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# The Swiss Observer

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## FEDERAL.

### THE FIRST OF AUGUST BADGES.

The sale of this year's First of August Badges and postcards has resulted in an amount of about Frs. 24,000 being handed over to the special fund in favour of the mountain population whose lands have been damaged (without recourse to insurance) through landslides, floods and cloud-bursts. Nearly 20,000 badges have been sold in addition to about 14,000 postcards.

### SWISS HORSES AT THE DUBLIN SHOW.

As in former years a Swiss team has been competing at the Royal Dublin Horse Show. Col. Ziegler (Thun) was again in charge of our équipe which was made up of Major Kuhn, Lieut. Col. Mettler and Lieut. Dégallier. Of the six horses two had to be left behind at Holyhead owing to sickness.

In the International Cavalry Jumping, the Swiss secured fourth place with 30 faults being beaten by the English, Swedes and Belgians.

### NEW ALPINE CLIMBS.

A new, i.e., a so far never attempted descent from the Jungfrau has been effected by the two guides Christian Rubi and Ernst Gertsch. They returned from the summit to the Silberhorn over the eastern flank near the Rothbrett glacier down the Schwarzmönch into the Lauterbrunnen valley.

The Matterhorn has for the first time been conquered by what is called the North Wall. This is the tremendously steep northern side over which on July 14th, 1865, Lord Douglas with his three companions fell to their doom after they had successfully negotiated the first ascent. The distinction of this hazardousfeat belongs to the two brothers Schmid from Munich, who, after eighteen hours' perilous climbing in bad weather reached the "shoulder" where they bivouacked in the Solvay Refuge.

(See special article).

### BANK FUSION.

Subject to the approval of the respective shareholders an amalgamation had been arranged between the Comptoir d'Escompte de Genève and the Union Financière de Genève. The existing share capital of these two institutions amounting to Frs. 110 million will be supplemented by a further issue of Frs. 40 million, which will be taken up as to 10 million locally in Geneva and 15 million each by the Crédit Suisse in Zurich and the Swiss Banking Corporation in Basle.

### HONOURING A SWISS IN SERVIA.

A bust was unveiled last Sunday in one of the public parks in Belgrade in memory of the Lausanne Professor Dr. Richard Archibald Reiss who was an officer in the Servian army and had taken a prominent part in the fight for freedom. He was also instrumental in framing the present constitution of Jugoslavia.

### SWISS EXPORT TRADE.

The figures for the month of July just published show a drop of nearly 30% in the value of export as compared with the same period last year. Agricultural products, machines and watches are the chief sufferers. As regards imports it is noteworthy that the importation of boots and shoes—one of our staple industries—has considerably increased: in fact, Switzerland is at present buying more shoes from abroad (91,830 pairs) than we are exporting (84,069). There was also a remarkable increase in the importation of beer and wine during the last month.

### SWISS GOVERNMENT TO HAVE FOURTH OFFICIAL LANGUAGE.

Not satisfied with having French, German and Italian all as official languages, the Swiss Government is about to add a fourth to this list. This new official language is known as

"Rhetoromanche"—"Romanche" for short—and is regarded as Switzerland's only native language.

It is of Romance origin, and is believed to have been originally the tongue of the fugitive Tuscan who sought refuge in what is now Switzerland at the time of the first Roman Emperors.

"Romanche" is spoken principally in the Canton of Grisons, and specially in the Engadine, but the Canton of Geneva has decided to create a special chair at the University of Geneva for furthering the study and use of the language.

### THE ZONES DISPUTES.

According to a communication issued by the Hague Tribunal Sept. 30th, has been fixed as the last date by which further written observations have to be handed in by the two parties. It is anticipated that the third—and presumably the last—phase of this unsatisfactory controversy will come before the International Court some time in October.

### LOCAL.

One of the small steamers on the lake of Zurich struck Mr. Adolf Hennes who was swimming near the shore; he has now died from his injuries. Mr. Hennes was a music teacher and solo-cellist at the Tonhalle orchestra.

Groaning noises from a roof gutter attracted the attention of passers-by one morning last week. Upon investigation a chimney sweeper was discovered in an exhausted state. He had spent the previous evening in a drinking bout, but instead of going home force of habit had directed his steps to a roof top; there he was overtaken by the cloud-burst that visited Zurich last Wednesday night. How he had managed to retain his hold all the time is not reported.

### LUCERNE.

A new boat was commissioned last Saturday on the Lake of Lucerne. The "Mythen"—which is its name—is driven by two Maybach motors of 150 H.P. each and is capable of carrying 200 passengers. The body and interior is constructed of "Anticorodal," a new aluminium alloy manufactured by the Neuhausen Company.

### VALAIS.

As a protest against the imposition of Frs. 60,000 towards the cost of constructing a new road from Salvan to Finhaut the whole of the communal council of Finhaut has resigned.

### ST. GALL.

A catastrophe of coal-gas poisoning has been prevented through the prompt action of the staff at the station of Lichtensteig and neighbouring doctors. A gang of 42 workmen were laying cables in Wasserfluh tunnel between Lichtensteig and Brunnadern when they were overcome by gas fumes. One of the men managed to crawl out of the tunnel and give the alarm. They were all saved in the nick of time though some of them had to pass the night in the local hospital.

### VAUD.

Through some defect in the steering gear the car of Mr. Henry Hulman, a chemist in Cossigny, dashed against a rock and became a total wreck. His wife and a friend, Madame Bastardoz, were killed on the spot whilst Mr. Hulman and Mr. Albert Vionnet, the manager of a local savings bank, contracted serious injuries.

The unclosed barrier at a level crossing was the cause of a serious accident that took place in the early hours of Sunday morning near Bussigny. The party were returning from Lausanne and as the car was crossing the railway line in the darkness of the night it was caught by a passing goods train. The occupants consisted of four young people who had been to a cinema performance in Lausanne. Elisabeth Profit of Ecublens was killed on the spot whilst the other three—Angèle Richard from Ecublens, Aimé Despends and Marcel Celelough from Bussigny—were transported to the hospital in Lausanne with serious injuries.

### TICINO.

A lively skirmish took place last week in the valley of the Muggio on the Italo-Swiss frontier. A band of about 40 smugglers on being discovered by Italian frontier guards and asked to "surrender" commenced firing their revolvers. The shooting bout continued until the Italians received re-enforcements when the smugglers retired into Swiss territory. One frontier guard was killed and others received minor injuries.

## SWITZERLAND IN SUMMER.

I have travelled in many lands and I cannot but admit that of them all Switzerland forces itself on the memory in a way that is all its own. Rivers and streams everywhere: rivers that have been held fast in the winter's frozen grip are set free in summer to rove and babble over a sunny land, amid imposing scenery of mountain and lake and charming rural landscapes, studded with quaint houses nestling beneath glaciers and snow-fields, so high up that thaw never touches them, and yet the whole within so limited a compass that every part is accessible.

The upper regions of the Alps are clothed in perpetual snow, of such a depth that great slow-moving fields of ice flow towards the lower altitudes in late spring and through the summer.

Most of Nature's thawing is done below 6,000 ft., though in the sheltered upper valleys the higher temperature helps a little during the warmest hours of a warm day. A good place to observe this phenomenon is in any of the passes at this altitude. I have stood on the Rhone Glacier and seen water trickle away beneath me to the Mediterranean, while a few miles away the Rhine was discernible, a small mountain stream, running down the side of the Oberalp Pass; and a little further south in the Upper Engadine rises the Inn, which joins the Danube and runs into the Black Sea. To the south also, just on the other side of the Maloja hill, there are streams which join the Po and thence flow into the Adriatic. So that you have rivers running into such far-apart points as the Black Sea and the North Sea, fed by Swiss snowfields that melt within a few miles of each other.

The charm of the lowlands is no less striking, especially when the vista is unobscured by summer mists and there is a tall mountain range within the panorama. Then, the snowfields, peaks and darkened precipices of the higher Alps form an endless vista of changes and colour effects as the sun advances from crest to crest, lighting up the successive slopes and revealing new details to every examination, or, in the evening, as the sun sinks behind a glowing crimsoned mountain, set high above a darkened range of foothills, one feels that awe which only Nature's handiwork can produce.

The cities are in no way behind the country in their appeal to beauty lovers. Berne on a sunny day in spring or summer is an enchanting town. Through the translucent atmosphere of early morn, when the aerial mists from the River Aar rise over the highly coloured foothills, and beyond, far away, can be seen the giants of the Bernese Oberland the colour of brick dust, against the clearest of skies. While through the soft air comes in wondrous harmony the music of the great bells of Berne. There are no bells like them in Switzerland, except those that ring the matin and vesper hours at Soleure, which have a tone that is theirs alone.

Berne is the capital of Switzerland and also of the canton stretching from the French frontier on the Jura to the crest of the Oberland range. There is a pleasure in the streets, with their fountains, and the arcaded houses that slope outward. The fountains seem to be taken from old-fashioned children's books, with their columns, figures and shafts of sparkling water. Some of them are painted, giving a brightening effect to the darker tones of the quaint houses. Story-book towers stride the main streets, and especially the Zeittglocken Tower, with its famous mediæval clock, takes you back many centuries. The city is surrounded on three sides by the Aar, flowing at the foot of high banks and crossed by two high-level road bridges. Everything is neatly kept, and bright and spotless, and the public buildings, both ancient and modern, are worthy of the history of the place.

There is one statue which has always excited the interest of the stranger. It dates from the sixteenth century, when feeling ran high between Jew and Gentile over a report that the Jews had sacrificed a child. The statue represents an ogre wearing the conventional Jewish dress and hat, with one hand holding a child while the other holds a bag from which other children are trying to escape.

There is no particular brilliance in Berne, no magnificent palaces teach us our place in life, but rather rows and rows of simple, countrified houses line the picturesque streets through which two modern streams of traffic flow, the public and private vehicles. Down the hill from the Minster