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NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

Pro Juventute Stamps.

Here is a short history of these charity stamps, together with a description of this year's issue from the pen of Fred. J. Melville, a well-known philatelic authority, and published in the *Daily Telegraph* (Dec. 6th):—

"There is no dearth of charity stamps all the year round, and old-fashioned collectors are often uncharitable in their thoughts of countries which find too many occasions for issuing them. But there are some little groups of charity stamps which come as hardy annuals in the first dark days of December and are welcomed by collectors everywhere. They are the children's stamps, which circulate in the mails while the spirit of Christmas pervades the hearts. It was Switzerland that started the fashion of using special stamps at Christmas to gather funds for child welfare, and millions of Swiss francs have been gathered in this way. The post office loses nothing, for the stamps are sold at their full postal value, plus a trifle for the children, and it is the multitude of these trifles that brings the "Pro Juventute" foundation the bulk of its funds for welfare work among Swiss children.

There has been more than a little inspiration behind the Swiss movement. The stamps during the past twenty years have covered two attractive artistic themes. From 1915 to 1917 the successive issues presented pictures of boys and girls of the Swiss Cantons by Professor William Balmer, of Berne, and from 1918 to 1926 the distinguished heraldic artist, Rudolf Minger, of Berne, carried through the superb series of thirty-one different designs showing the arms of the cantons, and reconstructing in beautifully-printed miniatures the history of Helvetia. M. Minger's theme was completed last Christmas, and the authorities have had to select a new subject for this year's issue. They have found an appropriate one in a set of four stamps commemorating the life-work of that celebrated friend of poor children, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi. In this centenary year of his death, his spirit of love and pity lives on, and between 9,000,000 and 10,000,000 of these stamps will be sold throughout the world to carry on a work in which he would have rejoiced.

The values in the Pestalozzi series are 5, 10, 20 and 30 centimes. The 5c. brown and yellow depicts an orphan at the tomb of his parents, the 10c yellow and green shows the same child after being taken under the protective wing of the philanthropist; these two designs are by E. G. Ruegg, of Zurich, and are printed typographically at the Federal Mint in Berne. The 20c red is printed by the copper-plate press in the Cartographic Bureau; it has a fine portrait study of Pestalozzi by K. Bickel, of Zurich. The 30c, which is a large stamp, has another portrait, by M. Ruegg, against a background of, to the left, ploughed land, and on the right a field of ripe corn, symbolising the harvest of good that has grown from the seed sown by the reformer; this stamp, in black and blue, is produced by a new photogravure process by a Dutch firm."

The Oberhasli Power Station.

A short preliminary description of what will probably be the largest hydro-electric plant in Europe is given in the Engineering Supplement of the *Times* (Nov. 26th):—

"The boring of the tunnel 5,714 yards long connecting the lakes on the Grimsel Pass (6,155ft.) with the Gelmer lake has been successfully completed. This is the first step in the construction of a hydro-electric plant which will be the biggest in Switzerland and in Europe, and which will involve an expenditure of about £3,300,000.

The Oberhasli power station, which will derive its hydraulic power from the Grimsel and Gelmer lakes and from the River Aar, will really consist of three electric power plants built at different heights. A dam 325ft. high and 250ft. broad will bar the course of the Aar, while another, 900ft. broad and 100ft. high will merge the two Grimsel lakes into one with a capacity of about 300 million cubic feet, which will extend to a length of four miles and stretch as far as the moraine of the Aar glacier. From here a horizontal gallery—that which has just been bored—will carry the water to the Gelmer lake (6,100ft.), on which a dam 100ft. high and 1,100ft. broad is being constructed. The raising of the level and the extension of the Grimsel lakes will necessitate the rebuilding of the road leading to the Rhône glacier and Furka Pass.

The water stored in the Grimsel and Gelmer lakes will be taken to the Handeck plant (4,500ft.), where five turbo-generators will produce some 150,000 horse-power. From the Handeck the water will descend 1,557ft. through a tunnel $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles long to the Boden plant (2,933ft.) where four turbines will produce 88,000 horse-power. The last stage will be a further water conduit three miles in length down to Innertkirchen, where four turbines will yield 52,000 horse-power.

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It is estimated that the station, which it is expected will be completed by 1932, will be able to produce electric power at the low cost of about $3\frac{1}{2}$ centimes (less than a half-penny) per kw. hour, and that the capital invested—partly by the Berne Government and partly by private capitalists—will yield interest of at least 6 per cent."

Motto d'Arbino Again.

Though official statements published in Switzerland do not anticipate any danger in the near future, a totally different view is voiced in the following report based on a personal visit and published in the *Times* (Dec. 8th):—

"Extensive mountain falls are fortunately of rare occurrence in the Alps. The last great fall was the direct result of human activity and was not the work of nature. This was in 1881, when the village of Elm, in the Sernf valley in Canton Glarus, was destroyed with 120 of its inhabitants. Slate quarrying in the base of a mountain known as the Plattenbergkopf was the cause. Ample warning was given of coming disaster by the appearance of great cracks in the mountain some years before the final collapse, and the fact that the village was caught utterly unprepared reflects little credit on the committee of officials who inspected the mountain and pronounced it safe.

At present attention is riveted on the Motto d'Arbino, a mountain of 5,577 ft., north-east of Bellinzona, in the Canton Ticino. So far back as 1888 this mountain showed signs of instability. As with the Plattenbergkopf, cracks appeared in the summit plateau and on the north face of the peak. These steadily widened and lengthened, but not at first quickly enough to cause anxiety. Of late, however, the cracks have extended at an alarming rate; new ones have opened in all directions, engulfing earth and trees; rocks are being split, and the summit plateau is scored with fissures. There is no doubt that the mountain is rotten through and through; and if figures are to be trusted a comparison with the Plattenbergkopf would suggest that the peak is on the point of collapse.

The Elm fall consisted of some ten million cubic metres of rock, but the mass outlined by the cracks on the Motto d'Arbino is estimated by Swiss surveyors to contain no less than 200 million cubic metres of rock. The fall is thus likely to exceed any since the pre-Glacial Age in Europe. Luckily it is the north face of the mountain that is falling away and not that overlooking the beautiful old town of Bellinzona. The only place of importance directly threatened by the fall is the large village of Arbedo.

It is the after-effects that are most to be feared, for the fall of the mountain into the steep and narrow valley of Arbedo will form a huge dam, 1,000ft. high or more, behind which the waters of the Traversagna stream will collect in a large lake. In such a narrow valley the dam will be quickly eroded or burst, and the flood waters will rush into the main Ticino valley, threatening Bellinzona and other towns with ruin.

In company with a geologist the writer recently paid a visit to the Motto d'Arbino. Starting from Bellinzona we walked up an excellent military road which winds across the dangerous north face of the mountain. At one point newly fallen blocks of rock obstructed the road, and above could be seen the débris of a recent avalanche. We passed the deserted villages of La Monda, Mte. Ruscada, and Mte. Co, which were deserted by their inhabitants at the beginning of October. No sign of life was visible and the houses were shuttered and forlorn. It was difficult to realise that the whole mountain-side on which we stood (estimated to weigh about 150 million tons) might well be on the verge of sliding to destruction with its fields, villages and forests.

Within an hour we stood on the summit whence we enjoyed a beautiful view over the blue reaches of Lago Maggiore to the far snows of Monte Rosa. The coming destruction of the mountain is here very evident. Cracks extend in all directions along the summit plateau; new ones are opening in many places. Here and there we gazed into narrow but awe-inspiring fissures of unknown depth. The mountainside, though wooded, is extraordinarily steep, yet the underlying line of cleavage is even steeper.

QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES.

BONDS.	Dec. 5	Dec. 12
Confederation 3% 1903	80.25	80.00
5% 1917, VIII Mob. Ln	101.00	101.10
Federal Railways 3½% A—K	85.75	85.50
" " 1924 IV Elect. Ln.	101.75	101.50
SHARES.	Nom	Dec. 5 Dec. 12
Swiss Bank Corporation	Fr. 500	Fr. 796 798
Crédit Suisse	500	850 855
Union de Banques Suisses	500	715 720
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	2735 2787
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	4370 4397
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe	1000	2807 2925
S.A. Brown Boveri	350	571 566
C. F. Bally	1000	1272 1277
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	841 840
Entreprises Suisses S.A.	1000	1150 1153
Comp. de Navig'n sur le Lac Léman	500	545 545
Linoleum A.G. Giubiasco	100	155 163
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In order fully to investigate the dangerous northern face of the mountain we descended it. Dense forest cloaks the hillside, but in many places the ground has crumbled away and trees have been engulfed in great cracks. Some years ago a great mass of rock broke away. Enormous blocks lie piled on one another, and to anyone forced to pass beneath them they appear all too unstable. Once I distinctly heard an ominous crack, but nothing fell. Darkness was falling as we scrambled down towards the valley. The scene was one of desolation.

Since the account just given was written the Motto d'Arbino has been covered by snow and further research on it is at present impossible."

The Basle Mission.

Though, strange to admit, the French Government has long ago admitted the wrongful confiscation of property belonging to this undertaking and has made suitable amends, no corresponding action has so far been taken by the British authorities. The following dialogue in the House of Commons on Dec. 8th seems to hold out slender hopes for a satisfactory settlement:—

"Sir R. Hamilton (Orkney and Shetland, L.) asked the Prime Minister whether, seeing that the French and British Governments during the War sequestrated certain commercial properties belonging to Swiss citizens and known as the Basle Mission Company, trading in India and Africa, under the belief that these properties were largely enemy-controlled, his attention had been drawn to the findings of the French court of inquiry, which established to the satisfaction of the French Government that no enemy influence or capital was employed; whether he had any information as to the action of the French Government on this question; and what steps he intended to take.

Colonel Wedgwood (Newcastle-under-Lyme, Lab.), also asked questions on the same subject.

Mr. Ormsby-Gore, Under-Secretary for the Colonies (Stafford), said:—I have not received any official information as to the actions of the French Government, but I understand the facts are as stated. The properties of the Basle Mission Trading Company in Africa were sequestrated during the War on the ground of enemy association, not of enemy control. I am well aware that negotiations have been proceeding with the Commonwealth Trust, Limited, as well as with the Basle Mission Trading Company. Negotiations are still in progress, and I do not propose to prejudice them by premature statement. I am not aware of any steps by which the Government can make the directorate of the Commonwealth Trust alter its policy.

Replying to a further question by Sir R. Hamilton, Mr. Ormsby-Gore said that he would ask for the report of the French inquiry."

As Others See Us.

Some flattering references were contained in a lecture which the Rev. C. H. Vine delivered to his flock at Ilford; the following extracts are taken from the *Ilford Recorder* (Dec. 2nd):—

"The Swiss people had no national characteristic but were a mixture of several races fused together by a love of liberty. There was no Swiss language, which was a grand opportunity for Esperanto, but he thought in view of the great number of visitors from Great Britain and America they would do well to adopt English. In some cantons French was the spoken language, in some German, in some Italian. There was no community of religion; some cantons were Roman Catholic, some Protestant, some mixed, with the majority of the people Protestant. In his opinion the Protestant cantons were the most prosperous. The general level of education was high, free education being in force before it was in this country. There were many fine technical schools and seven universities. The main industry was agriculture but engineering, silk, textiles and watch industries flourished.

The government was ideal, each tiny parish or commune managing its own local affairs. Every canton was a small republic with its own government and above them all was the Federal Government. Before any law was passed it was submitted to the whole population. That was ultra-democratic, and he did not know whether it would suit a great nation but it worked in Switzerland, and strange to say it worked out on Conservative lines.

He was greatly impressed by the industry of the people, and the skill of the engineering feats of tunnelling through the Alps and bridging the torrents. Berne, with a population of 109,000 was the Federal capital. It was more picturesque than the other great cities and was the natural gateway to the valleys and the mountain tops hid above the clouds. It was a quaint example of the medieval and the modern in architecture, with fine arcades and beautiful fountains in the streets, with the massive cathedral dominating the whole city. It was a city of wonderful bridges. One built in 1895 was 300 yards long with a main arch of 400 feet. Thun, with its castle and lake, was the inner gate of the Oberland. It was there that he saw the only tipsy man during the whole time he was in Switzerland. He always

felt safe and happy in Switzerland. In some countries the folk were always trying to cheat the visitors, and he had received bad money and flash notes from the banks and post offices of Spain and Italy. He had never felt safe in Spain—had always walked in the middle of the road. It was always advisable to examine the coins there, but he had never once been cheated in Switzerland. The Swiss could drive a bargain with Aberdonian tenacity, but were a straightforward and honest people, living among the beauties and grandeur of Nature, and worthy of respect and affection.

Numerous chalets were scattered about the valleys and hillsides occupied by smallholders who worked with untiring industry from light to dark, and deserved all they got, the goats "payin' the rent." They went to the English church at Adelboden and heard a good preacher but the singing was sadly out of tune. It reminded him of a story of Archbishop Temple, who was very fond of congregational singing. One night, when returning from a confirmation he heard singing at a mission hall. He entered and sat in the semi-darkness at the back of the hall and entered heartily into the singing until a working man advised him "to dry up as he was spoiling the whole show."

It is new to us to learn that according to the reverend gentleman our main industry is agriculture, which only proves how comfortable he must have been during his stay in Switzerland so that it never occurred to him that there was a tourist and hotel industry. We sincerely trust that the learned lecturer will pay another visit to our country as he may then discover that we do possess some national characteristics. Anyhow, at a dinner which we attended last week we were told by one of the orators that wherever and as soon as Swiss congregated they commenced to disagree and quarrel! We have often been told that there was some affinity between Scot and Swiss and we are glad to have it confirmed on such sublime authority that we can drive a bargain with Aberdonian tenacity. We know there is a goodly number of our compatriots residing in Ilford; perhaps the Rev. Mr. Vine has had dealings with some of them!

Morbus Sabbaticus.

An interested reader has handed us the following extract from a Church Magazine; we do not deny that 'the cap fits.' It is from the Parish Magazine edited by the Rev. H. M. Lang, Rector of Woodham Walter, near Chelmsford, and records the discovery of a new sickness:

"The attack comes on suddenly on Sunday morning. The patient sleeps well, awakes feeling A1, and eats a hearty breakfast. At about church time he becomes very unwell, and the attack continues until after morning service.

At dinner time the patient feels much easier and makes a good meal, and is able to enjoy a nice walk, talk politics, or read the newspaper; but after tea, nearing the time of the evening service, he is again stricken with the malady and is unable to leave his home.

The peculiarity of Morbus Sabbaticus is that the head of the house is usually the chief sufferer."

EIDGENÖSSISCHE GLOSSEN.

Ein Mann ohne Partei.

Für ein politisches Seminar könnte ich mir keinen schöneren Fall denken, als den Ausschluss des Gross- und Nationalrates Balestra durch die Konservative Partei des Kantons Tessin. Ein Mann wird durch feierlichen Beschluss aller seiner Aemter enthoßen—und bleibt, als ob nichts geschehen sei. Er sagte ganz ruhig, er sei vom Volke, nicht von der Partei gewählt. Und folglich tue er seine Pflicht.

Warum wurde er von der eigenen Partei mit dem Bannfluche belegt? Die "Berner Tagwacht" fasst seinen Ausschluss als ein Symptom von allgemeiner Bedeutung auf: Balestra sei unterlegen, weil er gegen das Bündnis der Katholiken mit den Sozialisten gewesen sei und den Anschluss an die Liberalen gepredigt habe. Das "Luzerner Tageblatt" ist der Meinung, dass Differenzen zwischen Staatsrat Cattori und Nationalrat Balestra inbezug auf die Tessiner Finanzwirtschaft zum Bruche geführt hätten. Mit andern Worten: Man habe die Kritik des in finanziellen Dingen wohl bewanderten Balestra gelten lassen, solange sie sich gegen eine liberale Regierung gerichtet habe. Einer konservativen Regierung gegenüber aber sei sie nicht mehr erwünscht gewesen.

Das ist Politik! Und wenn schliesslich nur eine persönliche Verstimmung schuld wäre? Wenn die Sachlichkeit nicht nur durch politische Erwägungen, sondern auch noch durch gewisse Erinnerungen beeinflusst worden wäre? Dann hätten wir ja wieder ein schönes Beispiel für jene Vermischung von Sache, Politik und Person, die das Wasser Helvetiens so gründlich zu trüben vermag, dass kein Mensch mehr klar sieht. Denn vor dreissig Jahren ("Il Dovere") gräbt das hübsche Geschick aus ist der gleiche Cattori, der heute harinäckiger Widersacher auf der Siegerseite bedeutet, von der gleichen Partei, d. h., von Balestra ausgeschlossen

worden, und der gleiche Tarchini, der anno 1897 als Sekretär der Rechtsfraktion die Verdammung Cattoris unterzeichnet hat, unterzeichnet heute den Bannfluch gegen Balestra, bloss dass er inzwischen Präsident der Rechtsfraktion geworden ist.

Holzboden der Ingenieure.

Gottfried Keller hat der Schweiz eher den Holzboden zugezogen, als einen blühenden Garten. Die Dichter werden je nachdem seiner Meinung sein oder auch nicht. Wichtig zu nehmen ist das nicht, denn ein Dichter wird sich schon zu helfen wissen. Wichtiger ist es, dass die Schweiz für die andern Schaffenden, die in einem viel engeren Sinne mit der Realität verknüpft sind, kein Holzboden ist. Doch mir schreibt ein Ingenieur: "Unfähigkeit, Kurzsichtigkeit, Bequemlichkeit sind führende Eigenschaften. Wer Genie hat, soll lieber fremden Boden aufsuchen. Die Schweiz nährt lieber hundert Bettler und erwirbt sich durch diese vermeintliche Wohltätigkeit einen Platz im Himmel, als dass sie einem Genie einen Platz im Vaterlande gönnte. Für den jungen Mann von Talent ist der Schweizerboden eine dürre Wüste, in der er verdurstet und verhungern kann!"

Das schreibt ein Ingenieur, nicht Gottfried Keller...

Konkurrenz der Feste.

Turner und Sänger wollen nächstes Jahr im gleichen Monat ihre eidgenössischen Feste feiern. Das eine in Lausanne, das andere in Luzern. Das ist unsere Planwirtschaft auf dem Gebiete der Feste. Lieber zwei Riesenfeste im gleichen Monat als eine Verteilung der Feste in bestimmten Turnus in verschiedenen Jahren. Denn es wäre ja viel zu einfach und viel zu vernünftig. Und nichts ist bei uns weniger selbstverständlich—als das Selbstverständliche!

Weihnachten im Zuchthaus.

Die ärmste Familie der Gemeinde Regensdorf ist vor einem Jahr mit 200 Fr. beschenkt worden. Woher kam das Geld? Es stammte von den Zuchthäusern! Die Insassen der Strafanstalt hatten zu Gunsten dieser Familie auf ein ihnen zugefallenes Geschenk verzichtet.

Die Unbescholtene und Gerechten sind nicht immer so mildherzig wie jene 300 hinter Mauern und Gittern in Regensdorf. Wie wäre es, wenn wir wenigstens um Weihnachten daran dächten, dass auch die Zuchthäuser unsere Mitmenschen sind?

Felix Moeschlin in "N.Z."

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

In connection with the scholastic programme the following lectures were given by the students during last week:—

Mr. Magnus Wehrli, Lausanne: "On the Way of the Caravan in the Belgian Congo." Mr. P. Staehli, Brienz: "An Ascension of the Wetterhorn." Mr. R. Gimmi, Zurich: "The Necessity of 'Auslandspraxis' for Young Swiss People." Mr. H. Péclard, Le Locle: "Germany." Miss Margrit Erismann, Rheineck: "A Motor Car Race." Mr. H. Nikles, Bern: "Is the Christian Church doing its Duty at the Present Time?" Mr. Werner Manser, Amriswil: "Art in an Absolute Kingdom: the French, Revolution and Socialism, their Influence on Art." Mr. Hermann Schoch, Lugano: "The Romance of the Handkerchief." Mr. Max Husy: "Some Thoughts about the Man and the Monkey."

The debating classes dealt with the following subjects:—

"Is the lot of Man preferable to that of Woman?" Proposer, Miss Trudy Findeisen, Zurich; Opposer, Mr. Edwin Hugenhucher, Frauenfeld.

M. Henri Martin, Chargé d'Affaires Suisse à Angora, gave a repetition-lecture on "Geneva to Angora" to the Students. The room was packed and the audience appreciated the Lecture and the slides, and a vote of hearty thanks was passed unanimously. Mr. J. Pfander was in the chair.

Another lecture was given by F. W. Felkin, Esq., M.A. (Cantab.) on "The Rise of Greek Civilisation." Both the lecture and the slides were admirable and the audience departed with a deep feeling of appreciation of Ancient Greece and her glorious history and culture.

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