

**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:** - (1931)  
**Heft:** 515  
  
**Artikel:** Two alpine seasons [continued]  
**Autor:** Gaunt, H.C.A.  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-694825>

### **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:** 03.02.2026

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

Our last expedition was painted in gloomier colours. Under a leaden sky we started for the Petersgrat at 4.10, and at 5.10 it was snowing. With all the inconsequence of human beings we sat down to discuss prospects, and decided that it was too early to return to bed, but that we could not climb the Tschingelhorn, but merely cross the Petersgrat; a weak resolution it seemed at the time, but the reverse later on. We breakfasted out of the falling flakes under a stone, and pressed upwards in growing mist to the end

of the tiny rock ridge which marks the crossing point. Not until we had crossed did we realise what our project meant. We were in a new world: the violent wind which so far the bulk of the Petersgrat had kept from us, burst in all its force, whirling the snow in our faces, making it difficult to breathe, and almost impossible to see. Our objective, the Muthorn Hut, was normally only half an hour away, and with a wall of rock behind us as a guide we felt safe even if compelled to retreat. There was danger from crevasses, for the mist was so thick it was impossible to see them until one foot was on their brink. After half an hour we were counselling retreat, when we saw a party of thirteen persons coming up from the hut, and after seeking our direction from them, followed their footsteps. Five minutes later the last traces of their steps had disappeared, and merely a smooth snow slope remained where but a few minutes before an army had passed, so violent was the storm. But now we were more confident, and in a few moments through a sudden break in the mist we caught sight of the hut not 100 yards away. Ten minutes later we were inside, welcomed by a Swiss party, and for an hour and a half ate and drank our ample provisions. Our troubles, however, were not yet over; for we had still to descend the Tschingel Glacier. I make a claim to unusual wisdom in prolonging our eating and drinking until the mists cleared a little and gave us a fine run down the broad, snow-covered centre where a mist would have been decidedly unpleasant. Actually it caught us lower down among crevasses, and it was of the pea-soup variety. Not only was it impossible to see any further away than two yards, but in the complete whiteness of snow and greyness of atmosphere it was impossible for the leader to tell where his next step would land him. The eye has nothing on which to focus. I now tried an experiment I had heard of, rolling a small snowball and throwing it as a mark in front. This, though a slow method of procedure, was helpful, and we soon arrived among rocks where normal eyesight returned again. Down we plunged, cut off from the rear, and with only a slender knowledge of the right way off the glacier beyond a general direction. Once an enormous wall loomed up in front, beneath which we correctly passed; and once a towering and totally unknown icepeak grew out of the mist; it proved to be a serac of no great height. At last we reached the moraine, under the mist caught sight of the path, and hurriedly flung ourselves upon it, safe after an anxious hour. So the mountains had reminded us just at the end that their majesty, even their attraction, lies not only in calm and sunlit loveliness, but in the anger of storm and mists. Musing over the circumstances of this, our last expedition, we descended the green ledges of the valley to Lauterbrunnen.

H. C. A. Gaunt.

In Contemporary Review, July 1931.

## SWISS SURPRISES.

### CURIOSITIES IN HISTORY.

History has its vagaries as well as nature, and on the screen of one little country we shall focus some events which to-day seem almost fantastic. Switzerland is full of surprises, both in scenery and in story. That is what gives it attraction for the tourist and interest for the historian. What it hides round the corner lures one on. If the views of the unexpected from its heights evoke wonder, not less do the marvels in its annals.

Its centrality compensates for its smallness. With Europe as a circumference, the pressure from so many different points has given odd twists to its history. Scotland and Switzerland have much in common, as we shall see. They are like in this, that if they were spread out their size would no longer be a reproach. Both, however, prefer altitude to latitude, and this applies to character as well! Yet this was not always the case. There was one exception, and we shall begin with this strange tragedy, which was not without its grim humour.

#### Tired of the Mountains.

To the modern tourist it seems astonishing that people could ever grow tired of these snow-capped peaks. Yet one can have too much even of a good thing. It was in the days long before winter sports were thought of, when icy slopes had not become gold mines for their owners; and it all came about through a Swiss tourist of that time. His name was Helicon, and he lived up to its first syllable in unconsciously preparing the abyss into which he unwittingly plunged his whole race. He took a pilgrimage to Rome before such pilgrimages were fashionable. It would be about the year 115 B.C. He came back with traveller's tales. He told the Helvetii what they were missing, and that is a sure way to create discontent. The mountains lost their glamour, and their inhabitants grew restless. The heaven worked. Curiosity to see what was beyond their icy barriers grew apace. The Swiss, to whom tourists were in later times to bring fortune, experienced misfortune by becoming tourists themselves.

# EUROPEAN & GENERAL EXPRESS CO. LTD.

Head Office—37, UPPER THAMES STREET, LONDON, E.C.4. Tel.: Central 9581 Extension 17  
West End Office—15, POLAND STREET, W.1. Tel.: Gerrard 8560

We Specialise in removals and also recommend our fast services for conveyance of your luggage, private effects and merchandise.

We supply estimates for removals and rates for luggage, etc., free of charge and without obligation.

If you have any dogs, horses or other livestock, let us handle it.

PERSONAL ATTENTION IS OUR GUARANTEE.

They set out on their sight-seeing *en masse*, and in their first enthusiasm swept Lucius Cassius and his Roman legions out of their way. It was a different matter when they encountered the Consul Marius at Aix. The remnant which escaped went home to their mountains chastened, but not cured. Nearly fifty years passed, and the fever for travel broke out again. This time they made deliberate preparations. For several years they stored up corn, and manufactured weapons. Transport waggons were built and cattle collected. Then when all was ready they said good-bye to their snowy summits, and burned their homes so that they might not be tempted to return, and, taking their wives and children with them, started out into the world, four hundred thousand strong.

The moment was inopportune; for another Dictator had arisen greater even than Marius, Julius Cæsar. He had no patience with discontented people; besides, the Helvetii acted as a buffer state between the Roman Republic and the fierce tribes of the North. He made one of his most rapid marches, built a bridge over the Aar in a day, and headed them off, and taught them in his severest manner the lesson of contentment. Little more than a quarter of their numbers survived that lesson, and marched back to rebuild their homes and settle down amongst their mountains, cured. Henceforth if they could not go out into the world they would bring the world to them, which they are doing to-day.

#### The Scots Shape Switzerland.

We are not surprised at the Scots turning up anywhere. They are more restless than the Swiss, and have not been taught the lesson of contentment! What we are apt in our modesty to forget is what Europe owes us. We remember with gratitude what Switzerland did for us in the days of the Reformation, when it sheltered our exiles. But after all that was but a pay-back. As long ago as the sixth century we reached out a helping hand to our brethren of the mountains. In 590 A.D. the restless Scot left the North of Ireland and the Western Islands to reform Europe. The success of these Culdee missionaries was only equalled by their daring. They entered Switzerland about 610 A.D., and proceeded in their rough and ready way to put things right. They smashed the idols of Odin and burned his temples, and calmly faced the fury of the enraged pagans. They suffered, but stuck to their task; and the result was a new Switzerland. Saint Gallus has left his shadow in the Abbey of St. Gallen. They did more than Christianise—they stamped their freedom-loving character on the religious communities they founded. These fostered that spirit in later years, and bred that love of liberty which inspired the Swiss in their heroic struggle against tyranny. Bannockburn had its reflection in Morgarten. There was more than coincidence of date between these two battles. It was the spirit of the old Culdees bearing fruit on Swiss and Scottish soil.

#### Pioneers of Peace.

History repeats itself. It is not only to-day that Switzerland has become the home of the peace movement. Geneva is merely following Lausanne, and that is an old story. The League of Nations, and the Conference for Disarmament, are the up-to-date methods for reaching the goal which was almost attained nine hundred years ago. The Swiss then introduced the thin edge of the wedge—though to tell the truth it was fairly broad—and if only they could have driven it home war would have been a thing of the past. I am not sure but that they were on the right lines. Their plan only required a little extension, and they would have been able to beat the sword into the plowshare. In 1036 A.D. Hughes, Bishop of Lausanne, convoked a Synod of Bishops, and issued an edict forbidding, under penalty of excommunication, all acts of war between Wednesday evening and the following Monday morning. If only he could have included Tuesday the trick was done. To such a noble effort it is a pity that the third day in the week proved an obstacle. Mars managed still to keep his foot in, and so prevent the door being slammed in his face. I hope that when the nine hundredth anniversary of that attempt takes place the world will honour Switzerland for its lead. Hughes may have got his ideas from the Arabs, who have close periods for the slaughter of men, and have set apart four months in which war is forbidden. All we have got to do now is to revive that old ban, make it universal, and include Tuesday!

#### The Clouds Lift.

The mountains which used to be a terror have now become an asset; they have transformed fear into fortune. As late as 1387 six bold men were sentenced in Lucerne to years of imprisonment for having ventured to climb Mount Pilatus; for by this act they were supposed to have disturbed the spirit of Pontius Pilate, which, after roaming restlessly over sea and land, had found a home in the depths of the lake on the mountain. It was considered of the utmost importance that such an evil ghost should not be roused from its slumbers; and no wonder the good citizens of Lucerne shuddered when they heard of the trespass of their townsmen. With Pilate starting again on his roamings, who would be safe? To-day, when I see a giddy party of tourists starting with laughter and jokes to ascend that peak, I tremble at the fate which might befall them if the Burgomaster of Lucerne in 1387 could but lay his hands upon them! It was only when the Continent was reopened after the battle of Waterloo that the mountains of Switzerland came into their own. To-day the sons of the ancient Helvetii have no cause to seek an El Dorado outside the confines of their own country. Their despised birthright has brought them gold from the ends of the earth.

#### The Scotsman.

Rev. A. G. Mackinnon, D.D.

## EIN- UND AUSFUHR VON SCHUHWAREN DER SCHWEIZ IM ERSTEN HALBJAHR 1931.

(Korr.) Die Einfuhr von Schuhwaren nach dem mit eigenen Schuhfabriken reichlich versorgten Schweiz. Wirtschaftsgebiet ist im ersten Halbjahr 1931 trotz der stark verminderten Aufnahmefähigkeit des Marktes nur um rund 50.000 Paare gegenüber dem ersten Halbjahr 1930 zurückgegangen, während gegenüber dem ersten Halbjahr 1929 eine Mehreinfuhr von über 250.000 Paaren vorliegt.

#### Die Totaleinfuhr beträgt:

1. Halbjahr	Paare	Wert in Fr.
1929	1.290.179	10.391.832
1930	1.614.214	13.138.470
1931	1.557.382	11.610.943

Bei diesen Zahlen sind Kautschukschuhe (Uberschuhe), wie sie in der Schweiz nicht hergestellt werden, mit in die Berechnung gezogen, da nach der vorliegenden Nomenklatur des schweizerischen Zolltarifes eine reinliche Ausscheidung dieser Warengattung nicht möglich ist. Der kleine Rückgang in der Einfuhr ist auf die verminderte Einfuhr aus Frankreich zurückzuführen, während die Einfuhrmengen aus Deutschland und der Tschechoslowakei eine starke Vermehrung aufweisen. Es sind eingeführt worden aus:

1. Halbj.	Deutschland		Tschechoslowakei	
	Paare	Wert in Fr.	Paare	Wert in Fr.
1929	429.565	4.744.109	123.215	1.639.830
1930	679.153	6.835.103	158.669	2.217.850
1931	683.877	5.087.008	325.129	3.898.153

Die Ausfuhr konnte sich auf der vorjährigen Höhe halten und ist sogar unter die Zahlen von 1929 zurückgefallen.

#### Die Totalausfuhr beträgt:

1. Halbjahr	Paare	Wert in Fr.
1929	972.599	18.183.460
1930	1.062.064	19.452.859
1931	941.519	15.739.996

Während die Ausfuhr nach England und Frankreich in einem kleinen Umfange gesteigert werden konnte, ist die Ausfuhr nach den übrigen Ländern infolge der verminderten Kaufkraft dieser Märkte und der erhöhten Zollschränken zurückgegangen. Einen besonders starken Rückgang (von 150.000 auf 80.000 Paar) zeigt die Ausfuhr nach den Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika. Dieser Ausfall ist auf den im Juni 1930 eingeführten Schuhzoll von 20 Prozent zurückzuführen, der einigermaßen dadurch kompensiert wird, dass im Herbst 1930 die Firma Bally in den U.S.A. einen eigenen Betrieb übernommen hat, der inskünftig auch als Stütze für den schweizerischen Import in die U.S.A. von Wert sein dürfte.