

Notes and gleanings

Objektyp: **Group**

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

Band (Jahr): - **(1929)**

Heft 386

PDF erstellt am: **24.09.2024**

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NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By J.H.B.

A Swiss Poet's Fairy Note.

Reviewing a translation of selected poems of Carl Spitteler, A.D. writes in the *Daily Herald* (Feb. 27) :—

Carl Spitteler, the German-Swiss poet, is presented to English readers through the medium of a number of excellent translations by Ethel Colburn Mayne and James F. Muirhead, published by Putnam's Sons, Ltd., under the title *Selected Poems of Carl Spitteler* (price 10s. 6d.).

Lyrics, ballads, parables, and extracts from the poet's two epics, *Prometheus the Long-Suffering* and *Olympian Spring*, are included in this well-produced volume, and the selection fairly represents a poet of genius. It will be difficult, however, for any student of contemporary European poetry to accept M. Romain Rolland's enthusiastic praise of Spitteler as "the greatest poet of the age."

The closing verses of the musical and delicate poem, *Green Fingers*, may be quoted as an example of the author's lyric gift :

Green Fingers rides through the dell.
And a word to her wise little horse she says,
And still as a mouse he staves.
Then out of the dell come creeping
A pair that a tryst were keeping :
But heavy is each fond heart,
For now they must kiss and part—
They sigh
"Good-bye."

And "When shall I see you again?" they cry.
Green Fingers rides on the road.

And the blossoms of May she strows
On the pair as her way she goes ;
And through all of their grief and rue
Breaks the Song of Songs, "You are true."
And what happiness each has known
Through their love in its beauty shown :—
"Nay, nay !"
"Mine for ay !"

"I can never forget you, come what may !"
Green Fingers rides o'er a grave.

There rings the authentic note of faery that we hear in Scott's *Proud Maïe* or Keats' *La Belle Dame sans Merci*.

Veterinary Science in Switzerland.

It is always gratifying to hear one's country lauded. The more so when the praise comes from such good quarters as the President of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. Prof. Share Jones, the President, in a paper recently read, said among other things :—

We looked to Switzerland for a lead in many things. We could well afford to turn to Switzerland in this matter, when it would be found that over a quarter of a century ago the University of Berne granted a complete Faculty in Science—the first in the world. He was honoured by an invitation to address this University of Berne in congregation on the twenty-fifth anniversary. Complete autonomy in Berne had led to wonderful developments, and workers from other countries, even Germany, had been attracted to Berne.

But University autonomy to such a degree had not yet been conceded in this country. He felt that in consequence progress had not been so rapid as in Switzerland and other countries and our national interests had suffered. It was scarcely fair to require the veterinary profession to shoulder the responsibility which the nation demanded of it without according to the profession a commensurate degree of authority.

Reported in *North Wales Chronicle* (Feb. 22).

Railway Braking.

We learn from the *Commercial* (Feb. 28th) :— Experiments conducted by the Swiss Federal Railways with the Drolshammer brake for goods trains have proved highly successful. The tests have been very exacting, some of them being carried out over some of the steepest gradients of the Swiss system. As a result, the Railway Administration has decided to equip all goods trains with this brake. The work of fitting all trains with the new brake will take about six years and cost the railways some 15,000,000 francs. It is estimated that the annual expenditure in respect of working the new installation will be about 1,112,000 francs ; the production of compressed air is estimated at 300,000 francs, upkeep at 742,000 francs, and the cost of the special staff at 70,000 francs a year. On the other hand, the Administration reckons to effect an economy of 2,890,000 francs a year by being able to reduce the number of brake guards. As a result, the Federal Railways consider that the entire capital outlay can be redeemed in eleven years, even if an interest of 5 per cent. per annum be reckoned on it. Taking all factors into consideration, there should eventually be a net regular saving of over 1,500,000 francs a year. It is understood that the Drolshammer continuous system will be used in conjunction with the Westinghouse and Kinze-Knorr brakes. The installation is regarded as a progressive technical step on the part of the Federal Rail-

ways, and it is expected that it will result in a speeding-up of goods trains.

The following two cuttings I give without comment. They speak for themselves :—

Motoring in Switzerland.

Autocar (15th Feb.) :—

Motoring in Switzerland has become, and is becoming, less costly, since, according to the Bill of Federal Subsidies of the cantons for the upkeep of their roads, the charges raised by various cantons on passing motor vehicles are being abolished. The charges have already been removed in the cantons of Unterwalden, Berne, Grisons and Uri, while at the beginning of the summer, when the passes are opened, they will be taken off in the cantons of Glaris, Tessin and Valais.

Consuls as Peace Agents.

Manchester Guardian :—

The annual banquet of the Manchester Consular Association was held last night in the Midland Hotel, with the president of the Association, Dr. A. Schedler, of Switzerland, in the chair. Among the guests present were the Lord Mayor of Manchester, the Mayor of Salford, the Bishop of Salford, the Town Clerk of Manchester, and the Stipendiary Magistrates of Manchester and Salford.

Proposing the toast of "The heads of all foreign nations," Dr. Schedler remarked that nowhere were peace and security more welcomed than in Manchester, and that the establishment of friendly relations between countries was the noblest function of a consul. That peace could be maintained in the midst of strife was shown by his own country during the Great War ; for at Christmas Swiss troops were able to walk into no-man's-land where the trenches abutted on their frontier and plant Christmas trees between the lines.

He pointed out that commercial relations between Great Britain and Switzerland were still governed by the treaty of 1855—a notable instance of uninterrupted friendliness.

Ski-ing at Mürren.

According to the *Manchester Guardian* (Feb. 21st) the silver challenge ski race, which was held at Mürren on the 20th, was won by W. Bracken in 3 min. 21 secs. ; N. Cleaver was second in 3 min. 52 secs., and E. W. A. Richardson third in 4 min. 5 secs. There were seven entries and Bracken led throughout.

A number of ski-ing accidents have happened during the closing season, and the following note from the *Daily Mirror* (Feb. 21st) is only one of the many I have noticed in the papers.

I hear from a friend in Switzerland that the authorities are worried by the number of casualties this winter among their English visitors.

St. Moritz has had the most, probably because the skilled ski-er is so contemptuous of the unskilled that novices are led to take too many risks.

A Fortune from Tips.

From the *Hotel Review* we learn :—

The death is reported at St. Gall, Switzerland, of a hotel servant who left nearly one hundred thousand francs, saved from tips he had received while working in the luxury hotels in Zurich and St. Gall. This represents yearly savings during his career of 5,000 francs per annum.

To which I have to add only that this gentleman was more lucky in the choice of his clients than I seem to be.

There was a nice article on the Swiss published in *The Schoolmaster* (21st Feb.), under the subtitle "Human Geography for Juniors," and *Country Life* (23rd Feb.) devoted a page and a half to an article on "Switzerland in Springtime," illustrated by three well-reproduced photographs of early spring flora in Switzerland. One is tempted to copy from both these articles—but four pages of *Swiss Observer* are not twelve, so we leave them with regret.

UNIONE TICINESE.

IMPRESSIONI.

L'avvenimento principale dell'anno della colonia ticinese a Londra, ebbe luogo ieri nel sontuoso Caffè Monico.

Avvenimento che si ripete ogni anno da più che un cinquantennio è vero, ma che ad ogni sua ricorrenza più si manifesta ed espande l'entusiasmo ed il briò naturale del sangue latino per questo ritrovo di ticinesi in ambiente ticinese, i circondati ed apprezzati dai fratelli d'oltre Gottardo e da tanti amici inglesi.

Mai come ieri sera, i ticinesi di Londra, dovettero sentirsi fieri di sapersi svizzeri, felici della dolce armonia esistente fra i popoli delle tre lingue, raccolti e protetti sotto l'ala dell'UNA BANDIERA.

Per questa occorrenza della festa annuale dell'Unione Ticinese, il Presidente signor W. Notari, arringava per la decima volta la brillante adunanza : e, come sempre, l'ellettizzava in modo fascinante con quel suo non so che d'elusive senti-

mento nostalgico, ma commovente entusiasmo patriottico che penetra nel cuore dell'esale che l'ascoltò in un silenzio quasi religioso.

E ben glielo disse il nostro Onorevole Ministro Signor Paravicini, in un suo caratteristico, elegantemente arguto discorso, quanto lui, e per lui tutta la colonia Svizzera, lo onora e rispetta. Già, disse, non v'è che Cicerone, Demostene e Notari !...

Il piccolo Cantone Ticino, il beniamino della Confederazione, forse perchè l'ultimo ad entrarle nel grembo, smagliante di sole e bellezze naturali, è conosciuto ormai e vezzeggiato fin'oltre ai mari, coi nomi di "Locarno," "Lugano," ed io dirò anche... Bellinzona !"

Un "Toast" al Rè d'Inghilterra fu dato particolarmente, in modo riverente, da tutta l'assemblea, prima d'ogni altro saluto.

Non è un rapporto della festa, che giù erigo : è uno sfogo dell'impressione lasciata da questo avvenimento annuale di poche ore o sono ; impressione fulgiva che ogni partecipante, ne sono convinta, terrà a lungo nostalgicamente nel cuore ; un bisogno di ripetere, che l'onorevole Vice-Presidente, signor Arturo Meschini ben disse : "Siamo Svizzeri e basta." T.L.R.

SWISS INSTITUTE ORCHESTRAL SOCIETY.

Very little has been heard during the last few months of the activities of this new Swiss Society in London, so that I feel a little publicity is indicated.

Since the Swiss Institute suspended its activities, this little sub-section has continued its work as before, thanks to the generous help of the Institute.

Some time ago this sub-section constituted itself into the "Swiss Institute Orchestral Society," its first President being its leading first violinist, Mr. W. Pellet. A well-chosen Committee, together with Mr. E. P. Dick as conductor, and some 34 playing members are all great enthusiasts and have the aims and traditions of the Society at heart. The Society holds regularly, on a Thursday evening, rehearsals at Swiss House, 34/35, Fitzroy Square, W.C., and is to-day proud to have become a well-playing and well-worth-hearing Orchestra.

This has led to their latest success. Through the kind introduction of ex-Councillor A. Moir, of Croydon, the Orchestra was invited by the "Croydon Excelsior Musical Society" to perform at their New Year's concert on January 11th at the Greyhound Hotel, Croydon.

It was a novel idea for the Orchestra to go so far afield to take part at a concert, and the task which the Committee and the conductor set themselves was no light one.

The Croydon Excelsior Musical Society is a society of 49 years' standing and is among the best of its kind in London. The players in the Orchestra knew full well that the best only would be good enough for their visit to Croydon, and it must be said that they really did their best and succeeded. Everybody was very pleased, audience, players, promoters and conductor alike. It was only to be regretted that an error occurred in the name of the Orchestra, which, however, shall not happen again. The following is the notice which appeared in the *Croydon Times* on January 16th :—

"An outstanding feature of the Croydon Excelsior Musical Society's concert at the "Greyhound" Theatre, on Friday night, was the appearance of the Swiss National Orchestra, which numbers 30 talented instrumentalists. There was a large attendance, over which Mr. A. Moir presided, and in many ways the concert proved the society's most successful for some time.

The orchestra opened the programme with a vigorous and masterly rendering of the march "Castaldo," by R. Novacek, followed by O. Nicolai's overture to "The Merry Wives of Windsor," each item being enthusiastically received. After the interval the orchestra played a Hungarian Dance, by G. Michieles, and a selection from Verdi's "Il Trovatore." Two humorous musical interludes by the V.C.H. Trio (Mr. T. V. Dally, Miss Evelyn Clifford and Mr. J. Humphreys) were greatly enjoyed, these clever artistes being recalled on both occasions. Mr. Kit Keen fairly "brought down the house" by his brilliant humour and versatility. The beautiful singing of Miss Gabrielle Rozelle in "Pearl of the West" was highly appreciated. Several of the society's old friends re-appeared in the persons of Mr. Edward Shakespeare, at the piano, and Mr. Robert Naylor and Mr. Harry Brindle, whose excellent vocal contributions were enjoyed as much as ever."

The society's next concert was held on Thursday, January 24th, when the artists included Miss Vera Siddons, Mr. Walter Glyne, Miss Brenda Quinion, Mr. Charles Ade, Mr. Frank Wood and Mr. Edward Shakespeare. Councillor A. H. Harding presided.

Early the wish was expressed by various members of the Excelsior Society to hear the Swiss Institute Orchestra again before the close of their season. Last Friday it was decided to invite the Orchestra to appear at their coming concert. This will take place on Thursday, March 21st, at 8 p.m. in the large Hall of the Greyhound Hotel, Croydon. Everybody to whom a really fine popular con-