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# The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. F. BOEHRINGER.

The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain.

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## Federal Councillor Motta in London.

Last Saturday, Federal Councillor Motta, Chief of the Political Department at Berne, arrived in London on a private visit. He has come here chiefly to see the wonderful Italian Exhibition of paintings at Burlington House. At the same time he is taking advantage of this opportunity to get into personal contact with our Colony. The City Swiss Club gave a dinner in Mr. Motta's honour on Thursday the 13th inst. at the May Fair Hotel. A full report will appear in our next issue. Our honoured guest is departing again, after a week's stay, on Saturday the 15th inst.



## FEDERAL.

### INSTALLATION OF THE NEW FEDERAL COUNCILLORS.

The new chief of the Federal Home Office, Federal Councillor Meyer, formerly Editor-in-Chief of the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung," has taken up his ministerial duties on the 1st of February. Federal Councillor Minger who was elected at the same time as Dr. Meyer at the December Session of Parliament has taken up office as chief of the Military Department at the beginning of the year.

### EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF PARLIAMENT.

In order to expedite the legal formalities for the establishment of the International Bank at Basle an extraordinary Session of the Federal Parliament has had to be called for the 24th of February. Not since the "distress session" in November 1918 in connection with the emergency measures necessitated by the General Strike has our Parliament met outside the customary timetable. The main business of the session will be the acceptance of the State Treaty for the Establishment of the International Bank at Basle, which was concluded on the 20th of January. Two resolutions will be taken, one confirming the treaty for fifteen years, which is the maximum period for which Parliament can commit the nation without referendum. The other is to confirm the treaty in perpetuity but subject to the Referendum. As the National Council first deals with the business the State Council will be occupied on the first day of the session with some minor agenda and vice versa on the second day.

On the 7th inst. the Federal Council has submitted its report on the Treaty explaining that owing to the special character of the International Bank similar privileges were due to it as have been granted the Swiss National Bank. If on top of those privileges the personnel of the new Bank had to be granted tax exemption this was an unavoidable concession to international opinion.

### TEMPORARY ABODE OF THE INTERNATIONAL BANK.

The Organisation Committee appointed at the Hague for the preparatory work for the Establishment of the International Bank has after a short stay in Basle chosen the Hotel Univers-Savoy, opposite the Federal Railway Station, as a temporary abode of the Bank. The Hotel which contains three big halls and 50 guest rooms will be rented at the rate of 200,000 francs per annum, while some necessary alterations in the "Kirschgarten" Building will be effected. The first meeting of the Bank's directorate is planned for the 5th of March and on the 1st of April the Bank begins to function.

### INCREASE OF FEDERAL PERSONNEL.

Including the Postal and Railway service the number of federal employees has increased during last year from 63,440 to 65,005. The increase was necessitated by a considerable growth on railway and postal traffic. The railways alone have 34,021 employees.

### LIBERAL-DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS.

The Annual Congress of the Swiss Liberal-Democratic Party will probably be fixed for the 23rd of March to be held at Berne. The Executive meets on the 4th of March.

Dr. E. Miescher

Dr. E.

## PROGRESS IN COMMERCIAL AVIATION.

Commercial aviation has again made good progress during 1929 and as in former years has been entirely void of accidents. The best frequented lines are Geneva-Vienne (Balair), Zurich-Berlin (Ad Astra), Zurich-Paris-London (Imperial Airways), Zurich-Amsterdam (Balair) and Basle-Geneva-Marseille (Balair). Statistics give the following figures: 15,581 passengers, 94,859 kg postal goods, and over 1½ million kg of freight.

Our commercial aviation has reached the highest degree of perfection in spite of many difficulties encountered on some of the routes. T.G.

### CONFERENCE FOR THE CUSTOMS ARMISTICE.

The Swiss delegation to the International conference at Geneva dealing with the customs armistice will be presided by Mr. Schulthess, head of the Federal Department of Public Economy. Messrs. Stucki, director of the Commercial Division, and Gassmann, General Director of Customs will be the members of the delegation, which may be further increased according to how events progress.

### PROPOSED NEW RADIO STATION.

The Postal Authorities have bought at Sottem near Moudon an area of land for Frs. 40,000 for the installation of a radio station for the French speaking part of Switzerland, similar to the radio station already in operation at Münster (Lucerne).

### LOCAL.

#### ZURICH.

The first prize of the Zurich Zoo lottery, amounting to 30,000 Frs., was won by a labourer, at present unemployed. As he has to keep his invalid mother, Dame Fortune has for once smiled in the right direction.

St. G.T.

#### BERNE.

Federal Councillor Häberlin has received a delegation of the Committee for Women's Suffrage. After listening to their address, he made a personal statement to the effect that, much as he recognised the capacity of women to exercise the privileges of citizenship and the desirability of their co-operation in matters affecting Church, Education and Child Welfare, he yet felt doubtful as to the wisdom of drawing them into participation in political warfare. In any case, so he assured the delegation, their petition will receive the most careful and serious consideration.

St. G.T.

#### \*\*\*

The population of the town of Berne has been increased by 1,616 during 1929 and now amounts to 110,880.

T.G.

#### ZUG.

Albert Märchy, leather tanner and merchant, of Arth met with a fatal accident while descending the Morgarten road in his car. The road was covered with snow and ice, and the car skidded so violently that it crashed through the railings alongside the road and rolled down the slope. Märchy was thrown out and killed instantly.

N.

#### BASLE.

The Delegates' Meeting of the Nouvelle Société Hélyétique at Basle elected Dr. Hammer (Solothurn) as Central President and Dr. Isler (Basle) as Central Treasurer. The former chief of the Auslandsschweizersekretariat, Dr. Zellweger (Zurich), was elected a member of the Central Committee.

The meeting also decided to hold an Auslands-schweizertag in Basle at the beginning of September next.

Federal Councillor Schulthess addressed the meeting concerning the proposed old age and dependents' insurance (Alters-und Hinterbliebenenversicherung). He stated that he was authorized to say on behalf of the members of the Federal Council, that they were all in agreement with the proposal in its present form, and that they would support and further it as soon as the alcohol Bill, just now in its final stages, was settled. He also appealed warmly to the meeting to support this latter proposal when it is submitted to the vote on April 6th. St. G.T. and N.

#### \*\*\*

Pastor Dr. E. Miescher died at Basle aged 82. He was the son of Professor Miescher (University Bern) and came to Basle in 1850. After completing his studies, he held appointments in the Thurgau and St. Gall. In 1890 he returned to Basle as President of the Basle Mission. From 1891 to 1921 he was Vicar of the St. Leonhards Church, and he was also the editor of the "Volksfreund" during 53 years. His son,

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KYBURG.

### White Drug Kings:

The account we published last week under the above title of the inglorious role Switzerland has hitherto played in the provision of drugs for illicit trafficking must have come as a shock to many of our readers.

I am not quite sure that I have ever read anything more sinister, more terrible for the good name of our beloved country. And yet, we flatter ourselves that Switzerland is a Home for lofty and humanitarian ideals! Ye gods! How can any Swiss feel proud of his nationality if he knows what these poison-manufacturers are doing and until he has helped to stop them and stop them effectively. Surely it's not a question of "Gewerbefreiheit," seeing that the good name of Switzerland is in question and that there cannot be two opinions about it among a people who call themselves Christian. The whole matter is utterly incomprehensible to me and I feel that if our Federal Authorities are in earnest in their endeavour to cope with this unclean business, they surely could get all the authority and power they require by appealing to the Federal Chambers. Cantonal Authority is one thing, Federal Authority another, but I have yet to learn that the Swiss People as such are willing to let such foul things go on unchecked in Switzerland. The truth probably is that they do not know, in which case the Swiss Newspapers are to blame. And I am glad our Editor has printed the article, because it is no good to anybody to go about in blissful ignorance of shameful things happening at home. When we know, we can start remedying such defects on our otherwise clean escutcheon.

Following is an interesting item on the participation of a Swiss firm in the elaboration of a new armour-piercing weapon:

### Guns to Fight Tanks:

Morning Post, 22nd Jan.

How an ordinary wax candle fired at a range of 120 yards from a 12 bore shot gun pierced a three-quarter inch deal board, travelled over a hundred yards beyond it and sustained little damage, was described at a meeting last night at the Royal Artillery Institution, Woolwich.

This was one of the many experiments recently carried out to show what could be done with a high velocity. The experiments were conducted in relation to attempts to find a mobile armour-piercing weapon with which successfully to fight a tank.

Major-General Peck, Director of Mechanisation at the War Office, giving details of experiments recently made with a view to approving a weapon which would fire an armour-piercing projectile, emphasised the essentials

### Home News—(Continued)

Dr. Miescher, is a member of the National Council and Director of the town of Basle's finances.

#### GRAUBUENDEN.

Stationmaster Johann Erni in Trins was crushed to death while supervising the loading of wood.

St. G.T.

#### VAUD.

Mr. Emile Mermier, retired engineer of the C.E.F. has died at Lausanne aged 74. He was one of the engineers in charge of the Simplon tunnel and the author of a scientific study on ventilation and refrigeration.

T.G.

#### \*\*\*

The Cantonal Council is submitting to the States Council a proposal for a new penal code which has been prepared by Mr. A. Capt.

#### VALAIS.

The Red Cross Society has collected the sum of Frs. 21,300 for the communes of Lourtier, Salgesch and Torgon.

J.G.

#### TICINO.

On his way back to work a 27 years old labourer, Severo, descended a small mountain path in the Val Gribbia and fell into a precipice where he was killed instantly.

T.G.

An Italian subject has successfully managed to pass the Italian-Swiss frontier, hidden in a luggage van, only to be arrested on arrival at Bellinzona.

J.G.

necessary for such a machine. Mobility, inconspicuousness, easy action, range, wide traverse, low trajectory, and high muzzle velocity were, he said, among the more important.

The Oerlikon Swiss gun, he added, which was of German manufacture, was greatly in favour. During the war a German aeroplane was brought down. It was armed with the Oerlikon, which had until recently been treasured by the Air Ministry. It was just the kind of weapon the Army wanted.

After the War the German company sold its rights to a Swiss company, and the gun has since been developed. It fired an armour-piercing or incendiary shell with a nose fuse, and many satisfactory experiments had been carried out with it.

Its breech action was new to this country. Traverse was limited to 20 degrees, but on a new mounting evolved at Woolwich they got a traverse of 120 degrees. They would understand, therefore, that it was a remarkable weapon.

What he thought would serve the Army well was a 3.8-inch machine-gun with an inconspicuous mounting of the type now in use and with an all-round traverse.

News of a more peaceful kind of new enterprise is contained in the following note:

#### An Interesting Enterprise:

*Chichester Observer*, 22nd Jan.:

Many endeavours have been made during the last few years in order to arrive at the manufacture of ladder-proof artificial silk stockings, with but indifferent success.

A Swiss manufacturing concern now claims to have solved this problem and to manufacture stockings of artificial silk which are entirely ladder-proof. These stockings have already a large sale on the Continental markets, and are even successfully sold in this country.

A British Company for the purpose of acquiring this Swiss enterprise is in the course of formation, and the Preference Shares which will enjoy a fixed dividend, will be covered three times over by the security offered by the Promoter, who is the sole owner of the Swiss enterprise, an acknowledged expert and an able industrial and commercial leader, and whose services will be given to the English Company for a period of at least ten years.

#### A very Shabby Matter:

We Swiss know, of course, that we have a certain penchant for thriftiness, akin to the Scot! But I doubt very much whether the *Manchester City News* could substantiate the following piece, which, if true, beats anything I have heard in that line:

*Manchester City News*, 18th Jan.

In the world of business, the Board's conception of the term "Economy" is sometimes held by the staff to be synonymous with "cheeseparing." A good outside example of this is passed on to me by a friend employed by a firm in Switzerland. The founder of the firm recently died, and the sons, wishing to mark the occasion among the workpeople, gave each employee a small Christmas present, ranging from fifteen to twenty-five francs, "in memory of your late employer." The office staff, however, received no such gratuity. Indeed, when Christmas came round they discovered that their usual bonuses had been reduced by amounts "ranging from fifteen to twenty-five francs." The memorial fund had thus been contributed willy-nilly by the rest of the staff! Can you beat that for parsimony?

I think the *Manchester City News* might well be asked, through the usual diplomatic channels, for the name of the Swiss firm in question and, if they could not produce the name, for an apology!

#### The Swiss Guide:

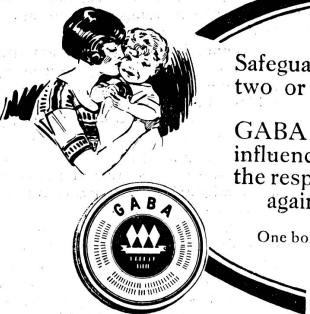
Again, I am happy to publish something more palatable, namely *The Swiss Guide*: by the Marquess of Donegall, *Daily Sketch*, 20th Jan.

The climb from the railway station of Bernina Häuser to the Diavolezza Hut is not difficult. But if a storm comes up, the last long stretch up to the hut with the wind howling down as though it were being blown through a tube from a refrigerator saps any energy that one may have kept in reserve for the descent. "There's nothing for it," I said to my companion, "we'll have to stay the night." He agreed. Together we stumbled into the shelter of the hut and threw ourselves full length on the ground.

How long we remained there I do not know, but the next thing I remember was a total stranger with a rugged but kindly face bending over me with a cup of hot tea. My companion was already sitting up and taking notice with a steaming cup in his hand.

"You'll be all right in a minute," he said in perfect English, and then asked if we wanted to be rubbed. No. We were only exhausted, not frost-bitten.

Well, this was my first acquaintance with Herr Adolphe Padrun, one of the few guides, as he modestly told me later, who are qualified for the whole of Switzerland. We dis-



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cussed the situation. Evidently it would be madness to try to go down. He, himself, would only risk it if it were a question of a rescue.

This was my first insight into the code of these heroes of the mountains. To him it was a commonplace that the whole situation would be different if a total stranger were in peril.

The wind was still howling ominously round the hut as we began to prepare the evening meal. Perhaps it was because we were ravenously hungry, but I prefer to put it down to Padrun's cooking. Anyway, the meal tasted better to us than many we had eaten in first-class restaurants, and we sat over our wine well on into the night.

"You start by being porter for four years," said Padrun, in answer to a question of mine. "For that, you have a licence from the police, and at the end of the time comes the examination to be a guide."

This examination is in several parts, and includes, apart from knowledge of the mountains in the would-be guide's particular district, first-aid, map-reading and compass, ice, and snow technique.

The candidate is then taken to a mountain which he has never seen before to test his knowledge of the theory of snow and ice-craft.

But it was on the strange happenings in the mountains that Padrun waxed eloquent. He knew, for instance, the guide who, some years ago, fell into a crevasse on the Aletsch Glacier.

He was with a woman tourist who, when the guide fell, was just able to hold his weight on the rope. For several hours she stood there unable to move and slowly freezing. As a last resort she cut the rope. It had frozen into the edge of the crevasse and held the guide, while she went down for help!

"I was once careless," continued Padrun, "the climb to the Boval Hut is so easy that I did not take a rope. But the crevasses on the glacier shift from year to year, and coming down the light was bad."

The Englishman who was with Padrun fell into a crevasse and stuck on a ledge, 30 feet down. Fortunately the hut-keeper saw the distress signal—a coat tied on the end of a ski-stick and waved three times—and a rope was not long in coming.

"That Englishman is now my best friend, though he could probably have had my licence taken away," he concluded.

It was time to retire, and even the hard bunks of the hut would seem like feather-beds.

"In that case I would like to tell you something," said Padrun when, before saying

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good-night, I asked his permission to use our conversation in an article. "I have had much experience of climbing with every nationality. I would rather climb with an Englishman or Englishwoman than with anyone else. I am not speaking of technique but of the great lore of the mountains which you alone, with us, the guides, understand."

In order to make up for the rather depressing fare I have felt constrained to put before my readers this week I will improve the menu with an amusing quotation from *The Graphic*, 18th Jan.:

#### Sporting Folk

There is no envy more bitter to my spirit in the gloomy month of January than that stirred up by the pictures of winter-sporting peers and peeresses who, having taken the Calais-châlet route, are caught by the camera in the act of skiing over sweeps of Alpine snow.

Here is the fair young Countess of Cordroy, looking her smartest in a pair of dark glasses as she emerges, splendidly accoutred, from the opulent Schweizerhof in which she occupies the most opulent suite. Here is the adorable Duchess of Dungarve, exquisitely erect as she glissades over the candid slopes like a pinnace over calm waters in a favouring breeze.

Here is the Hon. John Herringbone, arrayed like Solomon in all the glory of the Faroes, discussing a knotty point in snowcraft with some Scandinavian champion outside a syndicated Kurhaus. And here is the Duc de Linges, actually peeling an orange in the dazzling sun outside a lonely log-cabin six thousand feet above sea-level.

Really, it is all too tantalising.

I can just bear not being aristocratic.

I can just bear not being on snow.

But not being aristocratic on snow would surely try the temper of a lamb.

Meanwhile, just as there is a dearth of skiing stories, so there is a dearth of skiing limericks. But let us remedy this. There's no resort without a rhyme. If you will do Mürren and Davos and Arosa, I will do Lenzerheide and Klosters and St. Moritz. Let me see. . . .

Said a skier in high Lenzerheide,

"I fear that I look like a spider!"

As soon as I start

My legs fly apart

And get wider and wider and wider!"

Said a skimmie young lady at Klosters,

"This is better than biking with coasters!"

But when she sat down,

She remarked with a frown,

"They said nothing of that on the posters!"

Said a sporting young man at St. Moritz,

"Although it is risky, I'm sure it's

Decidedly classier

To ski on a glacier

So now I am one of the 'for its.'

And another humorous effort on the same theme culled from the *Royal Magazine*, January issue:

#### The Winter Sports

One of the most amusing characteristics of those quaint folk who comprise the Upmost

#### Ticinese Architects and Sculptors in Past Centuries.

By Dr. A. Janner, translated from "Deine Heimat" by one of our readers.

(Continued. Commenced Jan. 18.)

The artists so far mentioned are merely the greatest. If we desired to take into consideration artists who have also been renowned at their time, but who to-day enjoy less fame, we would never come to the end. Wyss, who studied the condition of the Ticino in the 18th century, refers to over 70 in that century alone and all architects, sculptors or decorators of great fame. And then no longer in Italy alone—Italy having become an insufficient field for their activities the Ticinesi were emigrating, to bring their artistic creations to other cities, to all the reigning families of Europe. Even in the German speaking part of Switzerland we find some of them—like the brothers Pisoni, from Ascona, who built the fine and classical cathedral of Solothurn. A number of them went to Germany and were among the foremost architects. In Austria we find, among others, Ricca building churches and palaces and in Copenhagen Trezzini. A special field of activity for the Ticinese architects was then provided by Russia. When Peter the Great decided on founding Petersburg he called as his engineer just that Trezzini who, up to then, had been architect to the Royal family of Copenhagen. When Trezzini died other Ticinese artists followed him like Rusca, who erected the Tauris palace and Gilardi who built the great palace of the Bourse. Another Gilardi was allotted by Czar Alexander the stupendous task of rebuilding Moscow, which

Ten—an elastic term applicable not only to the Great, but also to the Notorious, the Merely Opulent, and the Dashed Lucky—is their reluctance to remain in any one spot for more than a few weeks at a time.

Thus, in the spring they swarm thick as bees along the Riviera, alternately contracting pneumonia and achieving insolvency at the tables; in the summer they are to be found strewn along the shores of Deauville and the Lido, only a yard or so above high-water mark; in the autumn they are ten a penny in Scotland; and at this time of the year their unanimous migration to Switzerland is the signal for a sharp rise in the cost of Swiss living.

The popularity of Switzerland as a winter stamping-ground for what are humorously known as the Best People is due to the exceptional facilities it offers for the practice of Winter Sports. As every schoolboy knows, it is a surprisingly knobby country, thickly studded with mountains and almost entirely covered with snow and expensive hotels; and the astute natives long ago realised that this combination of attractions forms an irresistible allurement for the type of Briton who regards it as an offence against decency to remain in England now that winter's here.

Although I have a weakness for condensed milk, and hold that there is no more beautiful noise than a yodel, or Swiss national yelp, I myself have never set foot in Switzerland. But one of these days, when I have been acquitted on a murder charge and sold my life-story to a Sunday paper, I intend to invest my gains in the essential outfit, make a ski-line for the nearest Alp, and join my betters at their play.

Fortunately, the necessary equipment for such an expedition is comparatively cheap, if not particularly becoming. Unlike the polo-player, who must acquire a flock of ponies, a large open space, seven confederates and a considerable fortune before he can pursue his hobby, the winter sportsman needs only a woolly sweater, a woollier muffler, a toothy grin, a comic hat, a pair of incredible trousers, a brace of skis, and a return ticket to the field of play. Thus armed at all points, he can go blithely forth to the revels, ready to cope with anything from an avalanche to a Press photographer.

People with less sense than money, of course, need not content themselves with so modest an outfit. At the moment of writing, the advertisement pages of our glossier weekly journals are congested with photographs of persons in Winter Sports Wear—improbable comely youths in clothes such as might be worn by an American engine-driver with a leaning towards deep-sea diving, and impossibly fair maidens in garments that appear to have started life as plus fours and repented too late.

By these tokens we may know that the snow-lovers of Mayfair are feverishly preparing for the Great Trek, and that those who cannot afford to make the trip this year are busily explaining to their friends that Switzerland is simply too terribly tripperish nowadays, and that London is even so much more amusing, really, don't you think?

The embryo skier who wishes to escape ridicule and/or a broken neck, would be well

had been destroyed by fire during the Napoleonic campaign, and Gilardi built some of the finest monumental structures of that city. Another Ticinese, Adamini, was also architect in Petrograd and designed the great pronaos of 24 columns for the church of St. Isaac. Later, in 1834, emulating Fontana, he erected the great column in honour of Czar Alexander and he also accomplished a prodigy of engineering. According to Franscini, who had been able to know direct from Adamini, there were present 10,000 soldiers and 30,000 spectators and there were used 62 capstans set in motion by 2,332 workmen. The brothers Fossati, from Moretto, architects, restored the greatest Byzantine temple, viz. the church of St. Sofia in Constantinople.

We come now to the 19th century in which stands out, among all others, the name of a great sculptor, Vincenzo Vela. Of Vela it is well to speak somewhat at length, because both as a man as well as an artist his personality is attractive and typical of the Ticinese soul. Vela was born in Ligornetto in 1820 and as a young boy was set to learn the work of stone-cutter in the near-by quarries of Arzo and Besazio, but as he showed at once a decided artistic taste his elder brother, Lorenzo, who was a marmorial worker in Milan took him there, at his own expense, and sent him to the Academy. Young Vincenzo made rapid strides and even during the period of studies one of his sculptures was allotted a prize of about 70 crowns, which was a real fortune for the poor stone-cutter.

With that money he decided to go to Rome, to continue his studies, and he was in Rome when he hears that civil war, that of the Sonderbund, is imminent in Switzerland. As he was a member of the Carabiniers Corps of the Ticino he immediately leaves art and friends, to go and do his

advised to rehearse the motions privily behind locked doors before mingling with those who were born, so to speak, with silver skis in their infant mouths. And if—as is more than likely—his opportunities for ski-practice are limited by the terms of his lease, he would do well to abandon the project and turn his attention to tobogganing instead.

Tobogganing, it always seems to me, is unskilled labour of the easiest description. I mean, to say, any man with an elementary knowledge of the law of gravity can recline on his sled on a slab of wood and slide briskly down a mountain-side. After all, given the slab of wood, the mountain, and the inclination, the rest automatically follows. In other words, it strikes me as a pastime calling for resilience of the abdomen rather than for acuteness of intellect.

I admit that I do not quite see how, having once begun to slide, the tobogganist contrives to stop himself before he shoots over the edge of Switzerland and becomes involved in passport difficulties with Signor Mussolini. But I dare say there is some perfectly simple method of arresting his mad career; and in the last resort, I take it, he can always adopt the crude but effective expedient of falling off.

There is a larger and more alarming variety of toboggan which will accommodate half a dozen persons and is usually manned—if we may judge by the pictures in the illustrated Press—by a crew recruited from the younger and livelier section of the aristocracy. I am told—and I can well believe it—that there is no more exhilarating sight than one of these vehicles in full cry down some chamois-dotted slope, rebounding gracefully from Alp to Alp, jettisoning now a marquis and now a baronet, hurling an occasional viscount into the next cantonment, and finally, amid the plaudits of the onlookers, bringing the merry frolic to a close by wrapping itself round a tree or impinging against Mont Blanc. An enthralling spectacle, I should think, and one demonstrating beyond question that there is no accounting for tastes.

So rich is Switzerland in natural resources that even for those visitors who have no skill on skis and no sled on a sled for tobogganing there is diversion in plenty. For retired colonels, Members of Parliament, and others whose activities are restricted by their shape, there is the curious, old-world game called "curling." This form of amusement, which enjoys great popularity among winter sportsmen of the globular or static sort, is played—I understand—with a long-handled broom and a sizable fragment of rock, so that in its essentials it resembles a cross between housework and bowls. To me, I confess, this does not sound unendurably exciting; but from the fact that quite eminent civil servants go all the way to Switzerland to play it, I deduce that there is more in curling than meets the untutored eye.

If I have so far made no mention of skating, of which there is a good deal going on in Switzerland just now, it is because I happen to be a skater of the horizontal school, and am consequently prejudiced. But those happy folk who can retain their balance with a couple of knife-blades glued to the soles of their feet will

duty as a citizen. The brief campaign over, Vincenzo Vela, who felt enthusiastic about the strategic genius of Dufour, desired to make him a bust and, with a few sittings, he fashioned one of the best portraits of the great general. Later, in Milan, inspired by the movement of rebellion of the people against foreign oppression, with which he made common cause, he sculptured "Spartaco," the slave who breaks his own chains, and his fame as an artist leaps forward. The Austrian authorities, hoping with favours and enticements to subdue the rebellious soul ask him for the stone portrait of the Austrian governor in Lombardy, but Vela disdainfully refuses to accept an order which would have made him a rich man and well favoured by the rulers, but which grates against his conscience. Two days later he receives notice of his immediate expulsion from Lombardy. He bids his friends good-bye and, proud of his coherence, returns to Ligornetto. These particulars of his life make one feel the man of integrity and loyalty, the one-piece man. He is the type of the old Ticinese artist, modest, straight, clever, jovial, without finesse of culture, but full of genius, of commonsense and of fine sentiments.

The success of his works steadily increased and he has been considered the greatest Italian sculptor of his time. To-day certain of his sculptures are no longer admired, but others will remain so, like the "Desolation," which is in Lugano, "Spartaco," which is in Geneva, "Springtime," "Napoleon Dying" (which is in Paris), and the "Victims of Work," which was sculptured while the Gotthard was being pierced. The collection of his plaster-casts can be seen in his ateliers at Ligornetto, of which he made a gift to the Confederation, as a museum.

(To be continued.)

find that Switzerland offers them every opportunity to display their talent to their less gifted acquaintances.

To the ham-footed novice, whose idea of skating is to slide simultaneously in seven directions before sitting down with a thud that nearly drives his spine through the roof of his mouth, it seems incredible that any human being can perform such antics and live.

It must not be supposed, however, that the life of the Winter Sports addict is just one darned bump after another. Inasmuch as the most rabid tobogganist cannot whiz up and down mountains after dusk save at grave risk to his health, the winter sportsman whiles away the hours of darkness in fancy-dress dancing, bridge-playing, scandal-distributing and similar pursuits. Those who like that kind of thing will find that it is just the kind of thing they like. Incidentally, it would seem that Swiss air has a stimulating effect upon the more foolish emotions; for statistics show that the number of bachelors who are deprived of their freedom during a Winter Sports season exceeds the number of quills upon the average porcupine.

The last article but one reminds me: *The Swiss Observer* has never yet, to my knowledge, indulged in *Competitions* for its Readers. I will now start such a Competition by promising a price of *Fifty Player's Gold Leaf Cigarettes* to the reader who sends in the best Limerick on Murren, Davos or Arosa. My judgment alone to be accepted and to be final and no correspondence on the matter allowed.

All entries must reach me by Monday Morning first post, 24th February, 1930.

Now then, Readers, let us have those Limericks!

#### UN HOTE DE LA SUISSE A LONDRES.

De plus en plus notre petite patrie devient le point de rencontre de vastes mouvements internationaux. Il vient de se fonder un nouveau centre à Valangin, près Neuchâtel, dans le joli petit vallon jurassien, et si le monde n'en a point eu encore connaissance au loin, sa raison d'être n'en est pas moins de grande importance. C'est un ancien capitaine de l'armée française, un Alsacien, Monsieur Bach, qui fut en garnison en Allemagne durant des années, qui l'a fondé. Bien plus, il est l'âme de cette fédération nouvelle des peuples qu'il rêve de voir s'établir et qu'il a commencée. Elle est bien modeste encore, certes, mais établie sur le seul fondement solide: une foi commune, une franchise absolue, un effort constant de se comprendre de peuple à peuple.

Déjà les "Chevaliers de la Paix" sont plusieurs milliers des deux côtés du Rhin, et d'autres se sont joints à eux ailleurs encore.

Et nous, Suisses, qui sommes aussi un trait d'union entre les races, nous comprenons ce qui a pu animer le cœur d'un Alsacien et l'amener à se jeter dans la mêlée, comme il l'a fait, et nous tiendrons à nous associer à son idéal autant que faire se pourra.

Le Capitaine Bach parlera en français le dimanche matin 16 février, à 11 heures, au culte de l'Église Suisse, à Endell Street.

#### THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

Ten years ago, on January 10th, 1920, at 4.15 in the afternoon, the delegates of Germany and the Allies signed in the Salon de l'Horloge in the Quai d'Orsay, the protocol confirming the entry into force of the Treaty of Versailles, and consequently of the pact of the League of Nations, which formed a part thereof.

The greatest honour we can render the League of Nations is to attach ourselves daily to its progress, to make known its work everywhere and to prove the sound principles which it has acquired during these ten years—a very short period in the history of the world.

We should not like to let such an important day pass without reminding our readers of its meaning: For the first time the various Governments have decided to put an end to war and tackle the problem seriously. For the first time hope can be entertained that wars between nations may soon be a thing of the past like religious strife.

That is the real significance of the 10th January, 1920. Passing works perish; eternal works will last and solidify. History has already entered on a new sphere with the Treaty of Versailles, the departure from what is perishable to that which will last.

J.G.

#### AN INTERESTING CASE.

The "Journal de Genève" reports the following:—The Swiss consul at Seattle had to appear before the police-court to answer a summons for a driving offence. He said that he could not be judged by the State of Washington and that his case would come under the jurisdiction of the Swiss Confederation. The American government has replied that, although being a Swiss subject and a member of the consular service, the delinquent may be judged by the American Federal Court.

#### SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

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

Miss H. Baumann, Zurich: "The Sea." Miss E. Leuenberger, Belp: "A Modern factory in a modern building." Miss Y. Gross, Tramelan: "Out of sight, out of mind." Mr. W. Deuschle, Interlaken: "Interlaken and Bernese Oberland." Mr. O. Kaltbrunner, Zurich: "Circulating Letters." Mr. K. Herzog, Zurich: "Industrial Psychology." Mr. R. Ochsenebein, Fribourg: "Chinatown of San Francisco." Mr. H. Steiner, Olten: "A walk through London." Mr. A. Schenken, Olten: "Swiss Industries." Mr. R. Gausi, Lausanne: "Croydon." Mr. P. Renz, Bâle: "The Game of Chess." Mr. E. Wavre, Neuchâtel: "The Great Naval Conference." Mr. E. Berdoz, Vevey: "History of Shorthand." Mr. H. Lehmann, Solothurn: "Wool Sales."

The debating classes dealt with the following subject:

.. That the Modern Girl is a good house-keeper." Proposer: Miss H. Mange. Opposer: Mr. P. Renz.

On Friday evening, February 7th, the Students of the Swiss Mercantile Society had the privilege of listening to a wonderful lecture by G. P. Gooch, Esq., Litt. D. on "The European Outlook"—a lecture remarkable alike, as a triumph of historical knowledge, and as a masterpiece of rhetorical art.

Mr. Gooch who is undoubtedly an authority on his subject as well as one of the foremost practical historians and economists in England to-day, devoted most of his inspiring lecture to the discussion of the position of the less known countries of Eastern Europe, invoking our deep interest in the political and economic problems of Russia and Poland, as well as in the fates of the lesser countries of S.E. Europe. Unfortunately little time was left for examining the problems of the countries of Western Europe, which Mr. Gooch considers are now more or less stabilised, thanks to the recent peace pacts, and to the work of the League. In conclusion, the lecturer impressively appealed to each member of his audience to be not only a good patriot but also a good European, in the cause of European peace and stability.

After the lecture Mr. Gooch answered several interesting points raised by some of the students, a propos of the European question, and everyone joined in the very enthusiastic applause given in thanks for so remarkable and stirring an address. Further hearty applause followed the vote of thanks proposed by Mr. Levy, the Headmaster of the S.M.S. School. We hope that it may be our good fortune to hear Mr. Gooch again at the S.M.S. School in the near future, for it will be long ere his inspiring words will fade from memories of those fortunate enough to hear him last Friday.

#### AN OPTIMIST!

Monday, 9.30 a.m., student attends Swiss Mercantile School for the first time. Two days later at 11.45 a.m., student calls on Headmaster and complains she has not yet learned English.

C.L.C.

#### UNIONE TICINESE.

It is with deep regret that we announce the death of our esteemed member, Secondo Bianchi, which occurred on the 5th inst., at the age of 62. Mr. Bianchi had been a member of the Unione Ticinese for 35 years, was an ex-President and had served on the Committee on a number of occasions. He always upheld the prestige, honour and interests of the Society and his inexhaustible fund of knowledge was the admiration of all those with whom he came into contact. His departure is keenly felt by his numerous friends. A good number of people attended the funeral service, which took place on the 9th inst., and we were grateful to see among them Monsieur de Bourg and Signor Rezzonico, from the Swiss Legation.

Communicated.

#### SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.

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

Mrs. E. Carson (494), W. Deutsch (482), Th. Bruderer (481), A. Paris (482), P. Bessire (481), C. J. Bernheim (479), C. Baerlocher (482), City Swiss Club (479), Mrs. E. Steiner (479), A. F. Suter (481), A. Rueff (482), W. Glu (482), E. Gassmann (481), E. A. Scheidegger (444), Miss L. Fouvy (442), Miss J. Eugster (433), Miss H. Heierle (481), H. A. Bipp (483), W. Studer (482), J. Smith (444), Th. Schaefer (467), C. Pernsch (483), F. R. Lier (453), U. Schefer (482), G. Heinz (483), J. Hausermann (482), F. Dannmeyer (482).

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#### L. SACCANI

*Late Manager of Gennaros Restaurant wishes to inform his many Swiss friends that he has taken over the management of*

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Saturday, February 22nd, at 7 p.m.

Tickets at 12/6 (incl. Supper), may be obtained from Members of the Committee.

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Dimanche 16 Février, 11 h.—M. le Capitaine BACH, des "Chevaliers de la Paix."

6.30 h.—M. Marcel Pradervand.

7.30 h.—Répétition du Chœur.

Pour tous renseignements concernant actes pastoraux, etc., prière de s'adresser à M. R. Hoffmann-de Visme, 102, Hornsey Lane, N.6 (Téléphone: Archway 1798).

Heure de réception à l'église: le mercredi de 10.30 h. à midi.

#### SCHWEIZERKIRCHE

(Deutschschweizerische Gemeinde)

St. Anne's Church, 9, Gresham Street, E.C.2.  
(near General Post Office.)

Sonntag, den 16. Februar 1930.

11 Uhr vorm.: Gottesdienst und Sonntagschule.

7 Uhr abends: Gottesdienst und Chorprobe.

Sprechstunden: Dienstag 12-1 Uhr in der Kirche.

Mittwoch 5-6 Uhr im "Foyer Suisse."

#### FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Wednesday, February 19th at 8 p.m.—"NOUVELLE SOCIETE HELVETIQUE": Annual General Meeting of the London Group, at 34/35, Fitzroy Square, W.1. All members cordially invited.

Saturday, February 22nd at 7 p.m.—CITY SWISS CLUB: Dinner and Dance, at the May Fair Hotel, Berkeley Square, W.1.

Wednesday, February 26th at 8 p.m.—SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY: Annual General Meeting at Swiss House.

Wednesday, March 5th, at 7.30 p.m.—SOCIETE DE SECOURS MUTUEL: Monthly Meeting at 74, Charlotte Street, W.1.

Tuesday, March 11th—UNIONE TICINESE: Annual Banquet, Ball and Cabaret at The Monico Restaurant, Piccadilly Circus, W.1.

Wednesday, March 12th, at 7 p.m.—SOCIETE DE SECOURS MUTUEL: Committee Meeting at 74, Charlotte Street, W.1.

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