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The Swiss Observer

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HOME NEWS

ZÜRICH.

The farm buildings belonging to Mr. Höhener at Gossau were destroyed by fire, due to self-ignition of hay. The bulk of the furniture, all farm implements and whole store of fodder fell a prey to the flames. Unfortunately insurance covers only Frs. 35,000.

A youth of 20 named Früh, from Wil near Rafz, succumbed to the injuries sustained in a collision between his motor cycle and a motor car on the main Schaffhausen—Zürich road. The pillion rider escaped unhurt. N.Z.Z.

LUZERN.

An eminent business man has died at Lucerne in the person of Louis Schnyder von Wartensee. He was Director of the Kreditanstalt, Vice-Chairman of the Steamboat Company and on the Board of the Rigi and Bürgenstock railways. He was 68 years of age. St.G.

Criminal hands have burned down the home of farmer Anton Kneubühler at Hergiswil. Scarcity of water prevented effective help, so that practically all the contents of his home were lost. N.Z.Z.

GLARUS.

Fire has destroyed the stables situated near the Ziger factory at Mollis and belonging to farmer Fischli. Self-ignition of hay is suspected. N.Z.Z.

SOLOTHURN.

The public house "Spiegelberg" at Halten near Kriegstetten was reduced to ashes by a mysterious fire, which rapidly enveloped the whole building. The inhabitants just managed to escape with their lives. Two motor cars, two cows and all the furniture were destroyed.

Karl Früh, of Solothurn, aged 25, was killed in a road accident near Oensingen. He and his brother were on an outing on their motor-cycles when for some unknown reason they collided. The brother, Jean Früh, as well as a pillion rider, were only slightly injured. N.Z.Z.

BASEL.

Traffic in the Basel Rhine harbour in September shows an appreciable increase over September 1928. Goods handled during the first nine months of this year exceed by 17,000 tons the volume of the same period in 1928. N.

Extraordinary presence of mind was shown by a young painter, who fell from the third storey of a new building at Hagentalerstrasse. He managed during his fall to twist his body so successfully, that he escaped the wooden boards immediately beneath him and landed on a fresh heap of soft earth. He did not appear seriously hurt and, after a momentary lapse into unconsciousness, he returned to his work, but was prevailed upon to consult a doctor. N.

ST. GALLEN.

During the shunting of an engine the barrier near Ziegelbrücke station was opened to allow a heavy motor lorry to pass. Unfortunately the heavy vehicle could not be moved quickly enough to prevent a collision with the returning engine preceded by a goods wagon. The lorry driver and his mate jumped to safety at the last moment, while the lorry was reduced to matchwood. St.G.

A BOOK ON THE SWISS ARMY.

"L'armée suisse, ses origines et traditions, son état présent sa raison d'être," published under the supervision of Colonel E. M. G. Léderrey, by several authors, has just appeared. It is a wonderful review of the history of our army and should be a useful addition to the libraries of our Swiss Societies and of individual members of our Colony.

ALPINISM.

A Bernese climber named Herron fell down a rock wall on the Stockhorn from a height of 200 metres and was killed instantaneously.

In the Peccia valley two women, a mother and daughter, fell down a precipice of the depth of 50 metres and were killed.

APPENZELL.

Fifteen year old Emil Lutz, weaver apprentice at the Wolfhalden orphanage, has made an early start on the wrong road. Having delivered a piece of work at Thal, he returned late with cuts and blood over his face. He said that he had been attacked, gagged and robbed of his money. Police enquiries soon proved his untruthfulness. He admitted that he had lost the money, and that he had injured his face by cutting it with his knife and thorns. N.Z.Z.

DER BERNER MALER RUDOLF MÜNGER

Die Trauerkunde vom Hinschied Rudolf Müngers, die vor einigen Tagen von Bern ausging, hat überall Anteilnahme und ein ernstes Besinnen auf die grossen Verdienste dieses Mannes geweckt. Denn Rudolf Münger ist dem Schweizervolk kein Unbekannter. Nicht nur, dass er im weitem Umkreis seiner eigentlichen Heimat in so manche Kirche durch ein prächtiges Farbfenster Anmut und Andacht hineinmalte, oder dass er der Stadt Bern im grossen Kornhauskeller eine volkstümliche Sehenswürdigkeit von der echten, guten Art schenkte (von allen den Wappen, Scheiben und Urkunden ganz zu schweigen)—nein, weit über dies Schaffensgebiet hinaus ist Müngers Kunst mit dem Schweizervolk aufs innigste verbunden durch die hervorragenden Buchillustrationen—es sei hier vorerst nur auf den Röseligarten hingewiesen—die ungewöhnlich starke Verbreitung fanden und als ein herzhafter Ausdruck schweizerischen Wesens jedermann für sich gewannen. Lässt sich doch eine Bücherreihe wie der Röseligarten heute gar nicht mehr aus unserer Kultur und unserm Volkstum wegdenken.

Wenn je von einem Künstler gesagt werden darf, er sei aus dem Volke hervorgegangen, so trifft dies auf Rudolf Münger zu. Sein Schaffen ist wie das Volkslied selber; aus der unverblühten Seele des heimatlichen Stammes hervorgegangen, Fleisch von unserm Fleisch und Blut von unserm Blut, warmen Schweizerblut. Und dabei doch immer mit einem Zug nach reiner, allgemeingültiger Schönheit. Wenn Münger für die Kirchen Engel malte, so hatten sie aufgebundene Zümpfen und Anlitze wie gesunde Berner Landmädchen; wenn er aber auf der andern Seite die irdischen Knaben und Jungfern aus Gotthelfs Geschichten oder aus dem Volkslied zeichnete, so war es bei allem handfesten Bauernum doch eine verfeinerte helvetische Edelart mit Gestalten voll stiller, selchlicher Weiche.

Auch seiner Herkunft nach gehört Münger ganz dem Berner Volke an. 1862 wurde er als Sohn eines Gipsers und Malers geboren. Er lernte das väterliche Handwerk und bildete sich neben dieser strengen Berufsarbeit während Aufenthaltes in Rom, Stuttgart, München und Paris zum Künstler aus. In Bern erwarb er sich 1885 das Zeichenlehrerpatent. Aber erst nach mühevoller, entbehrungsreicherem Ringen gelangte er zu den grösseren Aufträgen, die ihn bekannt und hochgeachtet gemacht haben.

Auf dem Gebiete der Buchschmuckkunst hat Münger von seinen besten, unvergänglichen Werken geschaffen. Da darf immer wieder der Röseligarten als eine der originellsten, reizvollsten, Liedersammlungen der ganzen deutschen Literatur gerühmt werden. Diese Liederbüchlein sind einfach unerschöpflich an lustiger und ernster Phantasie, an feinem Stilgefühl und an herzhafter Kraft. Dann die zahllosen Porträte von Volkstypen in den Bärdütsch-Bänden von E. Friedli oder die überaus lieblichen bunten Bilder des Schweizer Kinderbuchs von Otto von Greyerz, das unter dem Namen "Güggelbuch" bei der Jugend begeisterte Aufnahme fand. Ausserdem hat Münger jenen die Zeichnungen für Titel und Einbände der Tavel-Erzählungen geschaffen und damit eine Bücherreihe herausgebracht, deren wahrhaftes, geschmackvolles Gewand mit den feinen dichterischen Absichten Tavels Hand in Hand geht. Ueberhaupt war diese kluge Einfühlung und Anpassung an den speziellen Charakter einer Dichtung eines der hervorragendsten Merkmale von Müngers Kunst. In dieser Hinsicht hat er auch dem Berner Heimatschutztheater und der Heimatschutzbewegung überhaupt durch seine Bühnen- und Kostümentwürfe unschätzbare Dienste geleistet.

Rudolf Müngers Werk ist durch seinen Tod nicht zu nichte geworden. So schmerzlich er auf seinen vielen Tätigkeitsgebieten vermisst werden wird, so lebenskräftig ist doch der Stil, den er geschaffen hat und so deutlich das Ziel, das Andere nach ihm in seinem Geiste erstreben werden. N.S.H.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KYBURG.

Solferino.

So many do not know the difference between the Swiss Flag and the Red Cross that the following reminder may be of interest:

Erith Observer 20th, September.

After witnessing the battle of Solferino—between France and Sardinia against Austria—in 1859, a Swiss named Dunant wrote a vivid little book on the terrible manner in which the wounded suffered. The book was translated into many languages, and representatives from many countries met in order to devise ways of lessening the sufferings of the wounded. The conference was held in Switzerland, partly as a compliment to Dunant, and partly because that country was regarded as neutral. Finally the ensign of Switzerland—a white cross on a red ground—was "reversed" and the Red Cross was adopted as the "sign and symbol" of those who tended the wounded.

While living at Hampton Hill during the early times of the War, I naturally hoisted the Swiss Flag on the 1st of August 1916, but, when returning home from the City in the afternoon, I was told that several neighbours had called during the day, asking whether the house had been turned into a temporary Hospital!

Stupidity.

The following is culled from the *Morning Post*, 2nd October and my heading explains itself for any one who is more or less sane still. But I give it as an example of how misleading views are being manufactured still in certain quarters.

A QUESTION OF APPETITE.

A correspondent in Switzerland writes: "A Swiss caterer noted for his successful public dinners, wedding luncheons, &c., tells me that a repast for eighty English people only serves for thirty German guests. Also, when feasting the Fatherland, he has to instruct his staff to hurry the dishes along lest what is intended for half a dozen persons be transferred to a plate as one 'portion.' Seven pork cutlets as one helping is not unknown. No wonder Germany won the War!"

What did William Tell Wear?

The Observer, 22nd September.

There is a dress reform movement in Switzerland, and the peasantry take it very seriously. William Tell, they argue, and all the Swiss heroes wore loose knickerbockers, while the long trousers now generally worn were only introduced with the French revolution in imitation of the pantaloons. Now they want knickerbockers and bare knees again, and whilst at work in the open air they are beginning to wear the minimum of clothing.

This summer's heat has greatly favoured the movement. At many schools just now the boys wear nothing but light white knickerbockers at gymnastics, and the girls are bare-legged and wear costumes resembling bathing suits. There was some opposition against these dresses, especially from the Catholic clergy, but without much success. The custom of abolishing stockings has made much progress this summer.

Travelling through various parts of Switzerland in August/September, I was struck by the fact that one could hardly see a stream or little river without noticing lots and lots of youngsters and grown-ups in bathing costumes, and even without, sun-basking and, where there was enough water, splashing about. Every lake in Switzerland, I should say has at least one Strandbad, while one of my friends actually bought a private Strandbad on the Untersee, where he and some 20 of his friends went bathing nearly every Sunday this summer. Surely a much

NOTA BENE!

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