

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

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1921)

Heft: 29

Rubrik: Notes & gleanings

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. [Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. [Voir Informations légales.](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. [See Legal notice.](#)

Download PDF: 31.01.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

NOTES & GLEANINGS.

"How Winter Sports began" is related by Ward Muir in *Country Life* (Dec. 3rd). Tremendous efforts—the writer says—are being made by Switzerland to re-establish its *Fremdenindustrie* on the old scale, and in view of the reduction in hotel charges there is no reason why anybody should hesitate to plan a visit on the score of expense. Travelling recently on the Engadine express, in the midst of merry young folk bound on holiday, it struck him that a large proportion of his fellow-voyagers were curiously ignorant of how the winter-sport vogue came into existence:

"We talk of Swiss winter sports. Actually, they are English winter sports. The English laid down the first skating rink in Switzerland in 1876 at Davos. An Englishman, Mr. Hornblower, inaugurated the first toboggan races ever held or heard of in Europe—on the steep road between Davos and the village of Klosters—in 1881. Later it was English enthusiasts who engineered the Cresta Ice Run at St. Moritz, and it was an Englishman, Major Bulpett, who invented the "skeleton" type of toboggan now universally used for ice-run riding. Harold Freeman, the athlete, a son of the historian of the Norman Conquest, came to Davos in 1884, and was for twenty years president of the (English) Toboggan Club. The first bobsleigh was devised at Davos by two Englishmen, Mr. Bullen and Major Wilbraham. Improvements were elaborated by various English zealots in the Engadin, and to-day there is no resort in the length and breadth of Switzerland where bobsleighbing is not a popular pastime. Even ski-ing, which the Swiss themselves could now hardly do without, was introduced (from Norway) by two Englishmen, the famous brothers Richardson, in 1901, though it may be added that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Dame Katherine Furse had already tried it at Davos some years previously. Curling came from Scotland about 1888. The Belvedere Curling Club was founded at Davos in 1892. Bandy was also a British importation, one of its pioneers being Capt. E. G. Wynyard, the celebrated cricketer.

The name of Davos inevitably keeps recurring in any account of the development of winter sports, because Davos was their birthplace. In the Oberland and the Rhone Valley there have sprung up hosts of delightful smaller pleasure places, but they all 'derive from' Davos, the oldest and still the biggest, with St. Moritz following it as a close second. Davos, of course, claims the advantage of having a literary as well as a sporting tradition. It was here, in 1882, that Stevenson completed 'Treasure Island.' John Addington Symonds, who settled at Davos in 1877, wrote many of his most important books in the chalet which he built there and which still stands in that part of the town known as the English quarter, where a string of villas and hotels connects Davos Platz with Davos Dorf. Other English authors who have lived and worked at Davos were Mrs. Oliphant, Annie Houldsworth, Richard Bagot Beatrice Harraden, 'Dick Donoyan' and James Elroy Flecker. For whereas the newer Swiss winter resorts cater for short-stay visitors, Davos, because of its climatic attributes has always had a settled English colony, and is, indeed, as cosmopolitan as Mentone or Madeira. Its season reaches its height in February, as is also the case with its neighbour, St. Moritz where the Grand National toboggan race is often held as late as the first week in March."

* * *

One of the English delegates to the Congress (recently held in Basle) of the International Co-operative Alliance records his impressions of Switzerland in the *Millgate Monthly* for December. He is full of praise for everything Swiss and pays a unique compliment to "Beautiful Basle," in fact, we feel quite proud and elevated in quoting the following lines:—

"O Basle, homage to thee and to thy burghers brave!
Poets may not have sung of thee as of thy sister in the west,
Geneva, but to see thee once is to love thee; and to love thee
is to have a longing to see thee again and to mingle among
thy folk once more."

The writer recalls a previous occasion when, travelling through Basle in 1907, the train was later than usual, arriving at 2 o'clock in the morning instead of early the previous evening. The railway station was being closed, and

over a hundred British people were stranded and turned out into the street. However, the Mayor of Basle happened to hear of their misfortune and instantly telephoned—at half-past two in the morning—to all the big hotels instructing them forthwith to open their doors to the forlorn foreigners. This kindly act has never been forgotten, and he sends his grateful salutations to the to him unknown Mayor of Basle.

The reception, the billeting and in fact all the arrangements in connection with the recent Congress have been the acme of perfection. It was impossible to get lost, for at important crossways English-speaking "Diensttragers" were posted to direct the visitors. He considers the Swiss the very essence of internationalism—it is their birthright, the inheritance of the ages.

"The Swiss people provide the one great example of co-operation in the everyday life of a great nation. Switzerland, the home of the League of Nations, is itself a veritable League of Nations. . . ."

"The Swiss speak German, and live the very next door to Germany, but they are not German. The Swiss speak French, and France is just the other side of the Jura mountains—but they are not French. The Swiss speak Italian, and through the Simplon Tunnel is Italy—but they are not Italians. The Swiss speak Ladin, a relic of the old common tongue of the Romans—but they are not Romans. Yes, they speak four languages, not one of which is Swiss. Now they have added a fifth—at least in Basle—and that is English, and good, honest English, too. A generous educational system partly accounts for this, as well as the fact that Basle is the gateway to Switzerland for the flow of English and American tourists, to say nothing of the numbers of young men who have lived in England either in hotel service—or in the commercial life of our C.W.S. Perhaps Charlie Chaplin, too, has helped a little in this direction, for no cinema in the city seemed complete without the effigy of this world's inimitable smiling at you in the entrance hall."

"Basle is eloquent of the part it has played in the history of the Confederation, and, incidentally, in civilisation." Basle is proud of its association with Erasmus, the great scholar, who taught and died here, as is Geneva of the other great religious leader, Calvin, to both of whom the Reformation owed so much. Basle has an artistic reputation, for here the younger Holbein flourished. The influence of Pestalozzi, a near neighbour, is clearly evident in the educational and humanitarian institutions of the city. Its cathedral towers remind us that Basle gives its name to the last of the three great ecclesiastical reforming Councils which was held here in 1431, when it was sought to reconcile the Hussites with the Roman Catholic Church, but ended in defiance of the Pope. Basle also gives its name to the Treaty concluded there in 1795 between France, Prussia, and Spain, which led to Prussia taking under her protection all the States of Northern Germany. The Rathaus, or Town Hall, in its somewhat gaudy Burgundian style, takes us back to the time of 1501, when Basle joined the Swiss Confederation. *And that there are two Basles, separated by the Rhine into Greater Basle and Lesser Basle, is because of the Civil War in 1831, when the discontented Basle country rose up in arms against Basle town.* [The italics are ours.—"S.O."].

Basle, possessing the charm of antiquity and the beauty of modern architecture, is too far away from the glorious Alps to be favoured with typical Swiss scenery, hence the delegates were treated to an excursion to—

"Lucerne, the Lovely, on whose crystal waters of emerald hue we spent a few hours that will for ever be treasured in our golden casket of memory. It was, indeed, an inspiration to be welcomed by a gigantic golden Christ—after the famous sculpture of "Come Unto Me" by Thorwaldsen—which stood, with gentle eyes and gracefully opened arms, on a headland, just beyond which there was revealed to our eyes, as in a wondrous dream, the glory of the lake and the magnificence of the mountains. The tongue was put to silence by the majesty of Nature, where earth rose sheer from the smooth mirror of the lake and in rugged grandeur struggled to pierce the blue of heaven with their silvery, snow-tipped peaks. The eye opened wide in wonder at the Axenstrasse, a highway tunnelled through the massive rock in a series of picturesque galleries, a great engineering feat, second perhaps only to the St. Gotthard tunnel; the ear was held in thrall with the story of how the

national hero, William Tell, leapt ashore from the boat which was carrying him to prison, as Tell's Chapel was pointed out on the edge of the lake; memory sought to carry away a vivid picture of that little plot of bright green sward encircled by trees at Rütli, for was it not here that the three mighty men of Swiss legend met and took the oath against Austria, and so was born the Swiss Confederation in 1307; and, lastly, our respectful gaze rested on the Schiller Stone, a needle-like rock bearing in golden letters its dedication to the poet Schiller, who, although a German—he was a poet of the world—is regarded as the national singer of Swiss story and legend."

The following eulogy on the Rhine closes this rapturous article:—

"The Rhine! Can we ever forget it? That great swift-running mass of cold, dark-green waters, swirling and eddying, ever flowing, never ebbing, grand and inspiring in the light of day, weird and mysterious in the gloom of night! It haunts one still! Some miles away it rises a

"Small current of the wilds afar from men,"

and then, gathering strength and force, it rushes through Basle, on between the vine-clad valleys and the castle-crowned heights of German romance, past the great centres of modern industry and high culture of Germany, and into Holland, where the heavy commerce of the world floats on its bosom, and so into the deep waters of the North Sea. Father Rhine, the great water-way to the heart of Europe, and "one which unites almost everything that can render an earthly object magnificent and charming" and which "comes down from remote antiquity, associated in every age with momentous events in the history of the neighbouring nations!" * * *

The *Railway Gazette* (Dec. 9th) publishes under the title "Swiss Railway Affairs" a recapitulation of the present position and the remedies proposed to secure the necessary economies. The information is presented in an admirably condensed form that we cannot do better than reproduce in full:—

"With an estimated deficit on the profit and loss account up to the end of 1922 amounting to somewhat more than 203,000,000 fr., the Swiss Federal Railways are trying to discover some means of reducing expenditure. A Parliamentary Committee of 25 members is now sitting in Neuchâtel, to discuss nothing but the reorganisation of the Federal lines. Among the 25 is the Minister for Railways, Federal Councillor Haab.

This Committee was not long before deciding to reduce the Federal Railway board of management from 55 members to 11. The number of railway district and district managerial offices has already been reduced from five to three at a former railway Parliamentary Committee, but the details have now to be worked out and decided. The reform will, it is estimated, result in the saving of 5,000,000 fr. a year, provided, that is, that Parliament ratifies these various decisions, which it is not at all likely it will refuse to do, for the outcry against waste of public funds on officials has of late become very loud indeed.

The reduction of the number of district departments of the Swiss Federal Railways from five to three (Lausanne I, Lucerne II, and Zurich III), omitting St. Gallen and Basel, has caused endless heartburnings, especially on the part of Basel, which says that, commercially, it is a very important town, and says so truly, although at present, owing to there being so little through traffic from Germany via the Baden Station, which is on Swiss territory, Basel's importance is much less than formerly. On the other hand, it may recover, and probably will do so, and become far more important than either Lausanne or Lucerne. As consolation prizes it is proposed that Basel shall become the headquarters of the railway rolling-stock departments, and St. Gallen, which will lose 150 railway officials through ceasing to be a separate railway district, headquarters of the receipts department; but this means the transference of 200 staff officials from Berne to Basel and St. Gallen, and these officials, who have their homes and often small gardens in Berne, do not care to leave the capital and go to Eastern Switzerland, and have already sent in a protest. The Parliamentary Committee, however, replied that they are Government officials, and that, like other Government officials, they must go whither they are sent.

While economy is the order of the day on the one hand, on the other hand we have a proposal for extra pay to railway servants and officials which would mean 25,000,000 fr. extra expenditure for the Government, plus the increased cost of living grants. To meet this extra pay it was proposed in the Swiss Parliament to revise the eight hours' working day law; but the Minister for Railways considered that this would not

be of much use, because the hours were not so very rigorously fixed, and, as a matter of fact, in some cases exceed eight hours. As regards the increased pay, however, he admitted that it was too much, too heavy a burden upon the country. No wonder the Swiss public is anxious about the financial condition of the State Railways, whose estimated deficit made up as follows:—

Excess of expenditure over receipts, according to the 1922 estimates	Frs. 30,355,000
Excess of expenditure over receipts, according to the 1921 estimates, 48,888,000 fr. Owing to the diminution of traffic receipts and alteration of the estimated traffic expenditure, this excess will probably amount to, in round numbers ...	80,000,000
Deficit on the profit and loss account at the end of 1920	92,738,000
Estimated deficit on the profit and loss account at the end of 1922	203,093,000

Moreover, the Swiss Federal Railways will require not less than 103,000,000 fr. for interest alone (88,700,000 fr. for fixed loans, and 14,900,000 fr. for floating debts). In the circumstances it is surely significant—not to use a stronger word—that one of the chief conditions laid down by the German industrial magnates for advancing securities to the German Government is that, as far as possible, State-managed enterprises (including the German State Railways) should revert to private management.

Owing doubtless to Swiss Federal Railway indebtedness, we find in the 1922 estimates only 1,500,000 fr. set down for new lines, and of this sum 1,000,000 is for the second Simplon Tunnel. For rolling-stock 26,389,000 fr. are set down, and for electrification work altogether 56,610,000 fr.

The great St. Gotthard line will be the first Federal line to be entirely electrified, and will be done by April next, it is expected. For some time electric trains have been running from Erstfeld to Bellinzona, and by the end of next month they should be electrified from Bellinzona to Chiasso (Italian-Swiss frontier), while by April next the line from Erstfeld to Lucerne should also be ready for electric traction. Between now and next spring the Amsteg power station should be ready to supply current, but even if this be not ready it will be possible to draw upon other power stations. A good many of the unemployed are engaged on railway work, and it is because of the need for employing so many workless men that the construction items on the 1922 Swiss railway estimates are so heavy, when it might have been thought that economies could have been effected. We must not forget that there are fully 145,000 unemployed in Switzerland at present, which, with a population of 3,880,000, is very heavy.

As yet there does not seem to be any prospect of a reduction in passenger fares or freight, but possibly Switzerland will follow the example of the British railways, especially as the increased fares and freights have not brought in better receipts."

* * *

A further contribution to the *Manchester Guardian* (Dec. 2nd) deals with the import into England of Swiss Dyes (see "S.O." page 220) from an opposite angle. The writer takes exception to the preferential treatment which the Swiss manufacturers are receiving at the hands of the English Licensing Committee and suggests that the English trader should be entirely unhampered in obtaining his supplies from whatever source he chooses.

* * *

On the question of the regularisation of the Rhine the following is reprinted by *Syren and Shipping* (Nov. 30) from a communication which appeared in the Antwerp journal "Neptune":—

"The Swiss scheme for the regularisation of the Rhine from Strasbourg to Basle will cost about 105,000,000 Swiss francs. How is that money to be found? It is not likely that the States interested will be very desirous of advancing it. There are really three distinct plans under consideration, namely, that of regularisation emanating from Switzerland, of canalisation, a Baden proposal, and that of a lateral canal as proposed by France. Switzerland and Germany are agreed in opposing the construction of a lateral canal, Great Britain is equally against it, and Holland will be of the same opinion. On the other hand, the problem whether to regularise or canalise the Rhine is a very difficult one to solve, and must be carefully studied. The fact that engineers who are well acquainted with

local conditions all differ on this subject proves how difficult it is, and even the technical press does not venture to solve the problem. The investigation should be entrusted to a small impartial commission composed of first-class water engineers, who would conduct an examination on the spot and draw up a detailed report. Such a commission could be appointed either by the States interested, Switzerland and the State of Baden, or by the Central Rhine Commission. I would like to point out that a similar fight occurred 30 years ago concerning the regularisation of the Rhine from Strasbourg to Karlsruhe, where these three propositions were equally represented and defended. After years of discussion the regularisation scheme was adopted, and from 1906 to 1914 it gave the best results. Nevertheless, it should be added that the up and down stream conditions at Strasbourg are entirely different from those at Karlsruhe."

* * *

The Electrician (Dec. 2nd) cites the figures on the extensive use of electricity published recently in the annual report of the "Vorort," adding that, though in some parts the increased use of electricity was due to the high price of coal, it was mainly due to its cleanliness, convenience and other advantages that the electric service has become so popular.

* * *

The Geneva correspondent of the *Westminster Gazette* (Dec. 6th), writing on Winter Sports, gives a somewhat gloomy picture of the immediate prospects on account of the poor snowfall. There is, of course, time yet for conditions to change and improve by Christmas; everybody is earnestly hoping that such a change will take place soon, as snowfalls are badly needed to replenish all sources of water supply:—

"This winter it is mainly the British that the Swiss hotel keepers are looking to fill their establishments, for there is hardly any nation, except perhaps the Dutch (of whom there are not very many) who can conceivably afford holidays this season. Trade is too bad, and the conditions of the exchanges continue too abnormal.

The days when a fortnight could be spent in one of the less expensive Swiss winter resorts for 12 guineas, or even 10, including a return ticket, are days gone by, let us not say never to return, but hardly soon. Railway fares have almost doubled, and hotel expenses increased about 70 per cent., which is very moderate, considering how much the cost of all necessaries and of service has risen. A fortnight in a Swiss winter resort now, according to the inclusive charges made by the leading London tourist agency, costs nearly £19 which sum does not include tips and small extras, and only covers a second-class return ticket.

There is no doubt that the fact that English people will still have the trouble of getting passports and Swiss visas for those passports does not predispose them to travel to Switzerland. Instead of spending such heavy sums in advertising Swiss winter resorts, the Swiss Government might have been better advised to have abolished passports and visas for British tourists, as has been done for American tourists."

STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.

BONDS.	Nov. 29th.	Dec. 12th.
Swiss Confederation 3% 1903	63.50%	63.50%
Swiss Confederation 9th Mob. Loan 5%	99.40%	99.35%
Federal Railways A—K 3½%	65.95%	67.50%
Canton Basle-Stadt 5½% 1921	97.65%	97.25%
Canton Fribourg 3% 1892... ..	59.75%	59.50%
Zurich (Stadt) 4% 1909	97.75%	97.60%
SHARES.		
Crédit Suisse... ..	520 frs.	532 frs.
Union de Banques Suisses... ..	500 frs.	500 frs.
Swiss Bank Corporation	520 frs.	517 frs.
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	950 frs.	1100 frs.
C. F. Bally S.A.	590 frs.	600 frs.
Fabrique de Machines Oerlikon... ..	405 frs.	410 frs.
Enterprises Sulzer	390 frs.	395 frs.
S.A. Brown Boveri (new)	150 frs.	197 frs.
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Co.	230 frs.	238 frs.

(Pressure on our space prevents us from giving the usual résumé of Financial and Commercial News from Switzerland).

THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT of the SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY will be pleased to hear from any person, or firm willing to allow use of one or two rooms for 1½ hours once or twice a week, between about 6—8 p.m. for the purpose of accommodating additional classes. District: City or West Central.—Replies to the Chef des Cours, S.M.S., 24, Queen Victoria Street, E.C.4.

COMFORTABLE HOME, at moderate terms, offered to one or two Swiss Gentlemen, from first week in January.—Apply, 50, Aberdeen Road, Highbury, N.5.

NICE GIRL as Mother's Help; all duties; charwoman for rough work; no other help kept.—Brown, 24, Radnor Road, Harrow.

An ?

(KUSS UND MISTEL.)

Dort unterm Mistelzweig, der von der Ampel
Am roten Bande sich herniedersenkt,
Hast Du am Weihnachtstage par exemple
Mir lächelnd einen ersten Kuss geschenkt.
Seither hat ohne Mistel Deine Lippe
Sich mit der meinen wiederum vereint,
Denn Du entdecktest, dass es mit der Klippe
Um's Mistelzweiglein nicht so ernst gemeint.
So zauberst Du, trotz rauher Wintertage,
Mit Deiner Anmut einen jungen Mai;
Wir suchen scherzend Antwort auf die Frage:
Ob's mit, ob's ohne Mistel süsser sei?
Doch dauerte das Minnespiel nicht lange ...
Kalt—unerbittlich kam die Abschiedsstund'.
... Ich küsst' ein Tränlein Dir von Aug und Wange
Und dann noch einmal Deinen Rosenmund.

GALLUS.

BARCLAYS BANK LIMITED.

Head Office: 54, Lombard St., London, E.C.3.

Authorised Capital £20,000,000
Issued Capital . . . £15,592,372
Reserve Fund . . . £8,250,000
Deposits (30/6/1921) . £332,206,417

Every banking facility is provided for merchants and others interested in the ANGLO-SWISS TRADE.

Chief Foreign Branch: 168, Fenchurch St., London, E.C.3.

West End Foreign Branch: 1, Pall Mall East, London, S.W.1.

The Bank has over 1500 branches in England and Wales, and agents and correspondents in all the principal towns throughout the World.

AFFILIATED BANKS:

THE BRITISH LINEN BANK, Head Office, Edinburgh.
THE UNION BANK OF MANCHESTER, Ltd., Head Office, Manchester
THE ANGLO-EGYPTIAN BANK, Ltd.,
Head Office, 27, Clements Lane, London, E.C. 4.

Kindly address all enquiries to:

The Manager, BARCLAYS BANK LIMITED,
WEST END FOREIGN BRANCH,
1, Pall Mall East, S.W. 1.