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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS



### FEDERAL.

#### SAVOY FREE ZONES.

According to an official communication from the Political Department in Berne no agreement has been reached with France in the above dispute which has now lasted for twelve years. By a tentative judgment the International Court at the Hague had on December 6th, 1930, laid down certain legal aspects of the case inviting the two litigants to resume direct negotiations and fixing July 31st as a time limit. The matter will now again come before the Hague Tribunal for final judgment.

#### THE MARK IN SWITZERLAND.

With a view of removing the difficulties encountered by German tourists in Switzerland to change their money an arrangement has been concluded between the Swiss National Bank and the German Reichsbank. The Swiss National Bank will accept from the hotel proprietors such amounts of Marks which arise through the holiday stay of German nationals; the rate of exchange is 100 Mark for 120 Swiss Francs.

#### A TAX ABATEMENT.

Subject to the ratification of the two respective parliaments an agreement has been concluded between the Swiss delegation negotiating in Berlin and representatives of the German Finance and Foreign ministries. Double taxation particularly where death duties are concerned will thereby be abolished.

#### A "GRAVE" AFFAIR.

A curious case was finally disposed of last week by the Federal Tribunal at Lausanne. Part of the old churchyard of St. Niklaus near Solothurn was recently sold and the new owner commenced building operations in the course of which he came across an old grave; the contents of the latter which evidently belonged to two different individuals were collected and packed into a case and handed to the ecclesiastical authorities for reburial. Some of the remains are said to be those of one Charles Sealsfield, an American writer, who had retired to his estate at "Unter den Tannen" and who died there in 1864. The Solothurn Council revoked the sale of this particular part of the cemetery on the ground that it contained a historical monument the transfer of which it had a right to object to. The new owner naturally appealed against this decision but the Federal Tribunal decided against him.

According to what has recently been published in local papers Charles Sealsfield, about whom we find no record in the ordinary English reference books, was a writer of considerable repute. Walter Scott and Balzac are stated to be his equals. He is believed to have taken French leave from a monastery in Bohemia and gone to America in 1822. He earned his living as a journalist in New York, Paris and London and wrote a number of historical novels. He acquired the estate "Unter den Tannen" near Solothurn where he spent the last five years of his life and where he died at the age of 71. His real name is said to be Karl Anton Postl.

#### EN AUSSCHNITT SCHWEIZER.

The well-known Milanese bookseller and antiquary Ulrico Hoepli, who celebrated his 80th birthday a few months ago, paid recently a short visit to his birthplace Tutwil (Thurgau). He was officially received by two members of the cantonal government; the local choral society and the schoolchildren also assisted in feting their famous countryman.

#### A DISTINCTION.

On the occasion of its 50th anniversary the Society of Chemical Industry in England has nominated Dr. G. Engi, of Basle, an honorary member in recognition of his eminent services in the domaine of chemistry.

### LOCAL.

#### ZURICH.

In a head-on collision at Wallisellen between a lorry and a private car Mr. Rudolf Bachmann, a 54 year old business man of Winterthur, lost his life; the latter's son, who was driving, lies in hospital in a critical condition.

#### BERNE.

A serious accident happened last Sunday morning when the "Altels" section of the S.A.C. were climbing the Lauterbrunner Breithorn; the party of twelve were accompanied by three guides. During the descent one of the guides, Fritz Ogi, slipped over a rock but was held on the rope by the others. Oscar Ogi over-estimating the dangerous position of his brother detached himself from the rope and went to his assistance; he however lost his foothold and fell over a steep stone wall. Both guides who are from Kandersteg escaped with their lives but one of them who had to be transported in an unconscious condition over the glacier lies at the Frutigen hospital in a precarious state.

#### URI.

The children in the canton of Uri can no more employ their Sundays and holidays by gathering the many eatable wild berries which now abound everywhere and taking them home to their parents in the customary baskets. The cantonal authorities have issued an edict forbidding the use of baskets or other suitable vehicles for carrying the berries on Sundays. On ordinary week-days baskets may be used but a licence costing from one to five francs must be obtained from the local revenue office.

#### BASLE.

The latest census of the population of Basle records 156,747 inhabitants.

#### GENEVA.

The collapse of the Banque de Genève in whose wake followed the failure of a firm of private bankers in Basle has brought forth vehement attacks by the socialist party against the management. The socialists further demand the resignation of the whole Conseil d'Etat maintaining that the latter has been negligent in its supervision. In the meantime a defence association has been formed by the depositors and creditors for the protection of their interests.

#### GRISONS.

A finance committee has been formed with the object of collecting funds for the acquisition of the "Klosterhof" in Truns. This hall was built in the second half of the 16th century by the Abbot of Disentis and served as the meeting place of the ancient council called the "Graue Bund." This historic building is at present in private possession; the Federal Council has promised a contribution of Frs. 10,000 if the Grisons government will support the scheme financially.

#### VAUD.

G. G. Mignot-Meyer, the town-clerk of Lausanne, against whom a warrant of arrest has been issued for defalcation and who absconded, has been detained in a small hotel at Grenoble. He is stated to have made a full confession.

#### TICINO.

Official representatives have been made by the Swiss authorities to the Italian government with reference to the severe customs examinations now enforced at Chiasso which are likely to cause a delay in transit and an accumulation of goods. It is stated that all goods are reloaded and that even cases consigned to an inland Italian Customs office are opened and inspected thus occasioning damage in repacking.

#### LUCERNE.

The former National Councillor, Ferdinand Steiner, has died after a short illness, in Malters, at the age of 63; he was a member of the Lower House from 1917 to 1926, and belonged, for a number of years, to the Grosse Rat of the Canton of Lucerne. In business, he was the senior partner of Messrs Steiner Soehne & Co., in Malters, and a leading figure in the Swiss milling industry.

### NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KYBURG.

I listened in to the "News" broadcast from Berne last Sunday, evening and to the Swiss Weather Forecast and gathered that much cloud, occasional bright intervals and now and again a rainy-shower were expected and that the temperature was just about normal, with a slight tendency to rise somewhat.

Thought I, having played golf that afternoon and during my pilgrimage across the links encountered two hefty showers, well, well, the Swiss climate seems to be tout comme chez nous and, although I felt some sympathy for those who are enjoying their holidays over there, I also felt some slight malicious pleasure, a quite heathenish feeling, no doubt. It is funny how the mildest among us—and Kyburg is about as mild a chappie as you can find in a day's wandering—occasionally feel malicious pleasure when thinking of our brethren's misfortunes, what? And when we get a letter from our Editor, saying "here are the gleanings for you to do for next week's issue, I am off tomorrow for my annual Swiss holiday and regret you are not one of the party, but hope to bear up all the same and trust you will see to your column being well filled week by week, while I am having a good time on the Lake of Lucerne," well, as I said, one does feel a wee bit envious! Naturally, our Editor did not write me the above, as I give it, but he thought it and that comes pretty much to the same, does it not?

And I have written the above, so that when he reads this week's issue and reads the above remarks, he will feel conscience smitten and will realise what loyal collaborators we are who keep the paper going while he gathers Alpenrosen and, perchance, fishes for Egli! And thank you, for promising to "Bringen I Eui daenn d'Blume!" And, "sobald I daenn an i der Schwyz bin, so chumeni Eui daenn nah!" Prost!

Now that the dogs days are on us—at least I feel it is about that period—I have to fill in my column as best as I can. I find very little help in the British Press. Swiss Holiday articles are always more or less the same. Besides, they make those who can't go envious and those who are going over, they will find out themselves what it is like. (I think your breakfast this morning did not agree with you, Kyburg? Editor).

"Oh no, Sir," he replied manfully, "It's not that, I assure you. But, I have read some Sunday paper or another yesterday and therein found an article by some wisecrack which told me that your really fine journalist or story teller—and aren't they all?—is he who writes just as he would talk, who does not elaborate, but writes simply and unaffectedly and I am trying to do so."

Well, most writers and journalists pretend in their articles and books to be much better men than they are. Witness Jean Jacques Rousseau. I have to name poor old Jacques, because of the laws of libel! But, thank Heaven, Kyburg is not like that. Kyburg writes how he actually feels and thinks and if he writes with a slightly vinegary sauce, as it were, you must remember that it is MONDAY, that the weather outlook is unsettled, that the temperature is on the coldish side for the time of the year and that there is still much work to be done, because on Tuesday Kyburg has to take a day off for health's sake. Anyhow, health, like patriotism and religion provides a fine peg on which to hang excuses of all sorts. Some rude friends of mine, envious, of course, will tell me on Wednesday when I reappear in our carriage on the "early" train, well and did you get many birdies and when I reply to them that I took a day off for the sake of my health, they will guffaw, yes guffaw, not laugh like gentlemen, but GUFFAW like inmates of Whipsnade or like whipper-snappers! Yes Sir, jealous they will be and why? Because they have not thought of that excuse themselves, because they go about boasting of their splendid health, instead of looking over-worked and thereby being able to convince everybody that must be convinced that what they need is a day off.

Meanwhile, work is irksome. Coming events cast their shadows before them and a day off is apt to spoil the previous day for work owing to anticipatory feelings and to mar the following day owing to sudden discoveries of (a) why one fluffed that drive at the fifth and (b) what the point of that story was which left one so cold when Smith told it at the 19th.