

# Notes and gleanings

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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

### FEDERAL.

#### FURTHER STATE HELP FOR THE HOTEL INDUSTRY.

After a short discussion the National Council has sanctioned the prolongation for another three years (till Dec 1933) of the present "temporary" measure which forbids the building of new hotels or the extension of existing ones unless the cantonal authorities approve any such scheme. It was stated that the crisis which in 1924 was responsible for this restriction had not yet been overcome and that the industry still required state help, especially in view of the heavy capital expenditure necessary in all hotels to meet modern requirements. The measure was opposed by a small minority (5 to 79), as being unconstitutional and not conducive to the relief of unemployment in the building trade.

#### NO REDUCTION OF "POSTAGE."

Federal Councillor Musy, in the National Council, held out no hopes of an early reduction in the postal charges; the State Treasury had advanced the Post Office eighty million francs during the war, and until this amount had been repaid this question could not be considered.

#### UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS.

According to the official figures published for last month unemployment has considerably increased as compared with May 1929. This is due, in the first instance, to the crisis in the watch industry and in a lesser degree to adverse conditions in the building and textile trades. Figures relating to the other trades are stated to be satisfactory; in the hotel industry there is actually a surplus of vacancies.

#### THE MOST POWERFUL LOCOMOTIVE IN THE WORLD.

The Swiss Federal Railways have placed an order with the Oerlikon and Winterthur works for the construction of an electric locomotive which will be the most powerful of the kind in Europe. It will be nearly 96 ft. long and weigh 234 tons, and will be capable of a speed of 80 miles an hour. It is intended for service on the steep gradients of the Saint Gotthard line.

#### MOTORING IN SWITZERLAND.

Motoring in Switzerland is becoming more popular in summer time now the authorities there realise that road travel is preferred by a large bulk of the tourists. Attention is drawn to the fact that all duties and fees on Swiss Alpine and transit roads were abolished early in the year 1929. Foreign motorists may drive in Switzerland for three months (in Geneva for 2 months) without paying any tax on their cars. The only things required are: For the driver: a valid passport (with or without visa according to nationality); for the car: a triptique or a frontier pass-card, or a free pass, or for a 5 to 10 day's stay, a provisory entrance card (obtainable at any Swiss customs office), and the international driving licence.

### LOCAL.

#### ZURICH.

On the occasion of a lecture, which the German Ex. Reichsminister Severing was to deliver at the "Volkshaus," the communists arranged a demonstration in order to prevent this meeting taking place. An hour before the lecture was due to take place a band of communists turned up in force to stop people getting access to the Hall. A member of the communist party began to address the crowd outside the Assembly Hall, when after frequent interruptions he was pulled down from the platform and roughly handled by members of the socialist party. In order to disperse the considerable crowd now assembled, which seemed to have got quite out of order, the stewards played a water hose on the interrupters, but this not meeting with the required success, the police were summoned who turned up in several motor lorries about 120 men strong. After considerable opposition and much boing and hissing they managed to clear the demonstrators from the vicinity of the building and the meeting took place without any further interruptions.

N.Z.

The Executive Council has submitted to the Grand Council a proposal to unite Albisrieden, Altstetten, Höngg and Wytikon with the town of Zurich.

ST. G. T.

While the "ZIKA" is on in Zurich, a sea-plane belonging to the Elmer-Citro Ltd. is carrying out propaganda flights. Last week the plane left the hangar at the Zürichhorn to pick up a passenger at Kilchberg for a flight to Lausanne and Geneva. Near Wollishofen, the pilot prepared to come down on the lake and, as soon as the plane touched the water, the pilot and the mechanic felt a shock. Turning round to locate the obstruction, they discovered that the right float had been wrenched off. The machine dipped to the right, so that soon wing and motor were in the water. However, the left float kept the plane's left wing and the cockpit over water. A steamer was nearby and immediately took the machine in tow. It appears that a wooden beam was floating in the lake and was struck by the right float.

N.Z.Z.

Owing to the continued crisis in the silk industry, one of the big manufacturers, with three mills in the neighbourhood of Zurich, has decided to stop work completely for four weeks. After this period work will be resumed on a three-day week basis. These mills employ about 1,000 hands, who will be paid part of their wages during this enforced idleness. It is said that this measure will prevent the necessity of discharging some of the hands.

S. I. T.

#### BERNE.

The Executive Council acknowledges gratefully a gift of 5,000 Frs. from the Berne Savings Bank (Spar- und Leihkasse) in favour of the victims of the recent storms.

N.Z.Z.

At the Gwattstutz near Gwatt a cart with a load of hay toppled over. The carter, Samuel Mami, aged 33, who was only recently married, fell on the wheels and had his chest crushed in. He died after a very short time.

N.Z.Z.

Thirty-four golden wedding rings was the unusual find made among the refuse at the Witzwill prison. It transpired that these rings were the property of a Berne wholesaler, who had placed them, in a box, on the window-sill. Apparently a gust of wind dislodged the box and threw it into the waste-paper basket beside the window. From there they were emptied into the bin. The owner has handed to the police 10 per cent. of the value of the rings as a reward for the finder.

N.Z.Z.

#### LUCERNE.

A very sad affair is reported from Lucerne. A very aged inmate of the Altersasyl on the Wesemlin had become of so unstable a disposition, that he had to be removed to the workhouse in his commune. He escaped from there, re-appeared at the home and repeatedly asked the sisters in charge to admit him, finally drawing a revolver as a further argument. For the safety of himself and the other inmates his demand had to be refused, and the police were informed. The poor old man retired to a shed and, when the police appeared on the scene, he started shooting. Finally he turned the weapon on himself; he is now in hospital with a severe wound.

ST. G. T.

#### GLARUS.

Five trucks of a goods train jumped the rails at Bilten and interrupted traffic for many hours. Brakesman Allemann, aged 22 and father of a child, was killed. The accident is believed to be due to premature changing of the points while the goods train was travelling over them.

Continued on back page.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KYBURG.

### The Art of Travelling.

With the approach of the Summer Holidays questions of travels and journeyings, of places to go to, of countries to visit, of waters to bathe in or to drink of, become subjects of absorbing interest.

I came across an article in the *Birmingham Post* of 10th June, from which I quote the beginning:

If anyone dares to say that travelling, like conversation, may almost be counted as a lost art, he will certainly cause astonishment, and may even rouse doubts of his sanity. He will be reminded that at no time in the world's history have more people been moving about from place to place, and that modern science has revolutionised the methods by which we travel and almost annihilated time and space. Aeroplanes and motors will be, metaphorically, thrown in his face with the demand, "What do you make of these?"

Yet, granted that speed approaches lightning more and more and that our fastest trains are becoming mere crawlers in comparison with modern machines, does it follow that we travel more than our grandfathers did? Do we understand and practise travelling as an art as bygone generations understood and practised it? It only needs a little thought and observation to justify the contention that travelling has ceased to be an art. Everyone is nowadays in too violent a hurry to travel: the one aim is to "get there" and to create a record every time and in every way a journey is taken.

Ruskin said that going by train was not travelling at all, it was merely being sent like a parcel. We have accepted the railway and we find that travelling in the true sense is possible in a train, though not to the same degree as on a coach. But what is to be said of motors and, still more, of aeroplanes? Those who are transported by them from one place to another do not really travel, they are simply hurled through space, not quite as rapidly as Jules Verne's inventors, who were shot out of a cannon into the moon, but still in much the same way. Excessive speed, whatever the method used, makes travelling impossible.

Those who greedily seize on everything that lies upon their route pay the righteous penalty of a blurred vision and mental indigestion. If lack of time makes it necessary to omit visits that we should like to pay, we can leave them to the imagination and console ourselves with the reflection that perhaps we are being saved from spoiling a pleasant dream by seeing the reality.

There is a great attraction in the idea of the old-time "grand-tour," largely because it was taken in the leisurely manner that belongs to the art of travelling. It came, too, at the right time in a young man's life; as it followed his university course he was in a mental condition to appreciate all he saw. Because it was preceded by study it had an educational value that no journeys by men with money, but no culture, can ever have. It reminds us that we see only what we have the capacity for seeing, and that to enjoy either scenery or objects of historical or artistic interest we must know something about them and be interested in them before we leave home. The best guide book is the one we carry in our head, not the one we carry in our hand.

Amongst the truest travellers we must always reckon the pilgrims of the Middle Ages. They took travelling seriously, making it an expression of their deepest thoughts and feelings and putting before themselves a definite purpose and a definite goal; yet they contrived, because of their healthy belief in the oneness of life, to find pleasure by the way as they journeyed to pay their devotions at the shrine which they had chosen. What conducted tourists to-day get half the delight out of a journey through Switzerland that Chaucer's pilgrims knew as they went by easy stages to Canterbury? They have no common object, they lack the one mind and heart that bound Chaucer's travellers together, and, because they are modern English men and English women, they look upon one another with suspicion instead of treating all their companions as friends and giving of their best to the general conversation.

## Special "Souvenir" Number.

Owing to the many demands for extra copies of the last three issues of the "S.O." we have decided to reprint the articles referring to the "Jubilé Décennal" of our Minister. This Souvenir number, which is ready now (price 3d.), is printed in brown on toned art paper and contains the illustrated article of May 31st and the full report of the subsequent Dinner and Presentation with the speeches *in extenso*, as published in the two following issues.

Differences of taste, as we know to our cost, may make travelling with others almost as much of a penance as those medieval pilgrimages that were taken with peas in the shoes. Yet few will deny that travelling only yields its highest pleasure when it is shared with friends, or with fellow-creatures who are friendly. But even the most congenial companions can spoil our travelling if we are always with them. We must somehow contrive to get away from them now and then and be entirely alone to enjoy the luxury of our own thoughts. Periods of silence and solitude are essential to our well-being and we can cling too closely to our closest friends. The art of travelling consists largely in a wise alternating of conversation and contemplation.

It consists, too, in choosing aright what places we shall see. It is natural to visit as many famous cities and scenes as opportunity may give, yet in our desire to see what everyone sees we may only be ministering to our vanity and aiming at being as "well-travelled" as our fellows. Those who are slaves to convention lose the real charm that travelling offers. No one, perhaps, ever got so much delight from travelling as Montaigne; no one knew its real secrets so well. He jogged along on horseback, avoiding all "show places," exploring the by-ways of Italy and watching with observant eyes the lives and habits of men. Though he went alone he was never lonely; he enjoyed his own thoughts and, being a friendly man, he turned strangers into friends on every road and at every inn. He knew how to travel because he knew how to live.

It seems to me that the writer of this article, who obviously agrees with what Ruskin said, is unduly pessimistic. After all, enjoying travelling is a sequence of sensations. It may be interesting and sweet and instructive to study roads, lanes, villages and villages, towns and hamlets leisurely, observing minute details, exchanging greetings with the people, etc., etc. But aren't these all sensations and experiences? Just the same, I think, as if one travels quickly and studies whole countries, whole countries, not minutely, but as they present themselves to the fast moving traveller. Again, one gets sensations. Imagine a really swift-flying aeroplane. You would then see not individual fields, hills, valleys, etc., you would see various colours only. But the sensations which the view of these various colours would give you might be just as strong as the milder sensation evoked by listening to the babbling brook. Again, from personal experience I have learnt that it is quite possible to travel by motor car and receive a wealth of impressions which, for a day or two, form a mass of rather blurred pictures in one's mind, but which, and this is important, sort themselves out by-and-by, perhaps a week or so after the journey. The mind can be trained that way, I think, and if that is so, then surely travelling quickly, seeing a lot, receiving a host of impressions in a short time—especially when one cannot afford a long time in which to travel—is the better way of doing travel.

We will now look at the opposite. The hermit has done with travelling. He or she as the case may be, wishes to live as a recluse, right away from the rest of the world, in other words, the hermit does not wish to receive any more outside impressions. Such a one forms the subject of the following, from *The Observer*, 15th June:

**Hermit's Cell on Alpine Peak.**

A modern hermit's cell is just being finished on the Monte Generoso, the beautiful peak in the very heart of the Italian lakes. It is situated about one hundred feet below the top, within six feet of the Swiss-Italian boundary, and can only be approached by the small footpath which leads along the frontier on the narrow crest of the mountain and is only used by the customs officers on their patrols. Otherwise the hermitage answers its purpose splendidly, standing right above a sheer descent of four thousand feet, a place where an eagle might build his eyrie.

Clinging to the bare precipitous rock of the mountain side without any space to walk around, it looks like a swallow's nest. There is a door at the back and a window in front looking down into the abyss, and far upon the lakes and mountains. But it is well furnished and provided with electric current for lighting, cooking and heating purposes. On its side there is a special water tank, in which the rainwater is being gathered.

The future hermit, who is at present staying in the Kulm Hotel of the Monte Generoso, superintending the finishing touches to her cell is a member of the Italian aristocracy, Marquessa Vitaleschi. A Dutch lady by birth, she married the Marquese, who is twenty years older than she. The Generoso was ever her favourite spot. But her husband never accompanied her. The reason for her retirement is her nerves. She is said not to be able to bear human faces and voices. She will not see any-

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one in her cell. Her supplies will be slipped down from the top on a wire cord, up to the hotel by the little railway, and thence carried to the top by mules. This cost money. The total costs of this very modest little dwelling therefore rise to the very considerable sum of 62,000 Lire.

**Over the Jura with a Yacht.**

*Daily Express*, 7th June:  
 The *Daily Express*, it is true, calls it "Over the Alps" but then, the *Daily Express* has a notoriously feeble idea of Swiss Geography. However, here goes:

M. Van Vroegt, a Dutch millionaire, has a summer residence at Montreux, on Lake Geneva.

M. Van Vroegt also has a palatial yacht. What more natural than that M. Van Vroegt, when he decided to spend a holiday at Montreux, should wish to have his yacht to sail on the waters of the lake?

The yacht, however, was at Rotterdam, in Holland, and between Holland and Switzerland are the Alps.

But many centuries ago Hannibal transported elephants as well as an army over the Alps.

Why, then, should M. Van Vroegt not transport his yacht in like manner?

With his family and friends he set out from Rotterdam, and, following the Rhine, arrived at Basle.

From there he wished to continue the water journey to Ouchy, on Lake Geneva.

When he was told that the Swiss rivers and lakes were not deep enough to carry such a large yacht from the Rhine to Lake Geneva he became rather angry, and insisted that he must have his yacht for his holiday at Montreux.

Finally an arrangement was made between the millionaire and a Swiss railway company to transport the yacht across Switzerland.

As the yacht was too large to go through the tunnels it had to be dismantled, and the pieces were carried on two specially constructed trucks with low wheels.

The transport took place by night, when there was less traffic.

With many shuntings, the yacht, after eleven days' transport, arrived at Ouchy, near Lausanne, and was launched on the lake under the supervision of M. Van Vroegt.

He paid more than £1,000 for the railway transport alone, but then he has the satisfaction of knowing that his is the finest yacht ever seen on Lake Geneva.

I smiled too when reading that the Swiss Lakes "were not deep enough" for that yacht. *Some Yacht!* Some Geneva Correspondent who sent that bit to the *Daily Express!*

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