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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 enthoben—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 in bezug 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 Sächlichkeit 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 Geschehnis aus ist der gleiche Cattori, der heute harträckeriger Widersacher auf der Siegersseite 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 zugetraut, 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 verdursten 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 Zuchthäuslern! Die Insassen der Strafanstalt hatten zu Gunsten dieser Familie auf ein ihnen zu gefallenes 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 Zuchthäusler 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 Hagenbucher, 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. Pfaendler 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.

#### SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.

(The figure in parentheses denotes the number of the issue on which the subscription expires.)

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