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# The Swiss Observer

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## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

### The Spahlinger Treatment.

No satisfactory explanation has so far come forward from Mr. Spahlinger to move the doubts—and even aspersions—which have been expressed by distinguished medical men and others in this country as to the genuineness and efficacy of the treatment. One by one the few cases, previously advanced as establishing the success of his treatment, are collapsing under the ordeal of critical examination. A fortnight ago I printed the history of the cure of Mr. Havelock Wilson's son, together with a grateful acknowledgment by his father: the *Daily Express* (Jan. 14th) has the following critical notice which seems to put the value of this particular evidence in jeopardy:—

Mr. Havelock Wilson expresses statements the nature of which surely call for comment.

He says of his son, doubtless referring to the month of June, 1925: "When the breakdown occurred I immediately had him medically examined by at least three doctors, and they expressed the opinion that there was danger of tuberculosis developing."

He goes on to tell us that, having made enquiries as to the Spahlinger treatment in Geneva and elsewhere, he received reports of so encouraging a nature that in October, 1925 he sent his son to Geneva with the view to having him treated.

And at this point comes an astonishing statement, or possibly an astonishing omission.

Mr. Havelock Wilson's son was examined in Geneva by Dr. Stephani and M. Spahlinger, the former pronouncing the case to be one of tuberculosis "well advanced."

Unless Mr. Havelock Wilson's son was acutely ill between June and October, 1925 (any statement to this effect is omitted) it seems a veritable feat even for the tubercle bacillus to have wrought such havoc as to have evinced such divergence of medical diagnosis between the months of June and October.

It would also be interesting to know why Mr. Havelock Wilson was apparently so satisfied with the examination of one Swiss doctor, when he already had the opinions of at least three English ones and, no doubt, the X-ray report of an independent radiologist (details of which are likewise omitted).

The reference to the increase of weight is of little importance unless accompanied by a statement as to the mode of his son's life before and during the treatment.

Further, one cannot regard very seriously the evidence of the doctor who pronounced Mr. Havelock Wilson, junior as an "A.1." life, when the two "eminent doctors" (who "could not be described as Spahlinger men") were able three months ago to find signs of "slight lung trouble."

In view of the apparent discrepancy in these facts, I should like to remind Mr. Havelock Wilson that, at the moment, the course of his son's illness does not afford any proof either of the efficacy of the Swiss examination, or of the efficacy of the treatment, and also that the standard of cure in tuberculosis is, unfortunately, its permanency.

If Mr. Havelock Wilson has written the letter with a view to encouraging still more patients to go to Geneva, one hopes that they will, at least, await the scientifically controlled test of the Spahlinger treatment which the medical profession of Great Britain has been demanding in vain for some years.

In the meantime some new methods of raising money have come to light. In Glasgow an "Anti-Tuberculosis Consumption Fund" has been started by a local cinema musician at the suggestion of "a friend who has been a close associate of Mr. Spahlinger." This roundabout finance seems strange considering the substantial offers of monetary assistance still open if certain preliminary conditions are fulfilled. Singular also is the following contribution from Dr. Graham Little, M.P., published in the *Daily Express* (Jan. 13th):—

A letter which lies before me, written within the last three months, from Chemin de Champel, Geneva, and signed by E. S. Harston, in response to an application by an English patient for treatment by M. Spahlinger, in which the writer says he is replying on behalf of M. Spahlinger—presumably, therefore, with his full authority and sanction—contains the following statement:—

"As you are no doubt aware, until recently all his patients were treated free, with the result that M. Spahlinger has expended a large fortune on his work. Owing to grave

## ANNIVERSARIES OF SWISS EVENTS.

January 31st, 1798.—The Great Council assembled at Aarau agrees to the abolition of the aristocracy, recognising the rights of man and the sovereignty of the people. Trees of Liberty are planted, revolutionary France playing a very inglorious part against the old Confederation. Great promises are made, and revolutionary movements stimulated. The French bayonet reigns supreme in Switzerland, which had, at that time, no military commander of importance. With the exception of Bern, military arsenals were empty, and the accoutrements and arms out-of-date.

February 1st, 1871.—The army of General Bourbaki (83,000 men) completely cut off by the Germans in the Franche-Comté, crosses the Swiss frontier at Verrières, laying down its arms; the French soldiers were speedily distributed throughout the various cantons and hospitably entertained until peace was signed.

February 2nd, 1895.—Hans Herzog, Confederate General, died in Aarau.

February 3rd, 1900.—Founding of the Cathedral in Lausanne.

February 4th, 1778.—August de Candolle, celebrated Botanist, died at Geneva.

Geneva, during the last 150 years, has produced quite a number of great Botanists, amongst whom may be classed several Clergy. Geneva has also two of the finest Botanical Collections in the world, *i.e.* the collection of De Candolle and the Collection Boissier. The present representative of this science is Prof. Chodat, and one of his most meritorious assistants the late conservator of the Collection Boissier, M. Beauverd, Hon. Dr. of the University. In one of his works on Botany he discusses the Edelweiss, of which there are thirty-two varieties.

February 5th, 1818.—General Aloys von Reding died.

Well known are the battles of Wollerau, Rothenturm and Morgarten.

financial difficulties, his English friends and patients have suggested that all new patients should make a donation of £500 to the Institute in order to help carry on the work, and this has been done by the majority of patients now undergoing treatment.

If you feel that you can assist in this way, will you let me know, and I will see if it is possible to arrange for treatment."

On the face of it there is nothing remarkable that Mr. Spahlinger should insist on a payment of £500 for his protracted consumption cure when other sufferers in this country have to forfeit a hundred guineas for an everyday abdominal operation which demands the surgeon's personal attention for a couple of hours at the most. I know of the existence of several similar letters received in this country within the last few weeks. The writer, Mr. E. S. Harston, is a New Zealand major, whose avowed cure is, by coincidence, related by him in the same issue of the *Daily Express* as follows:—

I have read with great surprise the statements in your columns from Dr. Thomas Nelson. I ask you to be good enough to publish this letter, which gives the experience of a patient who has not only been successfully treated himself, but who has seen many other cases who have had the good fortune to receive similar benefits.

In my own case I was for two years in sanatorium, and there had tuberculin as well as other treatments. I spent practically the whole time in bed with constant cough, frequently stained sputum and numerous bacilli. I was discharged weak and hopeless, with the assurance that everything possible had been done for me, and spent another year in bed in my own home, where I had two severe hæmorrhages.

I then had a course of Spahlinger serum, with results that were so definitely good that I went to Geneva.

The cessation of treatment owing to the voyage and the difficulties of the journey caused a relapse. My condition on arrival was far from good.

For two and a half years no bacilli have been found in my sputum. I lead a leisured, normal life, my cough has gone, a chronic fistula has healed, and so also, my medical advisers assure me, have my lungs.

It is presumably written by request to pour oil on the troubled waters, but all the same there

## HOME NEWS

The unjustified delay in the ratification of the "Free Zones compromise" concluded with France on October 30th, 1924, is beginning to occupy certain political circles in the latter country. The well-known Paris daily *Journal des Débats*, after referring to the growing irritation caused in Switzerland, thus concludes a significant article:—

Il est clair qu'il faut en finir. Nous avons signé, il y a deux ans et demi, un compromis d'arbitrage et nous ne saurions plus longtemps faire traîner les choses en longueur. La plus élémentaire correction internationale nous y oblige. Que dirions-nous si on agissait à notre égard avec une pareille désinvolture? Le Parlement ne semble pas se rendre compte du tort grave que font à la France des méthodes aussi désordonnées. Il appartient au gouvernement d'intervenir auprès du Sénat pour lui demander de ratifier dans les délais les plus courts la convention du 30 octobre 1924. Le rappel de cette date ne suffit-il pas à montrer la nécessité d'une prompte conclusion? Dans cette affaire, c'est le bon renom de la France qui est en jeu. Il ne faut pas qu'on puisse plus longtemps mettre en doute la bonne foi de nos dirigeants.

During the debate in the Zurich Grosse Rat on the 1927 Budget a lively discussion developed on the causes and responsibilities for the general strike of 1918. The Socialist members vigorously opposed any allocations for military purposes, especially in view of the propaganda recently launched by officers' societies against the claims of Robert Grimm to the Presidency of the National Council.

The gross profits of the Swiss Federal Railways for the year ending December 31st, 1926 amount to about 121 million francs, *i.e.* over eight million francs less than in the preceding period. As the service for interest, amortisation, renewals, etc., requires an annual sum of 132.7 million francs there is a net deficit of about 11 million francs. The number of passengers carried has considerably increased (by about 40,000) but goods traffic has suffered a further diminution.

The town of Basle shows for the last year a considerable increase in its population; the latter is stated to amount to 147,366.

To the end of last year 51,194 wireless licences had been issued in Switzerland; Zurich headed the list with 27,800.

Mr. Giuseppe Rossi, a former member of the Grand Council of the Ticino, who died recently at Croglio, left the whole of his fortune, amounting to several million francs, to a fund for the erection of a hospital at Croglio.

The former Clerk of the Registry Office in Zurzach, who, though dismissed from office, continued with his son to contract marriages, has been sentenced to four weeks' imprisonment and a fine of Frs. 200. As far as official statements go only one such marriage has taken place.

Dr. Joseph August Kurer died, at the age of 54, on his return journey from San Remo, where he had hoped to recuperate his failing health. A lawyer by profession—he practised for some considerable time in St. Gall—and at the time of his death Central Secretary of the Swiss Hotel Association, he was in 1927 elected National Councilor; he also belonged to the Grosse Rat in Solothurn, where he represented the interests of the Catholic People Party.

## CITY SWISS CLUB.

### CINDERELLA DANCE

at PAGANI'S RESTAURANT, on  
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19th, at 6.30.

Tickets at 10/6 (incl. Supper) may be obtained from  
Members of the Committee.