

Notes and gleanings

Objektyp: **Group**

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

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

Heft 387

PDF erstellt am: **26.09.2024**

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NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KIBURG.

It is a very sad coincidence that I should take up writing these Notes and Gleanings again at a moment when we mourn the loss of our beloved Papa Geilinger. To me, a Winterthurer, who, in Papa Geilinger, loses a near compatriot and townsman, the feeling of heavy sadness is aggravated by the fact that, owing to the slow delivery of half-penny circulars, the mournful message reached me too late for me to render the last honour to the dear friend and former mentor. If I refer to our dear Nestor here, it is to do homage to a particularly lovable character and to a wonderfully alert and optimistic mentality. To many of us younger compatriots he was a tested friend, a source of inspiration in many ways, and at all times an invigorating debater of all things political. I shall cherish his memory to the end of my own days, and shall never forget those delightful conversations we often had in our office, to which it was his wont to climb very often in former years, and especially when he had found some really good argument against the Bolsheviks!

Farewell, Dear Friend! Your memory lives on and on.

Narrow Frontier Line.

A rather nice compliment is paid to Swiss cleanliness in the *Irish Telegraph* of March 5th by its Paris Correspondent:

"In the Jura Mountains on the frontier of France and Switzerland there is a little inn now being dug out of the snow which during the recent blizzards in the region almost buried it. This is remarkable, because the frontier line between the two countries runs right through it, cutting the restaurant almost in halves. Some of the tables in the room are in France and some in Switzerland, with the result that certain drinks are prohibited at some of these tables and permitted at others. All depends on the country you are drinking in. The frontier line was mapped out in 1863 and it is stated that the inn was built by an astute person before the frontier agreement had been ratified. A Frenchman who has just returned from a visit to this neighbourhood, says that comparisons are not at all flattering to France. Near the inn are the Customs houses. The Swiss building is a fine structure of three storeys, while the French Customs headquarters is an old farm and a dilapidated wooden cabin serves for the examination of goods. He found the Swiss frontier station clean and neat and well heated with a post office and obliging officials. The French station, he adds, was half buried in snow, cold and deserted. "No doubt," he says, "France is beautiful enough to be loved for herself, but would it not be better to sweep and clean up the threshold a bit and give the doors a more hospitable look?"

We have all been struck by the same observations many times when crossing the Franco-Swiss frontier, and if a Frenchman gets the same impression now and has his eyes opened, we may hope that his countrymen will get these matters mended by and by. I need only refer to the Station at Basle and the truly enormous difference one notices when passing from the Swiss portion into the French. On the other hand, most of us have probably also noticed how things have been improved, and vastly improved, in the war-devastated provinces of the Nord of France. Those hamlets, villages and small towns now look clean and prosperous, and if one had not to remember the frightful loss of life and chattels during the war one might be tempted to think that that war was a blessing in disguise for those provinces.

Now that the General Election in England is drawing near and we are threatened by a flood of political oratory coming over the wires and making our "listening-in" hour one of doubtful pleasure, it is nice to read in the *Wireless World* of March 6th the following, entitled

Swiss Broadcasting Upheaval.

According to Swiss wireless journals, proposals are being put forward to the Post and Telegraph Authorities with a view to the complete reorganisation of the Swiss broadcasting system. The general opinion favours the installation at Gros de Vaud and at Suhrental of two high-power stations to work on 406 and 489 metres, the two exclusive wavelengths allotted to Switzerland. These stations would serve respectively the French- and German-speaking portions of the country, but, in order to make the system adequate, it might be necessary to put up relay stations at Berne, Basle, Geneva, Sion, Zurich, Coire, Tessin and St. Gall, such stations to take the high-power programmes and to re-transmit them on two common wavelengths.

The recent re-shuffling of wave-lengths in Europe has caused some confusion, at least on my set, which is quite a good one. Berne, for instance, gets drowned very often, and Zurich does not fare better, except when 5GB is not working, i.e., on Sunday afternoons, when some religious

speeches have come through nicely of late. What Switzerland requires, to my mind, is one very powerful station, which would be able to resist drowning attacks from stations of near wave-lengths, and then we Swiss abroad might hear our Yodellers and Nationalräte and other amusing items properly. What can be more annoying than trying to surprise a visiting friend by tuning in Berne or one of our other Swiss stations, only to find that some quite different programme is coming over the ether. So let's hope! And chiefly, let us hope that the "Kantönligkeit" may not prove insuperable in this connection.

The Literary Associations of Geneva.

It is quite impossible, at any time of the year, to read through any collection of Notes on Swiss matters appearing in the British Press without finding articles on Holidays in Switzerland, Winter Sports, or Conferences with lantern slides by which the lucky ones, i.e., those who have been, make the unlucky ones, who have not been, eager to go and travel likewise. This is all to the good for Switzerland and the sometimes really rapturous tones in which our country is being praised fill us all with pleasure. In *Everyman* (March 7th), however, I have come across an article called "The Literary Associations of Lake Geneva" which, when I had read it, filled me with some shame, because I found in it so much that was new to me, or which I had forgotten and which another—a foreigner, presumably—knew better than I did!

As it is not my function here to spare your blushes—rather the reverse, although I am holding myself in check for this first issue—I think it may do you some good, too, to hear about these literary associations and to find out for yourself how much you knew and how much you had forgotten:—

Four years ago, under the auspices of a Touring Guild, I made the tour of Lake Geneva, with Clarens as a centre, at an inclusive cost of thirteen guineas for fourteen days' hotel accommodation and certain excursions. The route was from London to Dover, thence from Calais through France to Clarens.

On the Swiss side of the lake from Lausanne to Geneva there are half-hidden villages among the trees and hills; on the Savoy side forests clothe the mountains; whilst from Evain to Geneva there are immense fields and orchards in the foreground.

At one end of the lake are Clarens, Vevey, Montreux and Territet. Clarens can claim literary associations with Rousseau, who laid the scene of "Nouvelle Héloïse" in this Swiss gem. In 1816 Byron lived for some time in what is now the Pension Sans Souci. Vinet, the eminent theologian, a man of another type, died in the same house in 1847. Behind Vevey, on a height among the vineyards, is the Castle of Bloney, and beyond are the green slopes of the Pleiades.

To the left of Vevey is the Little Island with its white villa built in the Italian style. In the background, situated on a hill, is the Castle of Chatelard. Near Blony is the village of La Chiesaz, where on the walls of several houses are some clever sketches by a native artist, A. Beguin. By the lakeside is the Castle of Chillon, one of the most interesting historical buildings in Switzerland, and the scene of Byron's ode, "The Prisoner of Chillon." The ascent of the Rochers de Naye affords a splendid view of the Dents du Midi and the Rhône Valley.

Opposite Vevey is St. Gingolph, whose mineral springs have been known since the days of the Romans. It was off St. Gingolph that Byron and Shelley narrowly escaped drowning owing to a sudden squall that almost swamped their boat...

The blue waters of the Rhône flow swiftly beneath seven bridges, the chief being the Pont de Mont Blanc, from whence a view of the famous mountain is obtained. In the Rue de la Pelisserie (at No. 18) a tablet records that George Eliot lived there, 1849-50.

It was at Geneva that the Red Cross movement had its inception.

Lausanne, the capital of the Vaud Canton, is a city of growing importance. Here Gibbon wrote the concluding portion of the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." Voltaire lived for some time at Lausanne, and Rousseau gave concerts there. Charles Dickens wrote part of "Dombey and Son" when residing in the city...

UNIONE TICINESE.

It was a happy gathering of over 300 guests members and friends which sat down, on the 12th inst., to the Annual Banquet of the Unione Ticinese, in the International Hall of Monico's Restaurant, with our esteemed Minister, M. Paravicini, in the Chair.

Our friends and compatriots, the brothers Monico, had seen to it that we should be treated to a really good dinner and that all arrangements worked with precision. Soon after the beginning of the banquet Mrs. A. Meschini was presented, from the Chair, with a beautiful bouquet of red and white carnations. Our trusted friend M. G. Marchand had the happy thought that the ladies should have something to look forward to and handed to the President, Mr. Notari, a fine gold

bracelet watch. The lucky ticket proved to be that of Mrs. Christen.

When the loyal Toasts and the toast to the President of the Swiss Confederation and the Swiss Federal Council, proposed by M. Paravicini, had been honoured, Mr. Notari rose to propose that of the Unione Ticinese, the Ladies and Guests, and was received with very hearty cheers.

In the course of his speech Mr. Notari thanked the gathering for the fine welcome he was accorded, and mentioned how glad he was to have the pleasure of addressing such a large number of guests, friends and well-wishers for the tenth year in succession. He thanked M. Paravicini, on behalf of the Society, for the honour he conferred on us by taking the Chair on this occasion also, and expressed the gratitude of all Swiss for the fine way in which M. Paravicini conducts the diplomatic relations between this country and our homeland. Mr. Notari then proceeded to welcome the other guests and mentioned Mr. Borsinger, Counsellor of Legation; M. de Bourg, First Secretary of Legation; Dr. Rezzonico, Second Secretary of Legation; Mr. P. F. Boehringer, of the *Swiss Observer*; Dr. Egli, correspondent of the *Bund*; M. G. Marchand; Father Hanfin; and the representatives of the Swiss Societies, viz.:—*Secours Mutuels*, Mr. Campari, accompanied by Mrs. Campari; *Fonds de Secours*, Mr. Dupraz, President; *City Swiss Club*, Mr. Gerig, accompanied by Mrs. Gerig; *Union Helvetia*, Mr. Indenmauer, accompanied by Mrs. Indenmauer; *Schweizerbund*, Mr. Pache and Mr. Calouri; *Swiss Mercantile Society*, Mr. Jenne and Mr. Pfändler; *Swiss Choral Society*, Mr. Bommer, President; *Swiss Gymnastic Society*, Mr. Block, President; *Swiss Rifle Association*, Mr. Krucker, accompanied by Mrs. Krucker. Mr. Notari pointed out that these are the gentlemen to whom the Swiss colony in London principally looks for its social and benevolent activities.

Turning to "The Ladies," Mr. Notari contrived to pay some subtle compliments, which were appreciated also by the representatives of the stronger sex.

Our President did not omit to remind the gathering (a large proportion of whom were not of Swiss nationality) of the example Switzerland sets by having people of three different races, with substantial differences of religion, creed and culture, living peacefully and contentedly under the same central authority. Turning to the Ticino, and with an eye on the difficulties which have been recurring in recent years, he pointed out that the Ticinesi have always been staunch upholders of a far-reaching freedom of speech and of the Press. This does at times create superficial difficulties of a political nature, but the Ticinesi do not bear any enmity either within or outside Switzerland and merely intend to abide by the principles which have guided them for generations.

The Chairman, M. Paravicini, next addressed the assembly and, among other things, reminded Mr. Notari he must not think he holds the "record" of speeches at such a banquet as he himself had addressed the Unione Ticinese at the Annual Banquet and Ball on more than 10 occasions—as a matter of fact he began quite a number of years before the war. Moreover, his acquaintance with Ticinesi dates back over forty years when, as a boy, he accompanied his father to the previous "Tir Fédéral" held in the Ticino, and well remembers returning home with a laurel crown and three cups, which his father won and which are amongst his most treasured possessions. He mentioned also that during the coming July Bellinzona will act as hostess to the rest of Switzerland at the forthcoming Federal Rifle Competition, on which occasion, no doubt, a large number of Swiss from north of the Gothard will make or renew the acquaintance with the sunny and beautiful Ticino.

Mr. Boehringer next returned thanks, on behalf of himself and his fellow-guests, in a few but suitable words, and at the same time expressed his gratitude to the Minister for the prompt and effective steps he took in seeing that there should be no interruption in the publication of the *Swiss Observer* when Mr. Boehringer himself felt the time had come to have his task lightened.

Replying to the kind words addressed to him by the President, in the course of his speech, Mr. Meschini, Hon. Vice-President, rose to thank all the friends who so readily responded to the appeal he makes on this annual occasion. He complimented Mr. Notari on the splendid work he does on behalf of the Society, and proposed his health, which was drunk amid the strains of "For he's a jolly good fellow."

Before the gathering broke up for the dance and cabaret, Mr. Notari read the following telegram he addressed to Madame Linda Meschini:

"Unione Ticinese riunita lieto annuale simposio porge Signora Madrina Meschini con gratulazioni buon ritorno omaggi sinceri e sentiti auguri. Notari Presidente."

and her reply:

"Riconoscente gentile pensiero auguro lieto successo lieto simposio auguri sinceri tutti intervenuti a rammentare patria lontana. Linda Meschini."

and a telegram received from our friend Mr. Togni of Pexhill:

"Assente distante sono con voi coll'animo au-