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HOME NEWS

The two representatives of the Ticino in the Federal States Council were returned last Sunday unopposed; they are Dr. Brenno Bertone (Liberal) and Adv. Antonio Riva (Conservative).

The much-discussed "centimes additionnels" in Geneva (a super-tax advocated by the Socialists) were rejected on Sunday (Feb. 21st) by the electorate, only just over 4,000 troubling to record their votes, out of a total of about 24,000.

The Basle Grosse Rat has just voted a subsidy of Frs. 165,000 to cover the deficit of the theatre during the season 1921-22.

The Federal Tribunal in Lausanne has reversed a decision of the Obergericht of Appenzell A.Rh. by which a bankrupt was sent to prison for fourteen days, though his misfeasance was admittedly not caused through any negligence on his part.

Arnoldo Franscini, a former Inspector of Customs, who recently died at Lugano, has bequeathed Frs. 23,000 to local philanthropic institutions.

In order to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of its foundation, the Männerchor Schaffhausen is making arrangements to hold a cantonal festival from the 20th to the 27th of June this year.

The manager of the Brigue branch of the Banque Cantonale Valaisanne, Adolphe Eister, has disappeared, presumably over the frontier into Italy, with most of the ready cash, stated to amount to about Frs. 30,000.

During a quarrel between the two brothers Keusch, who own adjoining farms in Mühlau, near Muri (Aargau), one of them was stabbed to death, whilst the other one was so severely wounded that he has since died in hospital.

For placing an obstruction on the railway line in order to avenge himself for an imagined injustice, a railway worker has been sentenced to three years imprisonment by the Lucerne criminal courts.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KYBURG."

In Doleful Mood: The Winter of Discontent.

My readers have been entertained rather lavishly with reports and records of Winter Sports. The following article will, therefore, be in the nature of a somewhat whistful "summing-up" of this Winter Sports subject, as far as I am concerned, for when I return to my labours for *The Swiss Observer*, Spring—with a Capital "S"—the susurating twittering of the birds, will have become an established fact, I hope, and the Travelling Agencies (which do not pay me any commission, as some of you might have thought they would) will issue their Summer Holiday handbills. Here goes then (*Morning Post*, 20th Feb.):—

I for one shall be glad when the Winter Sports season is over. In the old days I rather liked England in February. One doesn't notice a blizzard when one is out hunting. It is only since I have been to Switzerland that I have begun to pine away for want of bright sunshine. Of late I have hardly dared to walk abroad. All my friends are just coming home from the Engadine and the Bernese Oberland, and the sight of their cheerful faces makes me wilt. I flaunt in their faces Press cuttings, proving that it has been overcast, snowing, or even raining for the past three weeks in the very place from which they have just come. They will have none of it. They point to their definitely sunburnt faces, and I shudder with envy. They produce maps from their pockets in mid-street and begin to relate glowing epic stories of snow odysseys, undertaken with a gusto altogether foreign to them. They are altogether too full of beans.

They ought to go to bed for three weeks on arrival at Victoria. They all seem to find Eng-

land a very dull place, and me a very dotard. I seem to have remained a Sir Andrew Aquecheek, while all my friends have blossomed out into lusty Sir Toby Belches. Before I meet them I feel capable of carrying on for another day. When they leave me I have to clutch at the railings for support. I feel really weak. They seem positively to gloat over the broken wrists, sprained ankles and knees that were put out during their visit. I can't make capital out of that. It is no good pretending.

Ever since this craze for Winter Sports began those of us who have had to stay at home have suffered immeasurably. It is true that ski-running even rivals Rugger for excitement. It is true that cutting a line through crisp snow like iced cakes, straight runs that look like healing wounds, climbers that look like mediaeval pilgrims, all fill the heart with unrest. It is as if angels were constantly coming back to remind us of a Heaven we cannot reach. I dare not open an illustrated weekly in February, or turn my face towards a sports outfitter's shop. I sit up o' nights and pore over the three hundred pages of the British Ski Year Book, in the hope that when I drop off to sleep I may find myself threading the intricacies of a slalom race or getting tied up in a rope race. What actually happens on the rare occasions when my wish comes true, and I dream of Switzerland, is that a föhn has set in, avalanches crash over me before I can cast my ski, I fight duels over the Huitfeldt binding, and go to the stake over my devotion to Norwegian hickory, I climb inaccessible peaks without skins, and slip backwards over precipices. . . .

The truth is that, like every Englishman who has ever been to Switzerland, "I miss my Swiss" so terribly that all my Winter is one vast discontent, and my only gleam of pleasure is that reiterated comment in the "Morning Post"—"Raining at Mürren." That and the fact that the sun will soon melt all the snow. Then shall I gloat and sing my favourite song, "Where are the snows of yester year? What care I?"

This is what I imagine the psycho-analysts call a "snow-complex." I see no possibility of recovery unless my fairy godmother suddenly sends me out to Norway for the month of March. To have a whole country for myself while you, poor boob, are sitting on your office-stools—that would be a revenge after my own heart. But why on earth is my fairy godmother? Probably at Wengen—in the föhn.

M. Henry Spahlinger's Escape.

Daily Mail (23rd Feb.):—

While M. Henry Spahlinger, the eminent Swiss bacteriologist, was experimenting in his laboratory a short while ago, a test tube containing millions of tubercle bacilli exploded in his face, filling the air with its deadly contents. His assistants rushed out of the room, but M. Spahlinger did not leave the infected atmosphere until he had placed his priceless cultures in safety.

His health has since been causing anxiety. He is now recuperating on the Riviera, and he does not expect to be able to undertake his promised treatment at Crewe for tuberculosis in cattle until the end of next month.

In view of the extremely important work awaiting our famous compatriot, I hope his recovery will be prompt and thorough. If he can prove his claims, as there seems legitimate cause to hope that he will be able to do, Mankind will probably be in a position to tackle one of its greatest and deadliest foes in earnest and with the greatest possible chance of final victory.

By the way, wonderful progress is being attempted, and in some cases made, in other directions of medical research. The *Daily News* of Feb. 18th reports the following:—

Grafting Eyes.

Visions of the possibility of restoring sight to the blind by grafting eyes taken from another person—either one willing to sacrifice an eye,

or one who has just died a violent death—are awakened by experiments which have been carried out during the past two years in the biological laboratories at Geneva.

The work has been done by Dr. Matthey, under the direction of Professor E. Guyenot, of Geneva, and it has been shown to be possible to graft eyes from one newt to another, and for vision to be restored in the eye so grafted.

The professor showed me a guinea pig on which had been grafted a new eye, which it could already move, but which as yet gave no sign of vision.

International Trade Recovery.

South Wales Journal of Commerce (28th Feb.):

In the 54th annual report of the Swiss Bank Corporation, which will be submitted to the ordinary general meeting to be held at Basle on Friday next, it is remarked:—

Although it is now seven years since the Armistice was concluded, the material and moral damage occasioned by the war is by no means made good. The general great increase in bank note issues, the consequent depreciation of many currencies, heavy taxation, prohibitory import tariffs, and the transitory nature of many existing commercial treaties are among the factors which have interfered with a return to normal conditions.

Gradually, however, Governments and nations are becoming alive to the errors that have been made, more especially has the influence of the League of Nations been very beneficial in this direction, and it is to be hoped that the spirit of conciliation shown at Locarno will be extended to the settlement of economic questions.

International trade is still dependent on the fluctuations of the exchanges, and while countries with depreciated currencies have appeared for a time to prosper through their exports, sooner or later a crisis is reached, and a readjustment of the currency basis becomes necessary. Great Britain, Switzerland, Sweden and Holland have been able to maintain or restore the gold parity. Austria, Germany and Hungary have established their currency on a new basis in relation to gold. Denmark and Norway are gradually approaching parity. Belgium, which made a great effort to restore the equilibrium of her budget, is well on the way towards stabilising her currency on a new basis. Other countries are making efforts in the same direction, while it is to be hoped that France will succeed in adjusting her public finances, the disorganisation of which has so depreciated her currency.

Switzerland, dependent so greatly on her exports, has severely felt the effect of the fluctuations of the foreign exchanges.

The crisis in the watch-making and embroidery industries has not yet come to an end. In the case of other industries, notably textiles, the available outlets have become less; the engineering and electricity concerns cannot complain of a bad year, but this is entirely due to their increased technical proficiency, and to orders received for electrification of the Federal Railways. The hotel industry saw the return of a part of its foreign custom, and is gradually recovering from the effects of the recent crisis.

Owing to the state of trade, money has been abnormally cheap in Switzerland, the private rate of discount having fallen at times to two per cent., while at present the official rate is 3½ per cent. The effect of this cheap money was a rise in investment securities.

The Swiss Bank Corporation occupies a recognised position in the banking world of Great Britain, as well as in that of Switzerland, and its reports are read with care and are never dull, but always manage to provide very interesting and thought-compelling reading. For the ordinary mortal, like 'Kyburg,' its tables of "investments" are, of course, not only interesting in the academic sort of way, but they produce a feeling of ease and comfort—until I wake up! One favourite exercise to which those tables lend themselves nicely is, to pretend to oneself that one is really a holder of important blocks (or whatever they are called) of some of the finest securities, paying fat and regular dividends, to dream how to earmark the incoming revenue, how to spend the capital which seems to grow and to grow and to require further and further *placement*! And, as I said—then one wakes up, after a beautiful dream during which one has been driving about the country in a six-cylinder Sunbeam or equally swaggy car, has entertained one's friends most lavishly, has been hailed by all as a prince of hosts, just

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as they write in the gossip columns of the daily papers, and then, when one does wake up, one feels all the better for the dream, and is able to buckle to one's daily tasks with a better heart again, because one then reflects that after all mere vulgar money, as represented by those "investments" with fat dividends, etc., is not everything and that happiness does not depend upon its possession.

And so, as you see, the Swiss Bank Corporation, through its reports and bulletins—why the latter are in blue, beats me, seeing that "giving the blues" is certainly not the aim of its compilers or publishers!—is able to do a little good in quarters undreamt of by its managers, and I am sure the latter will feel very pleased to hear it. I hope the new marble walls at Gresham Street will not blush when they get to hear of this pat on the shoulder for our Swiss Banking Institution in London.

Important Announcement.

As promised last week, I beg to announce, with my tongue in my cheek—beg pardon! with a sad feeling permeating my otherwise joyful thoughts, that, my drives from the tee not having yet come up to the desired pitch of perfection, my golfing doctor has ordered me a complete rest from business and journalistic worries, and, believe me, *only* on account of his advice, Mrs. "Kyburg" and self feel reluctantly compelled to leave for the South Coast, where on some sunny—we hope so, anyhow—links they both hope to learn how to drive the tee-shot out of sight, whereupon they intend returning to their home, returning to their daily work, easy of mind, fortified with health of body, and eager, as far as I am concerned anyhow, to entertain you again with my weekly "Notes."

Au revoir donc, mes amis!

RIMEMBRANZE.

E tu, mio prediletto San Bernardino, mi ricordi ancora?... senti a risuonare l'eco delle mie risate gioiose, delle mie grida d'ammirazione, quando appunto ridevano "l'eco" nella tua tranquilla valletta misteriosa, lassù verso il "Pan di zucchero" ...et il "Campo dei Fiori" è tuttora cosparsa dalla sua lussureggiante flora alpina di cui ne facevo ampia raccolta, a mio bell'agio e senza domandare il permesso ad alcuno!...

Che festa, quando si andava all' "Ospizio" per quella pittoresca strada, tutta montante, che sembra un nastro bianco, serpeggiante, messo lì ad adornare pascoli e dirupi e pinete selvaggie che si stendono in dolci declivi... poi si costeggiava il laghetto, quieto e limpido, riflettente il puro azzurro del cielo... e l'ampia casa, quadrata e bassa, ospitaliera e calda ci stava di fronte; oh con che fame e allegria si faceva onore al buon pranzo composto di carne secca, del famoso prosciutto nostrano e di una fumante "polenta" colla panna dolce e fresca... ed "i grandi" inaffiavano il tutto con un eccellente "Valtellina"!

Ricordo un giorno che salimmo, noi ragazzi, nella "Valle del silenzio" per cogliere, ai piedi dei nevai, violette gialle ed odorose, "non ti scordar di me," azzurri e rosa, achillee a mazzolini bianchi; l'indomani, era l'onomatico della nonina... ad un tratto, il silenzio profondo ed impressionante, nella selvatichezza di quelle rocce solitarie, venne rotto da un fischio sibillante... qualcuno di noi gridò "all'orso, all'orso"... e tutti giù a corsa, a salti, colla velocità che la paura ci metteva addosso, anelanti, finché raggiungemmo il piano....

...forse non era che una marmotta alla vedetta, che dava così il segnale d'allarme alla sua famiglia... però, al giorno dopo, alcuni cacciatori uccisero davvero un orso, lassù, in quei paraggi rocciosi....

Ah i bei giorni passati lassù fra monti e cielo, inebriati d'aria pura e balsamica, dimentichi del mondo e "delle sue pompe" felici di vivere, ove ci si sente buoni perché la presenza di Dio penetra ovunque, in quegli arcani della vita che ci dischiude la natura, antica e sempre maestra di meraviglie!

Ora anche tu subirai la pena della scienza umana... anche tu verrai percorso dalla strada ferrata che dappertutto, a poco, a poco s'introduce, non rispettando nulla, taglia e abbatte e perfora, tutto distrugge sul suo cammino, avvicinando le terre e le genti, corre, corre portando dovunque la voce del progresso... la ferrovia ti toglierà il tuo fascino arcano, la selvatichezza primitiva dei tuoi boschi e delle tue folte pinete, l'imperturbato silenzio sarà rotto dai fischi dei treni, la tua bianca neve purissima verrà imbrattata dalla fuligine delle macchine....

Eppur tu ti accontentavi un giorno del tuo romanticismo vergine, dominato d'alte vette, tu riposavi fidente da quando i romani praticarono il tuo passo alpino; ti accontentavi dei tuoi due o tre alberghi, poche villette, delle alcune rustiche casine, del caseificio lassù verso la strada che conduce all' "Ospizio" dal quale sortivano i tuoi rinomati mescarpini....

E sul piccolo ripiano, dalla mistica pace, davanti alla cara, antica Chiesetta, sacro un tempo, sorgerà la stazione ferroviaria... le tue pinete fitte, salutarie, dall'ampio silenzio vergine, eccheggeranno dai fischi dei treni che ti porteranno a flotte i turisti festanti,

che verranno a bere la tua buon'acqua ferruginosa e riacquistare forza e vigore!...

Ma un'ineffabile malinconia, come di rimpianto, m'entra nell'animo... io vi rivedrò sempre cogli occhi della fantasia, come vi lasciai tanti anni or sono, o selvatici, poetici colli ridenti; mentre il pensiero s'inchina riverente ai grandi dominatori del mondo intero!

T. LUNGI-REZZONICO.

CORRESPONDENCE.

The Editor is not responsible for the opinions expressed by Correspondents and cannot publish anonymous articles, unless accompanied by the writer's name and address, as evidence of good faith.

To the Editor of *The Swiss Observer*.

Sir,—It is usually with genuine pleasure that I read the contributions of your correspondent, "Kyburg," since they often denote very high ideals and lofty sentiments, which for the most part find an echo in my own heart; but I am quite unable to follow him into his arguments for the recognition of the Soviets and the resumption of diplomatic relations with them, however desirable the participation of Russia in the proposed Disarmament Conference before the League of Nations may be.

At the risk of being considered by him to be devoid of any political sense or understanding, I am inclined to think that the manifesto of our Genevese compatriots which he is alluding to reflects the sentiments of the greater part of coherent opinion in Western Europe, which abhors and condemns the resumption of relations with a political body whose main object is the destruction of the existing order of things and its substitution by a system of social order—if one may call it so—to which most thinking men are opposed, as offering no solution to the many difficulties and troubles which beset the path of man at the present moment.

It is futile to argue that the adhesion of such a Government is an indispensable factor for the pacification of the world, so long as its "raison d'être" is the undermining of peace by obnoxious propaganda and the stirring up of internecine strife among the nations who are opposed to political methods of this kind. When the Soviet learns to have a proper regard for the opinions of those that differ from its tenets, and when it is prepared to substitute for a purely negative reign of terror a really constructive programme of social welfare and political equality, since social equality never can be, the time will have come for all men of goodwill to assist and further it in its task—but not before.

As no such change of mind is apparent at the present moment—quite the contrary—I cannot but agree with the spirit of the manifesto which was issued by our Geneva compatriots, although I disagree with the language in which it is couched as being unnecessarily aggressive and abusive.

While I also agree with much our distinguished compatriot, Federal Councillor Motta, had to say on the subject of our relations with Soviet Russia, I think it was wrong to link the question of a formal apology and compensation to Worowski's daughter with the murder of the Chancellor of the Swiss Legation at Leningrad, and the robbery which accompanied it, for it must be borne in mind that the assassination of the Soviet diplomat at Lausanne was the carefully premeditated act of a political fanatic, while the crime committed at Leningrad was the outcome of an entirely unrestrained—and under the circumstances probably unrestrainable—mob rule. When passions are thus inflamed and running riot, moral ethics and common-sense go by the board, and the innocent usually suffer with the guilty. Conrad's act is in a totally different category, for it was committed away from political strife, amid peaceful surroundings, and viewed in this light, the judgment of the tribunal at Lausanne was a grave miscarriage of justice, and to my mind due entirely to sentiment rather than cold reason.

An apology is, however, also due to the Swiss Government, and I submit to "Kyburg" that, if this had been tendered, much political oratory and acrimonious discussions could have been avoided; but whether this would have been of any other benefit to the peace of the world seems to me to be a highly problematical question.

A. E. DOMEISEN.

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