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The Swiss Observer

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HOME NEWS

BERNE.

Mr. Gottfried Kunz, president of the administrative council of the Loetschberg line died suddenly on the 5th of this month. He was a former States councillor.

Mr. Minger, the newly elected Federal Councillor, has taken over the portefeuille of the military department.

The postal authorities at Berne are proud of the following figures relating to the second fortnight in December: 622,000 letters have been stamped by machine, postage stamps sold amount to Fr. 678,000 and they have delivered 8,500 express letters and 162,000 parcels.

The Board of the Seidenstoffweberei Berne has decided to liquidate. The staff of their Berne factory have received notice to take effect on February 28th next.

Chocolats Tobler A.-G. in Berne have paid off about 100 hands.

Mr. F. H. Page, son of the founder of the Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Company, and technical director of the Nestlé factories, has died at Zug, at the age of 77.

Differences regarding a new division of working hours in the Ofenfabrik Affolter, Christen & Co., A.-G. in Basle have led to a lock-out affecting about 200 hands.

Representatives of the Authorities, of music lovers, newspapers and other circles have met and have formed an organising committee for a Mozart festival to be held at Basle on May 10th-18th next. Provisional plans foresee the following recitals: 5 operas at the Stadttheater, Mass in C-minor by the Gesangverein in the Münster, orchestra concert in the Grosser Musiksaal by the Allgemeine Musikgesellschaft, two recitals of Chamber Music of the Conservatory of Music, also a matinee with the Busch quartette, and a concert given by the Bach-Choir. A festival service is also planned to take place in the Martinskirche. The participation as guests of prominent soloists is another point under consideration. All musical arrangements are in the hands of Dr. Felix Weingartner.

Near the Basle Central Station a motor lorry was sandwiched between two tramears. The lorry-driver, a stranger, was evidently not familiar with the somewhat trying traffic problems and overlooked the approaching tram. Almost at the same time another tram came from the Margrethenbrücke and could not prevent a further collision. Both tramears were severely damaged, but the solid construction of the lorry saved the latter from anything more serious than scratches. A short circuit and a serious dislocation of traffic, apart from material damage, was the result of the collision; fortunately both tram drivers escaped injury.

The body of 60 years old Jakob Bleuler, foreman in a dye works, was found in the brook at Langendorf. It is surmised, that Bleuler fell in on his way home during the night.

A serious accident occurred near the Lausanne aerodrome between two cars driven by flight lieutenant Wuest (with three passengers) and Dr. Thelin. The first car was completely overturned; the passengers were seriously injured but the driver himself had a miraculous escape.

The Baumwollspinnerei Wettingen A.-G. has decided to give up manufacturing and has given notice per end of March to the staff numbering about 500. During the good years the firm has accumulated a welfare fund for their staff; this fund now amounts to about 800,000 Frs. The factory itself will probably be adapted for producing artificial silk.

NEUCHÂTEL.

The Society of gold watch case manufacturers in La Chaux-de-Fonds has decided to introduce as a temporary measure the 35 hours week due to slackness in the trade.

THURGAU.

Notary Emil Rügger of Märstetten was found dead at the northern end of the Thurbridge at Amlikon; his body was guarded by his dog. He had paid a call at Amlikon and failed to return. Expert opinion excludes all possibility of accident or foul play, and it is thought that a seizure was the cause of death.

GENÈVE.

M. William Martin, Editor of the *Journal de Genève*, is giving a series of lectures on Syria, Palestine and Irak at the "Institut de Hautes études internationales."

The *Tribune de Genève* reports that a Swiss, M. Albert Stocker, has been condemned to six years' imprisonment by a French court for having shot his wife in Paris.

An agreement has been arrived at between the Department of commerce and industry at Geneva, the postal authorities and the Air Union at Paris for the continuation of the daily freight air service between Geneva, France and Great Britain.

TICINO.

Following a dispute in a café at Lugano with members of the conservative association "La garde Luigi Rossi" a socialist, who fired at the party, has injured five members. It is feared that one of the injured will lose his sight. The would-be assassin has been arrested.

THE SHOE INDUSTRY.

The use of machinery for boot and shoe-making enables the manufacturers to place a constant supply of new models on the market in accordance with the latest fashions. The Swiss branch of this industry, in particular, has obtained a high degree of perfection in the course of the last thirty years. The leather used in this country is of the highest quality and the finished goods are both smart and comfortable.

At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century numerous factories were founded in Switzerland, such as the "Bally" at Schönenwerd (still the largest concern of this kind in this country), "Löw" at Oberrach, "Walder" at Brüttsellen, "Tell" at Frauenfeld, "Hug" at Herzogenbuchsee, "Aiglon" at Geneva and many others.

The great and rapid growth of this industry has made it necessary to look for new fields of activity beyond the Swiss frontiers. Numerous firms have found it desirable to build factories in countries which were formerly looked upon as markets for their goods; these factories, though working independently, remain under the supervision of the head factory. In other cases sale departments have been established in foreign countries. The "Bally" Works have, for instance, founded a holding society which is charged with the supervision of their factories, both in Switzerland and abroad.

There are at present more than 30 boot and shoe factories in Switzerland, differing considerably in importance. Some of these are small concerns whilst others, on the contrary, occupy a very prominent position with regard to output and often employ several thousand workmen. The total number of workmen employed in boot and shoe-making amounts to about 12,000 men and women.

Switzerland itself consumes about half of its manufactures, the other half being exported. In 1928 the value of the exports rose to 39.8 million francs for 2,184,100 pairs of boots and shoes. Some of Switzerland's chief customers are: Great Britain, the United States, Germany, France, South Africa, Holland, etc.

The kinds of boots and shoes exported vary according to the different countries, no two markets having the same requirements. Fashions also change constantly and within a short space of time. It is therefore not astonishing that there are several thousand kinds and styles of boots and shoes, and that hundreds of new shapes come into use daily. The Swiss shoe-making industry does not make a speciality of any definite model. The goods made are of the most varied kind, from the latest thing for sports to the most stylish and dainty ladies' shoe.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KYBURG.

I do not think that the "Editor's Post-Bag" in our last issue was well worth reading, if only for the very happy headlines, which, if I had had the arranging, would have read as follows, "In praise of Kyburg: A hint to Swiss Wine Importers."

Of course, the charming letter of Mlle. Dupuis—I presume she is a Mademoiselle by the very charming way she writes—would be published in the very week when I had found it necessary to ask the Editor to do without my Notes and Gleanings, because pressure of work and a nasty cold had prevented me from doing my weekly collaborative effort. However, if Readers only knew how very grateful we poor scribes are for a little bit of encouragement, for a wee sign that our efforts are meeting with appreciation and that our weaknesses are mercifully overlooked. Donc, Merci, Mademoiselle!

Gales and Rain have been the outstanding features over the week-end and have interfered not only with shipping and other transport, with telephone lines and even railway communications, but also and what is much more important, with Golf. How can one play out of a bunker when a sudden gust of wind catches you in the small of your back just at the very moment of the up-swing? S'unfair, I say, but, unfortunately the Rules of the Royal and Ancient do not provide any excuse for such occurrences and the Sunday game must, therefore, be classified among those which I hope to forget soon. But, oh, what cheerfulness in the Club-House afterwards. In our club there is a very happy camaraderie between the sexes—you see, we have no licensed bar!—and during these wintry Sunday afternoons we get up bridge-fours and community lunch and tea-parties and jokes and witticisms fly all around the place. And then, home for supper and a couple of hours listening-in and so to bed.

And what has all this to do with Notes and Gleanings? Well may you ask, since, I don't know the answer myself, but then, a chap has to write about something and I have heard it said that people like best to read about things they do themselves as well and I do hope that very many of my readers will have jolly and inexpensive, but really nice Sunday afternoons, the same as we manage to have them, simply by being good clubbable men and women.

However, to work:

But, before I proceed: I also belong to a Golf Club where we have a licensed bar! So, Swiss Wine Importers, please do not come to hasty and wrong conclusions!

Swiss National Park:

Children's Newspaper, 4th Jan.

The idea of a National Park for England will remind a few travellers of a part of Switzerland that very few know.

Zernetz, in the Lower Engadine Valley, is the starting point for the way to Tirol over the Föhn Pass, a road little frequented though of much beauty. Passing through the narrow street of the village it reaches the river and mounts high above its rocky gorge, with grand forest scenery on all sides.

It never rises above the tree line, but its highest point is distinctly impressive, perhaps because it fulfils our idea of what a mountain pass should be—the crest of a ridge where we pass definitely from one side to the other.

And here no caravanserai spoils the summit; there is indeed nothing to indicate the exact point except an insignificant signpost—and the sudden view of the other side. A wide panorama of mountain and forest is spread out before us, for a central attraction, the great mass of the snowy Ortler of Italy looming into the sky.

It is strange scenery; it has a wild, primitive look entirely in keeping with the mission that has been assigned to it, for this is the undisturbed home of all wild things.

Here, for all time, birds and beasts, may live in perfect security, for no hurt may be done to them, nor to the flowers or trees through which they roam. Over an area of fifty square miles neither axe nor scythe, neither gun nor net, may harm or destroy. All wild life here has the full and free hospitality of the country in this, the National Park of Switzerland.

Already the chamois, the eagle, and the ibex, becoming all too scarce, are feeling at home in this wide sanctuary; edelweiss and