeleistung. "Wir wollen sein ein einig Volk von Brüdern." Brüder erweisen sich als solche in Not und Gefahr. Unsere Gaben werden wir nicht karglich bemessen. Ein jeder tue, was er kann.

Die Gaben nehmen entgegen Herr J. Manzoni, 42, Kimberley Gardens, Harringay, N.4; Pfarrer C. Th. Hahn, 'Foyer Suisse', 12, Upper Bedford Place, W.C.1; und der *Swiss Observer*. — Wer Sammellisten wünscht, wende sich an die Ge-nannten. Die Sammlung wird am 25. Mai abgeschlossen.

H.

## Young Swiss Athletes Don't forget the Swiss Sports, Saturday, 23rd May, 1925, at Herne Hill. Last date for sending in Entry Forms May 9th.

(See paragraph "Swiss Sports.)

### NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KYBURG."

#### To-day's Thanksgiving.

"Wenn Du noch eine Mutter hast,  
So danke Gott und sei zufrieden."

#### Summer-time.

The evenings are nicely drawn out, and there should be plenty of daylight after work is done in the City. The weather, however, is marring outdoor pursuits, and overcoats are still *de rigueur*, at least for the older of us. However, with the advent of summer-time, hope is revived, and we know in our heart of hearts that the cold winter winds are waging a losing battle, and that the warmer zephyrs must triumph by and by. May it be soon!

Meanwhile the British Press gives us beautifully illustrated articles on Springtime in Switzerland. My readers will remember that 'Kyburg's' idea of a perfect holiday in Switzerland has always been one taken at about this time of the year, when the Alpine flora make the country one mass of gaily bedecked gardens.

#### An Asiatic Switzerland.

A very interesting speculation is the following which appeared in the *Glasgow Herald* (April 15):

A favourite diversion of schoolboys is to draw a rapid design in ink on a page of an exercise book and turn the page over against the opposite one before the ink is dry. The result is an ornamental figure which makes up in symmetry for what it may lack in artistic inspiration. A similar plan would seem to have been employed by Nature in the lay-out of the two Continents whose essential unity is expressed in the geographical term Eurasia. The right-hand or eastern page has shifted a good deal in the process, and the design has become distorted and curiously enlarged, but the general correspondence of the main features is easily discernible. Kamchatka answers to Scandinavia, the Sea of Okhotsk to the Baltic, Siberia and Mongolia to Russia, China to Central and North-West Europe, Arabia to Asia Minor, Annam, Siam and Malaya to the Iberian Peninsula, and, very obviously, Japan to the British Isles. India with Ceylon is a tropical enlargement of Italy with Sicily, the Ganges is a greater Po, and the Himalayas are a mighty counterpart of the Alps. Within their folds lies Asia's Switzerland, Nepal. Like Switzerland, it consists of the headwaters and mountain sources of continental races, has a diversity of races (Mongolian and Indo-Caucasian) and religions (Buddhism and Hinduism), was formed out of a number of little States, has asserted its independence against powerful neighbours, and has been a nursery of "mercenary" soldiers, the famous Gurkhas. The points wherein it differs from Switzerland—primitive isolation, the survival of a form of slavery, and government by an autocratic military caste—are incidental to its Asiatic character and its stage of historic development. A fascinating account of Nepal is given in the current number of "The Geographical Journal" by General C. G. Bruce and Major Brook Northeby, two of the very few Europeans who have been permitted to enter the country. Besides maintaining a home army of 45,000 men, this little country, with a population of not more than four millions, supplies the British Army with many thousands of soldiers and police. As a fighting man and a comrade the Gurkha has won respect and liking. But the Nepalese are not only warriors, but industrious agriculturists and natural artists—their little cities are a distinct improvement upon their Chinese models. In their valleys the eye passes at one short sweep from rice fields and rich meadows to primeval forests and dazzling snow mountains twice as high as the Alps, and absolutely unexplored. Between Britain and Nepal there is a close and honourable bond, and the racial and geographical conditions of Nepal seem to promise for it a career corresponding in many ways to that of modern Switzerland.

The above seems to prove again that peoples who have to work very hard to wrest their daily bread from Mother Nature, and who live among the valleys formed by mighty mountain ranges, develop the same sort of racial traits.

#### The Swiss Stage.

*The Times* (16th April):—

"Bühne und Drama der Deutschen Schweiz."  
Von Paul Lang. (Zurich: Orell Füssli.)

A question which must often occur to the reader of modern German literature is why the German-speaking Swiss, who showed such genius in the short story (Goethel, Keller, and Meyer) and won such distinction in the lyric (Keller, Meyer, and Leuthold), as well as in the epic (Carl Spitteler) created no drama in any way approaching the standard attained in other departments of literature. Dr. Lang sets out in this book to give the first thorough reply to the question, and to indicate his reasons for thinking that this reproach against German-Swiss literature may before long be removed, if, indeed, it has not been overtaken already in the most recent plays of the younger school of Swiss dramatists.

No attention should be paid to the theory that the Swiss are essentially an undramatic race. In the time of the Reformation, as Dr. Lang rightly points out, Switzerland led the way in German drama. The "race-theory," suspect enough on most occasions, will emphatically not do here; and Dr. Lang proceeds to dwell on the condition of the Swiss stage in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as affording the most likely clue to the failure of Swiss writers to devote themselves to the dramatic form. In the eighteenth century there were no regular theatres in Switzerland; puritanical prejudice and, later, the various armed struggles in which the country was involved were responsible for this. Practically the only drama was that provided by touring companies from France or Germany.

In the thirties of the following century a new cultural era began for German-speaking Switzerland. Two theatres were founded in Zurich. But now, when the stage began to be provided, the writers were not forthcoming. Richard Wagner studied the question some years later, and diagnosed the trouble as lack of native talent: the German-Swiss theatres were offering the public only poor imitations of current French plays. A further hindrance was the language. Acting, as a profession, was not encouraged in Switzerland, and most of the actors were German. Swiss writers could not, therefore, write in dialect, nor did they find the German actors suitable exponents of Swiss "national" drama, even though written in 'Hochdeutsch.' It was unfortunate that the two Swiss writers who might, by their literary genius and enthusiasm for the stage, have given Swiss drama its most powerful impulse, Gottfried Keller and Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, proved to be more or less devoid of dramatic talent.

The awakening really began, Dr. Lang holds, with Arnold Ott, who, inspired on the literary side by Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar" and on the technical by the stage-craft of the Meiningen theatre, wrote a number of dramas in the eighties and nineties which have not so far been surpassed by Swiss writers. The next important writer, Carl Spitteler, although he attempted to give the stage a native drama, found his chief medium of expression in the epic form, observing that the Swiss people had an essentially amateurish attitude to the stage, and that only when sufficient Swiss 'Berufsspieler,' professional actors, were available, would Switzerland have a school of native drama.

The remainder of Dr. Lang's book is an account of the way in which progress has been made along these lines in the last ten years: how the popular theatre, despite the counter-attraction of the cinema, has spread a taste for drama among the common people, how private stage-societies have given opportunity for Swiss dramatists to gain experience, how the regular