

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1930)

Heft: 447

Rubrik: Swiss Mercantile Society

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 21.02.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

the most modest scale. Again there is no need to become a free patient at a hospital. There are, of course, doctors on the Continent of world-wide reputation and they ask world-wide fees. But the ordinary and perfectly competent specialist does not imply that the patient hesitates for weeks before going to him. It also means that there is no Harley Street, no façade to keep up. In order to have specialised in something, it is not necessary to live in a particular quarter with all the increase in rentals and expenses which that implies. Doctors are necessities. They must be kept within the reach of the many.

In Continental education the question of façade is even more noticeable. Education is not merely a luxury, an extra, something which is best hidden lest your fellows should think you are putting on side. It is a fundamental necessity to the national life. Thus, education is incomparably cheaper than in our own country. The expensive preparatory schools which thrive in England, and which drain the parents to the utmost limits or else force them to give their children an education without the ordinary hall-mark, hardly exist or are at most a foreign importation. On the other hand, there is a good deal less of the exclusiveness which obtains in England whereby all children are brought up to know only their own type, to do the same things, to speak, think, and act in the same way. Much more stress is laid upon learning and it is not the highest quality to be a champion at ski-jumping or running. Continentals admire the stress laid on sport in English schools as productive of an independent type of child, but they continue to realise that knowledge is power and not the disgrace it is almost taught to be in so many English schools.

Façade in English schools is mostly snobishness in its purest form. It is not that special luxuries are provided. Boys, in particular, are often extremely badly looked after, and that at the most expensive type of school, but façade demands that they should have been to a school which leaves its particular brand upon them and which moulds them, not so much to do certain things but not to do a great many others. And even the most intelligent parents hesitate before sending their children to a school which may afterwards be called "crank," as opposed to that in which the façade is of the regulation type.

In France the absence of façade is particularly noticeable with regard to shops. There are, of course, the big shops which everywhere have taken on an international complexion. But there still remain the little unpretentious shops and businesses which, instead of putting their value into façade, put it into their goods. Some of the best things in France are not produced in a shop at all, but in the quarters where the family live. You climb four flights of stairs, very often dark, and at the end of them you find some of the most beautiful lingerie, some of the best dress-making in France. It is enabled to be good because façade has simply not entered into the question. There is no outside show to keep up.

No doubt façade is demanded by the public, which likes things to be obvious. There would not be the fortunes spent on outsides were there no answering response. But the whole question of values becomes thereby extraordinarily mixed. Money is to some extent a measure of things, but in the question of façade it fails altogether. In the matter of schools expensiveness has no relation at all, for the most part, to the advantages obtained. A school is expensive very often because it is the fashion to go there and to have indifferent food and be sent home with a dirty neck. That is to say, parents must ignore the money aspect, even if the schools do not, in order to achieve for their children some intangible quality which is supposed to come from having been there. There is a great deal to be said against a purely academic education, but there seems to be still more against an education of which the greatest merit is perhaps that several little boys live together and educate each other—a process which could be achieved at infinitely less expense to parents did not the question of façade arise.

We have often been called a snobbish nation. There is perhaps no greater evidence of snobbery than our attitude toward the necessities of life. While we grumble, we really like paying for things, really like receiving the regulation hall-mark, really like to be exclusive—in a crowd, it is true. Education, to take only one instance, is rather like a fashionable race meeting—where everything is much more important than the horse. And so we are doctored and lawyered and educated with everything spared, except the expense, and all in the interests of façade.

MURIEL HARRIS.

And although not only Swiss, but all sorts of "Exteriors" are dealt with in this article, I do think it will be a treat for a lot of our readers to read it, and, I hope, *inwardly digest it!*

Alpfahrt-Alpage.

Burton Evening Gazette, 7th May:

Green is now the predominant colour of all lower, and even middle, mountain slopes in Switzerland. Along the shores of the Lake of Geneva aubretia is massed in its purple, hanging from a hundred vineyard walls. Wild narcissi, gentians and a score of other Alpine blooms are colouring the pastures.

These are the obvious natural signs of the passing of winter and spring in the Alps.

But there is another, at first less obvious, sign of the definite arrival of summer; a sign only visible to the tourist who side-tracks the more famous resort and makes straight for those little valley villages which are the true soul of Switzerland.

Now, in the final weeks of spring and the first weeks of summer, the cow herds are taken from the valley pastures, where they have been all winter, and led high into the mountains to graze upon that rich, vividly green grass which lies within a few feet of the lowermost snows.

This time of the alpage, as the trek to the mountains is called, is one of hectic activity for the peasant villages.

It is also a strange time of picturesque rustic ceremony.

Early in the day the herds are assembled from the scattered valley farms which make up a Swiss village. The ascent to the high pastures is staged as a procession, headed by the herdsmen in peasant gala dress of bright embroidery and brass ornaments. In a choir which echoes from the vast surrounding mountains they sing the "Ranz des Vaches," followed by a chorus of yodelling.

All this is a merry and dramatic prelude to months of hard work and isolation for those who accompany the herds. For five months at least the men will be separated from their women folk in the villages below. Until the first snows of autumn signal the time to return their lot is one of monastic remoteness among the peaks of the Alps. Herds must be tended ceaselessly. Herds must be milked and many hundreds of pounds of cheese made for storage in the winter.

About October the return is made to the valleys—with all the herds and all the cheeses.

Then, in the villages the rejoicing lasts for many days.

Fifth Century Frescoes.

According to *The Bulletin and Scots Pictorial* of the 8th inst. an interesting discovery has been made at Bellinzona.

It is stated that the frescoes recently discovered during restorations in the church of the Madonna della Grazie at Bellinzona, the capital of the Swiss canton of Tessin, date from the fifth century and constitute an artistic and historic find of the highest importance. The finest of the paintings is a "King David," in a wonderful state of preservation and of admirable conception and execution. The colours are still as fresh as on the day on which they were laid on the walls of the church 1400 years ago, and the signature of the artist is clear and visible.

Further interesting discoveries are expected, and in view of the opening of the summer tourist season the renovation of the church is being speeded up so that visitors may have an opportunity of seeing the discoveries.

The Paris Correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* had the following item on May 7th:

Records for Year 2180.

"Our scientists, it would appear, are content to make elaborate experiments of which the results will only be known long after they are dead. The Paris Academy of Science has just been officially informed of one such experiment which was begun recently by the Swiss Glacier Commission and which is to last for 250 years.

"The object of the experiment is to determine the exact speed at which certain glaciers move. This is known to be at the rate of only a few inches a year, but scientists want to have it accurately measured. Therefore, metal receptacles resembling shells were buried in the ice at the starting point of various glaciers. Each of these shells contained a scientific record of observations already made concerning the glacier, and the date, hour and place of its burial in the ice. When two and a half centuries hence these shells are found by our descendants at the foot of the glacier, they will no doubt furnish useful information to the scientists of that age.

"An account of the experiment has been duly sealed and deposited in the safe of the Academy, with the note that it is not to be opened until the year 2180."

Well, who knows? by swallowing all sorts of glands, etc., some of us may yet live to be there when those receptacles are being delivered up by the glacier in 2180! I wonder what the income tax will be then?

Doings in Our Colony.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

Once more, gentle reader, I take up my pen to render an account of the doings of the C.S.C. and at the last meeting which was held on Tuesday May 6th at Pagan's Restaurant, the outstanding feature of the evening was the re-appearance for the present Session of "ek" as Reporter. This important item of news will no doubt be received with mixed feelings, but I should like to express my thanks to Uncle Max for having stepped so nobly into the breach during "ek's" absence and I will promise that "ek" will try to be a good little boy in future and not to offend the susceptibilities of Mary or other readers. As a matter of fact I am doubly grateful to Uncle Max, as he has given me an idea. I must confess I found his dope (Anglise prose) rather involved and I think his style might perhaps be copied with advantage. Otherwise nothing very important happened at the meeting. Mr. H. Senni was in the chair in the absence of the President, Mr. C. Chapuis, and presided over the proceedings with undoubted skill and charm. After the usual business of minutes, admissions, resignations, votes of credit had been transacted, Dr. Eckenstein gave a talk about his experiences in America and the impressions he had gained during his short stay in that country. He gave an interesting account of the beach at Daytona, and described the arrangements made for the speed trials and the atmospheric conditions necessary for the beach to be in a good condition. From his remarks, I gathered that the climate of Florida is similar to that of the Riviera, although the vegetation is more luxuriant.

The doctor appears to have had many interesting experiences in the short time at his disposal and it is a pity that he was prevented from gaining more by an illness which obliged him to make the acquaintance of the inside of an American Hospital, but perhaps his stay will not have been altogether in vain, as no doubt he gained useful experience of what it feels like to be a patient. At any rate he told me that he could not have been made more comfortable and he seems to have spent most of his time trying to learn to speak American.

Apparently his most pleasant memories are a visit to a fruit plantation, coloured boxing matches and a tour of New York behind a police escort. I cannot close this account of last meeting without referring to the minutes of the Annual General Meeting which were read by the Secretary. They were a model of clearness and remarkable for completeness of detail. Mr. Zimmerman received the congratulations of the members and well did he deserve them. ck.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY. EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

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

Mr. R. Schaffner, Baden: "Cheap Trips." Mr. A. Arbenz, Genève: "League of Nations." Mr. R. Schwarzenbach, Zurich: "Wine Making." Mr. E. Zbinden, Burgdorf: "Elections in Corsica." Mr. H. Obrist, Tramelan: "The Swiss Watch Trade." Mr. H. Paravicini, Wädenswil: "A Day in Genoa." Mr. A. Holliger, Basle: "A Journey through Italy." Mr. M. Vogt, Aarau: "My Hobby." Miss M. Schweiter, Horgen: "English People." Miss A. Buhmann, St. Gallen: "Venice." Mr. P. Hubmann, Steckborn: "When we had ice on our Lake." Miss G. Wuthrich, Brugg: "Hamlet." Mr. H. Morf, Zurich: "Money." Mr. R. Naef, Zurich: "Paris." Miss E. Walder, Rapperswil: "Rapperswil." Mr. O. Stettler, Langenthal: "The Cotton Crisis." Mr. Rebmann, Spiez: "Swiss Watches." Mr. Nussbaumer, Zug: "Kew Gardens." Miss E. Bezzola, Chur: "My Journey to England."

The debating classes dealt with the following subjects:

"Can Beauty and Brains go together?" Affirmative: Miss F. Huber. Negative: Mr. A. Lindemann.

"Do you believe in the Possibility of United States of Europe?" Proposer: Mr. Arbenz. Opposer: Mr. Niggli.

On Friday May 9th the Students of the S.M.S. listened to a very interesting and instructive lecture on "Some Aspects of London Life" delivered by P. Seaford, Esq., during which lecture, Mr. Seaford showed them, by means of Lantern Slides, the most interesting, although not very widely known, parts of London. At the end of the lecture, Mr. Levy, Headmaster of the S.M.S. School proposed a vote of thanks to the lecturer.

On Saturday May 10th the students visited Kew Gardens under the leadership of one of the Teachers, B. Davis, Esq., B.A. They enjoyed very much the walk by the riverside to Richmond.