

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: - (1922)

Heft: 66

Rubrik: Here and there

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: 30.01.2025

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

to them to learn that she is also not the least among the States "of chief industrial importance." The *Birmingham Post* (Sept. 1st) reports as under:—

"One of the questions to be dealt with by the Council of the League of Nations during its present session in Geneva is that of the eight States "of chief industrial importance" which, under the Labour section of the Versailles Treaty, are entitled to seats on the governing body of the International Labour Office. That body consists of twelve Government representatives, six of employers and six of workpeople. All the employers' and workers' groups and four members of the Government group are elected by the corresponding elements in the International Labour Conference, but the remaining eight Government seats are allotted to the eight most important industrial States. The list adopted for the purposes of the present governing body consists of Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Japan, Switzerland, and (pending the adhesion of the United States) Denmark, while the four elected Governments were Spain, Argentine, Canada, and Poland. A strong claim was made by India for inclusion among the eight States "of chief industrial importance," and as the decision of any question in regard to these States is entrusted by the Treaty to the Council of the League, the Indian claim has been the subject of its prolonged investigation. The issue turns mainly on the definition of the term "industrial importance" and the criteria which should be employed. A report on this question has been prepared for the Council, which will give its decision in time for it to take effect when the new governing body comes to be appointed at the International Labour Conference in October."

* * *

We all collected stamps in the palmy days of our youth, but few pursued the hobby so far as to deserve the dignified appellation of "philatelist." By amateur and expert alike, however, the following notes on rare Swiss Stamps will be appreciated; they are from the pen of Mr. Fred Melville (*Daily Telegraph* Aug. 31st) and have reference to the International Philatelic Exhibition which opened at Geneva on September 3rd and remains open till September 12th:—

"Foremost among the exhibits will be several of the greatest collections known of the rare early stamps of Switzerland, stamps that figure in the forefront of the rarities of the world in stamps.

The Swiss cantons were the first European authorities to follow the example of Great Britain in issuing stamps. Zurich and Geneva sharing the distinction with the South American Empire (as it was then) of Brazil in issuing their first postage stamps in 1843, and Basle followed in 1845, all several years prior to the general extension of the postage stamp system to the countries of the Great Powers. The proposal to simplify the work of the Postal Department was laid before the Zurich Council of State on August 13, 1842, and it was based upon the method of prepaying postage by means of stamps, as recently introduced in Britain. By adopting this system the rates could be simplified and reduced, so that there would only be two rates for the interior of the Canton, viz., 4 rappen for letters circulating within one 'rayon,' which was the district served by any one post-office, and 6 rappen for letters passing anywhere in the Cantonal 'rayon,' that is to say, from any one district to another within the limits of the Canton. The Council of State gave its decision in favour of the proposals on January 21, 1843, and ordered the preparation of the two now famous Zurich stamps, which were issued shortly afterwards. The exact date of their emission is not known, but from existing specimens it is clear that they were in circulation early in March. The earliest known dated copy is March 2, 1843.

The design was a simple one, comprising a large numeral '4' or '6' imposed upon a ground of trellis work pattern formed by oblique lines, in groups of four crossing in diamond formation. The border is formed of a double-lined rectangle with ornaments and the inscriptions 'Zurich' at top and 'Cantonal Taxe' at the bottom. The stamps were lithographed in sheets of 100 (10 by 10) by MM. Orell, Fussli & Co., of Zurich and the lithographic artist drew each stamp five times, and his strip of five drawings was transferred twenty times to the stone to form the set of 100. As a result of the first five being separately drawn we get five easily recognisable types of each denomination.

The impression, as with the first 1d. British stamp, was in

black, but the paper was ruled with horizontal red lines, and later with vertical red lines. The Cantonal Archives of Zurich are very incomplete in records of these stamps, and no information has been obtained of the numbers printed or used. The 4 rappen is the rarer of the two denominations, being quoted at £100 to £110 unused, and £60 used; the 6 rappen is worth £15 to £20 unused, and about £8 used. One of the stamps on the 6 rappen stone was defective, and was 'retouched,' creating a scarce variety of this denomination quoted at £75 unused and £40 used.

The Geneva stamps include the celebrated 'double' stamp of 1843, 5c. by 5c. black on yellow-green, worth over £200. the 'small eagle' of 1845, worth £15 unused, £10 used; and the 'large eagle' on yellow-green or blue-green, which are quoted from £6 to £16 each. Two other stamps now classed under Geneva in the Transitional period (i.e., pending the Federation) used to be attributed to Vaud. They are the 4c. black and red of 1849, an extreme rarity, worth £200 unused, £120 used; and the 5c. black and red issued a few weeks later, a more accessible stamp at £25 unused, £12 used. Of the Geneva issues I may have something further to relate upon seeing what treasures the Swiss specialists present at the forthcoming exhibition.

The other rare cantonal stamp is the 'Basle dove,' a very pretty little stamp in nice condition. It was issued on July 1, 1845, and, unlike its cantonal predecessors, was engraved on copper, from a design by an architect, M. Berry, who embodied the arms of the ancient town, and in the centre a white dove with a letter in its beak. The stamps were printed at Frankfurt. For some reason the postage stamp idea did not catch on at Basle as it had done in Zurich and Geneva, and very few were used. The stamp catalogues at £50 unused, £36 used. A few years ago someone found among the archives at Basle a part sheet of fifteen of these stamps, which had been mislaid for over sixty years. It is a unique block of these stamps, whose value would be much more than fifteen times the £50 price of a single specimen."

* * *

Swiss linguistic abilities generally are well and widely known, and horrid examples of "English as she is wrote" from Swiss sources are few and far between. The following gem from *Punch* (Sept. 6th) has a peculiar and rare lustre all its own:—

WARNING TO UNSOCIAL CLIMBERS.

NOTICE IN A SWISS HOTEL.

"It is defended to circulate in the corridors in boots of ascension before seven hours of the morning.
"Les chiens le même."

HERE AND THERE.

By J. H. Cortesby.

"Yes, gentlemen," said an occupant in the smoking compartment, "real ambition starts in childhood. If we only follow its impulse, not only do we attain our object, but actually go far beyond it. Yes, our ambition is gratified beyond our wildest dreams. Look at me. In my boyhood I was anxious to become a pirate. To-day"—and he gazed proudly round the carriage—"to-day I run a successful seaside hotel!"

Some people returning from their seashore holidays may have cause to believe that there is some truth hidden in the manner in which youth dreams of ancient daring deeds of sea brigandage and pillage can be transformed into civilized honest business realities.

To be a "bold, bad pirate" does not, happily, represent the only ambition of youth. Children's ambitions vary greatly and seem to fall in line with the life whose colour strikes most powerfully their imagination and which lies within the radius of their limited knowledge.

Mr. Adrian Beecham, a son of Sir Thomas Beecham, for example, who was born and lives in a home where music forms the main topic and interest, could not but be charmed with the prospects of reaching the heights of the

art. At the age of fifteen—two years ago—he set to music Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice." This opera will be produced shortly and be unique in rich costumes of the period (A.D. 1480). It is said that gorgeous fabrics and quaint jewelled settings are being utilized. On his mother's side, too, Mr. Adrian Beecham comes from a talented family. Lady Beecham is of American origin. Her father, Dr. S. Welles, apart from being a physician, is an oil painter of some distinction. Her mother is a descendant of the Claffin family, the members of which seem to possess the virtue of transforming stones into gold. Thus Mr. Adrian Beecham, who started to work hard at a time when other children think of play, possesses every chance to make for himself a name to be proud of.

* * *

"I wish I were a millionaire," says youth more often than not, "and I'd do nothing for the rest of my life!" But that kind of youth does not know that millionaires work hard and remain in harness to the very last. We have a recent instance of this in the late Lord Northcliffe.

Work is the only real thing that helps man to remain alive, for nature, when she finds a man to be useless, has a way of giving him short notice to quit. The answer to the question of "how long shall a man or woman work?" is given by Dr. Smith, renowned in America as a very hardy old man, who worked until he died a few days ago in his hundredth year. "Absence from work," he said "is the first step to the grave."

"To have the job that you like, to strive to be rather better at it than other people; to strive, indeed, to be better than you ever can—that is the greater happiness. A man who has voluntarily thrown up work when he is capable of going on with it is a no more impressive sight than a ditched and rusting motor-car."

Work!" some of the willing ones will say. "But if there is none to be had, what then?"

* * *

Work! Nobody will accuse the Reparations Commission of idleness, since the document in which it communicates its latest demand to the German Government is headed "Decision No. 2119," and, says the *Evening News*:—

"The ordinary citizen—the 'good European'—now prays that before the expiry of the six months of breathing time the Governments of Paris and London will have found a permanent settlement, without adding unduly to the other 2,119 decisions."

But while decisions are being taken and passed along, the Turks are tackling the Greeks in no uncertain manner and to the sorrow of King Tino, who sees his imperialistic plans dashed to the ground. Mr. Lovat Fraser gives in the meantime a touch of his black paint brush in the *Sunday Pictorial* as to the true European situation and concludes:—

"It will not be suggested that the grave crisis which arose about German reparations implied another war-cloud, but it undoubtedly deepened the gloom which rests over Europe. The Old World has been slipping backwards ever since the Armistice; our statesmen seem to be fumbling with mighty issues, and, while our people make holiday, civilisation is rocking as it did in 1914. I hope the clouds will pass, but can see few gleams of sunlight."

* * *

Londoners who come back to town with the vision of walls and roofs of other shapes than those of London buildings may be more or less in a position to appreciate the gentle but humorous remarks of the famous United States critic. He would hang one London architect each week "as a moral encouragement for the rest!"

"The trouble about English architects," he says, "is that they are under the thumb of some dodo who says he

wants 35 chimneys and a Gothic garage. The result is that they produce something that looks like a cheese-box decorated by an idiot. Whatever beauty English architecture possesses is due to climate."

As to the new London County Hall, he adds that "the roof is all wrong in colour. It just looks big and American."

But about Englishmen what strikes him most is—

"that they are practically the only people I know who still have any real liberty left, in spite of all the goose-stepping you have gone through. I walk down the street as soon as I land in London and meet a man selling a journal of Communitic tendencies. That's a healthy sign. Why, in America men have been killed for less than that."

'Yes,' concluded Mr. Mencken, 'I like England. She's recovering from the war in a very wonderful way.'

'But when you ask me who won the war, I am reminded of a remark of Irvin S. Cobb, our popular humorous writer: "Who do you think will win the war?" asked a woman of him in 1917.'

'My dear friend,' he replied, 'may I ask you who won the San Francisco earthquake?'

* * *

We have heard so much about the pollution of London's atmosphere by dust and the like that the statement made by Dr. J. S. Harlene, the eminent physiologist, before the Royal Society of Arts, comes as a relief from the constant obsession that it is almost unsafe to breathe within the metropolis:—

"He was in favour of a smokeless London because it would be cleaner and lighter, but he refused to admit that ordinary dirt did any harm to the lungs. The miner, he said; with his black lungs, suffered less from consumption than the farm labourer. London's small dirt particles were really health-bringers. The human lungs, it seemed, contained 'protoplasmic cells,' whose work it was to clean up the dust and then carry it up the air passages and out into the world again. If, therefore, one lives in a very dirty atmosphere, these little cells were kept constantly hard at work, and the cleaning service was therefore all the more efficient."

No wonder dustmen look so healthy!

If dust is so helpful it must be that we have lived hitherto with a totally wrong conception of things.

* * *

Another wrong conception is that which relates to the old style of waging wars by armies of men fighting other armies. A fair example of how easily party quarrels can be settled is provided by the solution of the old-standing feud that existed between the Facisti (Italy's militant anti-seditionists) and the Legionaries of the airman-poet and ex-rebel d'Annunzio.

Each party appointed an officer, Signor Vittorio Pantaleo, an engineer, for the Legionaries, and Captain Padovani for the Fascisti.

The two met with swords at Villaricca, near Naples, and in the fifth encounter Pantaleo was wounded in the right arm. The two champions were then reconciled.

There may even be a possible improvement on this system of settling international disputes or difficulties by following the arrangements that at present form an intimate part of boxing contests, viz., the offer of purses by the neutrals or lookers-on. This would avoid all the troubles attached to Reparations.

* * *

Another simple way of making a fortune:—

"I know a man who ten years ago was a clerk with less than £100. Now he is worth £10,000."

"Very good. How did he do it?"

"Oh, through industry, perseverance, and the death of an uncle who left him £9,900."