

# Notes and gleanings

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His real mistress was to be art. On the advice of Reynolds he set off in 1770 for Rome, where he stayed for eight years and found above all in Michelangelo what he chiefly sought, "Space, Height, Depth, Length." Federmann rightly stresses the fact that Fuseli was here well ahead of his age. An album of this period, preserved in the British Museum, is full of drawings done in Rome on subjects from Shakespeare, Milton and even Dante. His element was the daring, the grandiose, the heroic. We are not surprised to find him, after the year 1800, painting scenes from the Nibelungen epic and even making use in them of the Volung saga.

Fuseli's poems and prose as printed or reprinted by Federmann illumine chiefly the early period. A prose "Complaint" of 1763 expresses, almost in the language of a bereaved lover, his sense of loss on leaving behind him his fellow-exile and travelling companion, Lavater. It is, of course, partly a literary exercise, in a vein that anticipates "Werther." The poems are not likely to attract much attention at this date; Federmann has to admit that other critics have not thought so highly of them as he does. But they throw some light both on Fuseli himself and on the storm and stress period in Switzerland. The first is an "Ode au Meta" of 1760; the title, like the text, breathes respect for and imitation of Klopstock. The third contains a clearly seen and heard metaphor:—

dum pfondnernd  
Welzet London seine Menschenluthen!

The "Ode to Patience" (1766) bears a Latin motto from Calvin and speaks of the myriads "Denen mit eisernem Fuss die Noth folgt."

Here and there, perhaps, a line is inspired already by Milton or Shakespeare. The "Ode to the Friends left behind" (Essex, 1765) contains the proud lines:—

"Spiele, brause mein Tag, für euch verloren  
treibt  
Er der Ewigkeit Meer mich zu!"

Here and later Fuseli is feeling his way towards a sincere and personal utterance: now and then he comes close to the tones uttered by the young Goethe. But one may doubt whether practice would have turned him into a great poet. Still these poems, like the letters, help us to draw nearer to this spirited personality. Less interesting are the aphorisms carefully preserved by Knowles and admirably cited by Federmann. But some of them deserve to be recorded anew, for now and then there is a flash of inspiration or of warm feeling. No one who takes an interest in Fuseli, or indeed in the art and literature of this period, can afford to neglect this fascinating and beautifully produced monograph.

**Mountain Railways.**

A correspondent who was "agreeably surprised" by the readiness displayed by the erring English papers in rectifying a "terminological inexactitude" sends us the following extract from the Scotsman (Sept. 10th) which bears witness to the comparative safety of modern mountain railways:

"The recent disastrous accident on the Chamonix rack and pinion railway has once more shown how the most ingenious safety devices can be rendered ineffective through a fault of the human factor. Fortunately, while the fault of the engine driver by starting at excessive speed caused the disaster, the presence of mind of a conductor saved the rear carriage and its passengers by a supreme effort in detaching and arresting it on the brink of the precipice, as the engine and the front carriage were taking their fatal plunge. As usual in cases of excessive speed, especially on steep down grades, the train derailed at a curve. This averted probably an even greater disaster if the train had run unimpeded down the whole incline to an inevitably fatal impact at the terminus in Chamonix. The great safety device on rack railways, of which the present writer has had a large experience, is the automatic brake-clutch of the pinion wheel in the rack teeth; obviously the wheel had not been given time to grip the rack and so the automatic brake could not function. Two precisely similar cases within the present writer's recollection are those on the Snowdon rack railway in Wales, and on the Florence and Fiesole electric railway in Italy (1890), and it is noteworthy that such accidents, extremely rare as they are, invariably happen, not on the ascent, but in descending at excessive speed.

With these few exceptions, the hundreds of steep grade mountain railways, rack or wire-rope, or both combined, worked by steam, water or electricity, in all parts of the Alps, or connecting the low and high level quarters of many cities, have functioned with perfect safety and regularity ever since 1872, when the first rack railway on the Rigi was opened in Switzerland. These railways, shooting up like mushrooms with gradients of 1 in 4, 1 in 2, and even 1 in 1.6 (e.g., the wire-rope lines of Murren Stanserhorn, and Varese, Italy), and to altitudes of 6,000, 8,000, 10,000 (Gorner Grat), and even 13,000 feet (the Jungfrau line) annually enable—apart

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from the ever-increasing crowds of tourists—thousands of delicate visitors to ascend to heights of invigorating air which they could not reach otherwise. Mountain railways have often been derided as disfiguring scenery; but even the great Alpine trunk lines are mere specks on the mountain sides, and both they and their lesser offspring confer inestimable boons on mankind."

**Referendum Fiasco.**

The only reference in the English Press on this subject was contained in the following from the Geneva correspondent of the Daily Mail (Oct. 7th):—

"Charges of wholesale fraud are made against the Swiss Communist Party, which has failed to secure the requisite number of signatures for its referendum on the new law affecting the status of Government officials.

Under the new measure—which has been strongly combated by the Communist element—strikes by Government officials are made illegal. Out of the minimum of 30,000 signatures required before a referendum can be held the Communists obtained only 25,000, and of these several thousand were afterwards annulled for various reasons.

On the lists being examined many people were found to have signed several times, while many of the signatures were those of boys and of foreigners ineligible to vote.

Hundreds of other people who signed the petition on the strength of false representations by Communist canvassers afterwards wrote to the authorities cancelling their signatures.

Thus, out of 51 signatures, collected at Dubendorf, only one remained, while at Wädenswil only 20 per cent. passed out of a total of 200 on the lists.

The Press is particularly jubilant over this defeat in view of the fact that the Swiss Communists have always been generously subsidised by Moscow."

**DU COQ A L'ANE.**

Si j'intitule cet article du nom de deux animaux de basse-cour, ce n'est nullement pour insister sur la sagesse des hommes qui règne en ce début de XXème siècle dans notre triste monde. Mais c'est simplement parce que je vais essayer, sautant par dessus les barrières du temps et de la distance, de vous retracer quelques menus faits qui agitent les esprits en différents coins de notre Suisse.

Ceux qui, durant la conférence économique internationale, ont passé par Genève ont vu sans doute un édifice ridicule placé, telle une baraque foraine, sur le débarcadère du quai du Mont-Blanc. On avait dressé là un relief du système douanier actuel en Europe. La Suisse y paraissait telle une minuscule cour de prison, écrasée par les murs dressés de tous côtés par ses voisins. On s'en allait le coeur triste et l'esprit porté à la réflexion. C'est par un court récit semblable que le Comité de la Semaine suisse débute dans l'appel qu'il lance à la population pour l'aider à soutenir ses efforts.

Vous savez, sans doute, ce qu'est la Semaine suisse; il s'agit de faire une intense propagande pour tous les produits de première et de seconde main manufacturés ou réalisés sur notre sol.

Du 15 au 29 octobre, les devantures de tous les magasins n'exposeront que des produits nationaux, en l'indiquant de la plus aveuglante façon. L'affiche dessinée à cet effet comprendra, évidemment, la croix fédérale émergeant d'une gerbe et que surmonte un compas.

Tout le pays s'apprête à soutenir cette annuelle tentative et on a l'impression que l'effort va décemment crescendo. Il n'y a pas jusqu'à la pédagogie qui ne se mêle de la partie, puisqu'on annonce que des concours de composition éveilleront l'esprit de la jeunesse à cet aspect nouveau du sens commercial.

Vous avez lu, sans doute, et dans leurs moindres détails, les affreuses catastrophes fluviales dont ont souffert les Grisons, le Tessin, une partie de Saint-Gall et de Thurgovie. D'un mouvement unanime, le peuple suisse s'est porté au secours des concitoyens dans la peine et de tous les chefs-lieux, de tous les villages, abondent des sommes d'argent importantes qui viendront se joindre à ce que l'Etat a déjà fait de son côté. Les membres du Conseil fédéral se rendent les uns après les autres dans les

**QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES.**

BONDS.	Oct. 3		Oct. 11	
	Fr.	S.	Fr.	S.
Confederation 3% 1903	79.85	79.50		
5% 1917, VIII Mob. Ln	101.30	101.75		
Federal Railways 3 1/2% A-K	84.50	84.60		
" " 1924 IV Elect. Ln.	101.00	101.10		
SHARES.				
	Nom	Oct. 3	Oct. 11	
Swiss Bank Corporation	Fr. 500	Fr. 830	Fr. 823	
Crédit Suisse	500	867	870	
Union de Banques Suisses	500	737	745	
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	2730	2715	
Fabrique Chimique et-dev. Sandoz	1000	4500	4287	
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe	1000	2900	2925	
S.A. Brown Boveri	350	585	582	
C. F. Bally	1000	1295	1310	
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	819	819	
Entreprises Suiz. S.A.	1000	1180	1177	
Comp. de Navig. sur le Lac Léman	500	540	540	
Linoleum A.G. Giubiasco	100	137	145	
Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon	500	787	789	

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