

# Notes and gleanings

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## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KYBURG.

We shall soon celebrate the 1st of August again and feel intensely Swiss, intensely patriotic, intensely proud of our dear Homeland. Those of us who are spending our National Independence Day in this country, will, no doubt, let their thoughts wander freely across the sea and across half the Continent to roam about on our hills and mountains and, in our thoughts, we shall hear the bells of Switzerland ringing from 8 to 8.30 p.m. that evening and see, with eerie vision, the beacons that will flame from our hills. We shall all be homesick, and feel it in our bones that "once a Swiss, always a Swiss" still holds good. No doubt we shall also form resolutions to the effect that we shall always endeavour to remain good Swiss, a credit to our country, an example to others, etc., etc.

But I wonder whether any of us, when put to the test, will be willing to translate those noble feelings into deeds?

Who among us will make a sacrifice in the noble cause of Switzerland? Who will, for instance undertake to get one single new regular subscriber to the *Swiss Observer*? To our little Swiss Paper in London, which, although it may not be wonderful in the way of a newspaper, although it may be written by amateurs, although its contents may often be "yesterday's news" yet fulfils the important task of forming a link between the Swiss in England.

I have not been asked or commissioned to champion the cause of the *Swiss Observer*. But, looking ahead and anticipating the wonderfully patriotic feelings which will be engendered by the 1st of August celebrations in every Swiss's heart, I wonder, indeed I do, whether I might appeal to our readers to undertake the task I set before them, which is "get each of you one new subscriber to our paper!"

And if you cannot do this—why I would rather send in a yearly subscription myself, under a fictitious name and address, than confess my failure—then, my dear compatriot, I trust that your patriotic feelings may not suffer, that's all!

However—I might, of course, get ticked off by the Editor for trying to alienate the feelings and goodwill of the regular subscribers we fortunately have—I will now proceed to my allotted task, entirely honorary, let me assure those of you who think I get my inspiration weekly by feeding on rich dishes and drinking deeply from glasses filled with choice bubbly, paid for by my emoluments as a contributor to your Swiss paper.

In this year of grace 1930 when business all round is on the slow and sticky side and when money is scarce and the financing of holidays, not to speak of other "health giving amusements" becomes quite a problem for most of us, it is rather nice to read of a place, a country in fact, where the

### Currency Problem has been Solved.

Says the *Financial Times*, July 12:

The Diet of Liechtenstein, the small independent State which lies between Austria and the Swiss Cantons of St. Gall and Grisons, has decided to hand over to Switzerland the manufacture of its silver coins. The currency of the State has been related to the Swiss since 1921, and the new arrangement is therefore both economical and convenient, though it will mean the disappearance of an interesting if practically unimportant native money issue. The Principality has been making its own silver since 1924, and this coinage is now in circulation, but evidently the experiment has not revealed sufficient advantages to justify its continuance.

For Customs and postal and telegraphic services, Liechtenstein is united with Switzerland, so that a common currency is also logically indicated. Nevertheless, the State retains the power to mint its own gold coins, though with a population so small—it is less than 11,000—and engaged in purely agricultural and pastoral pursuits, it does not seem likely that tokens of high value are much needed.

Is it not nice to write of "tokens of high value"? It gives us such a comfortable feeling when we realise that money, after all, is only a token, a means of exchange! Why worry? Just tell your tailor that "tokens of high value are somewhat scarce just now" or words to that effect and watch his understanding smile, when he replies, "What about letting me have tokens of lesser value, but more of them and oftener?" And yet, tokens are useful in many ways, for engagements, for cross-word puzzles, for birth-day and other gifts and so forth. The only trouble with tokens is that you must work, as a token of good faith in order to obtain tokens, which, again will be "token" from you, soon after you have become "tokened." Yea, verily! This very poor effort at producing "puns" which, as Dr. Johnson said, are anyhow the poorest form of wit, must now stop.—EDITOR.

All right, let's proceed again. Still thinking of the forthcoming 1st August celebrations—London's Swiss Colony is again going to have a

miniature "Schuetzenfest" and all sorts of "Budenvorstadt-Amusements" at Hendon, not only bells, like they have at home, you poor fish!—and wishing I were climbing up some lovely mountain range myself just now, I naturally turn to anything which further reminds me of the goal of my wishes and I find that even His Holiness the Pope has similar longings. *The Bulletin and Scots Pictorial*, 12th July, writes:

### Pope as Mountaineer.

It is probable that the Pope, who left Vatican City last week for his summer palace at Castelgarden, will spend the late weeks of August in the Swiss Alps, says an Interlaken correspondent, the scene of many happy days of his youth, when he was an ardent mountain climber.

Long before he attained his great ecclesiastical eminence, the Pope regarded mountain climbing not only as a manly exercise but also as a definite enricher of human moral fibre.

"The stimulus," he once told a friend, "to both mind and spirit in attaining to great heights through difficulties is unmatched. The emotions experienced during a struggle with the elements always remain clear cut and uplifting in the memory."

The Pope is the author of an authoritative work on Swiss Alpine climbing.

And everyone, irrespective of his religious beliefs, will, I am sure, wish good sport and happy days to the Holy Father when he visits our mountains once again.

A very fine feat of mountaineering has been achieved recently. According to the *Morning Post*, July 14th:

### British Climbing Feat.

A splendid mountaineering feat has just been accomplished by Mr. Shossfield, of Oxford University, accompanied by two guides.

The party crossed from Zinal to the Rothorn (13,730 feet) near the Mount Hut, and then, in very bad weather, climbed the northern ridge of the Weisshorn (14,670 feet) and went back to Zinal in twenty hours. This is regarded as one of the finest mountaineering achievements of the year.

There is something thrilling in a run through a tunnel. Children especially look forward to the experience and the Swiss Railway authorities in question have hit upon an excellent idea. Says the *Journal of Education*, of July:

SIMPLON AND ST. GOTHARD JUBILEES.—In commemoration of the piercing of the St. Gothard Tunnel (fifty years ago) and of the Simplon Tunnel (twenty-five years ago) the Swiss Federal Railways are offering railway facilities, available to school-children of all nations, for visiting the two famous tunnels through the Alps at a reduction of 50 per cent. below ordinary school-child fares. The reduced fares will be in operation until the end of 1932, except during the months of July and August and on Saturdays and Sundays. Arrangements have also been made for hotel accommodation for school parties along either route at especially reduced rates. Full details of the concessions may be obtained upon application to the Swiss Federal Railways, Regent Street, London.

Adults are not to enjoy the reduction in fares. They probably have no great desire to see these tunnels. They prefer the run outside, when they can see something. Even lovers, now that electric lighting installations turn the inside of the trains into well-lighted drawing rooms, are not very keen on tunnels anymore. 'Twas different 25-30 years ago, me hearties! Tunnels, then, were tunnels and worth while visiting!

### The fight against Tuberculosis.

*Daily Express*, 15th July:

A new Swiss law enacts that in future doctors must inform local authorities of all cases of tuberculosis, and must declare when deaths are due to tuberculosis.

School teachers, nurses, and pupils must submit to medical examination, and the habitation of infected premises is forbidden.

### A word of Season:

The International Labour Office at Geneva

Geneva calling: *Children's Newspaper*, 12th July:

Thank you, B.B.C., for providing such a splendid link between Geneva and the people at home with your series of talks on the International Labour Office and its work during the weeks of its recent Conference.

And thank you, Miss Bondfield, for the fine first talk, and for addressing yourself to those "who just listen-in without the foggiest notion of what is likely to come through."

And particularly thank you for reciting those sonorous phrases from Part Thirteen of the Peace Treaty which should surely be chanted from all house-tops as some high call to service, phrases which are inscribed so fascinatingly in coloured enamels on the wall of the entrance hall of the I.L.O., arresting the eye of every visitor as he enters, phrases which, as you remarked, crystallise the hopes of the workers of the whole world.



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P. GODENZI

In spite of all difficulties some of these hopes have been realised already and many more will be in the future. Each year sees some hardship in working conditions removed, some injustice remedied, some privation abolished, through the improvements brought about by the new labour laws enacted as a direct result of the work of the I.L.O.

This, the tenth year of the I.L.O., has been celebrated by a quickening of ideas, an access of energy, a new dedication of the work to the ideals which illuminated the minds of men in 1919, ideals expressed in those sonorous phrases of the Peace Treaty. In no uncertain voice the Director of the I.L.O. has spoken.

He takes stock of the world to-day and says that the Office he directs "will draw on all the forces of imagination and enthusiasm at its disposal to prevent the organisation from being reduced to the state of an unwieldy, lifeless body, and to ensure that all the big streams of social life flow toward it and give it increasing vitality and strength." He notes one all-important condition: success depends on faith in social justice and the will to achieve it.

So once again, B.B.C., our thanks for linking up Geneva with the home people. Much is written of the League and its work, but not all of it is read. The spoken word carries conviction, and we cannot conceive better service to listeners than in making them better acquainted with Geneva and the new world it is creating.

And, it is a very encouraging sign to see that Authorities ruling Newspapers which are meant for children in the first place, appreciate and bring home to their young readers, the excellent work for Peace which is being done by the I.L.O.

### Where Wagner was Inspired

*Glasgow Evening Times*, 24th June:

The old white stone house with faded green shutters in Lucerne in which Richard Wagner lived for six years has been purchased by the Lucerne authorities as a memorial museum to the great composer. The house stands in a secluded spot beside the lake. Here, between 1866 and 1872, Wagner composed some of his greatest masterpieces. Here he brought his wife Cosima after their marriage in the little church behind the Schweizerhof Hotel. When the purchase at a price of 275,000 Swiss francs is completed the house will be restored as far as possible to its condition during Wagner's occupation. At present the house, which dates from the eighteenth century, presents a somewhat neglected appearance, but a profusion of wild roses still cluster around the windows of the big square music-room in which Wagner was inspired with his greatest themes.

### Five Weeks in America.

By DR. K. E. ECKENSTEIN.

#### III. FLORIDA CONTINUED.

Among the various entertainments provided by the town one of the most amusing was boxing matches. These took place twice a week, Monday night being reserved for white boxers whilst on Friday nights fights took place in 'Darkie' town. There is plenty of excitement to be had out of boxing in America because the audience is not satisfied unless the fight ends in a knock-out and if the fighting does not come up to standard the onlookers do not hesitate to let the combatants know what they think about them. The fights in 'Darkie' town were especially interesting. The ring was protected from the weather by a roof while the sides were open to the air. One side of the ring was reserved for whites while the other three sides were packed with coloured folk of both sexes of every possible shade. White women do not attend these matches.

The first event was a battle royal. Five negroes entered the ring and proceeded to fight indiscriminately. Two niggers would be fighting in a corner when a third would come up behind them and without any warning proceed to land one of the opponents a hefty blow on the back of the head. This went on until one or other of the combatants had had enough when he would slip out of the ring. Finally when two were left they proceeded to fight a couple of rounds to determine who was the winner. The next event was a fight between two little nigger boys aged about fourteen who fought like wild cats. When they had finished everyone proceeded to throw nickels into the ring and the two lads had another fight to see who could collect the most money. The main bout of the evening was between two heavy weights, one being a great big lusty pure blooded South African negro who rejoiced in the name of 'Mr. Snowflakes' while his opponent was an almost equally lusty local celebrity. Mr. Snowflakes entered the ring robed in a black dressing gown embroidered with snowflakes. The fighting was fast and furious and each opponent got in blows which would have quickly reduced a white man to oblivion. Gradually Mr. Snow-

Now that wireless has brought real music into our homes, and the B.B.C., not to speak of foreign stations, is broadcasting not only the very best concerts but Covent Garden Opera as well, Richard Wagner has become familiar to all, and many who before the advent of radio have thought him much too high-brow for the ordinary mortal ears to understand, know and have learnt meantime that some of his music is easily understood and beautiful indeed. Who, with any sense of romance or any imagination and feeling could listen to the Overture to Tannhauser unmoved? And who, again, could fail to be thrilled by that glorious storm tone-picture in the Overture to the Flying Dutchman? Wagner indeed, at least in his more popular operas, is more easily understood, I think, than many modern composers.

### Wood Carvers of Brienz.

*Oldham Evening Chronicle and Standard*, 2nd July:

Four million foreign tourists visit Switzerland every year. Of these at least one in three takes home a small bear, the figure of an Alpine shepherd, a trinket box or some other object of carved wood—the typical souvenir of the country. At a very conservative estimate this means a production by Swiss wood-carvers of some 1,300,000 wooden objects a year. Each one is entirely hand carved. When one considers that the skilled wood-carvers of Switzerland number only a comparatively few hundreds the output is amazing.

Wood-carving has been a hobby of the Alpine peasant for many centuries, but it is only since 1860 that the craft has been organised and raised to the level of a national institution. Brienz, the lovely lakeside village in the Bernese Oberland, is the headquarters of the craft. Early in the last century Christian Fischer, a carpenter, began carving tobacco pipes of boxwood, horn and maple. As a variant he produced toy figures, cups, bowls and small boxes. Actually, he was the first man in Switzerland to realise the possibilities of wood-carving as a remunerative trade. More than this, he raised wood-carving formerly only a hobby for the winter evenings, to a high national form of art. His fame soon spread beyond Brienz, and he began to give instruction in carving to peasants from a wide surrounding area. Fischer's remarkable work—some of his figures were as exquisite as fine sculpture—was brought to the notice of the famous Brienz School of Wood-Carving, from which some of the most notable carvers in the world to-day have graduated. The apprenticeship for animal and ornamental carvers is three years, but for human figure work a four years' course has to be taken. At the end of his training the student-carver has to pass a difficult State ex-

amines got the upper hand until after several rounds he had reduced his foe to a bleeding mass of black humanity, and just as the obvious end was approaching the gong sounded. During the interval the seconds threw the towel into the ring much to Mr. Snowflake's indignation and he stalked about declaring in a loud voice "Dat won't do for me, I want to knock him out." But this would have been too much even for America and the fight came to an end.

One of the industries of Florida is the growing of oranges and grape fruit. We made the acquaintance of a delightful Southern gentleman who owns a fruit plantation and our visits to it are among some of the pleasantest of our trip. It is indeed an experience for a dweller in a Northern climate to be able to pluck oranges and grape fruit and eat them fresh from the tree. The latter when grown are about twice the size of those to which we are accustomed in this country and needless to say taste very differently. They also grow a fruit called a "kumquat" which is about the size of a plum and is, I believe, a Chinese variety of the orange. It tastes somewhat like an orange but is slightly more acid and does not contain any pips. At this plantation they also made crystallized fruits and one of their specialties was to hollow out a grape fruit and shape it like a basket into which were placed chunks of crystallized grape fruit and other fruits.

At Daytona there was a very cute miniature Golf course containing all sorts of obstacles. In one, the ball had to be driven into a hole through which it dropped into a pipe which took it on to a green which was at a lower level. In another the ball was driven slightly up hill in the direction of three pipes, two of which had blind ends and were so placed that they returned the ball to the sender, whereas if it entered the third pipe it went on and ran out on to a green situated as before at a lower level. A third consisted of a number of stout pegs placed irregularly through which the ball had to be driven, and so on.

There are numerous interesting excursions to be made from Daytona. To the north lies St. Augustine where there is an ostrich farm and an alligator farm and which is said to contain some of the oldest houses in the United States. About 80 miles inland is a place called Silver Springs.

amination. A new and particularly interesting feature of the Brienz school is the formation of a small zoological park in the grounds, where animal carvers can study their models in natural surroundings at first-hand. Brienz carvings are to-day exported all over the world, notably those of a devotional type, such as crucifixes, figures of saints, and altar panels.

### SWISS DELEGATION ENTERTAINED BY MONSIEUR C. R. PARAVICINI

The members of the Swiss Delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Conference in London were entertained to dinner on Friday, July 18th, by the Swiss Minister and Madame Paravicini at 21, Bryanston Square. W.I. The party consisted of:

The Lord Mayor and the Lady Mayoress, Col. Sir Clive and The Hon. Lady Morrison-Bell, Commander The Hon. J. M. Kenworthy and The Hon. Mrs. Kenworthy, Major and Mrs. Nathan, M. le Cons. Nat. R. Dollfus (Tessin) and Mme. Dollfus, M. le Cons. Nat. V. E. Scherer (Basle) and Mme. Scherer, M. le Cons. Nat. H. Sandoz (Berne) and Mme. Sandoz, M. le Cons. Nat. H. Häberlin (Zurich) and Mme. Häberlin, M. le Cons. Nat. R. Tschudy (Glaris), M. le Dr. Fr. Studer, Président du Tribunal Fédéral des Assurances (Lucerne) and Mme. Studer, M. Weber, Ancien Conseiller National.

After dinner the guests were joined by: M. Leopold Boissier, Vice Secrétaire Général de l'Union Interparlementaire, and Mme. Boissier, M. and Mme. Morier-Pictet, Melle. van Berchem, M. and Mme. Francois Micheli, M. Jacques de Saussure, M. de Sonnenberg, M. and Mme. de Bourg, M. Micheli, M. Rezzonico, M. Kessler, M. Popoff, M. Duchosal, M. le Prof. Vellemann (Traducteur de la Délégation).

### SWISS TOURIST INFORMATION OFFICE.

The following information has come to hand:

#### Special Trains of the Swiss Federal Railways.

There will be no cheap fare excursion trains from July 15th until August 31st owing to the rolling stock being needed during this time for the heavy holiday and season traffic.

#### Air Service.

The Imperial Airways Ltd., have arranged a new air service which flies three times a week between London and the North of England (Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool) with direct connection from and to the continent. The connection with these routes is ensured for the following Swiss aerodromes: Geneva, Lausanne, La Chaux de Fonds, Berne, Bienne, Lucerne, St. Gall, Zurich and Basle.

Here is a park through the middle of which runs a river. The visitor is taken for a tour in a small boat with a flat bottom in which is inserted a large pane of glass. In places there are deep holes varying from 20 to 50 feet in depth. The water is so clear that every detail on the bed of the river can be seen distinctly. Some of these holes which are 20 to 40 feet across are really very beautiful and the bottom consists of silver sand through which springs can be seen bubbling. Fish are numerous and come swimming up under the bottom of the boat. The vegetation on the banks of the river is most luxuriant and is sub-tropical. Another excursion is up the Indian River, which passes through swamps, and here alligators, some of which attain great size, can be seen in their native surroundings. There is very good fishing to be had in Florida and I was very anxious to go tarpan fishing but unfortunately it was not the right season as tarpan fishing takes place in July.

Another curiosity of the region is the blow-fish. This fish which is about the size of a herring has the power of blowing itself up like a balloon if attacked by a larger fish or when it is caught. As soon as it comes out of the water it proceeds to swallow air until it comes as big as a small balloon and if thrown back it bounces on the surface and then gradually deflates itself until, with a final kick, it disappears under water. Apparently this peculiar faculty is the method of protection employed by this fish against its enemies.

Unfortunately I was unable to visit either Palm Beach or Miami but from all accounts these are very expensive places and are the pleasure resorts of the rich American. Miami is some three hundred miles south of Daytona and the vegetation is still more tropical.

On the whole Florida is very interesting and the climate is delightful. Although it lacks the mountains which are one of the most agreeable features of the Riviera it is very beautiful and, as I have said, the vegetation is much more luxuriant and appears more natural. Sea bathing is good and the ocean has several advantages over the Mediterranean. In the winter months there are no mosquitos although I believe they are troublesome in August and September.

TO BE CONTINUED.