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# The Swiss Observer

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Our next number will be issued on Wednesday, December 24th, and posted early on that afternoon. In place of some of the regular features we shall reproduce a few photographs, illustrating recent events in the Colony, which will doubtless prove of interest to our readers.

## HOME NEWS

An interesting discussion occupied the National Council last week. It was a question as to whether the five years enacted for the closing of the gaming houses should be reckoned from the date of the referendum in 1921, or from the date when the new law was passed by the two Houses. The National Council, by a very small majority, decided in favour of the latter. The few hotels and casinos running hazard tables will, therefore, suspend their activities in this direction in the spring of next year. It is asserted in some quarters that this restriction will do considerable harm to the Swiss hotel industry in general.

No sympathy is extended to the sparrow in the new hunt and game regulations, this innocent bird being declared "vogelfrei."

Smuggling of cattle into Switzerland across the Savoyard frontier has recently developed into a regular trade: two cows, of the value of about Frs. 2,500, were captured last week by Swiss customs officials.

The Federal Military Department has cashiered two Lucerne officers, one for leading a loose life in private, and the second for having anonymously exposed the first.

A petition, which sought to establish civil or labour units for those who for religious or other conscientious reasons objected to military service, was discussed in the National Council, the Socialist members strongly supporting this unconstitutional measure. Further consideration of the petition was subsequently negated by a majority of over two to one.

At the International Communist Congress in Basle, all the Governments, with the exception of Russia, came in for very serious criticism, and vehement protests were uttered against the persecution of Communists in all European countries. The Swiss Communist party was presented with a red flag from their friends in Russia.

Slight earth shocks were experienced in different parts of North-Eastern Switzerland on Thursday, December 11th.

The manager and other high officials of the Banque d'Escompte et Change in Lausanne, which closed its doors in July last, have now been arrested.

For manufacturing and selling absinthe, a number of persons were mulcted in fines ranging from Frs. 50 to Frs. 200 (!) at Motiers (Neuchâtel), the stock and distilling apparatus being confiscated.

## ADVENTSGRUSS.

Weihnachten naht wiederum, und da möchten wir uns in der Adventszeit innerlich sammeln und zurüsten auf dieses lieblichste aller Feste. Wir Menschen von heute—nicht nur im Getriebe der Weltstadt, sondern auch in der Heimat—wissen nicht mehr viel von stillen Wochen. Wer denkt noch daran, dass in früheren Zeiten die Adventswochen Fasten und Enthaltung von rauschenden Vergnügungen forderten? Noch einige Tage oder ein paar stille Stunden vermögen uns vielleicht von Zeit zu Zeit über den Lärm des Augenblicks hinauszuhelben, und selbst da heisst es auf der Hut sein, damit wir nicht noch um diesen bescheidenen Rest ungestörter Ruhe betrogen werden.

Ihr, liebe Landsleute in London, seid doch wohl in ganz besonderer Weise solch steter Unruhe, solchem Hasten und Jagen ausgesetzt. Daher lasst die Stimme aus der Heimat zu Euch dringen, deren Höhenlandschaft nun wieder in herrlich reinen Schnee gebettet liegt. Die ewigen Berge predigen zu Euch hinüber mit einer Wucht, wie sie des Menschen auch noch so vollendete Redegewalt nie aufzubringen vermöchte. Und was sie Euch hineinrufen in Nebel und Finsternis, in Trüb- nis und Dunkelheit eines gequälten Daseins—was der unermessliche Lichtglanz der Sonne, die über

Schnee und Eis dahinglitzert—Euch allen, Reichen und Armen, verkündet, das ist die frohe Botschaft, dass es einen Schein gibt auf Erden, der heller ist, als aller Glanz dieser Welt. Dieser Geist ist der Geist der Liebe, der an Weihnachten—mit dem Kommen Jesu in diese Welt—hereinbrach. Die Menschen dieser Welt, ob sie als Pfaffen, Krämer oder Laifen herumlaufen, treten ihm immer wieder mit Füßen. Sie machen ein lautes Festgeschrei an Weihnachten, um auf die innere Bedeutung dieses Tages, auf die Stimme des Gewissens nicht achten zu müssen.

Weihnachten will einziehen in die Herzen der Menschen, der Menschen nämlich, die noch Sinn haben für die ewigen Wahrheiten, die von einer Welt des Geistes zeugen. Der Geist ist es, auf den es ankommt. Dieser Geist aber der Liebe, der Freude, des Jubels, den wir meinen, fasst sich zusammen in die Worte der Bibel: *Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe, und Friede auf Erden, und den Menschen ein Wohlgefallen!*

Arosa, Dezember 1924. HEINRICH URNER.

## EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

**Une statistique matrimoniale.** — La "Revue ecclésiastique suisse," de Lucerne, publie une statistique du plus haut intérêt sur les mariages en Suisse, au point de vue religieux.

	Mariages		
	cathol.	protest.	mixtes
Uri ... ..	2,799	209	194
Schwyz ... ..	8,048	362	413
Obwald ... ..	2,240	59	57
Nidwald ... ..	1,780	23	60
Lucerne ... ..	20,480	2,699	2,103
Zürich ... ..	12,607	67,197	14,423
Glaris ... ..	1,178	4,314	779
Zoug ... ..	3,606	497	395
Berne ... ..	11,220	89,450	6,255
Fribourg ... ..	16,070	2,714	647
Soleure ... ..	11,158	6,441	3,770
Bâle-Ville ... ..	5,624	13,373	4,922
Bâle-Campagne ... ..	2,369	9,740	1,583
Schaffhouse ... ..	1,364	6,465	1,126
Appenzell-Extér. ... ..	632	8,512	822
Appenzell-Int. ... ..	1,905	143	—
Saint-Gall ... ..	23,458	18,868	5,624
Grisons ... ..	6,766	9,115	1,518
Argovie ... ..	13,664	20,871	3,776
Thurgovie ... ..	5,799	15,320	2,824
Tessin ... ..	20,023	700	1,570
Vaud ... ..	5,038	43,155	4,869
Valais ... ..	17,345	551	620
Neuchâtel ... ..	2,026	18,743	2,174
Genève ... ..	11,425	12,997	5,339
	208,504	351,518	65,971

La "Revue ecclésiastique suisse" dénonce comme alarmante l'énorme proportion des mariages mixtes, qui représentent une moyenne de 1 mariage mixte pour 3 mariages catholiques. Dans plusieurs cantons, comme Glaris, Berne, Bâle-Ville, Bâle-Campagne, Schaffhouse, Thurgovie, Genève, les mariages mixtes atteignent la moitié ou les deux tiers du nombre des mariages catholiques; dans le canton de Vaud, il y a presque autant de mariages mixtes que de mariages catholiques; à Zurich, Neuchâtel, Appenzell-Extér., il y a davantage d'unions mixtes que d'unions catholiques.

**Une mutuelle des déserteurs à Genève.** — Au Sénat français, récemment, M. Goy, sénateur de la Haute-Savoie, déclarait, à propos de la loi d'amnistie:

— Les douze cents déserteurs de Genève se sont depuis longtemps constitués en sociétés coopérative et mutuelle selon la loi suisse, et au vu et au su des autorités de ce pays et, réunis tout récemment en assemblée générale extraordinaire, au reçu de la bonne nouvelle que vient de leur apporter la déclaration ministérielle, ils ne se proposent rien moins que d'aller festoyer en France pour célébrer leur libération, insultant ainsi la mémoire des 1,500,000 morts du pays dont l'immense sacrifice ne méritait pas pareil oubli au bout de si peu de temps.

Si tout n'est pas très exact dans cette déclaration, elle contient cependant une part suffisante de vérité pour justifier des explications. C'est M. Alphonse, président de la Fédération romande des sociétés de secours mutuels, qui a bien voulu, nous les dire:

— Il est parfaitement vrai, nous a-t-il dit, qu'une société de secours mutuels, comprenant des déserteurs en majeure partie français, a été créée à Genève. Elle s'appelle L'Initiative et avait été fondée il y a quelques années dans le seul but de défendre les intérêts des déserteurs et insoumis. Ce n'est que plus tard qu'elle devint une société de secours mutuels. Elle ne comprend qu'une centaine de membres.

Sur l'intervention de sociétés françaises de secours mutuels, on demanda à L'Initiative de don-

ner sa démission de la Fédération romande, ce qu'elle fit. Mais elle appartient toujours à la Fédération genevoise des sociétés de secours mutuels et, à ce titre, reçoit les subsides de l'Etat, conformément à la loi de 1903. Ces subsides peuvent aller jusqu'à 9 fr. 50 par membre. Les sociétés françaises n'ayant pas persisté dans leur ultimatum, aucune démarche n'a été entreprise pour amener la démission de L'Initiative de la Fédération genevoise.

L'Etat subventionnant des déserteurs voilà qui surprendra bien des gens! Mais continuera-t-il? (La Suisse.)

**Humor bei der Postverwaltung.** — Die "Strafmarken" sollen nun ein freundlicheres Aussehen erhalten, und zwar zeigt die Zeichnung ein Kinderpaar, das auf einer ovalen Tafel die Mehrforderung der Post präsentiert. Das soll auf den Bezahler der Strafporti beruhigend wirken, und er wird, statt zu knurren, die beiden Kinderchen auf der Marke freundlich anlächeln. Vielleicht ist aber unsere Oberpostdirektion so bössartig, dass sie mit diesen baby-geschmückten Postmarken sagen will, der Absender sei ein Kindskopf, dass er die Postsendung nicht genügend frankierte, und der andere Kindskopf sei der Empfänger, dass er die Strafporti bezahle! (Volksrecht.)

**Alle Leute.** — In der Gemeinde Schwyz wohnen derzeit mehr als fünfzig Personen, die über 80 Jahre alt sind. Hievon ist die weitaus grösste Zahl noch munter und wacker dran, diejenigen Arbeiten, die sie vor 20 und 40 Jahren besorgten, jetzt noch zu erledigen. Wohl in der weiten Welt herum kaum übertroffen werden die zwei Lieben, hochachtbaren männlichen Seniorenmitglieder in der Gemeinde Schwyz: Jak. Jos. Horat, Landwirt am Haggen, geb. 1832, und Prof. A. D. Bommer in Schwyz, geb. 1834. Beide arbeiten noch wie vor 30 und 40 Jahren und sind körperlich und geistig sehr frisch. Horat mäht Heu und Streue und hirtet im Stall wie ein Fünftziger, und hat letzten Sommer noch Kirschen gesammelt auf der höchsten Leiter, wo nicht die Hälfte Junger hinauf dürfte. Prof. Bommer hält im Kollegium täglich noch mehrere Stunden Vorlesungen, immer bewundernswert in Form und Inhalt, immer ohne Buch und ohne Notizen. Er bearbeitet nebstdem seinen grossen Hausgarten allein und betätigt sich zudem noch in verschiedenen Kommissionen, in allem allzeit pünktlich wie eine Uhr. Beide rauchen gerne täglich ihre verschiedenen Pfeifli oder Stümpfen, auch wenn obsi gad, und haben ihr Lebtage ein gutes Glas Wein und einen währschaffen Most nicht geschaut.

Im Alter übertroffen werden die Genannten nur noch von Herrn G. K. Suter im Unterdorf, geb. 1831, der noch täglich die hl. Messe und tagsüber oft diese oder jene Kapelle besucht, und von der Frau Elisabeth Fässler in Seewen, geb. 1829. (Ostschweiz.)

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KVBURG."

### Politics.

All is not well with the world, and especially with Europe. A number of European Statesmen are like the Bourbons: they never forget and they never learn anything. We are back to the old diplomacy of Secret Treaties, we are back to the old fallacy of the Balance of Power or the European Concert, and we are back to the conditions from which the 1914-1918 War arose. I often wonder why it should be ordained that our poor Humanity is so terribly and incomprehensibly blind to dangers ahead, and yet so sublimely brave when it meets those dangers. And why is it that grim lessons are forgotten so soon, and that we of to-day are, so it seems, ever willing to prepare horrible disasters for those who come after us? It has ever been so—but will it always be so?

Let us switch over to some other topic, and one that will compare favourably with modern politics, viz.: What to do with those unfortunate fellows whom we have to restrict in their freedom for our protection? The *Northern Daily Telegraph* (Dec. 2nd) states:—

One of the most up-to-date penitentiaries in the world is to be found in Switzerland. The old idea of solitary confinement is eliminated altogether, and the institution is practically self-supporting.

When the level of Neuchâtel Lake was lowered by the drainage of Jura waters in 1878, a vast track of marshland between the lakes of Neuchâtel, Bieme, and Morat was laid dry. The canton of Berne then had the idea of establishing on the uncultivated land an agricultural penitentiary colony.

The colony was to make the land arable. Within 30 years an uncultivated stretch of marsh-land and of quagmire has been turned into a flourishing farm of 2,500 acres, solely by the work of convicts.

#### "Cat" Burglary.

Talking of prisons and their inhabitants, leads up to the following "Cat-Burglary" story which I find in the *Evening Standard* (Dec. 8th):—

If I were one of the Big Five at Scotland Yard (romantic thought!) I should on the "cat" burglary question consult certain members of the University of Oxford.

When I was there there was an exceedingly flourishing institution, called the Alpine Club. Whether it exists nowadays I do not know. Probably not, now that there is an organisation for letting you go on reasonable terms to Switzerland in the wintertime.

The Alpine Club, denied the Matterhorn, had to be content with such minor heights as the roofs of Balliol, New College, and the like, but they did perform some surprising feats, in which a distinguished ornament of the Union was once in my time involved.

It is related that on one occasion a new Master of Balliol, being aware that the college was invaded in this manner, invited the members of the club, whose names were perfectly well known, to dinner.

No reference whatever was made to the club, but its members were informed with an almost Japanese politeness that such precautions had been taken as would prevent any one to whom it occurred to climb over the roof from coming into the college again.

That night, when all the college gates were closed, so they say, the visiting cards of all the Master of Balliol's guests were punctually affixed to his front door.

Well, well, I could tell of some fine things in that line, perpetrated by some Winterthurer students some 25 years or so back. But as I do not exactly know how many years have to elapse before such "crimes" are forgiven by the Swiss law, I had better say nothing.

#### Students and Duelling.

Zurich students seem to find ways and means to get into trouble even nowadays, as witness the following (*Daily News*, 6th Dec.):—

A number of students of Zurich University have just been sentenced to one day's imprisonment, and other have been fined for duelling with rapiers.

Duelling has always held much the same place in Zurich as in the German Universities, but there appears to be a movement to suppress it.

In the present case contests took place at a restaurant on the outskirts of the town, the proprietor of which was also heavily fined.

Need I say that I am sincerely against duelling, even the harmless one indulged in even now sometimes by students? Happily, I know that it is not considered good form any more to have one's face criss-crossed by duel souvenirs. After all, even a student's honour can be vindicated by other means, and if he does not believe so, the Law rightly steps in to help him re-arranging his mental outlook.

Motorists among my readers will read with pleasure a charming article, entitled "An Alvis in the Alps," which appeared in the *Autocar* on the 5th inst. During a London fog such articles are especially nice to read!

#### New Swiss Stamps.

*Daily Mail* (6th Dec.):—

New stamps are being issued in Switzerland in aid of juvenile charitable institutions, the percentage which is added to the cost of the stamps going to the funds of the charities. The new issues will not be on sale until March.

In view of the excellent purpose for which these stamps are being issued, I hope that they will appeal to philatelists, and that large quantities will be sold. After all, Switzerland puts such money to better use than used to be done, and perhaps still is, by some notorious stamp-issuers in Central America.

#### The Dialects of French Switzerland

—by which is meant, of course, the French-speaking part of Switzerland—forms the subject of the following interesting letter, which appeared in *The Times* on the 4th inst.:—

It is right and proper to call the attention of scholars to the first fascicule of the "Glossaire des Patois de la Suisse Romande," by Professors L. Gauchat, J. Jeanjaquet, and E. Tappolet, with the collaboration of Professor E. Muret (Neuchâtel et Paris, éditions Victor Attinger. Fascicule I, A—Abord, 64 pp. quarto. 6 fr. par fascicule de 64 pp.), which has just been published. The first fascicule of the "Schweizerische Idiotikon," which aimed at collecting and arranging all the linguistic material of the Germanic dialects of Switzerland, appeared at Frauenfeld in 1881. This work at once created and stimulated the desire for a similar collection relating to the dialects of French Switzerland. It was the eminent dialectologist, Prof. H. Morf, who

"discovered" the hero of the present publication, Prof. Louis Gauchat, of the University of Zurich. It was at Morf's instigation that Gauchat, in 1888, undertook, with some financial aid from the federal and cantonal authorities in Switzerland, the great task of collecting the material for the present work. To this task he has devoted his life. He succeeded early in securing the valuable co-operation of Professor Jeanjaquet, of Neuchâtel, and Professor Tappolet, of Basle, and the collaboration of Professor Muret, of Geneva. The names of these eminent scholars on the title-page of the new "Glossaire" are a guarantee of its scientific value.

In the domain of linguistic science this work is an event of the first importance. The "Glossaire des Patois de la Suisse Romande" is the result of a systematic enquiry, carried on for nearly forty years, into the Romance dialects of Switzerland, with a view to collecting all the words of those dialects which have been used in the past and all the words still used in the cantons of Geneva, Vaud, Neuchâtel, Valais, Fribourg and Berne. The authors have profited, of course, by the great strides which have been made in the last fifty years by the linguistic sciences. Among the most interesting developments of recent research is the discovery by dialectologists and etymologists that there remain in the Romance dialects of the west of the Continent many survivals of the pre-Latin and pre-Germanic languages that had previously not been suspected. From the dialects of Switzerland in particular much information has been derived. It is clear that the present "Glossaire" will from the purely philological side be of the highest interest. But it is of value also by its historical treatment of the whole material used, and has an interest for others than the professed linguist or the Swiss citizen interested in the vocabulary of his village or the ancient manners and customs of his country. It is not only a great national work. It has an international importance.

It is to be hoped that the universities and learned societies of Great Britain and Ireland, and some also of those many British citizens who know Switzerland, will subscribe to the "Glossaire." It is at present proposed to publish two fascicules a year of sixty-four pages each. But it is urgently desirable that the publication of this monument of patient effort and research should be speeded up, and an increase in the number of subscribers would lead to that end.

#### Man Who Fights Consumption.

A year or so ago I kept my readers *au courant* concerning the work of Dr. Spahlinger, who is fighting a gallant fight against Tuberculosis. The following article by Arthur Lynch, in *Reynolds's News* of 7th Dec., will, I am sure, interest not a few of my readers:—

I beg to introduce to you Henri Spahlinger, and in doing so I do not wish to speak with the big pompos of the medical man, but simply as a friend and admirer, to call attention to the work of a benefactor to humanity. Spahlinger is out to cure consumption, but his whole design is wider—he wants to eradicate tuberculosis in any form, so that it may be as rare in our civilised societies as that scourge formerly so terrible, leprosy.

Since the days of Koch an immense amount of work has been done by bacteriologists all over the world in every branch that has a bearing on the life history of the bacillus and its modes of operation, but hitherto few have reported anything of importance in the nature of a remedy. Recently I had an opportunity of attending an international conference on the subject in Switzerland, but although distinguished authorities from various parts of the world read learned and interesting papers, the practical outcome was almost nil in regard to the question which the ordinary citizen asks—what is the remedy?

It is here that Henri Spahlinger comes into the picture, and of all the bacteriologists whom I have known in various countries it is he whose methods and whose results have given me a proper sense of confidence.

Immediately after leaving the University he returned to his previous studies in bacteriology, and set out in the first place to obtain serums and vaccines. This had been done before his time, and it has been the object of research of hosts of workers, but what distinguishes Spahlinger's work from others is the variety and efficacy of his products. He has three serums and a series of nineteen vaccines.

Spahlinger has devoted himself to his work to the exclusion of other interests, but I do not know that he is unhappy on that account. He is never so content as when he is in his laboratory at Carouge, near Geneva, or attending to the details of his experimental farm. He has over a score of horses, fine animals of the Irish hunter stamp, and cows, sheep, goats, guinea pigs and chimpanzees.

He is the most disinterested and unselfish man of science I have met, and I know that on many occasions he has refused large sums of money when the gift has been offered under conditions

that would limit his freedom of action, or prevent him from employing his remedies except at the discretion and to the advantage of a particular agency.

The question may well be asked as to what proof there is that Spahlinger has substantiated his claims; and the answer is, the best of all, that of actual trial and experience.

Although still a young man, as bacteriologists go, about forty years of age, Spahlinger had already, as far back as 1912, offered his remedies for testing to various well-known physicians in London. A considerable number of patients were treated, those selected by preference being cases where the disease had progressed almost to the last stage, and the great majority of these are now alive and well, and attending to their ordinary business. I have seen them myself, and I have also seen the charts and notes taken at the time when Spahlinger's system was first given a trial, and the evidence offered by these cases alone is, in my opinion, conclusive.

Since then I have passed in review a considerable number of new cases, and have heard the testimony of English, French, and Swiss physicians of eminence who have used the Spahlinger products, and I have found that the men who have tested the system the most thoroughly are those who speak of it in the highest terms. At one time I tried to interest the Ministry of Health in the matter, but then I ran counter to a spirit prevalent in Government Departments—that of finding all sorts of reasons, good or bad, for doing nothing, so that no responsibility might be incurred. All the successive Ministers have succumbed to this miserable argument, forgetting that they are all the time incurring the gravest responsibility of all, that of permitting the continuance of this abominable scourge, which it is within our power to annihilate.

I do hope that Dr. Spahlinger will be successful in getting the necessary assistance from high quarters, so that his cure may benefit all the countless thousands of sufferers from this dread disease. What a Christmas present to the world if the success of his cure could finally be established beyond a doubt!

#### Christmas Thoughts—

Christmas Thoughts are in our hearts. For some of us they cannot be separated from considerations of a monetary nature, because—and I suppose this really applies to nearly all, even the very rich—we would like to give so much more than we can afford to. We, who are fortunate enough to remember happy childhood days and happy Christmas days, wish in our turn to make others happy, having long since found the truth of that wonderful saying that "to give is more blessed than to receive."

My mind wanders a long way back these days. I see myself on a Christmas morning anxiously running to the window to see whether the snow has come at last, or whether the frost has held. Important factors these were in our town, because if we could either toboggan or skate, we knew we could while away the otherwise almost unbearable hours of the afternoon. Then back from the skating rink or the toboggan run at about five in the evening. In our house we children had to go up to stay with aunt and uncle until the glorious moment came when a little silver bell summoned us downstairs and when father and mother would receive us at the wide-open door of the living-room, from which an unwonted radiance would shine on to the landing and the passage. That radiance, produced by the little lights from the Christmas tree, was the first sign that Christmas had actually happened once again. Then we would go in. Shyly, not quite at ease, our hearts too full of thoughts and of the wonder of it all. Then we would recite our poems, learnt for the occasion. Then would follow, perhaps, a wee bit of music appropriate to the occasion, and then the white cover would be lifted from the table on which the gifts had been piled. That was the moment. The rest of the evening was made more glorious by the comforting thought that next day we would be able to play with the new toys, right from the early morning, and I do not think that we were ever late in getting up on Boxing Day!

Happy the parents who can make their little ones happy at this time of the year, and bless them with happy memories which will keep them faithful company during all the years to come, brace them up when trouble happens, soften mishaps in later life, and make their heart responsive to kindly acts. My Christmas wish to all my readers is that they may be blessed in giving! And A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL!

#### MISCELLANEOUS ADVERTISEMENTS

Not exceeding 3 lines.—Per insertion, 2/6; three insertions, 5/—  
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