

Notes and gleanings

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While it has been indicated above that there are three distinct language sections to Switzerland, this is not exactly true. The German language predominates and the majority of the population speaks three languages. In the French Cantons pure French is spoken, but in the German Cantons a dialect known as German-Swiss is prevalent. This dialect is difficult for the German to understand, and, compared to pure German, is as broad Scotch to English.

Up to date, no French dialogue pictures have been shown in the German sections, nor have any pictures in the German dialogue made in France been shown. On the other hand, several pictures in the French language produced in Germany have been shown in the French sections with considerable success. It is obvious that Switzerland presents to the British producer a good market for his French and German versions provided that he can make them of the same quality as those coming from France and Germany.

You will have noticed, I hope, that little sidelight in the above article "Swiss audiences are, perhaps, the most critical in Europe" and, if you remember what I wrote the other week, under the heading "Criticism" you will feel that you are hardly a good Swiss anymore if you do not exercise that faculty of criticism when you have the chance of doing so!

The other rather good thing I found in my Gleanings this week, is the following sparkling

Notes from Geneva

in the *Christian Science Monitor*, 14th Nov.:

"La Grande Saison" of Geneva, which falls during the annual session of the Assembly, was thought to have been a little less "grand" than usual this year because of its lateness. There were not, it is remarked, so many charming ladies who took villas in the neighbourhood and conducted salons after the manner of Mme. de Staël, who lived, it should be recalled, at Coppet, a few miles away. But there were distinguished visitors in plenty before and during the Assembly. Several American senators attended one of the series of summer courses on international affairs. King Feisal of Irak looked in. Emil Ludwig came to lunch with Aristide Briand, and exchanged aphorisms on the Assembly with his fellow biographer, André Maurois. Thomas Mann, the German novelist, talked about his work to an audience containing many Assembly delegates. Jules Cambon upheld the dignity of the Académie Française, Edouard Herriot came to inspect progress of Pan-Europe, and Paul Morand arrived, perhaps in search of new "world champions" along the lines of his latest popular book by that name, in which the United States plays an important part.

Not content with being the seat of the League of Nations, Geneva is agitating for a zoo. A few years ago, someone looked down upon the Assembly during one of its more unintelligible moments, and said, "It's a pack of monkeys." But Geneva appears to be divided upon the merits of acquiring a more conventional zoo. The promoters of the scheme zealously point out how much zoos add to the juvenile well-being of London, Berlin and Hamburg, and so forth. But majority opinion on the subject is convinced that if zoos must exist a small zoo is much worse than no zoo at all, for the animals should, of course, receive the greatest possible freedom. Finally, it is pointed out that a zoo would cost much more than Geneva taxpayers are prepared to pay.

Geneva has recently had the privilege of seeing the Comédie Française in two classic performances: "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme," a delightful comedy known to most American schoolboys who take "second-year French," and "What Do Young Girls Dream About?" by Alfred de Musset. The company came to Geneva only with the help of a heavy subsidy from the French Government, naturally to demonstrate French culture before the Assembly then in session. At the same time the Graf Zeppelin, also travelling on governmental funds, flew to Geneva and landed at Cointrin, where tens of thousands of enthusiastic Genevans swarmed to meet it. A caustic Parisian journalist referred scathingly to the French presentation of the idyllically romantic "What Do Young Girls Dream About?" and asked "What Do Zeppelins Dream About?"

At Cointrin an amusing scene revealed the real Swiss democracy. Youths who were entering upon the first weeks of their compulsory military training had been stationed to see that all visitors carried their two-franc tickets. But they had been told only to guard gates, that is, apertures between stone pillars, on either side of which there was no wall whatever. Therefore the citizenry, heartily amused, ignored the soldiers and trooped across fields at the soldier's elbows, but not within the gates. Firm in carrying out their strict assignment, the soldiers stopped nobody who did not attempt passage between the gates, and laughed as heartily as the townsfolk. Nobody

minded and everybody saw the Graf Zeppelin.

When gambling was banished from casinos in the canton of Geneva it was freely predicted that these places of amusement would shortly go bankrupt. But during the season which has just closed the Geneva Kursaal found itself more prosperous than ever. At a banquet organised to celebrate its success, it was especially pointed out that the absence of gambling, instead of being a handicap, had permitted an entirely different class of patrons to come to the Kursaal. Variety performances of a high artistic standard, including dancers and singers of more than average excellence, were given. The climax of the season was the Japanese Theater, which won the extravagant praise of Geneva, as it did in other European capitals. This year the Kursaal had new managers, who expect to continue next season, also without gambling, to build up a light theater of genuine merit.

Can't we just see the good people of Geneva invading that field, and can't we just hear the Colonel's comments when the matter was reported to him!

Switzerland's Population over 4 Million?

The *Observer*, 30th November:

A census will be made in Switzerland on Monday as from the preceding midnight. The method of counting has been improved, and a widespread propaganda is at work to emphasise the importance of filling in the forms as conscientiously as possible. Forms have been distributed in all the schools, and the children are being instructed how to fill them in, so that they can advise their parents if need be. There are only thirteen questions to be answered.

According to the census of 1920 the population of Switzerland was 3.88 millions; this time there will be approximately 4.1 millions. As there were two millions in 1830, the population has just been doubled in the hundred years.

A serious feature of the present census will be the rapid decline of the agricultural population. The "nation of shepherds," as it was once called, has long since become an industrial nation. In 1889 40 per cent. of the population were occupied in agriculture, in 1900 31.3 per cent., in 1920 only 26.3 per cent.

And those among us who, like Kyburg, spring from peasant stock, we do envy our cousins who are still farmers and are doing well and know how good it still is to rise early and to go to bed early. H'm, yes, there is a lot to be said for that life!

A New Swiss Road.

Autocar, 21st November:

A committee has been formed in Lucerne to study the construction of a road along the left bank of the Lake of Lucerne. The road, which will be about 28 miles in length, will facilitate access to the St. Gotthard Pass, and will relieve traffic congestion on the Axenstrasse, which winds along the other shore of the lake.

But, it will be a great pity, because so far, that side of the lake has been free from petrol fumes and dust and ideal for walking. One has only to think of the terrible conditions, as far as pedestrians are concerned, of the Alpachstad-Standstaad Road!

NOTZEIT IST ZEIT DER DANKBARKEIT

Liebe Landsleute! Ihr habt schon viel von den Bedürfnissen unserer Schweizerischen Hilfsgesellschaft gehört. Mit diesen paar Zeilen wollen wir durchaus nicht betteln gehen, sondern Euch zeigen, dass man immer Grund zur Dankbarkeit hat, auch dann wenn die Geschichte schlecht geht. Der Blick auf diejenigen, die wir alle Montage betreiben dürfen lehrt uns das. Und deswegen dachten wir, sei es gut, wenn wir anstatt nur den Jahresbericht auszusenden auch hier und da etwas von unseren Erlebnissen mitteilen würden. Wir haben rund 40 Pensionäre, die teilweise oder ganz auf unsere Unterstützung angewiesen sind. Es sind dies beinahe ausnahmslos Alte oder dauernd Invalide. Da haben wir einen lieben Landsmann, der schon seit 3 Jahren gelähmt in seiner Kammer liegt und aufopfernd von seiner Frau gepflegt wird. Die ärztliche Kunst scheint machtlos gegenüber diesem Leiden, das auch den Mutigsten nach einiger Zeit matt machen muss. Wir gehen aber immer wieder gerne zu unserem Landsmann, weil sein Krankenlager so viel Heldenhaftes offenbart. Und wie dankbar ist er für die kleinste Aufmerksamkeit!—Da haben wir ferner eine noch junge Frau, Mutter von 5 Kindern, die einige Zeit nach dem Tod ihres Mannes vom Schlag gerührt wurde, lange Zeit in einem Spital verbrachte und nun daheim ist, kaum fähig von ihrem Bett auf den danebenstehenden Stuhl sich zu bewegen. Das bange Warten, als ihr Mann am Halskrebs leidend im Spital dahinsiechte, die langen Nächte haben der armen Frau Kraft vorzeitig verbraucht. Aber wenn man zu ihr kommt, grüsst einen immer ein dankbares Lächeln aus ihrem bleichen Gesicht. Gegenüber der Wohnungsfrage sind wir einfach

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