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## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KIBURG."

Now that the Winter Sports season is practically over, articles on Switzerland are getting few and far between in the British Press.

Among this week's gleanings I have been struck by the comparatively large number of articles dealing with the ex-Khalif's stay at Terriret. Most of these articles, like the one I give below, deal with the question of the ex-Khalif's Three Wives, and I have not quite succeeded in getting rid of a suspicion that this matter is having a special attraction for some of the writers. However, not to do the same and, thereby, be tempted to write about matters of which I have no knowledge, I will now "switch you over" to the following from the *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury* (11th March):—

Because of his conjugal situation, the Khalif of Islam is proving an embarrassing guest of the Swiss Federal Government. Bigamy—not to mention trigamy—is strictly forbidden in the Helvetic Republic, and there is the possibility of a clash between the Koranic law, as laid down by Mahomet, and the Swiss penal code, as interpreted for "tourists" in Switzerland.

No one wishes to persecute the fallen Khalif, or to compel him to seek a fresh political asylum. No one questions his legal right to have three wives under the Moslem law, but in Switzerland the legal conjugal allowance is strictly defined to "one man, one wife," and this applies equally to peasant, King, or Khalif.

When I discussed the question with a high official of the Political Department of the Federal Government the other day, I found there was a tendency to be as lenient as possible, in view of the extraordinary circumstances of the Khalif's case. I was told that in the ordinary way a foreign bigamist or trigamist would be refused admission, and even if he entered and if his irregular conjugal status from the point of view of the Swiss law were discovered afterwards, the offender would be expelled. No such drastic step is, however, contemplated towards the exile at Terriret. The Swiss authorities are turning for the moment a blind eye upon the matrimonial situation of the Khalif, and as the Goddess of Justice is proverbially reputed to be blind anyhow, there is not much harm done.

"The Khalif might perhaps have been allowed to sojourn in England because of Britain's large Moslem interest," said my informant, "but he would not be permitted to land in America with his plurality of wives. It is a delicate problem, one that never confronted us before, and the Federal Government is seeking to find some amicable solution satisfactory alike to the Swiss law and to the Khalif's religious scruples. The Khalif told us that he was unable to state definitely the duration of his stay at Terriret. He contemplates going to France sooner or later. His departure would settle the whole matter."

"For this reason there is at present a sort of interregnum, and the Federal Government has not yet considered all the problems and committees arising from his visit, and therefore will take no decision until it is ascertained whether or not the Khalif is making a prolonged stay at Terriret. In the meantime the visitor will be treated with all the respect and courtesy due to his exalted rank."

## Switzerland and Soviet Russia.

My readers, of course, know my views upon this matter, although most of them probably disagree with me. However that may be, I cannot refrain from quoting the following from the *Electrical Review* (7th March):—

Turbine Erection.—A Baku message says that, in consequence of the interruption of relations between the Soviets and Switzerland, the Aznept has declined the services of Swiss firms in the erection of a 10,000-kW turbo-generator, supplied by a Swiss firm. The Aznept used its own resources, and the trial run, made a few days ago, showed that it worked quite smoothly, showing no defects.

What, I suppose, happens is that some British or German firm gets the contract, and our Swiss manufacturers then try their hardest to be able to supply, as sub-contractors, some of the parts and get a little money out of that. It is quite likely, too, that such contracts, although given, for example, to German firms, are yet placed with works in Switzerland. Thus work for our people may be provided, but does anybody think that in such a way Swiss industries are being helped? Are we not rather assisting the German to get a stranglehold on our industries? I maintain, as I did before, that Switzerland has a very poor case as far as her official attitude towards Soviet Russia is concerned, and that that attitude works to the detriment of our country.

As a valedictory message—at least I hope I may not have to come back on wintry topics for months and months to come—I will give you the following article from *The Times* (11th March), entitled—

## A Ski Festival.

When the winter season begins to drag on to the end, when long strings of sun-burned strangers are daily going off in sleighs, it is then that the whole village may suddenly be seen to sally forth on ski. The few visitors who stay on to the very last can now observe a change coming over the practice slopes.

The ski-ing figures are no longer recognizable. Homely, sombre clothing has replaced the gay confections of Parisian and London modistes. Skirts are much in evidence once more; the gaiter dialect of the Alps predominates. The reason of it all soon becomes apparent in the placards that spring into view in shop-windows and on the shrunken notice-boards of the hotels. They announce, in large type, that in five days' time the village ski club will hold its annual festival. Races for men, women and children are provided; every able-bodied villager between the ages of five and fifty is bidden to compete, under pain of some terrible fine. But, far more than any such imaginary penalty, the people fear the ridicule attendant by abstention from the racing. And so feverish preparations go on daily among the clumsy ones, who, during the season, are never able to ski.

The chosen day arrives. It is Sunday, since it must be a holiday. Before 7 o'clock all the young "bloods," together with the guides and ski-ing instructors, have set off for the start of the first race, the long-distance

event for men. The finish is timed to take place somewhere about 9 o'clock, at a spot near the church. Thus it becomes possible to witness the event and then to attend service. Service, indeed, may have to begin late.

Having disposed of the really serious event, the rest is leisure and amusement. Shorter races for the old men, with special classes for ex-champions and winners of big national events, well on in years, are held. A women's race or two are included in the programme. These evoke great enthusiasm, for the beauties of the village are eager to show such prowess as shall not discredit their looks and aspirations. The young women finish the course hatless and breathless—some quite fashionably attired, some in costumes that are but a comic imitation of those seen on the same slopes a short time before, others in their workaday garments. The excitement is intense.

But the enthusiasm culminates in the events for children, held in the afternoon. There is a race for little mites under ten years old. They attempt to evolve around flags, yells of excitement and of encouragement resound from the assembled families. With the utmost gravity they finish, some in tears by reason of a fall at the flag that indicates the last turn on flattened, slippery snow. The assembly then makes a rush for the farther slope, where the boys are to jump.

The whole performance is treated with the utmost gravity; the appropriate ritual is observed, just as would be done at the National Championship itself. Two men, renowned winners of great events, open the proceedings by going over the little jump with all seriousness. Their leaps are measured with due ceremony. The village schoolmaster goes over next. Great is the delight of his pupils on witnessing his arrival at the foot of the slope—on his back. Red with confusion, he gets up to try again; this time he jumps in good style, so he obtains well-earned applause. But the boys are just as keen critics of their own kind, and they know every point of a good jump. The sun sets as the tireless procession over the jump is concluded before a shivering but still enthusiastic assembly.

Then, at night, the biggest hotel dining-room is invaded by all the villagers—masked, costumed, yodeling, dancing and singing. There is an orchestra of "cow-music"; none of the new-fangled hotel orchestras now! There are two violas, a flute, two accordions and a bassoon, and genuine old-fashioned tunes. Then, solemnly, they dance—waltz, polka, and all the back numbers of the ball-rooms of a past age. Almost grimly serious, the assembly gyrates for four solid hours; it is an entertainment that mingles, in the oddest manner, customs and fashions of the past century with flashes of the latest mannerisms of the departed guests.

The dance concludes with a prize-giving. By this time tongues are loosed, excitement is rife. Prizes are bestowed on a lavish scale. Everybody must be happy, for this is a festival. So consolation prizes lengthen the list. There are special prizes, also, for the two visitors who have competed. Yet this is not the end of that great day. The visitors may depart, but the "cow-music" resumes its output. Dancing, on this great occasion, must last till daylight. So they set to with a light heart, for are not all these revellers aware of the fact that the hotel is all but empty, and that the village policeman himself is leading the dance with the cantonal forestry inspector's wife? So dancing is kept up to the strains of the somnolent, if tireless, music until the sunlight shows up the bedraggled costumes in the now dusty, frosty dining-room. A last spasm of snowballing marks the exit of the revellers as the sun rises.

And how wonderful it must feel to sink down into Morpheus' Arms after such a night!

HEIMWEH.

Von Hermann Lings.

Ein eifriger Leser wünscht, dass wir das nachfolgende Gedicht drucken sollen, was gerne geschehe.

In meine Heimat kam ich wieder,  
Es war die alte Heimat noch,  
Dieselbe Luft, dieselben Lieder,  
Und alles war ein andres doch.

Die Bächlein rauschten wie vor Zeiten,  
Am Waldrand sprang wie sonst das Reh,  
Von fern erklang ein Abendläuten,  
Die Berge tauchten aus dem See.

Doch in dem Haus wo uns vor Jahren  
Die Mutter stets empfing, dort sah  
Ich fremder Menschen fremd Gebaren,  
Wie weh, wie weh mir da geschah!

Mir ward, als rief' ich aus dem Wogen:  
"Flieh, flieh! und ohne Wiederkehr!  
Die du geliebt, sind ausgezogen,  
Und kehren nimmer, nimmermehr!"

## FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

The deficit in the Federal Accounts for 1923 amounts to about 46 million francs, as compared with a budgeted deficit of 84 millions, and shows an approximate improvement of 33 millions as compared with the final accounts for 1922. The improvement is fairly evenly distributed over both sides of the accounts, since revenue has gone up to the extent of 18 millions, and expenditure has been reduced by 15 million francs. The general financial position may, therefore, be characterised as favourable, and the improvement in the Federal Accounts is further supported by the gratifying results of various of the Federal Services, such as the Post Office, and by the good showing recently made by the Federal Railways.

The new loan on behalf of the latter service is now open for subscription, the lists being due to close on the 26th of March. Particulars of this issue were briefly given in last week's edition of *The Swiss Observer*, but it may be useful to repeat that the issue price is 98½%, rate of interest 5%, date of redemption 15th of April, 1935, and the amount Frs. 150,000,000, with a right to increase the amount to Frs. 200,000,000, should subscrip-

tions warrant such a course. The yield works out at 5.28 per cent.

The Banque Commerciale de Bâle closed the year 1923 with a net profit of Frs. 3,670,000, as compared with Frs. 3,690,000 last year. The dividend of 6 per cent. is to be repeated.

The Swiss and Roumanian Bank, which was formed to facilitate trading relations between Switzerland and Roumania and to carry on a general banking business, shows a net profit for the year of Lei. 13,900,000, as compared with Lei. 4,360,000 last year. A dividend of 13 per cent. is proposed (12 per cent. in 1922). During the year the capital was raised from 30 to 45 million lei, and the directors mention the over-subscription with which their offering of new shares was met, as the best proof of the confidence enjoyed by the bank in Swiss and Roumanian circles.

## STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.

BONDS.	Mar. 11		Mar. 18	
	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.
Swiss Confederation 3% 1903	72.90%		72.90%	
Swiss Confed. 9th Mob. Loan 5%	100.25%		100.20%	
Federal Railways A-K 3½%	77.75%		77.30%	
Canton Basle-Stadt 5½% 1921	100.50%		101.10%	
Canton Fribourg 3% 1892	67.25%		67.50%	
SHARES.	Mar. 11		Mar. 18	
	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.
Swiss Bank Corporation	500	677	635	
Crédit Suisse	500	679	665	
Union de Banques Suisses	500	568	532	
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	3470	3460	
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	2460	2505	
C. F. Bally S.A.	1000	1137	1135	
Fabrique de Machines Oerlikon	500	637	637	
Entreprises Suisses	1000	675	672	
S.A. Brown Boveri (new)	500	315	325	
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	199	204	
Choc. Suisses Peter-Cailler-Kohler	100	119	125	
Comp. de Navig'n sur le Lac Léman	500	460	460	

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