Health springs bubble in Switzerland

The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. F. BOEHRINGER.

The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain.

EDITED WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF MEMBERS OF THE LONDON COLONY.

Telephone: CLERKENWELL 9595. *Published every Friday at* 23, LEONARD STREET, LONDON, E.C.2. Telegrams: FREPRINCO, LONDON.

VOL. 15—No. 758 LONDON, MAY 23, 1936. PRICE 3d.

Where are you going to-day ?
to the Swiss Sports at Herne Hill, of course !

PREPAID SUBSCRIPTION RATES

UNITED KINGDOM AND COLONIES	3 Months (13 issues, post free)	3/6
	6 " (26 " ")	6/6
	12 " (52 " ")	12/-
SWITZERLAND	6 Months (26 issues, post free)	Frs. 7.50
	12 " (52 " ")	" 14.—

(Swiss subscriptions may be paid into Postscheck-Konto Basle V 5718).

Swiss Sports.

We particularly wish to draw the attention of our readers and their friends to the Swiss Sports Meeting which will take place to-day.

The Committee of the Swiss Sports has spared neither time nor money to make this event a great success, and we hope that many of our compatriots and their friends will make the journey to Herne Hill.

We feel sure that they will not be disappointed, it will be an afternoon well spent. Therefore make up your mind now, and do not fail those who have given their time and money freely, that you and your friends should have an enjoyable afternoon. Don't say "I may come along," say "I will be there," and we are certain you won't regret it.

HOME NEWS

(Compiled by courtesy of the following contemporaries: National Zeitung, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, St. Galler Tagblatt, Vaterland and Tribune de Genève).

FEDERAL.

SWISS NATIONAL BANK.

The report of the Swiss National Bank for the week ended May 15th shows that the French monetary crisis also influenced Switzerland. On May 15th the gold reserve reached 1,509,000,000f., a drop of 7,000,000f. in round figures over the previous week. On the other hand bank-note circulation dropped by 21,000,000f., and totalled 1,259,000,000f. On May 15th the gold reserve represented 89.56 per cent. of all the engagements of the Bank.

GENEVA AND CALVIN.

Four hundred years ago Calvin went to Geneva and settled in the city which still speaks eloquently of his mission there. From it flowed one of the mighty rivers of the Reformation. During the month of June celebrations will be held in Geneva, and for an entire week a crowded programme will commemorate the religious, the historical, and the civic aspects of the Reformer's life. The commemorative exercises will begin on June 12th with an official visit to the special Calvin Exhibit in the Rath Museum, followed the same evening by a Communion service in the Cathedral of St. Peter. Professor Eugene Choisy, President of the Swiss Protestant Federation, will conduct a welcoming service in the Cathedral the next morning, followed by addresses by the visiting Church delegates. The civil authorities will entertain the official delegates at a luncheon in the Hotel Beau-Sejour at Champel, after which an academic celebration will take place in the Temple de la Madeleine under the auspices of the theological faculty, and with the assistance of the delegates from foreign faculties and Protestant historical societies. The evening will be devoted to conferences.

Sunday, June 14th, will mark the beginning of the popular celebration, with special services in all the churches and a great "fellowship dinner" at the Palais des Expositions. Sunday-school children and young people will parade during the afternoon, concluding with a festive demonstration at the Reformation Monument. The evening will see the first presentation of the Jubilee Pageant in the Hall of the Reformation. Three hundred people will present "La Source de la Vie" ("The Source of Life"), a pageant in three scenes: "The Year 40 in Rome — The Glad Tidings"; "1536 — To God alone the Glory"; "1936 — Thy Word is the Truth."

Publications prepared for the occasion include a subscription edition of Calvin's selected works, special books on the Geneva Reformation, and a collection of music of the 16th and 17th centuries issued under the title "Our Fathers Sang."

THE EMPEROR'S FUTURE HOME.

Thirteen years ago the Emperor of Abyssinia bought for his daughter a villa called Pré Fleuri, near Vevey, on the Lake of Geneva. The house has been for sale during the past month, but has now been withdrawn from the market and is being put in order. The Ethiopian delegate to the League of Nations, Mr. Wolde Mariam, visited the house a few days ago, and it is believed that the Emperor intends to settle there.

DAVIES CUP.

Switzerland eliminated Denmark at Montreux, gaining a winning lead of three matches to love. In the third round Switzerland meet Ireland.

SIXTY YEARS A POSTMAN.

M. Josef Schmidiger, in Sörenberg, has just accomplished 60 years as a postman and is thus the oldest postman in Switzerland, he is 82 years of age.

NO CORRUGATED ROOFS FOR CHALETS.

The Government of the Canton Valais, complying with a wish recently expressed by the Swiss Alpine Club, have decided to prohibit the building of roofs with corrugated iron in the Alpine villages in order to preserve the picturesque appearance of mountain chalets.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

The *Première* of John Knittel's "Protektorat" took place at the Municipal Theater in Zurich and met with great success.

BASLE COUNTY.

Dr. Hermann Augustin-Flury, a well-known medical practitioner in Alschwil has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary. Dr. Augustin is a member of the "Landrat" since 1911, over which he presided in 1927/28.

LUCERNE.

A fire completely destroyed the "Gasthof Schwanen" in Sursee, the damage is estimated to exceed 100,000 frs.

* * *

Mme. Egli-Fischer, aged 32, from Lucerne, was killed when climbing in the Pilatus region.

THURGAU.

The community of Altnau has bestowed the title of "honorary citizen" on Army-Corps Commander Bridler. Colonel Bridler spent his youth at Altnau.

SCHWYZ.

The opening of the new "Bundesbrief Archiv" is taking place on the 1st of August.

* * *

M. Anton Real-Arnold, for many years Manager of the "Bank in Schwyz" has died at the age of 89.

FRIBOURG.

The Grand Council has fixed the age limit for employees in the service of the canton of Fribourg at 70.

AARGAU.

The death is reported from Brugg, of Lieutenant-colonel Hans Graf, at the age of 79.

The deceased was a well-known personality in Swiss Rifle Shooting circles.

VAUD.

Dr. C. Strzyzowski, since 1902, Professor of Chemistry at the University of Lausanne has retired from his post.

TICINO.

M. J. B. Rusca has been re-elected Mayor of the town of Locarno.

HEALTH SPRINGS BUBBLE IN SWITZERLAND.

To anyone in quest of health, Switzerland will prove the solution of the most difficult problems. Not only has this country beautiful become world renowned for her miracle-working alpine climate, but in its great wealth of mineral springs it possesses priceless assets which, strange as it may seem in this enlightened era of ours, are only superficially known in foreign lands. Yet knowledge and use of healing waters in Switzerland date back to the very beginning of civilization.

The springs of St. Moritz in the Upper Engadine, according to Dr. med. H. Keller, furnish indisputable proof of great antiquity, for when their pipes were replaced in 1853, there were found at 3½ to 4½ feet under the surface of the earth the well-preserved hollowed-out trunks of three mighty larches which had obviously been employed for the springs. In these tree-trunks a number of bronze objects, swords, knives, needles, etc., were discovered, which scientists estimated to be about 3,000 years old. Similar prehistorical finds were made in Baden (Argovie), Loèche-les-Bains (Valais) and Yverdon (Vaud).

The period of the Roman occupation, beginning in the year 58 B.C., represents the second stage in the development of watering places in Switzerland. Spas flourished to a high degree, not only through the use of such medicinal springs as were already known, but also through the discovery of others and particularly through the progress made in technical equipment and bath fittings. The thermal baths at Baden are an outstanding example of this. The bath hospital and the numerous surgical instruments discovered there show how well the Romans understood how to utilize natural healing methods as available through baths and even to combine them with surgery.

After invasions from the North put an end to Roman influences, appreciation of mineral springs suffered a temporary setback, but already during the reign of Charlemagne taking the baths came more and more in vogue. In the monastery of St. Gall there is still preserved the plan of a building of the year 820 in which a bathing establishment is designed. In the later Middle Ages and particularly at the time of the Renaissance, baths taken by people in normal health were considered as one of the chief "amenities of life."

Watering places now increased rapidly and in addition to the before-mentioned spas of prehistoric foundation, there are historical records of the establishment of the following: Ragaz-Pfaefers (1038 and 1384), Tarasp, Lower Engadine (15th century), Val Sinestra, Lower Engadine (15th century), Bex, Vaud (salt spring mentioned in 1554 and sulphur springs in 1717), Gurnigel near Berne (1561). The springs of Passugg near Chur had already been known in 1562 and were rediscovered in 1863. The mineral spring of Rheinfelden, called Kapuzinerquelle, was in use as early as 1664, and the exploitation of the Rheinfelden salt-mines and the opening of the brine baths dates from 1864.

There are 100 spas in the alpine regions, 26 in the Jura and 30 in the Swiss high plateau. Springs with over 20 degrees centigrade are called

thermal waters, and those with less than 20 degrees cold springs. They contain the soluble substances of the percolated rocky strata. The greater the quantity of such substances and the longer the water has been in contact with them, the richer is the water in mineral constituents. These elements are chiefly calcium, potassium, sodium, lithium, magnesium, iron silicium, aluminium, sulphur, phosphorus, borax, chloride, bromide, iodine, nuoride, carbonic acids, sulphuretted hydrogen and nitrogen. The bases and the acids can be disassociated from one another or compounded with salts. The most important of these are common or kitchen salt, carbonate of soda, magnesiums and iron, sulphate of soda, sulphate of sodium, gypsum and sulphate of magnesium, iodine salts and arsenic compounds. The importance of borax and lithium has not yet been sufficiently investigated.

When the mineral waters come into contact with organic substances on the surface of the earth and slowly spread, they deposit a part of their salts; in this way mud and peat are formed, which are both used for baths and local applications.

The majority of the springs are radio-active, having emanations either in the water itself, in their sediments or in their gases. Radio-active springs contain but little mineral substance, and are connected with the deepest strata of the earth.

Mineral waters are classified in ten kinds, according to their degree of mineralization, predominant element and temperature. They are:

1. *Feebly mineralized* or simple cold waters, containing less than 0.5 gr. of solid constituents to one litre, and less than 1.0 gr. of carbonic acid. Switzerland has 40 such springs, of which the most important are Aigle, Disentis, Knutwil, Romanel and Weissbad.

2. *Akrato-Thermal* or simple thermal waters, "Wildbäder." They contain to the litre less than 0.5 gr. of solid constituents, and their temperature is above 20 degrees centigrade. Ragaz-Pfäfers features such a spring, which compares with Badenweil, Gastein, Wildbad and a number of other spas in foreign countries.

3. *Earthly Waters*, containing over 0.5 gr. of solid constituents to the litre. They are divided into carbonate and gypsum waters, according to the predominance of carbonic and sulphuric earth. Some of the most important watering places with these features are: Henniez-les-Bains Montreux, Meltingen, Sissach, Rheinfelden-Kapuziner and Magdener springs, Yverdon, Tenigerbad, Andeer, Grimmialp, Loèche-les-Bains and Vals-Platz. The springs in the two last resorts are thermal. This category of spas compares with such foreign watering places as Thonon, Vittel, Wildungen, etc.

4. *Alkaline waters*, containing to the litre more than 0.5 gr. of solid constituents. The predominant salt is carbonate of sodium. Several of these springs contain iron, bromide, iodine, borax and lithium. There are 9 springs in all, of which the most important are Tarasp-Schuls-Vulpera, Passugg and Oberiberg. Neuenahr, Vichy, Ems, Franzensbad, Karlsbad, Marienbad, etc., are rivals of similar properties in foreign countries.

5. *Sulphur Waters*, containing sulphate of sodium, sulphate of calcium and sulphuretted hydrogen. Some are cold and others warm, and often contain chloride and sulphate. There are 68 such springs, 24 of which are warm. Among the most important of them are Baden, Schinznach, Lavey-les-Bains, Yverdon, Alvaneu, Bex-les-Bains, Gurnigel, Lenk, Lostorf, Heustrich and Schwefelberg Bad.

6. *Common Salt or Brine Baths*, containing over 1 gr. of common salt to the litre. Bromide, iodine and carbonic acid are often found in these springs. Switzerland has such saturated waters at Bex-les-Bains, Rheinfelden, Rheinfelden-Ryburg and Schweizerhall, which are used for extracting salt as well as for brine baths. They compare, for instance, with Baden-Baden, Biarritz, Homburg, Ischl. Kissingen, Nauheim, Wiesbaden in foreign lands.

7. *Iodine Waters*, containing at least 0.001 gr. of iodine salt to the litre. The iodine is mostly found compounded with chloride of sodium in common salt, alkaline and earthy waters. The most important of these springs are at Tarasp-Schuls-Vulpera, Rheinfelden, Passugg, Bex-les-Bains and Schinznach.

8. *Chalybeate or Iron Waters*, containing 0.01 gr. and more of ferruginous salts, in which the iron is the main curative agent. In Swiss springs the iron is found in the form of bicarbonate. They are classed as alkaline, earthy, muriatic, saline and carbonic waters, according to their predominating element. Iron waters are very numerous in Switzerland, especially in the Alpine regions, and particularly in the Grisons. The most important among these spas are St. Moritz.

THE PERILS OF MOUNTAINEERING.

By F. S. Smythe.

(*Strand Magazine*).

Mountaineering is an exact art calling for strength, determination, skill, and patience. Efficiency in it is gained only through a long and exacting apprenticeship. Its charm lies in its appeal to the physical, mental, and spiritual qualities of man.

The British hills provide an excellent training-ground which demands a special and intriguing rock-climbing technique, but the Alps still remain the cradle of the art, and it is to them that thousands of men and women escape annually to rediscover the spirit of adventure and to learn the value of simple things — food, warmth, shelter, and companionship.

The greater Alpine ranges lie in France and Switzerland. The Alps of Dauphiny are the most famous of French ranges. Then comes the range of Mont Blanc, of which the major portion is in France, the steepest side in Italy, and the eastern end in Switzerland. In Switzerland mountaineers gravitate principally to the Pennine Alps, the Bernese Oberland, the Bregaglia and Bernina ranges, though there are, of course, many less lofty ranges where the novice may graduate in mountaineering.

Mont Blanc was scaled a hundred and fifty years ago, but it is genreally conceded that mountaineering as a pure sport was inaugurated in 1854 when Mr. Justice Wills scaled the Wetterhorn.

Alpine climbing has passed through a number of stages. At first, a peak such as the Matterhorn or the Meije was thought to be impossible of ascent; then it was climbed and became "the most difficult peak in the Alps." Finally, it became "an easy day for a lady." This last should not be taken as a reflection on the ability of lady climbers; of recent years many new and difficult routes have fallen to their hardihood and skill.

In these speedy, impatient days the popularity of mountaineering results in many calamities. The annual Alpine accident roll is no longer numbered in tens but in hundreds. Inexperienced persons, unable or unwilling to employ guides, venture upon the high mountains, frequently ill-provisioned and equipped, and meet with disaster. On Mont Blanc alone a score or more perish yearly.

Only through years of experience in the company of first-rate guides or skilful companions can most people learn to climb safely. And, even as regards easy ascents, the weather is an incalculable and often deadly factor. The ordinary way up Mont Blanc, which is little more than a snow walk, may become the snow grave of the incompetent when a blizzard stalks without warning over the vast and complicated snowfields.

Only last summer I witnessed a display of incompetence which in retrospect seems scarcely possible. It was on an easy mountain. A large party started down from the summit one and a half hours before we did. Yet, we overtook them within five minutes of leaving the summit! The weather was fine, but supposing a storm had broken? It is not difficult to imagine their plight.

Another type of accident has become common of recent years. It is limited for the most part to young Continental mountaineers, and is a remarkable indication of the fanatical desire to undertake the most desperate risks for fame. Two Germans attempted to scale direct the terrific north precipice of the Eiger, which is a familiar sight to visitors to the Bernese Oberland. Day after day they pushed their way upwards, driving pitons (ringed iron spikes) into the rocks every few feet regardless of threatening weather. Then the storm broke and nothing more was seen of them until some time later a searching aeroplane saw one of them frozen to death lashed by a rope to the face of the precipice. It is small wonder that Swiss and French mountaineers deplore such madness, for it often happens that their guides, men who are always ready to risk their lives to succour those in distress, are called upon to rescue the injured or recover the bodies of the fallen, exacting and often dangerous work.

To those prepared to undergo humbly the task of learning adequately the art of mountaineering in all its branches the mountains are generous in their rewards. To climb efficiently, to be master of the situation, is to know one of the greatest joys that life can bring, the communion of the high hills. Yet, though skill may conquer fear, it does not eliminate adventure. The mountaineer knows he is there on sufferance, a mere ant on the face of the precipice, and that his skill, unaided by the intervention of anything mechanical, alone stands between him and death. It is in testing that skill to the uttermost, yet never overstepping the boundary separating boldness from rashness, that he discovers the perfect adventure in mountaineering.

The great rock wall of the Aiguilles des Grands Charmoz and Grépon, which rises in a single tremendous sweep 3,000 feet out of the Mer de Glace is a challenge to the spirit of adventure.

Mr. G. Winthrop Young accepted this challenge in 1911 and the wall was scaled for the first time after a desperately difficult climb. On its granite facets, in its cracks and chimneys and the delicate spires and bold rock towers of the great ridge in which it culminates, all the thrills of rock climbing are communicated to the climber. To stand on an inch-wide ledge and gaze upwards at the lean slabs, alight and warm in the sun, and at the bold pinnacles wedging a stainless sky, and to know that strength and skill are just sufficient, but only just, for the task before one; to do these things is to understand the subtle thrill of a great mountain climb. And when at length the summit is reached and taut muscles are relaxed in delicious repose, there comes a moment when physical adventure links hands with the spiritual beauties of the Universe, and horizons wider than those visible are disclosed.

To climb ice and snow demands a very different technique from that required by rock climbing. Nothing in mountaineering is more exacting on mind and muscle than the ascent of a long and steep ice-slope in which every step must be cut with the ice-axe. In no situation is the mountaineer more dependent on the skill of his companions, for a slip on steep ice would in most cases be fatal to the whole party. It might be queried whether the rope is not more dangerous than useful in such cases, but the answer is that its moral support is invaluable, and even on a steep ice-slope there is always a chance of holding the leader should he slip, though it is axiomatic in mountaineering that the leader simply must not slip.

The rope is seen to its best advantage when crossing a crevassed glacier or ascending an ice-fall, such as is depicted in the accompanying photographs, when there is a risk of snowbridges spanning crevasses collapsing beneath the party. It is a thrilling experience to balance along a thin edge of ice with the dark green throats of crevasses on either hand.

Considerable skill is often necessary on a glacier, and many have marvelled at the manner in which a guide picks out the route, through a labyrinth of huge crevasses and tottering *séracs* — ice pinnacles which are a feature of an ice-fall.

Every man to his taste: some prefer pure rock climbing, a few specialise in snow and ice work, but the great majority prefer a little of everything — snow, ice, and rock. A man cannot truthfully call himself a mountaineer until he has had experience in all these branches.

No Alpine rock climbing can excel that to be found on the Chamonix Aiguilles, though some prefer the fearsome cliffs of the Bregaglia and the Dolomites. The Oberland is noted for its snow and ice, so also is the Bernina. The Zermatt district is as good as any for all-round mountaineering. But the greatest Alpine climbs lie up the south face of Mont Blanc and the east face of Monte Rosa. Here the scale is almost Himalayan, and it is not uncommon for climbers ascending by a great route such as the Pétéret ridge of Mont Blanc to be forced to bivouac for one or two nights. Woe betide them should the weather break; an already difficult climb may be changed in a few minutes to a desperately dangerous and hazardous retreat towards the safety that is so many weary hours away.

It is impossible to close this article without some reference to the work of the Alpine guide. Mountaineering owes much to his sagacity and skill. Many of those about to attempt Mount Everest will have learnt how to climb safely behind a guide. Quiet and unassuming yet strong and purposeful, his margin of physical and moral strength enables him to cope with any emergency.

One instance of his devotion to duty may be given here. When a friend of mine was injured on the south side of Mont Blanc I descended to Courmayeur, leaving a third member of the party with the injured man. Within an hour of my arrival at a hamlet two miles from Courmayeur a rescue party, with a doctor and medical appliances, was ready to start. This promptitude enabled the injured man to be brought down by nightfall, and point of the utmost importance when succouring the injured.

Mountaineering brings forth the best qualities in men, and of these perhaps the greatest is comradeship. In these difficult days the League of Nations can take heart from at least one human enterprise that has its roots in good-fellowship and goodwill.