

The third international silk congress

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mountains, the other two provide enough power to carry the machine and ten passengers to a safe landing ground.

The headquarters of the new Alpine Service are at Zurich and at the new aerodrome at Lucerne.

I wonder how long it will be ere ordinary life-insurance policies cover flying risks?

United States and Swiss Watchmakers:

Much indignation is being aroused in Swiss watch-making circles by the systematic efforts which are being made on behalf of American competitors to induce really first-class watchmakers to leave Switzerland for the United States. Not only are offers extremely tempting, but every facility is assured in respect of migration and quota regulations. This action, taking place as it does at a time when increased American duties on Swiss watches are being put forward in Washington, is being criticized very severely. It is naturally impossible for the Confederation to prevent Swiss subjects from going to whatever country offers them the greatest advantage for the exercise of their trade or profession, even if by so doing they contribute to the decline of an important industry, but in this particular case it is alleged that the activities of American agents, although exceedingly discreet, are contrary to the provisions of the Swiss law governing emigration.

And now, to wind up, I have an article especially for the Ladies and I am sure they will be interested, although their husbands may not thank me for publishing it. However, it may come handy even for them, inasmuch as it may help them to select their Christmas Presents for the chief sharer of their daily joys and troubles.

Morning, Noon and Night in Switzerland.

Daily News, 25th Nov.

Many women on their first visit to Switzerland lumber themselves up with too many heavy things which are not needed. The sun can be very warm in snowy regions and as one is in continual movement it is light-weight woollies that are required, and not heavy clothes that are most tiring.

The new angora and fleecy jumpers in delightful designs and colours, are made expressly for winter sports, and the well cut suede cloth skirts have just the correct swing and do not blow about in ungainly fashion with the wind. Another advantage with such clothes is, that they can be cleaned by merely sponging, and anyone who is a winter sports devotee will realise what a boon that is.

The popular colours vary with each season, and where mustard yellow, bright blues and pillar box red were seen on every hand a year or so back, now there is a leaning towards black and white, a deeper red, marine blue and a glistening copper which is exceptionally becoming.

The caps have changed also, the beret in all kinds of materials and even fur now takes pride of place, also the American dinky cap which had such a vogue on the French plages this summer.

Scarves are much bigger and longer just now and some are attached to the cap. With scarves as with all the other outdoor winter sports clothes, designs are in the modern cubist style and of many colours.

When the wants for skating, ski-ing, etc., are supplied, one turns to ordinary outdoor wear, which is equally important, as there are many expeditions planned and lunch parties to go to by motor and the choice is mainly tweeds.

Dinner and dance frocks are a big item in the trousseau, as the hotels in the more popular Swiss resorts are like English country houses and parties of all kinds are always being arranged, so a good deal of change is needed.

That there are all sorts of things to be seen, heard and otherwise witnessed in Switzerland is evident from the following, entitled

Glacier That Moaned:

Daily Mail 24/10/29.

What is it like to be caught by a series of violent thunderstorms on one of the highest Alps is told by that well-known climber, Mr. F. S. Smythe, in his book, *Climbs and Ski Runs* (Blackwood, 21s.), the pages of which are replete with thrills. The mountain on which he encountered the storm was the Schreckhorn, and the coming of the storm was preluded by—

A weird greenish glow . . . The plain of Bern was drowned in a green haze.

They were only 500-ft. from the summit when the trouble began:

Every few seconds the lightning struck the ridge a few feet above us with a rending, tearing BANG! After one particularly brilliant flash that flamed all round us, accompanied by a terrific report, there was another crash and a mass of rock—dislodged by the lightning—fell to the left of us.

After an hour's bombardment the storm abated and they fled down some small distance when once more—

The storm was upon us in a blinding *tourmente* of snow and hail, snarling wind and crashing thunder. . . . There was a blinding

glare and a terrible explosion. I received a stunning blow on the head as if I had been sandbagged. For a second or so I was completely knocked out.

The wind rose to such a pitch that the party "were in imminent danger of being blown off the mountain." For three hours they were in the most deadly peril when the "wind suddenly moderated," and they escaped.

Two strange experiences on the Brenva ridge of Mont Blanc are recounted. At a bivouac above the Brenva Glacier, while brewing tea—

We were startled to hear three long-drawn moans come up from the Brenva Glacier. Each moan was several seconds in duration, and seemed expressive of the utmost agony. They were inhuman in tone and yet unlike any mechanical noise or syren that we had ever yet heard. I can offer no explanation. Glacier ice under pressure makes curious noises. . . .

THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL SILK CONGRESS.

The third International Silk Congress was held in Zurich from September 12th. till September 14th. under the presidency of Mr. Erienne Fougère, the well-known Lyon industrialist. After Paris and Milan a Swiss town was to become the seat of the International Confederation that counts among its members delegates from all the principal European States interested in the silk industry.

The choice of Switzerland and of the town of Zurich in particular was undoubtedly determined by the desire to do homage to Zurich, heart of Swiss trade and industry. Zurich, the Swiss economic metropolis, occupies a rank equal to that of the most important European silk-dealing centres. The patent of nobility of the Zurich silk trade testifies of quite an imposing age since silk-weaving has been recorded as far back as the 13th. century. But it was not until the middle of the 16th. century that silk industries (spinning, silk-throwing, weaving, etc.) and the silk trade in general became really prosperous and rapidly acquired an international renown.

For a long time the silk industry was jealously monopolized by the burghers of the town of Zurich. The 19th. century witnessed the introduction of factories and soon after many large silk firms were founded in Zurich which helped to enrich the city and made themselves appreciated abroad.

The third International Silk Congress was sure to find in Zurich a stimulating atmosphere to perform its work. The order of the day was heavily charged comprising most varied subjects which ranged from the breeding of silk-worms to the sale of fabrics. During three days of strenuous and closely organized work, the Congress was able to successfully conclude its work which consisted, firstly, in solving various problems already treated in the course of former sessions and, secondly in taking fresh steps necessary for the development of the present international situation. A detailed account of the results obtained during the Congress is far too lengthy to be given here, we will, therefore, mention only the principal points.

In the first place, the Congress completed a codification of international rules for the sale of raw and worked silks, a result which received the marked approval of all. The work undertaken by the former assemblies has been ended and it is presented to the public in book form, comprising 100 pages of code relating to the unification of international usages which varied, previously, from one district to another. The date for the enforcement of these regulations has been fixed on January 1st. 1930, and they are to be adopted on trial until the next International Congress.

A solution was also found of the problem connected with the limitation in the loading of fabrics. The Congress set up certain regulations in this line and decided to create a guarantee-mark to be applied to goods treated according to these regulations. The International Silk Federation is to be the owner of the mark and its application is to remain optional for a year, after which period it can be made compulsory if judged advisable.

As the Swiss silk industry owes its prosperity largely to its export trade, special attention was paid to the efforts made to unify conditions of payment for the sale of fabrics. A committee was charged to present to the associations of all countries interested a uniform regulation, in order to obtain any eventual counter-proposition or suggestions. As soon as this regulation will have been accepted by the different States, it will be recommended by the Federation.

S.I.T.

Modernism in the Alps.

By HOWARD ROBERTSON, F.R.I.B.A., S.A.D.G.
The Architect and Building News.

How difficult it is to trust our judgment where novelty is concerned! There is so much in habit, in what the eye is accustomed to. The new shocks at first, unless it is preceded by preparatory introduction in the form of a gentle transition. And yet how rapidly our first astonishment is dissipated, how completely we assimilate new forms which have some basis in reason.

We well remember the controversy which raged round the building of the British Medical Association in the Strand, enriched by Epstein's sculpture, and the milder excitement created by Mr. Belcher in his Piccadilly Insurance building, both of which were prophetic of a changing attitude towards architectural expression. Yet to-day these buildings are scarcely noticed, and if they were might conceivably be judged as old-fashioned. Sculpture passes through the same phases. Carpeaux, whose group "La Danse" in front of the Opéra in Paris was besmirched with ink, is now amongst the academicians of his art. Bourdelle, who has just died, was almost derided when his friezes on the Champs-Élysées Theatre were unveiled, and yet to-day there is talk in France of a posthumous and very tardy official recognition of his place amongst a trio of leaders in sculpture. Epstein's Rima is still in process of being tarred and feathered by the ignorant, though it has become so softened by increasing public understanding that many visitors enjoy it without realising that it had the honour of being publicly condemned by a President of the Royal Academy, coincident with a demonstration held in front of it by a disappointed artist, who frightened more birds in two days than Rima in a life-time.

And now we have the same process in regard to very modern architecture. For better or worse, what is loosely termed "Corbusier stuff" is becoming in many countries quite a commonplace. Le Corbusier, like every other man of talent, did not so much invent as crystallise ideas. He collected, and pushed to a very logical conclusion, certain scattered germs of thought which were held by various coteries of architects and laymen. He is a little too logical in fact, and therefore runs counter to human nature. But he has exerted, and is exerting, a powerful influence in Russia and Central Europe, and while we here have been discovering Sweden, the Swedish have discovered Le Corbusier. We do not say this is good; it is merely a fact.

Le Corbusier, and no doubt others who think along parallel lines, has also reacted on the modern architecture of Switzerland. This is the more comprehensible since he is of Swiss origin and has built in Switzerland. That, no doubt, is why a quotation from his work, *Towards a New Architecture*, slips easily into place as the text of the introduction to a very interesting little book which is devoted to what is even to-day quite a unique example of modern architectural design.

The book is entitled *Neue Wege im Hotel Bau*, and is published by Orell Füssli, of Zürich and Leipzig, at the modest sum of 3 Swiss francs. Its subject is the consideration, in a brief but attractive and comprehensive form, of the architectural ideas which have found expression in two hotels which, though modest in size, claim attention for the boldness and originality of their treatment. A treatment which gains added relief from the fact that it is still an unfamiliar spectacle in a setting of Swiss mountains. The author of the book is Dr. Walter Amstutz, himself connected with an old family of *hôtels*, which is an assurance that the reading matter, though slight in bulk, is written with a thorough understanding of the subject.

Dr. Amstutz is not addressing himself either to architects or to hotel-keepers, but to all those whose appetite for travel has been blunted by contact with that type of dear and uncomfortable hotel accommodation which includes the tasteless curtains and floor coverings, the sofa which invites not ease, the chair on which one does not care to sit; in other words, to the general travelling public.

He begins by a survey of the modern tendency towards the rational outlook in design, the objectives of which are the simplicity, the economy, the logical planning which were first dictated by present-day conditions, and which have since been elevated to the position of desiderata on their own merits. He points out the importance in this scheme of things to the element of standardisation, the advantages from a practical standpoint of the repetition of well-designed standard articles of equipment and furniture, following a principle which can be applied to buildings as it has been applied to most branches of commercial activity.

The origin of two new buildings in the Bernese Oberland (Hotels Alpina & Edelweiss) turns on a disastrous fire which occurred in Mürren in the autumn of 1926, in which both these hotels, which, though independent, adjoined each other, were burned down. It was decided to rebuild, and the same architect was chosen for both, a very

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