

# Home news

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de-Fonds was given a rousing reception by the Municipal Band and authorities of Lugano, during their one day's stay in the town on their way to the Lago Maggiore. They treated the population of Lugano to some fine concerts, and our friends from the Jura can have entertained no doubt as to the warmth of the welcome.

#### FRONTIER INCIDENTS.

A lengthy discussion took place last week in the Grand Conseil of the Ticino concerning instructions issued by the police with a view to avoiding the recurrence of frontier incidents. The discussion arose from an interpellation criticising the Department of Police for the instructions issued by the police station at Stabio to licensed establishments in the immediate vicinity of the frontier to suppress discussions and rowdiness inimical to our neighbours. The instructions were criticised as being contrary to the established rules of liberty, as far as Switzerland is concerned. Mr. Cattori, head of the Department of Police, explained, however, that the Cantonal authorities had been specially requested by the Federal Council at the end of February last, after a series of incidents, to take steps to see that the peace should not be disturbed in future, if possible. Mr. Cattori defended the instructions issued from Bellinzona to the frontier police stations as being quite legal, although he admitted that the communications by the local police of Stabio to licensed premises somewhat exceeded the mark and the "circular" has been withdrawn. The critics declared themselves "so far" satisfied.

#### NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KIBURG.

##### Security in Switzerland.

I confess I had to read the following article—*Time and Tide*, 26th April—twice before I really was able to enjoy to the full its meaning. We are rather used to read very flattering articles about Switzerland in the British Press and when one meets one which succeeds, in a most delightful manner to hit off also some of our most characteristic shortcomings, it is doubly welcome, I think.

"In the generous rivalry in which the nations of Europe have been engaged in the last ten years—the race towards that security which the statesmen of Europe have united in proclaiming as the new ideal—it has been painful to observe the lagging steps of Switzerland. Switzerland's reputation for brilliancy has never indeed, quite equalled that of France or Italy. The mercurial flashes of an Aristide, the Jovian rumblings of a Benito, could never have issued from the sweet but placid Alpine pastures; yet the country of Tell and Zwingli once occupied an honourable place among its peers, and even in the nineteenth century, the Swiss Federation claimed to be the chief Continental stronghold of civic liberties.

"The more lamentable, then, was the purblind obstinacy with which Switzerland in recent years rested on her fast-withering laurels. She appeared to cherish the delusion that a defensive national militia, a neutrality internationally guaranteed and jealously guarded, and a series of arbitration treaties, constituted a sufficient contribution towards the great ideal of security. Undoubtedly, pernicious influences were at work. Perhaps poisonous emanations from the so-called Spirit of the League had floated miasmically across the boulevards of Geneva to take away the brains of sturdy Swiss citizens.

"But fortunately even this citadel of reaction is beginning to totter at last. The Swiss Federal Council has appointed a mixed Central Commission to study the protection of the civilian population against gas warfare. It is a small step indeed, but it is a step along the right road, and we hope that Switzerland will soon be following the rest of Europe along the path which their statesmen (with the one lamentable exception of Denmark) have recognised as alone leading to security. The Swiss do everything well, and we have no doubt that when the recommendations of the Mixed Commission are issued, they will be found to combine the maximum of protection for the population with the minimum of dislocation to the important tourist traffic. Dug-outs in the mountains can, of course, easily be arranged, and the sacrifice of picturesqueness need only be small.

"The towns present a more serious problem. Many aged and timid persons of both sexes frequent Switzerland for their health, and might find the atmosphere of their rest-cures marred if the pretty features of their Swiss chambermaids were suddenly to be found concealed under masks of rubber, when emergency practices are ordered. Perhaps—we venture the suggestion with all diffidence—at the national gas-drills, the customary harsh Klaxon might be replaced by loud-speakers giving out a peculiar yodelling cry, sufficiently like the old sounds of less enlightened days to preserve the atmosphere, but subtly distinguished to signify danger. The cows represent a real difficulty. Their masks will, of course, be hung round their necks, and it should be easy enough to shape their covers in the outward form of the traditional cowbell. But what of the old melodious tinkle? That will pro-

bably have to go; but then there has never been lacking a morose section of opinion which maintained that the concord of sweet matutinal sounds, for all its suggestion of rich creamy chocolate in the preparing, was not really worth the broken sleep which it involved. Such practical men will doubtless find far greater satisfaction in watching the nicely drilled herds rally round their guardians, with true Swiss efficiency, at the warning yodels, and submit to the swathing of their absurdly pacific faces in the latest implements of security."

With regard to the last few lines of the above, all I say is "Things I should like to see illustrated!"

Some little time ago we had a Swiss project for bridging the English Channel, and a very good idea it looked to my lay-mind, too. Now comes another Swiss, Mr. Otto Probst, of Zurich, who intends to fly

**To America in Twelve Hours.** (*Daily Mirror*, 22nd April):—

"If the plans of a Swiss inventor materialise, a vessel he has designed will be able to travel at over 300 miles an hour—as fast as a Schneider Cup seaplane. Mr. Otto Probst, of Zurich, is the designer of this remarkable craft, and he has arrived in London to submit his plans to the British Government. "My vessel is a 'projectile boat,' driven by explosive forces which are my secret," Mr. Probst told the *Daily Mirror* yesterday. Motive power, he added, was rather similar to that used in rocket cars.

"Mr. Probst claims that any great Power that adopted his craft for its navy would be practically unbeatable on the sea. Cigar-shaped, with a cabin in the nose and the explosive chambers in the tail, the boat could be controlled either by a pilot or by wireless from the land, he said. If controlled by wireless, it could be loaded with explosives and used as a gigantic torpedo, from which no ship could escape since its speed is so great. The minimum speed is about 80 miles an hour, and naturally the pilot and passengers are entirely enclosed in a cabin. The craft skims on the surface of the water like a hydroplane, and could easily cross the Atlantic in twelve hours.

"In peace time it would make a wonderful pleasure and commercial craft, and in war time a fleet of "projectile boats" would be impossible to hit even with the most modern guns. The most suitable and practical size for such a boat up to the present would be about fifty yards long with a beam of two and a half yards. Trials with one five yards long have been very successful. I want Britain to adopt this invention, but if this Government declines it, I shall offer it to the United States authorities."

Suppose it is true! Suppose the British Government obtains possession of this wonderful appliance which will enable it, when worked out in practical fashion, to master the seas in a sense hitherto undreamt of, would it not be fine? And, after all, we all know, I think, that the world at large could have not a better policeman than John Bull, who would see to fair play for all being enforced everywhere. The millennium, perhaps, draws nearer? What?

Meanwhile, however, and, perhaps, just to prove that there are many kinds of wars and not all of them sanguinary affairs, we have

**War on Words in the Ticino.** (*The Observer*, 28th April):—

"Though Lugano and Locarno and many other places in the Ticino live on "Fremdenindustrie," the Ticino patriots feel none too kindly towards their visitors. They are now leading an attack on inscriptions and advertisements in other languages than Italian; not even French and German, which are "national languages" in Switzerland, find favour in their eyes. The inhabitants of Interlaken or Lucerne do not mind such harmless mottoes as "On parle français" in the window of a barber's shop, or "English spoken" at the door of a chemist's. But the Ticinese—at least some of them, though not the hotel-keepers and shopkeepers—are of a different mind.

"A motion has been carried in the Legislative Assembly charging the Government with the maintenance of the Italian character of placards, inscriptions, and advertisements in the streets. The Government, doubtful of the legality of the proceeding, approached Professor Burckhardt of the University of Berne with the following questions: Have we the right to forbid the public exhibition of any inscription in a foreign language? If not, can we demand that such texts be preceded by a translation in Italian, written in larger print? May we levy a special tax on foreign inscriptions, and, if so, how high may it be? Professor Burckhardt answered that there is such a right, and that, as the Constitution does not provide for them, the Canton is free to settle them as it likes.

"If the patriots have it their own way, such dangerous words as "Tourist Office" or "Münchener Bier" may disappear. The unpatriotic "Change" at the banks will be overshadowed by a larger "Cambio" and the treacherous "Fahrkarten" at the booking office by a fat "Biglietti." The intended tax opens a field for wild speculation, especially as the expert suggests the careful distinction between "more and less" foreign languages, English belonging to the "more."

"But there is a well-founded rumour that the circles interested in the comfortable accommodation of visitors have approached another expert, who, being in their pay, will be somewhat more considerate towards their business interests."

In a sense it is quite right and proper that the Lingua di Dante should be defended and upheld and kept free from foreign elements, as much as possible. But, in practice, our friends will find that a language is, like all living things, subject to change, and words which are foreign to-day may be not so a couple of hundred years later. I remember the German efforts to substitute "Gesichtserker" for "Nase," the latter word being foreign! But very few even of the most enthusiastic followers of the pure-language movement, went as far as to describe the result of a boxing bout "blutender Gesichtserker."

Further, wrong ideas may be given, as for example happened to me in Rome, years ago. Although I rather prided myself on my knowledge of the various brands of beer, I was startled to find "birra di Monaco," as up to then I had never heard that the little Principality possessed an exporting brewery. I found out, in tasting the stuff, that it was my old friend the veritable "Münchener Bier."

At the present moment when we read so much about unemployment, the following from the *Times*, 27th April, is probably of interest:—

##### How Switzerland deals with Unemployment.

"As a result of the steady decrease in the demand for embroideries and "passementeries" and the consequent menace of unemployment to a large number of workers, the Federal, Cantonal, and rural authorities have taken energetic steps in order to institute new means of gaining a livelihood, by the creation of new industries in those districts principally affected.

"Thus in the Canton of Basel, the home of the "posamentiers," or "passementerie" makers, no fewer than seven separate courses in market gardening were given by expert gardeners, special attention being devoted to the cultivation of peas. These one of the principal Swiss tinned goods manufacturers guaranteed to purchase. Special places in the big markets are to be reserved for the sale of the so-called "posamentier" fruit and vegetables. Further, the sum of 3,000,000 frs. has been allocated for the creation of a special board for the promotion of fruit-growing among these "posa-

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