

Here and there

Objektyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1922)**

Heft 63

PDF erstellt am: **20.05.2024**

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NOTES & GLEANINGS.

Switzerland is not the only country in the market for holiday visitors from abroad; the competition with other lands favoured with an attractive exchange proves at times a serious handicap, but when gratuitous statements are made to the effect that hotel charges are still abnormally high, incalculable harm is done if these are not promptly challenged. Very often these statements, on closer examination, contain their own refutation, as, for instance, when a correspondent in *The Times* (Aug. 5th) asserts that "hotel expenses are at least fifty to sixty per cent. more than they were ten years ago." The writer evidently ignores the fact that this increase is not even commensurate with the general rise in the cost of living which obtains in all European countries. We are pleased to record that Mr. Arthur L. Jennings (*Times*, Aug. 8th) has taken up the cudgels in the interest of truth and fairness.

* * *

The *Pictorial Magazine* (Aug. 12th) relates afresh the story of mountain climbs that have taken their toll of human life, such as the first ascent of the Matterhorn in 1865, which is described as follows:—

"The Swiss Alps, probably because they are comparatively easy of access, take their toll of human life regularly year after year.

Each separate peak has its own black record. You might fill a fair-sized graveyard with the victims of the Matterhorn alone. The very first ascent of the mighty mountain—which for a long time was deemed unclimbable—was marked by a dreadful accident. It also furnished one of the most marvellous escapes recorded in the history of similar exploits.

Seven men in all constituted the party which essayed the feat. Their names were Edward Whymper, the leader; Lord Francis Douglas, a young man as years go, but a trained and tried mountaineer; the Rev. Charles Hudson, also a famous climber; Mr. Hadow, a young athlete, but without much experience of mountain climbing; and three guides, Croz, and the two Taugwalders, father and son.

Following a day and a half of strenuous climbing, the summit was reached in safety, and a flag which the party had brought with them was hoisted there as a signal to the watchers in the valley below that success had crowned their persevering efforts.

The little village of Zermatt, at the base of the giant mountain, was immediately agog with excitement. Work ceased for the day, and everybody was jubilant.

Everybody, that is, save one little lad of about twelve, who would keep insisting that something very terrible had happened. He had, he said, while watching the summit through his toy telescope, seen an "avalanche" fall from the mountain top on to the great glacier four thousand feet below.

As nobody else had seen anything of the kind, however, he was not believed. But he was right, nevertheless; only the "avalanche" was not rock, nor frozen snow, but a roped-together cluster of living men.

What had happened was this: The climbers, after spending about an hour on the summit resting and admiring the view, had started to descend. They were, of course, all roped together, Croz leading and the rest following in the order named: Hadow, Hudson, Lord F. Douglas, old Taugwalder, Whymper, and young Taugwalder.

Hardly had the downward climb commenced, however, when from some unexplained cause Mr. Hadow fell from the face of the precipice on to Croz, knocking the guide off his feet. These two dropped plumb down the perpendicular side of the mountain, and as the rope tautened, the weight of their falling bodies dragged down after them first Hudson, and then Lord F. Douglas.

Old Taugwalder, seeing what was happening, stooped, and, quick as a flash, twisted the slack of the rope beneath his feet round a projecting pinnacle of rock. This manoeuvre would have saved the lives of the others if the rope had held. But the sudden strain proved too much for it. It snapped. And the four men were dashed to death.

The three survivors were so paralysed, with fright and horror that for a long while none dared move. For hours

they clung to the face of the precipice trembling in every limb, the two Taugwalders sobbing like children. Eventually, urged by Whymper, they recommenced the descent, which was accomplished without further incident.

Search parties recovered three of the bodies. That of Lord Francis Douglas, however, could not be discovered, nor has it ever been found since. Somewhere deep hidden in the depths of one of the many fathomless crevasses of the great glacier the brave young man sleeps quietly to this day, frozen solid, his form and face as they were in life, save perchance for the havoc that may possibly have been wrought by his terrible fall."

* * *

Two of our compatriots have received notice in the English dailies. The one is a playwright, Mr. John Knittel, whose forthcoming historical drama is referred to in theatrical notices. Mr. Knittel has restrained us from publishing particulars, but the *Daily Graphic* (Aug. 8th) states that Maurice Moscovitch will take the leading part in a play entitled "Arnold von Winkelried."

* * *

A long article in the *Westminster Gazette* (Aug. 11th) brings to public notice Mr. Buhner, of Upper Norwood, who is a well-known breeder and trainer of Alsatian Dogs, now so fashionable in this country, and who has formerly trained these dogs in Switzerland for police work.

HERE AND THERE.

By J. H. Corthesy.

"Down in the distant hollow someone was making veal in large quantities; and, fitfully on the warm wet wind, there came to me the expostulations of the calves who did not like the process. One there was, a lusty-lunged chap, with a voice like his ancestor of Bashan. He was in an awful funk. "Braaaaar! Braaaaar! Aooooo!" or words to that effect. I think it was his turn next by the row he was making.

"As I listened to the far-off sound of slaughter, all my old love for veal-and-ham pie vanished like snow upon the desert's dusty face; and I was glad I had chosen a fried sole for breakfast. Fish hardly make any fuss when their time comes. . . .

"'Braaaaar! Braaaaar! Aooooo!' . . . 'Calves,' said the tramp, 'killing calves? Oh, I see! You mean that 'Berooooomp' noise . . . But that is not calves. That's the town band practising a new piece!' . . ."

The auditory effect of a brass band exercising on stomachic inclinations, as per the above from the pen of Mr. F. W. Thomas in the *Saturday Star* would be the antithesis of that of music pleasing to the ear of Sir Thomas Beecham or Monsieur R. Gaillard which would soothe any breast, savage or otherwise, or of music such as that heard at the opening of the 28th season of the Promenade Concerts at Queen's Hall and conducted by Sir Henry J. Wood, the programme of which was immensely appreciated, although a daring innovation in the way of novelties was introduced.

* * *

Good music relieves mental tension, raises the mind to higher planes from the hard and bumpus earthly "realities" and leads us to think that the body ought to be able to follow the mind in its ethereal excursions, as in dreams, simply by will-power, that is, without having to incur the cash expense inseparable from travelling in aeroplanes—however moderate it may be for the material value of this means of transport—for it can as yet only be afforded by a few privileged ones.

The public has always been patient. Patience has been

the principal attribute of man, since Adam and Eve had to *walk out* of the Garden of Eden, and this desirable property was guarded by angels with wings—which probably meant that the angels could *fly* at them if they dared any attempt to return to that region. Ever since man has been possessed of the idea of beating angels at their own game and growing his own wings.

Nature, after all, is very kind. If man cannot, for the present at least, be born with large feathered membranes or arms, the indication is that each man may yet fly on his own, almost like a bird, without petrol or the like, without the internal combustion engine which itself was supposed to be the only necessary agent to make aerial travel possible.

As a matter of fact, man has already gone a long way in that direction, and here I may quote a paragraph of Mr. Lovat Fraser's masterly article in the *Sunday Pictorial*:

"The marvel is not a mere matter of speculation. It is here. A German, Herr Martens, has flown nearly five miles at a speed of close upon twenty miles an hour with a sail plane, a kind of box kite which carries no motor. Hundreds of Germans are flying in these sail planes or gliders or 'motorless aeroplanes' and are attaining astonishing success. They can twist and turn against the wind. Nor is this all. French and Swiss airmen are tying box kites to their shoulders and rising off the ground. There has actually been a 'Congress of Motorless Flying' in the mountains of Central France. Only two or three days ago an American, Mr. Allen, seated on a light monoplane glider, left the summit of one of the peaks of Auvergne and flew almost a mile in seventy seconds, rising over three hundred feet. The real bird-men are upon us. . . ."

Mr. Lovat Fraser concludes:—

"No one has ever dreamed of suggesting that the happiness of man suffered a mortal eclipse when he learned to sail the seas, and I cannot believe that the ultimate welfare of our race is endangered now that youth is soaring towards the sun and the stars. The people who want to stop flying because it may breed trouble would have tried to destroy the first man who rode a horse or sailed a boat or planted grains of wheat. Flight is a million times more marvellous than the partial subjugation of the seas. Let us welcome its dawn, and be thankful that we have witnessed its coming in our time; but—I shall not be measured for my own wings just yet."

* * *

Man may fly to his heart's content, but, like the birds, he still has to live on land, and life on land cannot change very much as to eating, drinking, sleeping—and getting married, with its manifold results.

Experts in matrimony, and experimenters in the art who have aired their views on the subject, have been many. As some have been very successful at the "game" from a financial point of view, imitators are likely to follow and say and do the same things. However, some apostles of "happiness" are very sincere in their theories and teachings, and this is, no doubt, the case with Miss Jane Burr, a rich heiress and the American leader in *radical* feminism—a slim, boyish figure in tweed knickers and woollen jumper—who has just landed and is on her way round the world to study the conditions of women and children and preach to them freedom from sexual slavery. She believes in progressive monogamy—the changing of mates as soon as love for that particular person dies. Of course, *marriages d'argent, de raison* must be ruled out. She says, "people should marry for peace, quiet, lovely things of life"—not for thrills, as the average length of an "undying affection" is about one to three years. Her opinion is that "the worst person in the world to rear a child is his mother. She invariably surrounds it with floods of emotion that shackle it on every hand."

Miss Burr is married, so she knows. But she and her husband are friends, and occasionally visit each other.

There is another alternative in the solution of the problem of marriage "happiness." It is the change of sexes, as happens with the oyster.

Please do not jump to the conclusion that because these bivalves are "beavers," or possess a beard, this has anything to do with the sex question. No, the information is a serious one, as it is endorsed by the statement of Dr. J. H. Orton, of West Mersea, in *Nature*, that "a young maternal oyster, surrounded by her numerous family when captured, turned itself into a male in the brief space of a fortnight."

Nobody now can say that oysters do not think or have no will-power, as the idea of auto-suggestion is advanced as the cause of the transformation. The "*bête comme une huître*" sadly reflects on the accuser, for man, with all his knowledge, has not yet succeeded in attaining the power of changing his sex. Of course, since the oyster has taken the lead and taught us something, nobody can say what will happen.

All past attempts at sex exchange have been merely those of imitation in dress and manners.

It has been rumoured that mental assertion has been attempted by one sex over the other, but as there are no statistics on the subject, such statements can hardly be credited, and as for the hint that some strong-minded ladies *will* "wear the breeks" and can manage to do so with a smile, it is healthier to believe that all ladies are sweet and passively submissive to their dear husbands—as promised at the altar.

FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

New Federal Loan.

In the course of September a new Federal loan to the amount of 125 million francs is to be offered for subscription. This is required to provide for the repayment or conversion of the 6% Treasury Bonds which fall due for redemption in September. The new loan is likely to be on a $4\frac{1}{2}\%$ basis and to be for a term of $9\frac{1}{2}$ years.

New Canton of Lucerne Loan.

The Cantonal authorities of Lucerne are at present discussing the raising of a new loan to the amount of 15 million francs. Details as to the terms of the issue are not yet available.

Termination of War Profits Tax.

The Federal Council have decided not to levy the War Profits Tax on profits made since the 1st January, 1921.

Activity of the Federal Mint.

In the first six months of the present year the Federal Mint turned out 20-franc gold pieces to the value of 58 million francs, and 10-franc gold pieces to the value of 1,300,000 frs. At the present time a further $11\frac{1}{2}$ million francs worth of 10-franc pieces is being minted. These coins should be ready by the end of October, and will then replace the 20-franc banknotes which are still in circulation.

The Industrial and Commercial Situation in Switzerland.

The report of the Federal Labour Department for the end of July contains some interesting figures as to the state of the various important industries in Switzerland. In the case of the silk-ribbon industry the year 1922 has