

# Notes & gleanings

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the position of the Swiss Peasants' Union, which is now being heavily attacked on all sides in two extensive articles in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, and endeavours to prove that the war profits of this class are not nearly so exorbitant as is believed in other quarters. He also tries to convince his readers that the protection which the peasants have gained by the new tariff is absolutely necessary for them. He shows that the Swiss peasants could not diminish their debts during the war more than by reducing them from 3.779 million to 3.541 million francs. This would mean a lowering of 6 per cent., which will strike many people who hitherto believed that nearly all their debts had been wiped out. Dr. Laur very cleverly also shows and proves by statistics that the average daily relief of the unemployed is higher than the average daily earning of a small farmer or farm servant. He says that the peasant earns, when working twelve hours daily and with food taken into consideration, 6 francs, and a farm servant 6 frs. 25, whereas, according to the communications of the Labour Office, the average unemployed relief is daily 6.50 to 7 francs.

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In 1921, 9,227 inhabitants of Switzerland left the home country to start a new life in another Continent. There was an exodus of 629 from Berne, 910 from Zurich, and 900 from St. Gall and the Tessin. The average number of emigrants before the war was from 5,000 to 6,000. 1893 was a record year with 13,000. It is interesting to note that of these 9,000 odd emigrants, 2,190 are agriculturists, and three-quarters of them are single. As in the past, the favourite destination of these emigrants is the United States, whither not less than 7,000 directed their steps. 750 went to the Argentine, 750 to Brazil, and 409 to Africa.

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The direction of the Swiss Red Cross has decided to make an appeal to the Swiss people and the Federal Council for providing means for a Relief Mission to Russia. They reckon not so much on sending food, but rather with dispatching a number of medical officers with the necessary staff and material. The Swiss Red Cross will collaborate with Dr. Nansen.

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The wine harvest in Thurgau has proved an exceedingly rich one. The wine connoisseurs are unanimously agreed that the 1921 wine will be comparable to the one of 1911 and the one of 1895, both of which are recorded as having been extraordinarily successful. This is good news for wine lovers both in Switzerland and England, and it will also considerably help the wine peasants of Thurgau, whose condition is none too favourable. In 1900 there were 1,400 hectares of vine planted in the Canton; to-day there are no more than 400.

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The Crematorium of Zurich has recently recorded the ten thousandth cremation. It was constructed in 1887 and started work in 1889. In the first year only 21 cremations took place. In 1920 there were 814. Whereas a special society managed it to begin with, it was taken over by the city in 1900. Now cremation is entirely gratuitous in Zurich, and the society which fostered the development of the idea therefore dissolved in 1913, having attained its aim.

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The famous musician, Friedrich Hegar, celebrated his eightieth birthday on October 11th. Hegar was brought up in a musical family of Basle. He was a conductor for 42 years. His many friends all over Switzerland congratulated the veteran-musician very heartily, and the poet,

Gustave Gamper, dedicated a poem to him in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*. A special concert was arranged in his honour in the Tonhalle by the Teachers' Choral Society and the Tonhalle Association. The programme consisted exclusively of compositions by Hegar, i.e., the Overture, written for the inauguration of the new Tonhalle, a concerto for the violin, and the Festival Cantata written for the opening of the new University in 1914.

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The Bernese correspondent of the *Liberté*, Mr. Pie Philippona, celebrated his fiftieth professional anniversary. Although now seventy-six years of age, he is still active and enterprising. For thirty-four years he has provided the Fribourgois paper with the news of Berne.

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The Conservative paper *Vaterland* of Lucerne celebrated its fiftieth birthday on October 1st. It is striking that only eight editors were employed on the staff during all this time. This is the more remarkable, as extreme changes generally take place on Swiss newspaper staffs.

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Six French officers of high rank will attend the manoeuvres which are shortly to be held in the Kiental.

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The Radical Democratic Party of St. Gall provided last year for the creation of a committee to elaborate a scheme for reforming the Moving Picture Theatres. This committee has now reported on its activity and asks for a Federal law on Moving Pictures providing for a Federal censorship. These proposals will be forwarded to the Central Bureau of the Radical Democratic Party with a view to preparing the ground for a parliamentary campaign.

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OBITUARY.—Professor Dr. Abeljanz died at Zurich in his 73rd year. Originally an Armenian, he became Swiss in 1877 and was appointed ordinary professor of chemistry in 1890. He was the father-in-law of State Councillor Wettstein, of Zurich.

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Ex-National Councillor Louis de Diesbach died in his seventy-ninth year in Fribourg.

## NOTES & GLEANINGS.

All the English papers refer in gratifying terms to the gift of the Vevey Municipality which will allow of the bodies of 74 British prisoners and officials, who died during the war in different parts of Switzerland, to be exhumed and re-interred in the St. Martin Cemetery, where, on the shores of the Lake of Geneva in beautiful surroundings, they will find a final resting place. According to *The Times* (Oct. 14th) the success of this scheme, which was initiated as far back as July, 1919, is mainly due to the untiring efforts of Major de la Harpe, of the Swiss Army. As a member of the Swiss Medical Commission charged with the selection of wounded prisoners to be sent to Switzerland, Major de la Harpe is not unknown to the London Colony, when, during his official visits, he missed no opportunity of coming into contact with his countrymen.

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Amongst the articles referring to the change from "summer" to Greenwich time the "Sun Treatment" in Switzerland has come into prominence. Dr. C. W. Saleeby in *The Daily Chronicle* (Oct. 7th) apologizes for not having already twelve years ago laid stress on the work carried on by Dr. Rollier, of Leysin, who "for 18 years has been

demonstrating the unapproachable powers of the sun . . . and has been curing cases otherwise hopeless, perhaps after half-a-dozen operations, and making healthy and happy wage-earners of them."

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*The New Statesman* (Oct. 15th) in a series of articles headed "Modern Sun-Worship" refers to Dr. A. Rollier as the High Priest, treating at his temple in Leysin nearly a thousand patients, housed in more than thirty clinics. After stating that "no peculiar virtues inhere in this place, that in some respects it must be inferior to many other places which might be and are not used for heliotherapy," the writer supplies the following brief description:—

"Leysin is a little place at an altitude of 1,450 metres in the Alpes Vaudoises. It is admirably sheltered from the north wind, and has long been a resort of consumptives. There, for personal reasons, it happened that Dr. Rollier began to practise his profession and to attempt the systematic use of the sun-cure in 1903. That is a long time ago, and here am I discussing the subject of heliotherapy as if it were a new discovery. If work like this had been done in the United States, it would be a household word, millionaire philanthropists would have endowed it galore, and it would have been copied everywhere. But it was done by a quiet man in a small country, and though visitors from afar have been to see his work and its lovely results, the Prometheus-Esculapius of Leysin is still almost unknown, even in the professional circles that are concerned with tuberculosis."

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The discussion of technical questions which the "Electrification of the Swiss Federal Railways" has given rise to amongst experts in England is continued in *The Engineer* (Oct. 7th and 14th).

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The early October number of *Vogue* gives a lavishly illustrated article on Ferdinand Hodler, the giant artist who during his life time was never popular amongst his own countrymen. "In every way a typical Swiss, by birth the son of a carpenter, rough, obstinate, and endowed with immense tenacity of purpose, he ranks as the first (modern) painter of his country, the art of which he has dominated for nearly fifty years."

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*Health and Strength* (Oct. 8th) refers to the "splendid wrestling" at the Swiss G.S. (see *Swiss Observer* October 8th): "Molinari appears to be a newcomer, and was quite a surprise to many of us. He showed form which ought to bring him into the front rank of light-weights within a year, under skilled tuition."

## FEUILLE D'AUTOMNE.

Les coteaux et les bois ont des brumes qui traînent.  
Par le long des chemins, les ormes et les frênes  
Érigent des troncs nus. Pas de fleurs. Pas de chants.  
Dans les taillis déserts, dans le désert des champs,  
S'allongent les ennuis des brouillards monotones,  
En formes sans profils, en ombres sans couleurs,  
En un rythme sans vie. Au soir de cet automne  
Glisse un silence froid sur la nature en pleurs.  
Oh! dans mon âme et par les bois, les mornes brumes!  
Mais je t'évoque, ô Muse, et voilà que s'allume,  
A mes horizons gris le flambeau des vermeils,  
Que les éclats du cor acclament au réveil  
D'un fastueux printemps, et que, par ton sourire,  
Sont chassés les brouillards qui pleuraient en mes yeux.  
O Muse, mon amante, aux accords de ma lyre,  
Pour moi viens-t'en chanter les cadences des dieux!

HENRI JACCARD.

## ENGLISH VIEWS ON SWITZERLAND.

By "Jean Pierre."

"How do other people see us?" is a question that never fails to rouse general interest in every country of the world. We Swiss are somewhat different, and are more anxious to know: "How do other people see our country?" This, no doubt, because we are, to say the least of it, intensely proud of our country, its natural beauties, and its institutions, but the reason may also, to a certain extent, be less disinterested. On the other hand, we are not so keen to learn other people's opinions about ourselves—our conscience may put some restraint upon our curiosity. Before the war praise and admiration for the natural beauties of Switzerland were general, and nobody dared to utter another opinion. But war has changed many things, and it is, therefore, doubly interesting to know how our country appears now to other people in the light of their war-time experiences. A good many of such impressions have been published in the English press during the holiday season which has just come to a close. A few of the more characteristic of these utterances will be reproduced hereafter.

As of old, foreign visitors to Switzerland are struck by the variety and diversity of sights and aspects, which are there, close together on such a small territory. A traveller writes thus in the *Nottingham Journal and Express* (Sept. 24th):—

"Switzerland, being a land of infinite variety—it provides you with railway officials who are always polite and gentlemanly that always look comic—you can never be tired of travelling in it. But Switzerland, unless you were told, would be a baffling country to identify. A man dumped into it for the first time from an airship might have six guesses and then be wrong. Dropped at Lugano he would guess 'Italy,' from language and scenery, at Zurich 'Germany,' for the same reasons at Geneva—'France,' if the lake gave no clue, and in the Rhone Valley he might guess, from the heat and the taste of the wines, 'Spain,' not to mention names such as Sierre and Montana."

The author of these lines liked the Rhone Valley—most likely on account of the wine that grows there, as can safely be inferred from the frequent allusions he makes to it while describing his journey from Visp to the Lake of Geneva:—

"The journey from Visp to the Lac Leman was a period of torture, pleasurable torture. Italy can be hot, but the Rhone Valley seemed to me the oven of Europe. Despite the Rhone, the great valley down which one journeys seems thirsty and parched.

### THE APPROACH TO SION.

It is a luxuriant valley given over to vines, and the river seems to have much freedom, for its bed is often a mile broad. Perhaps the heat is accentuated by the parallel lines of snow-capped mountains and the closer ranges of vast pine-clad hills.

Near Sierre, a name familiar on bottles throughout Switzerland, itself a quaint little place situated on a prehistoric landslip, one is on the verge of a tract as romantic as anything in Switzerland—the great 5,000 feet high plateau of Montana with its view of the Valais Alps from the Weisshorn to Mont Blanc. It is the haunt of consumptives—or a part of it, and one day, when the repute of its beauty in summer and its sports in winter are better known, it will be a Mecca for Englishmen—and consequently expensive. If any of my readers want to be romantically lost I recommend Montana.

Meanwhile, the train crawls down the broad sun-baked valley, and my companion, to console me, reads out from his guide-book that Sion, then approaching, was notoriously hot. It needed no guide-book to proclaim this truth; the place perspired. Nevertheless, the name Sion somehow conjured up scenes of romance—boars, barons and castles. The boars and the barons have gone, but the castles remain.

### PRISON OF CHILLÓN.

On the heights to the north, silhouetted against the skyline, are the ruins of the castle of Tourbillon, erected in 1294; on the lower hill stands the old castle of Valeria, on the site of a Roman fort. They both looked very picturesque, the