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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

At the joint session of the National and States Councils held on Thursday morning, Dr. Giuseppe Motta was elected President of the Swiss Confederation for the year 1927.

Mr. Rudolf Minger (Berne), belonging to the Farmers' Party, has been elected Vice-President of the National Council.

The Latin Monetary Union—an international convention between France, Belgium, Italy, Greece and Switzerland allowing their respective silver tokens to have legal currency in these countries—has been officially dissolved as from January 1st, 1927; it was concluded in 1885.

Up-to-date taxation is to be introduced in the canton Uri if the Church synod which met in Altdorf is to have its way; ladies and girls showing a "bubikopf" (possibly the equivalent of Eton crop, or bobbing or shingling) are to become liable to a special tax of 50 centimes per head.

For under-declaring the fortune during lifetime (Fr. 32,000 instead of Fr. 400,000) the estate of a recently deceased Locarno resident has been surcharged Fr. 103,000 in fines.

In connection with the recent disaster in the Ricken tunnel the Swiss Carnegie Commission has, in addition to the usual medals, distributed the sum of Frs. 3,250 to those of the local railway staff who participated in the relief action.

A donation of Frs. 150,000 has been made by an anonymous benefactor to the commune of Balgach (St. Gall) as an initial contribution to a fund for assisting old residents in need.

The late Mr. Suter of Mönchaldorf (Zurich), a local magistrate, bequeathed Frs. 500 to a special fund for enabling poor school-children to participate in their annual outing. He stated that 60 years ago he was the only one of his class left behind at the annual school excursion as he was unable to obtain the money for the fixed contributions towards the expenses, which was 80 centimes.

A building in Chiasso used by the Swiss Federal Railways for storing documents was burnt down last week.

During a ski practice run by ten monks and novices of the great St. Bernard hospice, five were overtaken by an avalanche descending on the Italian side of the Col de Fenêtre; two were able to extricate themselves, whilst three of the novices perished.

Damage to the amount of about Frs. 400,000 was caused by the total destruction of Ziegelei Roggwil; arson is suspected.

The 84 year old widow Eschmann, of Delémont, was robbed and murdered in her bedroom by an out-of-work decorator, who was arrested next day in Bienne after he had unsuccessfully endeavoured to withdraw at a local bank the savings of his victim.

## EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

**La colonie suisse de Milan.**—La ville de Milan est actuellement non seulement la plus industrielle et la plus active de toute la péninsule, mais elle est aussi la plus peuplée puisqu'elle vient de dépasser les 800,000 habitants. La Métropole lombarde compte aussi une colonie suisse fort nombreuse. Elle se compose d'environ 3,200 membres, dont 1,400 Tessinois, autant de Suisses allemands et 300 à 400 Suisses français. La plupart des Suisses allemands sont employés de commerce ou de banque; il en est de même des Suisses français. Les Tessinois sont plutôt commerçants; depuis des siècles, ils jouissent d'une considération spéciale dans diverses branches de l'activité commerciale, dans l'hôtellerie par exemple, ainsi que dans le commerce et la vente des fruits et des primeurs.

La colonie suisse de Milan ne compte pas moins de cinq sociétés différentes: tout d'abord la "Société suisse" qui a déjà plus de 50 ans d'existence et qui compte à l'heure actuelle près de 500

membres. Elle possède un magnifique local et a en outre plusieurs sections spéciales, telles par exemple les tireurs et la gymnastique. Outre cela, on compte à Milan, dans la colonie suisse, une section de la Société suisse des commerçants, une Société libérale tessinoise, une section de Pro Ticino et enfin une Société suisse de bienfaisance. L'école suisse est fréquentée par plus de 250 élèves. L'asile évangélique, fondé en 1875, dispose d'une clinique, qui jouit d'une excellente renommée. A la tête de la colonie suisse de Milan se trouve un consul honoraire, M. Hüni, assisté par un vice-consul de carrière. Le grand éditeur Ulrich Hoepfli, dont la renommée n'est pas seulement européenne mais mondiale, fait partie, ainsi qu'on le sait, de la colonie suisse de Milan. F. d'avis de Lausanne.

**La catastrophe au Grand-Saint-Bernard.**—Une dizaine de jeunes chanoines de l'hospice du Grand-Saint-Bernard étaient partis, mardi matin, pour une excursion en ski au val Ferret. Près du col Fenêtre, ils furent surpris par une avalanche qui ensevelit trois d'entre eux, Jules Luisier, Bonvin et Crétaz, âgés de 22 à 25 ans. Leurs camarades et des religieux s'employèrent à les dégager. Lorsqu'ils y parvinrent, dans l'après-midi, les trois malheureux avaient cessé de vivre.

Rappelons à ce propos que pendant des siècles, chaque matin, une ou deux équipes, formées d'un domestique des religieux, seul ou en cas de tempête accompagné de quelques religieux, avec deux paires de chiens, se rendaient d'une côté vers le sud, dans la direction de la cantine italienne, de l'autre, vers le nord, vers la cantine de Proz, à la rencontre des voyageurs. Maintenant, les équipes de secours ne se mettent en route que lorsqu'un appel au téléphone signale le passage de voyageurs à l'une ou l'autre de ces cantines. L'exercice par les religieux de cette mission est grosse de périls; les annales de l'hospice ont enregistré de nombreux cas de mort dus surtout aux avalanches. Les trois victimes surprises mardi par l'avalanche n'ont pas été frappées en secourant leur prochain; leur sort n'en est pas moins tragique.

Gazette de Lausanne.

**Todesopfer im Zürcher Strassenverkehr.**—Das Statistische Amt der Stadt Zürich teilt mit, dass von Anfang 1926 bis Mitte November in der Stadt Zürich bei Verkehrsunfällen 18 Menschen ums Leben kamen, an denen der Automobilverkehr in 14 Fällen beteiligt ist. Die höchste Zahl betrug 13 im Jahre 1916. Damals standen in der Stadt Zürich rund 500 Automobile, während es heute gegen 4,000 sind. Im Bezirk Zürich sind im Jahre 1926 bis heute 26 Verkehrsopfer zu beklagen; davon entfallen, wie bereits erwähnt, 18 auf die Stadt und acht auf die Landgemeinden. Diese Statistik enthält eine ernste Warnung an Fahrzeugführer und Fussgängern, im modernen Grossstadtverkehr äusserste Vorsicht und Aufmerksamkeit walten zu lassen. Morgen, Olten.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

### The Corn Monopoly.

Many and varied have been the references in the English Press to the recent plebiscite, and the underlying tone makes the result to appear a rebuff to Swiss Socialists. Even an old reader of the Swiss Observer writes to give expression to his jubilation over "the defeat of the Socialists."

This, of course, is not so, and he, in common with public opinion here, entirely ignores the advantages which would have followed in its wake if the Government Bill had been passed. *Inter alia* the state would have obtained control over wheat supplies and stocks and thus have been able to counteract in good time the adverse influences of contracting from hand to mouth in war-time, and other similar emergencies; the price of bread would have been stabilised and regulated on the basis of the margin necessary for distributing and storing the cereals; the home production of wheat would have been encouraged by guaranteeing the farmer a fair and regular return, thus bringing about a healthy development of our agricultural resources and stemming the rising tide of over-production of dairy produce. Probably the best reference appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* (Dec. 7th), which I reprint below:—

The Swiss people have shown once again the conservative tendency of the institution of

the referendum. Although the Swiss Parliament had adopted by a great majority a new article in the Swiss Constitution creating a State monopoly for the import of grain, and although the four biggest political parties—the Socialists, Radicals, Catholics and Peasants—all recommended an affirmative answer in the referendum, the result was, nevertheless, the rejection of the proposed revision of the Constitution.

The warmest adherents of the grain import monopoly for the State had been the Socialists and the Peasants, but for very different reasons. The peasants expected that the State monopoly would safeguard them against the import of too large quantities of foreign grain, which import might force the peasants to lower the prices of their own Swiss grain. The Socialists were in favour of a State monopoly as a new step in the direction of the nationalisation of industries. Aversion from such nationalisation may have been the chief cause of the rejection of this innovation.

### The President of the National Council.

More amusing than informative have been the articles in the English dailies about this event, the importance of which, owing to the agitated controversy at home, has been much exaggerated. In fact, some of the papers boldly talked about the "Swiss President." Even the solemn *Daily Telegraph* (Dec. 7th) went astray; so did the *Morning Post*, though in its subsequent issue (Dec. 2nd) it promptly put matters right. That some of the less important scribes in the provinces reverently took their cue from the London Press is only natural, and the result is the following parody broadcast to the Scots by the *Glasgow Bulletin and Scots Pictorial* (Dec. 6th):—

Switzerland does not make a fuss about her President, and the name of the new holder of that office, who is to be elected to-day, may be very little heard of outside of his own country. His importance has been somewhat enhanced since the war, and recent holders of the office have even broken through tradition and paid official visits abroad, but the democratic Swiss prefer their chief citizen to be a working man, and the emoluments are so small that some Presidents have been compelled to follow their usual occupation while in power. The man who has done most to increase the influence of the office recently is M. Giuseppe Motta, who has twice held office (in 1915 and 1920), and gained international fame as President of the Assembly of the League of Nations in 1924. He is a favourite candidate for to-day's election, and so may have a third term of office next year.

Perhaps I ought to compliment the *Scots Pictorial* on its intelligent anticipation. To place things in their proper light I reprint the report which appeared in *The Times* (Dec. 8th):—

The winter Session of the Swiss Parliament was opened on Monday at Berne. The first meeting was awaited with the greatest interest, and also with some anxiety, by the whole population as the National Council—the Second Chamber—had to choose its President.

It was feared that, in conformity with Parliamentary tradition, the former Vice-President, M. Grimm, a Socialist, would be elected as President. A strong campaign has been directed against M. Grimm by the *bourgeois* parties and by military and patriotic associations, not because of his membership of the Socialist Party, of which he is one of the extremist leaders, but because he was personally responsible for the general strike which took place in 1918 after the Armistice. It was then necessary to mobilize the whole of the Army, serious riots occurred in the big towns, and over 1,000 officers and soldiers died in consequence of an influenza epidemic which rapidly spread among the troops.

Public opinion was therefore very much excited when the question came up of electing M. Grimm as President of the National Council. Fortunately, the Deputies responded to the general expression of public feeling and elected, in the place of M. Grimm, another Socialist leader, M. Gros-pierre, who at once refused the position. A second vote was then taken and the Chamber elected M. Maillfer, of Canton Vaud, a Radical, whereupon the whole of the Socialists withdrew. The Parliament Houses were guarded by strong forces of police, as it was feared that the Berne Socialists might seek to approach them and create disorder, but, happily, no untoward incidents have so far happened.

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**The Spahlinger Treatment.**

It is to be hoped that the wide publicity given by the following article in the *Daily Mail* (Dec. 8th) will relieve Dr. Spahlinger of his financial anxieties:—

I am able to give to-day the first account of a series of highly important experiments which have just been completed at Geneva by M. Henri Spahlinger, whose treatment for consumption has already produced remarkable results. Part of these bovine tests were to have been made at Crewe last year, but had to be postponed owing to M. Spahlinger's ill-health, and the urgent call for supplies of serum for human beings, which necessitated his constant presence at Geneva.

For the last ten years M. Spahlinger has been making private experiments on cattle, but those conducted during the last twelve months were under the control of officials of the State of Geneva. The results have been such that it is now possible to state that M. Spahlinger has succeeded in most brilliant manner in immunising cattle against tuberculosis, on the same principle as human beings are vaccinated against smallpox. The incalculable importance of this achievement, perhaps the greatest step towards eradication of the dread scourge since Koch startled the scientific world 44 years ago by announcing his discovery of the tubercle bacillus will be appreciated when it is remembered that in England and Wales alone the disease claims a death roll of 42,000 victims every year.

It is an accepted fact that in the great majority of cases of pulmonary tuberculosis in human beings the disease was originally contracted through the intestinal tract, the germs having remained quiescent for years in the glands, where the bovine bacilli adapt themselves to the human environment, breaking out later when the defences of the body are weakened or occupied in fighting some other disease.

That cattle could be successfully immunised against the scourge was known to M. Spahlinger already in 1917, as the year previously he had vaccinated 20 Freiburg cows with complete vaccine, over a period of six months.

Massive doses of living tubercle germs were afterwards injected, but the virus failed to have any effect whatever upon the animals, which have remained "consumption-proof" up to the present day. Every year one or two of the herd have been slaughtered, but not the slightest trace of tuberculosis has been discovered in them.

Despite great financial difficulties, M. Spahlinger resolutely refused all offers to commercialise his bovine vaccines until he could produce them at a cost which would bring them within the reach of everyone. In 1921 he successfully vaccinated a few cows with "partial" or incomplete vaccines, but, notwithstanding these satisfactory results, he set about still further simplifying his method of immunisation.

The tests recently completed show that in this he has entirely succeeded.

In the course of these different experiments various forms and quantities of simplified vaccines were used on heifers in order to ascertain:

(1) What combination of vaccines and what dosage would prevent a vaccinated calf from contracting tuberculosis when inoculated with a moderate dose of virulent virus such as is met with in the normal life of the animal.

(2) What combination and doses of vaccines would prevent a vaccinated calf from contracting tuberculosis when injected with massive doses of virus.

The experiments were conducted under the strict supervision of M. Antoine Bron, President of the Government of Geneva, and MM. Larue and Montant, official veterinary surgeons.

The virus was taken from virulent cultures of bovine tubercle, rendered hypertoxic by M. Spahlinger's method of irritating the strains. Equal quantities of the germs were placed in ampullas and handed to M. Bron, in whose possession they remained until the injections were actually made.

A certain number of the calves had been previously vaccinated, while others of the same age, weight and breed, certified free from tuberculosis, to be used as "controls," remained unvaccinated.

After the virus had been injected, all the animals were placed in the keeping of the Geneva State officials, who alone had access to them during the experiments.

The results of the tests can be described only as amazing. M. Larue, the official in charge, yesterday summarised them to me in the following words:—

All the cattle vaccinated with M. Spahlinger's simplified bovine vaccines, two and three, successfully resisted the infection and showed no trace of tuberculosis at the autopsy; whereas all the unvaccinated calves or "controls" had developed "progressive tuberculosis."

In confirming the above, M. Bron said:

I am happy to be able to declare that the experiments were successful beyond all hopes.

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These magnificent results open up a new horizon in the preventive immunisation of cattle, and justify the hope that before long humanity will be relieved of one of its most appalling maladies.

It is said that none of us really escapes the invasion of the tubercle bacillus, which is generally introduced early into the system through cow's milk, though most of us possess natural defences which prevent the dire consequences.

**Silver Foxes in Switzerland.**

*Country Life* (Dec. 4th) gives a description of the experiments to acclimatize silver foxes in the Engadine. There are other similar farms in Villars and the Valais, and the results will be watched with general interest; experiments have been tried in England but have not so far been successful.

An enterprise has recently been started at Klosters, near Davos, for the breeding of Canadian silver foxes. The breeding of these valuable foxes in captivity has been successfully carried out in Canada for many years, and the Swiss promoters hope to be equally successful. Certainly the mountain climate here appears to suit the animals well, and the long, severe winter is ideal for the production of first-class fur. The farm at Klosters has sixty pairs of foxes, all bred from pedigree stock, imported from the well-known farm of Colpitts Bros., Calgary, Canada. They are kept in pairs in a series of long enclosures formed of strong wire netting on stout beams arranged at a steep angle, as shown in the illustration. This is necessary to prevent the lodgment of enormous weights of snow in winter. A feature of this farm is a system whereby any private individual can buy a pair of foxes and "board" them on the farm for a yearly payment. The initial outlay appears somewhat large at first sight—a pair of pedigree silver foxes costing about £350. As however, each pair breeds four or five cubs

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annually, the investment is not without its attractions. The skins, unmounted, fetch anything from £30 to £70 in the European market, while the pick of the young stock can be retained for breeding, or sold for this purpose.

**Kandersteg.**

The following extract is taken from the *Referee* (Dec. 5th) and I select it on account of its personal and familiar touch:—

The Heirs, Executors and Assigns of the excellent Mr. Thomas Cook, the inventor of Switzerland, provide me and my family with tickets from door to door. I register the family baggage at Victoria and never see the infernal nuisance again until it is tipped out at Kandersteg, for the canny Swiss, who have far too much sense to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs, never bother the winter sportsman with customs and suchlike mediaeval tortures.

When I get to Calais I find that these beneficent successors of the immortal Thomas have not only got places for me in the train, but places in a carriage which runs straight through to Kandersteg. Of all things, I hate changing carriages on a long journey the most, and I notice that when it is necessary on the Continent they generally arrange that you shall do it in the middle of the night. But no such troubles afflict the traveller to Kandersteg. He gets into his compartment at Calais, and, except for a short excursion along the train itself to enjoy an excellent and wonderfully cheap dinner, he need never leave it again until he does so permanently in Kandersteg itself. You know, that always strikes me as a very astonishing thing. Here is a little village in the Oberland, a mere shrimp of a place in size, and yet all through the winter—and, for ought I know, through the summer as well—you reach it without a change.

But that is less than half my reason for going always to Kandersteg. The greater part is that I know it and am known by it, that I can count on a welcome which is something more than conventional and commercial. I know that when I reach the hospitable doors of the Victoria Herr Kauf will be there to greet me as he has greeted me for umpteen years, and that Frau Egger, bless her heart, will be waiting in the hall to explain that she has kept my old rooms for me and that she thinks we all, and Madame in particular, look ever so much younger than when we arrived last year.

Then I shall be told all about the picnic at the Oeschinen See which is to take place next day, and of Thursday's tailing party to the Blau See, that wonderful lake which never freezes, a lake whose water is like molten sapphire and whose amazing tint no man of science has ever yet been able to explain.

**Ski in London.**

From the *Sphere* (Dec. 4th):—

From the time he was a lad of eight in Andermatt, where he was born, Mr. Miggi Meyer, the chief instructor to the London Ski School, who is giving demonstrations of skiing on an artificial snow slope at Harrods, has been recognised as a distinguished practitioner of the art. When the days of his schooling were over in Freiburg he went to Italian Switzerland to learn the language, and returned home to become military instructor to the Swiss Ski Alpine Corps. Later on he took a similar position in the French Alpine Club in Haute Savoie for two winters. During the war he was attached as ski instructor to the mountain troops on the Gothard and in the Engadine. He is, in addition, an accomplished slalom runner and bobsleighter as well as a fine Alpine climber. Such is his skill that he has ascended Mont Blanc on skis, a feat of endurance which takes three or four days, according to the weather. As a ski-runner Mr. Meyer is exceedingly fleet, and on the Gothard and in the Engadine was victor in the ski-patrol running competitions on four occasions, while in the 60 kilometre ski race, the longest in Switzerland, he came in a close second in 1914.

**"L'ESCALADE A LONDRES."**

Les Genevois se sont réunis cette année comme de coutume, pour célébrer la fête traditionnelle de l'Escalade.

Défiant toute superstition, ils se trouvèrent chez Fagani le 13 Décembre au nombre de treize pour leur treizième dîner! Le menu fut de choix, grâce aux bons soins du fameux restaurant tessinois, et la belle marmite en nougat fut brisée au dessert par le président, qui prononça la formule chère aux Genevois "qu'ainsi périssent les ennemis de la Patrie!"

Le pasteur Hoffmann fit le bref récit de l'Escalade, et lut les noms des patriotes morts pour Genève en 1602.

On passa ensuite au second acte, et la gaîté régna jusqu'au moment de se séparer en écoutant les "bonnes blagues" de chacun à tour de rôle. Si la réunion fut peu nombreuse, le tort en est aux absents qui, de l'avis unanime, manquèrent une excellente soirée. —T.

**FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.**

The municipal authorities of Belgrade have worked out a very expensive programme of development for the city and have been in negotiations with a number of foreign financial groups with a view to securing the funds necessary to put their schemes into action. The most important item will be the construction of a new electric power station and the improvement of the existing station so as to allow of an extension of the tramway system and also a development of the water supply. Expenditure of about 220 million dinars will be necessary. The Swiss engineering firm of Brown, Boveri have submitted tenders and are understood to be competing for the order with the American MacDaniel group. It is thought that the Swiss engineers stand the best chance of obtaining the contract, especially as they are in a better geographical position to understand local conditions and requirements and to act promptly in commencing work. Should they be successful it will be a valuable gain to Swiss industry in general.

As the Belgian Government have seceded from the Latin Monetary Union by creating the Belga as their unit of currency, the question of preserving the Union has become somewhat pressing. The Swiss Federal Council has instructed the departments concerned to study means of maintaining the Union. The Federal Council has reached the conclusion that Belgium's withdrawal on January 1st, 1927, would lead to the complete dissolution of the Union, and has communicated its views to the Governments of France, Italy and Greece, which are the other countries interested.

After remaining at a level above the dollar since April last, the Swiss franc has since the last days of October moved slightly lower than the dollar or at its exact parity. It is an interesting fact that the capital demands made on Switzerland by foreign countries in recent months have not had any appreciable effect on the Swiss exchange. This is a sound testimony to the good financial position of the Swiss issuing houses, but not less to the steady exchange policy pursued by the National Bank. This policy will serve to counter any effects of the export of capital which may be forthcoming in the near future.

The current issue of the Swiss Bank's monthly bulletin, which will, no doubt, already be in the hands of some of the readers of these columns, contains some interesting particulars of the work done by the Preparatory Committee which is working out the agenda for the Economic Conference to be held next year. Since the Bank's Chairman, Mr. Leopold Dubois, was leader of the Financial Committee, the bulletin is of special interest.

**QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES.**

BONDS.	Dec. 7		Dec. 14	
	Fr.	%	Fr.	%
Confederation 3% 1903	79.50		79.00	
5% 1917, VIII Mob. Ln	97.50		100.82	
Federal Railways 3 1/2% A-K	82.67		82.12	
" " 1924 IV Elect. Ln.	100.62		100.82	

  

SHARES.	Nom		Dec. 7		Dec. 14	
	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%
Swiss Bank Corporation	500		786		782	
Crédit Suisse	500		812		802	
Union de Banques Suisses	500		672		670	
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000		2547		2555	
Fabrique Chimique et-dev. Sandoz	1000		3997		3950	
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe	1000		2725		2742	
S.A. Brown Boveri	350		499		500	
C. F. Bally	1000		1232		1215	
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	2000		549		545	
Entreprises Sulzer S.A.	1000		965		965	
Comp. de Navig'n sur le Lac Léman	500		559		550	
Linoleum A.G. Giubiasco	100		94		94	
Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon	500		865		867	

**MACCHIETTA TICINESE.**

Bizzarra figura infagottata: quando per la prima volta la vidi sgranai tanto d'occhi che credevo fosse il "mago" del libro "Il castello di Barbarera" uscito da quelle pagine per fare una passeggiatina nel mondo!

Ticinese proprio non era: figlio della terra apparteneva alla terra, senza avere forse una fissa nazionalità: certo non aveva una fissa dimora: per lui era proprio il caso di dire "tutto il mondo è paese..." Nessuno sapeva da dove veniva e nessuno desiderava indagare la sua origine. Comparve un giorno nel paese e vi rimase: lo si accettò come un fatto naturale e non ci fu chi osò chiedergli "Da dove vieni e che vuoi?" Non voleva nulla lui: meglio voleva che lo si lasciasse vivere in pace. Non sopportava ne'sm scherzo: se un monello osava deriderlo, da mite e sorridente, si faceva cupo e terribile: inveiva allora contro chi lo attaccava: sembrava una fiera. Eppure il suo cuore era buono, il suo animo generoso. Il suo vero nome non lo si conosceva, e che importava il suo nome? Con la sua tipica figura aveva acquistata maggior notorietà che molti uomini portanti nomi alto suonanti...Lo si chiamava "al cappellon" e ciò doveva bastare. Era alto e nerboruto. La lunga barba argentea, tenuta con una certa superbia, gli scendeva giù sino a metà petto: aveva i capelli canuti quando lo conobbi; lo sguardo severo, penetrante, sembrava cerca se di voler scoprire anche i

persieri più occulti di chi gli parlava. Parco di parole, di gesto: non lo si vide mai ubriaco; non si era dedicato al dio Bacco, come molte altre macchiette tipiche della strada. Girava per il Cantone: da Chiasso ad Airolo. Preferiva le valli d'estate, i centri d'inverno. Era amico di tutti. Ricordo d'averlo visto più volte accarezzare un capo biondo di bimbo...e allora il suo volto solcato da profonde rughe, sorridente tutto...sembrava s'illuminesse d'una gioia ineffabile...Lo vidi chinarsi, accoccolarsi quasi accanto a un cane e tenergli grandi discorsi misteriosi...che poteva raccontare a quella bestia, fedele compagna dell'uomo? Forse la storia della sua vita randagia a noi sconosciuta. Forse confidava a quel docile animale le sue gioie, i suoi dolori, ben conoscendo che poteva fidarsi, che i suoi segreti non sarebbero stati mai svelati... D'inverno compariva con in testa un enorme cappello di panno nero che sembrava uno di quei "sombrosos" portati dai messicani: l'ala tesa doveva avere un buon metro e mezzo di circonferenza e l'altezza era conforme! D'estate aveva un simili...campanile, in paglia nera e da questa sua speciale...montura era nato il suo nome "al cappellon"...Girava...batteva di porta in porta vendendo opuscoli che, secondo lui, narravano le sue gesta giovanili: diceva che aveva fatto il giro del mondo a piedi! Nei paeselli le donne credule, pronte a prestar fede a tutto ciò che il primo capitato narra loro, lo credevano un vero oracolo...a lui si rivolgevano per ottenere certe ricette misteriose che avevano il potere straordinario di far guarire i loro malanni...Non era un ciarlatano però...non aveva, no, questa pretesa! Semplice figlio della natura ne conosceva forse i rimedi semplici e li passava a chi glieli chiedeva. Poi...scompare! Non lo si vide più. Così come misteriosamente era venuto, misteriosamente se ne andò. Alla chetichella! E fu un chiedersi a vicenda "Vedesti al cappellon ultimamente?" —"Al cappellon non lo si trova più dunque?" No! "al cappellon" non lo si trovò più. E con lui un'altra macchietta caratteristica veniva a mancare al Cantone. Lui che si era reso così popolare con il "cappellon" e il "giro del mondo a piedi" aveva forse intrapreso il "giro" dell'alto mondo pure a piedi...stanco di girovagare quaggiù fra le mie erme umane...forse è ancato a cercare altrove una fissa dimora...la pace eterna, la pace e la calma che nessuna bufera può turbare!

*Elena Lunghi.*

**SWISS GYMNASIIC SOCIETY.**

The above Society gave a display last Sunday afternoon at 1, Gerrard Place which showed that, in spite of the present difficulties in securing new members, the reputation for efficiency in classical gymnastics is being maintained. A new feature is the "Junior Section," which appeared in public for the first time in drill-exercises and Indian club swinging, and which by its performance recompensed the two instructors for their arduous task of "shaping the youngsters" and making them amenable to gymnastic discipline. A similar display will take place next Sunday evening, the 19th inst., at the "Schweizerbund," 74, Charlotte Street, W.1, when it is hoped that the Swiss in London will, by their attendance, encourage this national sport.

**SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.**

(Communicated.)

The December Monthly Meeting took place on Wednesday, the 8th inst., at 1, Gerrard Place, W.1, Mr. A. C. Stahelin presiding over an attendance of more than 50 members. Five admissions and six resignations were duly accepted. At the suggestion of the Committee, Mrs. C. Chapuis, Mrs. Pfaendler, Messrs. Bretscher, De Brunner and Boos were appointed House Committee of the Swiss House. Application having been received from the Nouvelle Société Helvétique and the Swiss Institute, to put accommodation at their disposal on certain evenings at Swiss House, this matter was discussed, on principle agreed upon, and the Committee authorised to settle the necessary details.

Last Saturday, the 11th December, was a real 'Red Letter Day' for our Society as the long-looked-for event of opening the Swiss House took place. The ceremony was fixed for 3 p.m., and the attendance, consisting of the Society's members and friends, not to forget the students of our School, was all that could be desired.

After Mr. A. C. Stahelin, the President, had expressed his hearty welcome to everybody, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, who was accompanied by Madame Paravicini, and who had kindly consented to perform the opening, took the chair. The Minister, in his speech, expressed the great interest with which he had always watched the development of the S.M.S. School and the pleasure its progress had given him, also that he was now especially pleased to realise that, owing to our Society having taken over the lease, the Swiss House was enabled to continue its mission, that is, to be of service to the Swiss Colony in London. Monsieur Paravicini then spoke of the good work done by the Committee, and made special mention of Mr. A. C. Stahelin, the President, Mr. B. Bretscher,