

# Notes and gleanings

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**NOTES AND GLEANINGS.**

By KYBURG.

I think I have stated before how difficult and tantalising it is for me to wade through the British Press and read all about the Swiss Winter Sports, Springtime in Switzerland, Holidays among the Alps, etc., etc. How such lecture seems to put the brake on the flight of time and to put further back still that happy moment when my fur has come to board the Boat Express, en route for Home.

But the following article is written so nicely and the writer is so obviously a charming personality that I feel I ought to have it in the Swiss Observer. I think too that many of my readers might wish to pass it on to some of their English friends who may be asking them all sorts of questions about Switzerland at this time of the year:

**Switzerland, the Never Ending.**

*The Nation and Athenaeum*, June 22nd, 1929.  
In many ways it is remarkable that with all the modern eagerness for novelties, including new holiday resorts, Switzerland should still retain its pre-eminence. Yet, in other ways, it is not surprising. There is always old affection and happy memory. Nothing can vulgarize the majesty of the Alps or divest the snow peaks of their glacial dignity. And there is something much more. Switzerland is singularly up-to-date. Always it has kept pace with the times.

Its hotels are the most perfectly equipped and managed; its travel facilities ahead of those of other countries; its recreative and entertainment appurtenances thoroughly abreast of the times with all the latest devices. In Swiss hotels the regulations are made to conform to the convenience of visitors; it is not the case that travellers are deemed conscript tourists who must fall in with a pre-arranged inflexible routine. People who detest hotel life as a violent change from home are charmed with Switzerland because there is nothing irksome in the hotels.

The travelling is comfortable in the extreme. There is nothing of the continental dragging on Swiss trains or stations. Travel is as free from officiousness as in England.

Travel is a joy in Switzerland. Every conceivable form of locomotion has been pressed into service to bring the mountains nearer, to make their summits and attendant snowfields more accessible—by electricity, available through the vast energy in their waterfalls, eliminating smoke and all discomfort. Motors loop the passes, affording a new thrill; and still there are abundant paths where train and motor are unknown, where walkers can penetrate the inmost recesses and achieve the most profound solitude.

The Swiss people are quick to learn, swift to assimilate the latest ideas and to meet the wishes of visitors. They have reproduced the joys of all other favourite resorts—except, of course, the sea beach. They have got near to that, though. There are Riviera pleasures on Lakes Maggiore and Geneva, and Onchy, the delicious offshoot of Lausanne on the latter Lake, is already known as the Swiss Lido. The sports beach is complete with sun-bathing, aquaplaning behind fast motor boats, motor sleighing in craft which hydroplane over the water at great speed, moonlight picnics, water hockey, and other hilarious methods of enjoyment.

This incessant endeavour to cater for all tastes keeps Switzerland ever young and fresh. The combination it affords for variety and contrast is amazing. All the excitement of Casino life with opportunity for the display of the richest costumes can be diversified with a trip the same day to an ice playground over two miles high, as at the Jungfrauoch, whence, in dazzling sunshine, Interlaken looks like a gay picture postcard far below; or the days can be spent at isolated villages, easily reached by mountain railway, yet unapproachable by motor or horse-vehicle, with merry dancing parties in the hotels at night.

Probably nowhere is this dual form of recreation available so readily as in Switzerland. You can revel in all the quietness of heart's desire, away from motors and roads and noise, and yet have in your own hotel when the young people return from their daily excursions, or within easy reach by the funicular, all the giddy delights which to many are inseparable from a holiday.

It is cosmopolitanism in its best and most attractive form—a mixture of the customs of the world, of its languages, its faces, its forms, and its devices for social entertainment. A few hours spent at some noted concentration point, such as the Jungfrauoch, the Rhone Glacier, the Gorner Grat (above Zermatt), or the glorious heights now accessible by rail in the Engadine; or, indeed, on the lake-sides at Lucerne, Lugano, Montreux, Locarno, are bound to widen the outlook and extend the sympathies of all people. The world is presented in epitome, and just as the wonderful air clears the brain from cobwebs, so does the broader horizon of existence dissipate prejudice

and pessimism. Switzerland cures the curmudgeon completely.

Switzerland is bigger to-day than fifty or even twentyfive years ago. True, it has gained no new territory, and seeks none, either by conquest or treaty. It is content to expand by enterprise. Steadily more heights are being added to the railway map, more routes being brought within the sphere of the motor, and more health resorts blessed with curative waters or healing sunshine opened for seekers after health. And yet the country is in no danger of becoming hackneyed. It is too versatile in its character and natural endowments.

Its wonders are on too grand a scale to suffer belittlement by exploitation. There are multitudes of unspoiled retreats where nature is still at its wildest, its sternest, and its most tantalizing allure. The mountains may be the playground of the world, but there are hundreds of reserves where the play is for the expert only. But side by side with this fascinating aspect which draws devotees regularly, are abundant nooks into which the most timid may venture with perfect safety to stand entranced before sublime manifestations. All are not mapped and routed, but the paths are known locally. They may be imperfectly blazed, may be mere crazy windings to be detected by a local guide—often a boy will do—and they may require careful negotiation.

But they will repay all the trouble taken. Every walk in Switzerland opens up a wonderful series of gorgeous vistas. There is no end to a Swiss walk. There is always something round the corner. It may suddenly seem the end of the path verging on nothing. But it will disclose its continuance under a waterfall, or through it—through the rainbow—or, beyond a gap, into what is almost another world. It is the never-endingness of Switzerland that is its chief joy.

**The Coupe des Alpes.**

Plenty of excitement can be had by those who are not content to spend a few days in quiet fishing and who like to see others risk their bones. I quote from the *Motor*, June 18th, 1929.

The contest for the Coupe Internationale des Alpes for 1929 will be held under the joint auspices of the Austrian, German, Italian and Swiss Automobile Clubs August 7th to 11th inclusive.

It will be a stiffer trial than that of last year, as the total distance to be covered in five days is 2,680 kilometres, as against 1,964, or 1,665 miles as against 1,226, an average in fact of 333 miles per day in mountainous country, while the longest journey will be of no less than 365½ miles.

The competitors will proceed on the fifth day to Bellinzona and over the St. Gothard Pass (6,926 ft.), the Furka Pass (7,976 ft.), the Simplon Pass (6,594 ft.) to Domodossola, and thence to Locarno. The west bank of Lago Maggiore will then be followed to Arova, and from Sesto Calende a fast run will be made by the *autostrada* to Milan. Total, 426½ kilometres.

The majority of the passes named, of course, are regularly climbed by touring cars, and the third day's run, for example, that reads formidably in figures, is not really difficult, as the roads are modern. The Austrian portion of the route is the most severe, but the outstanding feature of the trial is the combination of ascents and descents each day with long total distances; and good driving and a knowledge of the country will count for much.

**Rudolfo Olgiati Exhibiting at Birmingham.**

*Birmingham Gazette and Express*, June 18th.

An exhibition of some typical work by Rudolfo Olgiati, a Swiss artist with a great reputation in his own country, is being held at the Ruskin Galleries, Birmingham. The exhibition comprises something over forty paintings—mostly of mountain scenery—and it is the first of Olgiati's work held in this country.

At first glance, a mere Britisher, used to life under skies almost always grey, gets the impression that Olgiati is over-fond of blue. But Olgiati's skies and mountains are of sunnier, more highly coloured climes than ours. And people who have visited the areas of which Olgiati's landscapes treat will appreciate their fidelity to nature.

It is in the spirit of a scene, however, that Olgiati excels. There are several paintings of his in the Ruskin Galleries—notably "The Tempest"—which express in colour and form not only what one sees but what the seeing makes one feel.

There is a strong emotional atmosphere about these works of Olgiati. And the effects are very cleverly achieved in a semi-impressionistic style. . . . Olgiati is worth seeing.

**Curative Education.**

The problem of deficient children has long been the object of serious and anxious study. Even in my school time we had a class composed entirely of "weak" children and it was recognised even then that something could be done for them by special treatment and gentle nursing of

their backward minds. Since then new methods have superseded older and cruder ones and the latest "Curative Education" looks to Music and Painting for help.

*Bradford Telegraph and Argus*, June 14th, 1929.

There will be held in London, commencing on Sunday, the first conference arranged in England on curative education, or, as it has been called, healing in the schools. Teachers and medical men—anybody who cares to go—will see demonstrations of Dr. Rudolf Steiner's system of teaching backward and deficient children.

Famous doctors from Switzerland and Germany will give addresses, and there will be shown the curative eurhythm with which, it is stated, wonderful results are being achieved on the Continent.

Strange musical instruments, designed for this part of the curative work, will be seen and heard. One of them is a soprano lyre of 26 strings. Another is a bass lyre taller than a man, and there is an even bigger glockenspiel, having tubular bells in a framework that is a marvel of curves.

Curative eurhythm— healing through sound and rhythmic movement—is also given to grown-ups, especially for rheumatism and digestive and nerve troubles, but the London conference on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday will be upon the application of the system to children usually called mentally defective. The idea at the back of the treatment is that "deficient" children lack the right union between soul and body. Lack of will, it is held, is as much the cause of the trouble as lack of mind.

And, by the way, is there anything which stirs the imagination more than the woeful sight of a backward child? A fellow human being who, through no fault of his own, seems shut out from partaking of the fruits of this Earth. And perhaps, we ought not to think this and do not think this only of backward children, where mentally backward children are concerned, but also where otherwise "poor" children suffer through no fault of their own. The Chinese reserve their highest reverence for their ancestors. We ought to go one better and make it a point to put the welfare of all children, not only our own, above everything.

Perhaps it is in connection with the above that the next cutting took my eye.

**The Swiss Medical Year Book.**

*Lancet*, June 15th, 1929.

After appearing for 50 years in a modest paper cover and a format less than 6 by 4 inches the Swiss Medical Calendar in its 1929 issue has blossomed into a handsome cloth-bound quarto volume which compares favourably with the medical directory of any other country. The general scheme of the book consists of a medical guide to each of the 24 cantons in succession. There is also a list of 45 Swiss doctors practising outside Switzerland, scattered it may be noted from Japan to Mexico; their number if it is in any way complete, bears testimony to the reluctance of the Swiss to leave for long his native hills. Five of the absentees hold chairs—at Bonn, Frankfurt, Leibzig, Stuttgart, and Johns Hopkins Universities. The earlier 131 pages are occupied by a collection of monographs and articles of a very high standard. The year book is published by Benno Schwabe and Co. in Basle at 11 Swiss francs.

However, I trust all holiday makers will have little or no call to seek medical advice! Speaking from experience, those who take their cars with them, may be interested to read the following: (it's such a comfort to know of it, when your own "bus" has done it on you!)

**Novel Brake held off by Engine Suction.**

*Motor*, June 18th, 1929.

A very novel servo brake has been designed by a Swiss engineer in which the orthodox plan for vacuum braking is inverted, i.e., a powerful spring applies the brakes, but is normally held in its compressed position (with brakes "off") by means of a piston operated by engine suction. Matters are so arranged that an atmospheric valve, operated from the brake pedal, reduces the vacuum progressively and so permits the spring to exert an increasing force on the brake gear. The pedal is interconnected in such a way that the driver can feel the extent to which he is retarding the car. An obvious advantage of this plan is that braking power does not suffer depreciation should the engine stop. The brakes can, however, be released independently (if the engine fails) so as to enable the car to be moved.

**SCHOOL HOLIDAYS.**

Clergyman near Neuchâtel is prepared to receive into his home one or two Students. Every modern convenience. Terms *en pension* Frs. 220 per month. Tuition can be arranged for, if required. Will take well recommended children wishing to improve their French during school holidays.—Apply to "Pasteur," c/o *Swiss Observer*, 23, Leonard St., London, E.C.2.