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Clearing the summit of the Vosges Mountains—that gloomy barrier of hills that divides France from Switzerland—at a height of 3,000 feet and passing over Belfort, we dropped down to Basle Aerodrome for lunch. Here the weather changed and the last stage of the journey, from Basle to Zurich, was made through driving rain, soon to be followed by a prolonged thunderstorm.

But in the comfortable *bonhomie* of the Elite Hotel I was content to await the arrival of suitable weather conditions, fortunately to prove only five days distant. An experienced Swiss pilot told me that, on an average, only on 15-20 days in the year is it possible to enjoy perfect atmospheric conditions above the Alpine Range.

Meanwhile, through the friendly help of Imperial Airways' resident manager, Mr. Bachrach, I had got into touch with the well-known Swiss aviator, Lieut. Mittelholzer, who in the summer of 1923 led an aerial expedition into the Polar Regions to co-operate with Amundsen's first attempt to fly across the North Pole. Lieut. Mittelholzer is a specialist in Alpine aviation, and I consider myself fortunate in having enjoyed his arrangements and personal pilotage.

Our machine was a single-engined Dornier with accommodation for 3 to 4 passengers, and we took off from Dubendorf Aerodrome in the early evening about 4 p.m.

Climbing steadily, within half-an-hour we had approached the foothills of the Alpine Range—if one may so disrespectfully describe heights of over 7,000ft.! Still rising, we slipped past rocky peaks and over cavernous depths up which the wind rushed in gusts, momentarily tossing the machine like a leaf in an autumn storm. Rounding, in frequent succession, precipitous shoulders of rock, new and still more majestic vistas of beauty leapt into a view, which grew more extensive with increasing height.

After nearly two hours' flying we reached the Matterhorn (14,800 ft.)—goal of many a persevering and courageous mountaineer—and the climax of our flight. Having passed at 16,000ft. over the snow-clad, flat topped summit of Monte Rosa (5,800 ft.), we soared above the rocky pinnacle of the Matterhorn before descending in easy spirals to circle several times the needle-pointed rock, our wing-tip but a few feet distant from its scarped face.

If the rocks of the Grépon Peak be considered, by the comparatively few adventurous spirits who have conquered it, probably the most difficult feat in the Alps, so the Matterhorn may be regarded as the most distinctive landmark standing, as it does, separate and apart, in solitary and dignified aloofness.

My observations confirmed what I believe is widely conceded by climbers, that the general line of ascent from the Swiss side is much easier than the Italian approach across the Zmutt Ridge. The same observation applies, more or less, to Mont Blanc (15,780 ft.), where the ascent from the Swiss side offers an exceedingly difficult climbing enterprise, while the French approach from the Chamonix Valley presents no great deterrent to a man in good physical condition.

An aerial examination, however, even from a "close up," does not altogether reveal the actual, practical difficulties of the rocks as faced by the climber, but one felt a sense of smug satisfaction at this effortless enjoyment of the climber's preserve from the comfortable outlook of a modern magic carpet. But the easy attainment of a purpose is not everything. It may well be that in his sporting spirit a climber may find his greatest satisfaction in the exhilarating joy of actual physical achievement, rather than in the ample reward of a wonderful vision of nature.

One fact of interest to the flyer—not commonly known or realised, is that the frontier line between Switzerland and Italy in the High Alps runs across the summits of several well-known peaks besides the Matterhorn, notably the Breithorn and Monte Rosa.

Here then is a frontier unguarded, across which the adventurous traveller can fly to and fro at will at any hour of the day or night without fear of challenge from outraged law in hiding. Some day, perhaps, an efficient customs Mussolini may hitch a Schneider Trophy winner to a star to prevent ubiquitous *Moths* escaping across this stretch of frontier with too many lira—but to-day nobody demands a passport, and on this spot who wants a landing ticket?

Recovering our height, the vision was that of a vast snowfield glittering in the sunshine, pierced by innumerable peaks of every size and shape—the travail of primeval ages, an orderly

confusion of beauty in a silent world—where silence seemed the only fitting spirit wherewith "to absorb this majesty of nature."

There may be some whose mental outlook leaves them unaffected by such earthly grandeur, but I confess myself incorrigibly susceptible to the glamour of Nature on so stupendous a scale.

Owing to the rapidity with which impressions succeeded one another, one lacked the time to locate and identify in passing some of the lesser-known peaks and glaciers. But I hope to return next year and enjoy anew at greater leisure this feast of natural beauty—the first taste of which has but whetted an appetite.

Turning homeward, and still keeping our height, flitting almost from peak to peak, we passed in quick succession the Breithorn and Dent d'Herens, the Trinity of Peaks, Monck, Eiger and Jungfrau (13,660 ft.), with glaciers at their feet, while at one point through a cleft in the mountains on the far horizon, the railway running down through the Simplon Tunnel and along the pleasant shores of Lake Maggiore to Milan lay stretched beneath us into the unseen distance.

Gradually descending, with the engine throttled well back, we passed over the borders of Lake Lucerne, and reaching the summit of the Rigi—banked sharply upwards circling the hotel.

Then, still losing height, we crossed the Lake of Zurich to land at Dubendorf Aerodrome at 7.30 p.m.—a little over three hours after our departure. The distance covered by the flight was approximately 300 miles, and from the point of view of natural beauty there surely can be but few flights comparable to it elsewhere in the world."

As the Irish See Us.

From the *Irish Times* (Feb. 9th):—

"Switzerland, which to many people is more famous for its goat's milk and watches than for the Geneva Convention—what of this comparatively small State in the heart of Europe! Every year brings it into prominence with the Red Cross, which is the protecting sign of each hospital ship and ambulance. This famous little State is, indeed, one of mystery for the man in the street. It supplies Swiss Guards for the Pope at the Vatican, and it has been affording hospitality for years to all the diplomats who have wrangled for that peace which the war could not give.

Geneva is one of the three principalities of a country which also makes money out of the sport-seekers of the world. Park Lane's millions are scattered in St. Moritz, and the almighty dollar is spent lavishly in Davos. The little land of William Tell goes on yodelling among the mountains until the gladsome notes are heard—the Austrian Tyrol. But, except for the hotels, the people keep aloof and to themselves, like the Prince of Monaco. "Do not interfere," they say, "the skis and the bob-sleighs will come and the 20 franc pieces will make themselves!"

To show how ignorant some of the rich ones of the earth are about Switzerland, it may be pointed out that, on the eve of war, a Congress Committee of the United States was inquiring into European armaments. The Swiss military system was regarded as a model. Britain had sent a Commission, including Labour M.P.'s, to study it; but one relentless seeker after knowledge in America demanded to know the strength of the Swiss Navy!

When Shakespeare thought that Bohemia (now Czecho-Slovakia) had a seaboard, he made a similar mistake; but he lived over 300 years ago and had not travelled. Nor had he, like the Congress man in God's own country, the opportunity to study blue books in the Smithsonian Library at Washington. The Swiss Navy to us had long been a joke, but it was not one for that serious-minded Congress man, who was a typical Mr. Babbitt of Main Street. Nevertheless, Switzerland has a national militia of 45,000, which can be raised to a war strength of 250,000; and it has 200 aeroplanes. Yet the President who is elected annually is one of the least known of the world's rulers. He might be the chairman of some urban district council for all the world outside Berne is concerned. Last year Mr. M. G. Motta, who was the Foreign Secretary as well as President, was never heard of while the League of Nations was framing protocols by the dozen at Geneva."

DIE MITTEL DER DEMOKRATIE.

Zurzeit steht, wie man weiss, im Kanton Uri eine Initiative zur Abschaffung der Landsgemeinde; zur Diskussion. Die Initiative ist von 1800 Mann, d. h. von zwei Fünfteln sämtlicher Stimmberechtigten, unterzeichnet worden. In vielen Schulbüchern, in schwungvollen Monographien, Feuilletons und Reiseschilderungen war es immer wieder zu lesen, dass die Landsgemeinde das ideale Instrument der Demokratie sei, "ihre lebendigste und schönste Verkörperung." Demgegenüber machen nun die Verteidiger die Initiative geltend, dass so nur reden können, wer die wirklichen Verhältnisse nicht kennen. In Wahrheit gebe es kein schlimmeres Zerrbild der

Demokratie, als zum Beispiel eine umericische Landsgemeinde. Den Bewohnern abgelegener Talschaften, wie Urserental, Isental, Seelisberg bedeute der Besuch einer Landsgemeinde in Altdorf einen anstrengten Tagesmarsch und eine Ausgabe von 8, 10 bis 20 Franken, für die Bewohner des Urnerbodens aber bedinge der Besuch der Landsgemeinde einen Marsch über den möglicherweise verschneiten 1941 Meter hohen Klausenpass oder aber einen Abstieg nach Linthal und von da eine Eisenbahnfahrt über Ziegelbrücke, Bieberbrücke, Goldau. Auch das Idealbild der "friedlichen Tagung" stimme keineswegs. Just die letzte Landsgemeinde hätte da sehr unerfreuliche Streitszenen aufzuweisen gehabt; von der "Käuflichkeit gewisser Wähler," die auf anderer Leute Kosten herbeitransportiert wurden, wolle man lieber schweigen.

Wenn man diese Begründung der Initiative hört, ist es einem, als werde man ins alte Rom versetzt, und wenn man modernen Geschichtschreibern glauben darf, ist die römische Republik zugrunde gegangen, an ungenügenden technischen Mitteln zur Ausübung der Demokratie. Als sich der römische Staat immer mehr vergrösserte, als er bald ganz Italien umfasste, durfte nur in Rom das Wahlrecht ausgeübt werden. Eine Presse in unserem Sinne bestand nicht. Die Information des Volkes war durch und durch mangelhaft. Die Abstimmung in den Pflerchen geschah oft in einer Weise, dass man im Zweifel sein konnte, ob die Abstimmenden auch wussten, über was sie abstimmten. Die Käuflichkeit der Wähler spielte sehr bald eine grosse Rolle. Jeder Abstimmung gingen religiöse Opfer voraus, und aus den Eingeweihten der Opfertiere konnten die Priester "weissagen," ob man die Wahl nicht besser verschiebe.—So war der Wähler in verschiedenster Weise dem Mächtigen ausgeliefert, und so entspricht es wohl der Wahrheit, dass die römische Demokratie am Mangel an tauglichen Mitteln zugrunde ging. Die Mittel der Demokratie haben nicht mit der Entwicklung des Staates Schritt gehalten.

Dieser Lehre der Geschichte sollte man sich nicht entziehen. Im Kanton Uri kommt man heute zur Ueberzeugung, dass die Landsgemeinde

QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES.

BONDS.	Feb. 13		Feb. 21			
	Fr.	S.	Fr.	S.		
Confederation 3% 1903	83.00	83.00				
" 5% 1917. VIII Moh. Ln	101.25	101.60				
Federal Railways 3 1/2% A-K	86.60	86.20				
" " 1924 IV Elect. Ln.	102.25	102.30				
SHARES.	Nom.		Feb. 13		Feb. 21	
	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.
Swiss Bank Corporation	500	826	834			
Crédit Suisse	500	927	879			
Union de Banques Suisses	500	760	761			
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	2905	2902			
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	5025	4975			
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe	1000	3315	3325			
S.A. Brown Boveri	350	606	600			
C. F. Bally	1000	1424	1492			
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	959	950			
Entreprises Suizer S.A.	1000	1217	1222			
Comp. de Navig. sur le Lac Léman	500	550	550			
Linoileum A.G. Giubiasco	100	250	250			
Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon	500	790	787			

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