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The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. F. BOEHRINGER.

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HOME NEWS

BUILDING OF NEW HOTELS.

It is expected that the Federal Council will propose the extension of the measures at present in force restricting the building of new hotels. The Federal Authorities have prepared a circular to be sent to the cantonal governments and to the bodies identified with the hotel industry. Information will be asked as to the results obtained during the restriction period and the parties concerned will have full opportunities of expressing their opinion on the matter. This measure, enacted at a time when the industry was in a tragic condition as a result of the war, has contributed greatly to the gradual improvement registered during the last few years, but, in a general way, the pre-war hotels are yet a long way from having recovered the ground lost then.

BUILDERS WORK TOO QUICKLY.

The Swiss Builders Association have sent a circular letter to all public bodies and architects drawing their attention to the fact that in most cases building operations went on too quickly. It appears that accidents to workmen are far more frequent than they used to be and that hurried building has been the cause of structural collapses which might have caused serious loss of life. This is a reproach which has not so far been levelled against that much abused person the British Bricklayer.

ALPINISM.

The New Britannia Hut, above Saas Fee, was inaugurated on the 24th, 25th and 26th of August before a large number of Swiss and English climbers. Apart from some of the leaders of the Swiss-French Alpine Club, General Bruce, of Mount Everest fame, Mr. Leman of the Alpine Club and other celebrities of the climbing world attended this ceremony, which terminated—as such ceremonies always do—with a most delightful banquet at the Lagger Hotel in Saas Fee.

CERVIN.

Two young ladies ascending the Cervin were caught in an avalanche. One was killed and the other seriously injured.

THE NEW CREDIT SUISSE IN GENEVA.

The Credit Suisse propose to build most striking new premises on the site of their present ones. Although the plans were originally passed by the State Council there arose subsequently a strong current of opposition on the plea that the new building does not allow sufficient space for the widening of the street.

A public meeting took place last week at which a resolution was passed opposing the new building as planned at present and urging the Town Authorities to come to an amicable arrangement with the bank.

GENERAL DUFOUR A "RED".

Some practical joker placed, during the night, a red flag in the hand of the statue of General Dufour in Geneva. This created quite a sensation. The flag was removed in all solemnity and the Geneva Authorities are taking a stern view of the incident.

"CATHOLIC WEEK" AT GENEVA.

The Catholic Union of International Studies is holding an "International Catholic Week" from September 16 to 22 at Geneva, in connection with the meeting of the League of Nations Assembly.

ITALO-SWISS BANKING.

On 5th September a new bank, under the style of Credimare A.G., was formed to take over the Zurich branch of the Istituto Italiano di Credito Marittimo.

The authorised capital of the new bank is 5,000,000 Swiss francs.

The Istituto Italiano di Credito Marittimo is one of the most progressive banks in Italy.

MATTERHORN CLIMBER'S FEAT.

M. Blanchett, of Lausanne, a well-known Alpine climber, has successfully accomplished the

JEUNE FÉDÉRAL, 1929.

Chers Confédérés.

Il y a une certaine grandeur, mais aussi une nécessité, dans la tradition qui veut qu'un dimanche par an, le peuple suisse se présente devant Dieu, sans distinction de confession, de langue ou de classe. De nombreux facteurs contribuent à affaiblir et à rabaisser notre vie nationale; nous sommes privés de joies vénitables, parce que nous ne savons pas être reconnaissants. Et pourtant, nous aurions bien des raisons de l'être, en particulier pour tout ce qui nous a été accordé depuis le Jéne dernier. Dieu, par son secours, a donné la paix à notre pays: Il nous a donné notre pain quotidien. Grâces Lui en soient rendues!

Faire pénitence! Cela ne semble-t-il pas en contradiction avec la liberté? Et cependant, c'est par la pénitence seulement que l'on devient libre. Nous devons nous humilier de ce que les intérêts personnels passent si souvent en premier, alors que nous manifestons si peu de compréhension pour les intérêts généraux. Des lois de première nécessité se font attendre, bien que la santé publique les réclame impérieusement. Les partis, et non le bien général, sont au premier plan. On est trop enclin à marchander et trop peu à sacrifier. Chacun recherche son intérêt, sans s'occuper de celui des autres, de peur d'être lésé. Nos vénérables armoiries nous rappellent cependant d'acquérir chaque jour ce que nous avons hérité de nos ancêtres.

Mais comment la Croix et la Parole pourraient-elles s'imposer à nous, si nous ne reconnaissons pas l'autorité divine, en la puissance de laquelle les Anciens ont eu confiance? Flétrir le genou était pour ces hommes forts une condition naturelle de la victoire: ils savaient en effet que cette genouflexion devant le Tout-Puissant et le Très-Haut était une source de force, de liberté et de dignité. Cette condition subsiste aujourd'hui encore, si nous voulons le bien de notre patrie et de notre peuple. Si nous ne remercions pas Celui qui dirige les événements, si nous ne nous humilions pas devant Lui et ne Lui adressons pas nos prières, nous marcherons sans but, et notre vie nationale perdra toute tenue.

C'est pourquoi nous invitons cordialement nos chers compatriotes à prendre part avec nous à la solemnité du Jeune, dimanche prochain 1. septembre, matin et soir, pour rendre grâces à Celui qui y a droit. Nous espérons que nous retirerons de cette heure passée en commun dans la maison de Dieu, une nouvelle impulsion pour aimer, croire et espérer, pour le bien de notre pays et de notre peuple.

Le Consistoire de l'Eglise Suisse.

descent of the famous Eufengrat (S.E. arête), on the Matterhorn (14,780 feet). This is the first time the descent has ever been carried out. An attempt was made some years ago by the famous Alpinist, Guido Rey, to ascend the arête, but he had to give up when only a few metres from the summit, after surmounting incredible difficulties.

ACCIDENTS IN THE MOUNTAINS.

During the week-end Herr Branger and Dr. E. Vischer, two of a party of members of the Basel section of the Swiss Alpine Club, while climbing a peak in the St. Gotthard group, were killed by an avalanche of stones. Herr G. Graf, a well-known Berne climber, was killed by a falling stone near the summit of the Jungfrau, and Fraulein R. Pischka, of Vienna, was killed by a fall on a glacier in the Vorarlberg.

FAMOUS GUIDE KILLED.

While two famous Swiss guides, Tangwalder and Aufdenbauen, were making the ascent of the Matterhorn with an Englishman named Kay, a stone detached by a party of Englishmen who were climbing further up the mountain fell and killed Tangwalder. Mr. Kay received bruises.

The tragedy recalls the disaster of 1865, when two members of the dead guide's family and Edward Whymper were the only ones saved after the first ascent of the Matterhorn.

On the way home Robert Hadow lost his footing and, with the Rev. Charles Hudson, Lord Francis Douglas, and a guide, fell 4,000 feet to death. The others were saved by the breaking of a rope.

BETTAGSMANDAT.

Liebe Mitgenossen!

Der Schweizerpsalm mahnt: "Betet freie Schweizer betet!"—Ueberwältigt von dem was Gott ihnen in ihrer Heimat an Herrlichkeiten beschenkt, hat Leonhard Widmer gedichtet und hat Alberich Zwyssig gesungen. Dass an einem Sonntag im Jahr das ganze Schweizervolk ohne Unterschiede der Confession, der Sprache und des Standes gemeinsam vor Gott hinkniet ist etwas Grosses aber auch eine Notwendigkeit. Wie manches trennt und erniedrigt unsre Volksgemeinschaft; wie sehr mangelt es uns an wahren Freuden, weil uns die Dankbarkeit fehlt! Grund genug dazu hätten wir wahrlich, auch im Hinblick auf das seit dem letzten Betttag verflossene Jahr. In Gottes rettender und erhaltender Hand hat unser Land ruhen dürfen; unser tägliches Brot hat Er uns beschenkt. Ihm sei gedankt!

Unsere Busse! Das passt scheinbar so gar nicht zum Freisein. Und doch wird man allein durch Busse frei. Beugen müssen wir uns darüber, dass die Einzelinteressen so stark in den Vordergrund treten und der Sinn für die Gemeinschaft so wenig sich betätigt. Notwendige Gesetzgebung lässt auf sich warten, wenngleich die Volksgesundheit sie dringend fordert. Die Partei und nicht das gemeinsame Gut steht im Vordergrund. Es wird zu viel gemärtet und zu wenig geopfert. Zu stark sucht ein jeder das Seine, zu wenig das was des anderen ist, aus Angst man komme sonst zu kurz. Das heilre Wappenbild und sein Wahlspruch mahnen uns täglich zu erwerben, was wir von den Vätern ererbt haben.

Wie soll uns aber Krenz und Wort verpflichten können, wenn wir die göttliche Autorität nicht anerkennen, deren Macht die Altvorderen vertraten haben? Selbstverständliche Bedingung zum Sieg war für diese starken Männer, dass sie ihre Knie beugen, weil sie wohl wussten, dass Beugung vor dem Allmächtigen und Hocherhabenen Macht, Freiheit und Würde verleihe. Diese Bedingung ist heute noch so gültig wie damals, wenn wir unserer Heimat und unseres Volkes Bestes im Sinn haben. Wenn wir dem Lenker der Geschichte nicht danken, uns nicht vor Ihm beugen und zu Ihm beten, dann werden wir ziellos und hat unser Volksleben eine wahllose Haltung.

Wir laden deshalb unsere lieben Mitbürger herzlich ein, mit uns am nächsten Sonntag, den 15. September an der Bettagsfeier morgens und abends teilzunehmen und die Ehre zu geben, dem sie gebührt. Wir hoffen, dass von dieser gemeinsam im Gotteshaus verlebten Stunde neuer Antrieb zum lieben, glauben und hoffen ausgehen möge zu unseres Landes und seines Volkes Heil.

Die Kirchenpflege der Schreizerkirche.

THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN SWITZERLAND.

FINANCE.

The Swiss Confederation's revenue for the first half-year shows a considerable increase. Custom duties, from January till June, amounted to over 123 millions, equivalent to 5.7 million francs more than in 1928. Stamp duties, another important source of national income, show an increase of nearly 2 millions as compared with the preceding year.

THE COAL MARKET.

Notwithstanding the ever increasing utilization of hydro-electric energy, coal imports to Switzerland attained, during the first term of 1929, 962,000 tons against 911,000 over the same period of the preceding year. This change can be partly accounted for by a greater utilization of gas, which, during the first half year of 1929 attained 105 million m. 3, against 98 million during the corresponding period of 1928. The increase is due to a more extensive gas distribution, to an increase of the number of consumers and to a considerable drop in the price of gas.

WINE PRODUCTION.

In spite of the development of the milk industry, various other agricultural branches have maintained their importance. The Swiss lake districts and sheltered valleys for example, are covered with vineyards, which, in 1928, had an output of 66 million francs, i.e., 5% of the country's total agricultural revenue.

YET ANOTHER NEW POWER STATION.

The utilization of Switzerland's hydro-electric resources is being actively proceeded with. An

illustration of this fact is the construction of the Dixence power-plant which has recently been undertaken. The Dixence river takes its source in the Valais mountains and flows through the Dix Valley which owes its peculiar name to an ancient legend according to which ten brigands are said to have established their headquarters there, from whence they pillaged the neighbouring districts. The tale runs that it was only by setting fire to the forests, where their hiding place was situated, that they were finally captured.

An artificial lake, 3 Kms. long, is to be built at an altitude of 2,000 m., from which the water will be conducted to the Rhone Valley, near Sion, after a drop of 1,750 m. It is the highest construction of the kind in the world, exceeding that of Fully by about 100 m. which, until now, had held the world record. A 180,000 h.p. generating plant is to be set up there. The total expenditure for the various installations will amount to 73 million Swiss francs.

ELECTRIC APPARATUS.

During the past year 131,000 electric heating and cooking apparatus were set up in Switzerland. At the close of 1928, about 1,300,000 of these apparatus were in operation throughout the country, comprising 124,000 kitchen stoves, 70,000 boilers, 180,000 kettles, tea and coffee pots, 600,000 electric irons and 140,000 stoves. The proportion thus attained is that of about one apparatus for every three heads of the population. Were these apparatus to operate simultaneously, they would consume, roughly, ten times the quantity of electricity necessary to run all the electric trains on the Swiss railway lines, at a time of most intense traffic.

BUILDING ACTIVITY.

During the first half year of 1929, 1,600 resident buildings, comprising 6,000 lodgings, have been constructed in the 25 Swiss towns of over 10,000 inhabitants. During this same period nearly a hundred new plants for industrial purposes have been completed.

TRUSTS AND HOLDING COMPANIES.

At the close of 1928, there existed in Switzerland 770 limited companies created as Trusts and Holding Companies with a nominal capital of nearly 2 thousand million francs, i.e., 28% of the social capital of all Swiss Limited Companies. At the same period a capital of over 20 million francs was invested in 31 Swiss Holding Companies, which sum is equivalent to more than one half of this category of companies' total capital.

AN ENGLISH TRIBUTE.

The *Engineering Review* has recently published a highly complimentary article on the soundness of the industrial, commercial and financial position in Switzerland, with a particularly generous tribute to the efficiency of our industries. Following are a few extracts:

Much of the economic interest of Switzerland lies in the means by which the country has overcome its natural disadvantages. With a population of about four million, placed in the centre of Europe far away from the sea, compelled to import the bulk of its raw materials and some of its food, it has built up thriving industries and a strong financial position, mainly through its success in the export trade. Most of this trade consists necessarily of manufactures which go to all parts of the world, and its success is the more remarkable because not only most of the raw material has to be bought, but both it and the exported products have to bear a substantially heavier cost of transport than has to be paid by competitors. The prosperity of the export trade has naturally been accompanied by an increased purchasing power in the population, and, both for this reason and to supply the raw material of the industry, the imports of the country are larger than the exports. A report by Mr. M. Ashton Johnston, of the commercial Department of the British Legation at Bern, has recently been published by the Department of Overseas Trade (H.M. Stationery Office, price 1s. 6d. net).

Stable foreign trade can be built up only by a country whose financial basis is sound. In this respect Switzerland is particularly well off. Its public funds have been administered with prudence, its banking organisations are highly developed, its money market has been providing the lowest rates in Europe, its currency stands normally round about par within the limits of the gold points, and through the stabilisation of the exchange of neighbouring countries, especially France and Italy, and the conclusion of various

commercial treaties, its foreign trade has benefited considerably. Agriculture, indeed has been passing through a critical time, which, however, now shows signs of coming to an end, and there is reason to hope that measures now being taken will restore the decreased purchasing power of the agricultural classes. . . .

. . . . When these facts are put together, they show that the engineering and electrical industries in Switzerland are being conducted economically, and with the success which engineers have long recognised in their technical achievements. They show also grounds for believing not only that the country as a whole has by no means reached the limits of its economical development, but that active measures are being taken to enable it to do justice to that development as it may be made.

CHOOSE AUTUMN for the ALPS.

The woman traveller who wants to get to know the country she visits will do wisely to choose an off-season, especially when this off-season gives her a good promise of better weather.

The crowds at the height of Summer and Winter in the Alps internationalise the scene in the least satisfactory sense, and the Swiss people have their hands too full with their annual crisis of business to present their most characteristic aspect to the tourist.

In the height of Summer the cows are up in the pasture, at their highest, grazing the last strips of herbage that struggle up almost to the glacier level andbeck the gaunt cliffs with verdure.

Keats, after gazing down the Northern precipices of Ben Nevis, could exclaim, with one of those flashes of insight into activities which he did not share, that are the privilege of the poet, "And precipices show untrodden green." Thereby by voicing in one word, "untrodden," one of the most secret springs of the mountaineer's passion.

But in the Alps, there are not many patches of untrodden green—cows and goats will usually graze them, borne up aloft like small balloons by economic pressure! And after the cows go, the herdsmen and *fruiterers*, the experts who make those gruyères and other cheeses.

But if you want to see the real life of the country, you must go in September, when the work is lighter and the cows have been brought lower down to the valley to gather round the cheese maker's chalet.

The women who make such an idyllic picture haymaking in August are in reality being worn down to exhaustion beneath a load of almost overwhelming labour. The hay has got to be got in, and most of the men are away in Savoy making cheeses, up in the *alpage* with the cows, or acting as guides, and the women must toil with the rake from very dawn till well after nightfall, with an hour or two's sleep in the mid-heat of the afternoon.

Every Alpine visitor has seen those prostrate figures, in their dark brown home-spun, lying face downwards in the fields—a sight which moved Ruskin, in describing the Mountain Gloom, to a passage of prose which, without his knowing it strayed into verse and even into rhyme:

"For them there is neither rest nor relaxation of labour.
Black bread, rude roof, dark night, laborious day;
Weary arm at sunset and life ebbs away."

But later in the year you can see the domestic crafts—the spinning and weaving, the embroidery, the gathering together of the home life in the ancient wooden chalets with their overhanging eaves and geranium-filled window-boxes.

For the active walker Autumn offers as good an opportunity as any season. To give the considered verdict of one of the best informed experts on Alpine conditions, Mr. Arnold Lunn in his "Switzerland," writes as follows:

"It is in Autumn that the Alps are least visited; why, I have often wondered, for the weather is usually far more settled in October than in the Summer, and a three or four weeks' spell of unbroken fine weather is the rule rather than the exception, and October is perhaps even more beautiful than May.

"The mellow, golden light of October subdues all distances and tones down the harsher contrasts, and is yet so crystal-clear that the details of distant ranges are revealed with a precision which, in Summer, would augur the immin-

ence of rain. It is this contrast of tenderness and clarity which is the chief glory of those long, unbroken weeks of sunshine which we associate with the Alpine Autumn."

What he has to say of October equally applies to September. About the middle of the month there may be a small fall of snow when most of the visitors vanish and the season officially closes, but in the weeks that follow, the lover of quiet and solitude can find a new perfection in the Alps.

You may meet a marmot-hunter with his gun—the practice too common in some valleys of digging out these little creatures in their Winter retreat is very heavily fined, and quite rightly, as it entails the destruction of the entire family. But to shoot an old one is not an unsportsmanlike proceeding. Marmot ragout, heavily spiced and cooked in red wine, is a tasty dish, and the marmot's grease is alleged to be a sovereign remedy for rheumatism.

The discovery of such items of country lore, together with the fellowship of the village, are the rewards of the traveller who is willing to break away from the beaten track, not only in choice of place but in choice of season.

(Morning Post).

BOOK NOTICES.

The Great St. Bernard Pass and Hospice, by Jane Dee Thompson. (The Epworth Press; 2s.).

An exceedingly well-written account of the Monastery of St. Bernard, of its situation, its famous dogs and its great and humane mission. The latter portion of the book is devoted to an account of the life of the saint who founded this world-famous hospice. The book is illustrated by several interesting and pleasantly reproduced photographs.

Wanted : Translations into English.

Will readers who have the time and inclination occasionally to translate German or French articles into English, for publication in the *Swiss Observer*, kindly send in their names.

GESCHÄFTS - ANZEIGE

Anstatt durch Zirkular, gestatte ich mir auf diesem Wege meinen verehrten Landsleuten anzuzeigen, dass ich das von Herrn F. W. Rühmann anno 1887 gegründete, sich eines sehr guten Rufes erfreuende,

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RESTAURANT

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Darauf mache ich insbesondere die lieben Studenten der Swiss Mercantile Society in Fitzroy Square, aufmerksam.

"Ich lub nüd nah, und lub nüd nah,
bis dasa mer überall seidt :
Wä mer würlki öppis Guets will z'Esse ha
So mues mer zu üsrem Landsma Störi gah."

Erlaufen Sie mich durch Ihren werten Besuch, ich werde dafür sorgen, dass Sie wiederkommen !

Hochachtungsvoll empfiehlt sich,

PETER STOERI.

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GESUCHT: Gute, selbständige Schweizerköchin auf 1. Oktober, Landhaus Nähe Londons, Schweizerfamilie, nur englisch sprechend.—Offeren an Köchin c/o *Swiss Observer*, 23, Leonard Street, E.C.

IS ANY young or middle-aged Swiss woman looking for an easy post? to act as companion to elderly Swiss lady, with light duties in house; very best references essential.—Reply to "A.H." c/o *Swiss Observer*, 23, Leonard Street, E.C.

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VICTORIA HALL, VICTORIA HOUSE, Southampton Row, Bloomsbury, W.C.I MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1929.

The Film depicting Life and Scenes of the Patriotic Rally at Hendon, in celebration of the Swiss National Day will be screened at 7 p.m., and will be followed by: Locarno, Engelberg and Wintersport and "D'Bärner Mutze als Filmschauspieler"

After the Film-Show Dancing from 9 till midnight on the superb Parquet Floor of the New Victoria Hall.

The Catering, at popular prices, will be under the management of Mr. A. Schmid, of the Glendower Hotel.