

# Round and about

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ever silently working, in the midst of the people, moulding a nation which must glorify God as it arouses the respect of man.

A real, good, hearty pat, that! In fact, a regular thump!

Next to hearing nice things said of ourselves, we like to hear them said of our native country.

"Lives there the man with soul so dead

"Who never to himself hath said:

"This is my own, my native land!"

It is altogether creditable to us that we feel a glow of pride when our country's praises are sounded. There is something wrong about the man who does not feel this pardonable pride in his native country, town or locality. To such a one we feel disposed to put the question, formulated by a shrewd American preacher, somewhat to this effect: "What mean thing did you do there, that you do not like the place?"

Here is a letter to the *Spectator* (Sept. 8th), conveying another hearty pat:—

There are still a few of the old mountaineering centres in Switzerland that remain pretty well as they were in the 'sixties; of these, Bel Alp is, perhaps, the most delightful. The host of the motor is not heard in its pleasant places; gangs of cosmopolitan tourists do not invade its by-ways; no wheeled traffic is found there; and those that desire to enjoy its unrivalled prospects must trudge up on foot for four hours or so—or (more 'antique') hire a mule. There was a scheme drawn up just before the war to connect Bel Alp and Brigue with a mountain railway; lovers of quiet and of the mountains will pray that no such scheme may mature in their lifetime. As Wordsworth may (possibly) have remarked:—

"Leave to the railway-tourist Grindelwald;

"The privacy of Bel Alp still be mine!"

It was interesting to me, not many days ago, to dig up the old visitors' book at the hotel and look at some of the early entries there. Under the date 'July, 1862' I found the well-known signature 'B. H. Kennedy'; he was then Headmaster of Shrewsbury, and was travelling with his old pupil H. M. Luckock; later on they were to be found again at a very different place—Ely; both master and pupil were Canons of Ely together. Next year, the great Dr. Hort spent a month at Bel Alp (Aug. 14th to Sept. 14th); we remember him as the greatest of the textual critics on the N.T., but he was a fine climber, too, in his day. In the summer of 1864 Leslie Stephen, F. C. Grove, and R. S. Macdonald were at Bel Alp—en route "from Aegischhorn to Kippel," says the record; readers of "The Playground of Europe" will remember the doings of that incomparable trio of climbers; Stephen's ascent of the Bietschhorn (the first ascent) had been done five years previously, but no notice of this expedition is to be found in "The Playground" and inquisitive readers must search the pages of the "Alpine Journal" for an account. In the year 1865 Bel Alp was visited by "C. H. Spurgeon and wife," as well as by H. B. George. The latter, on Sept. 18th, made—according to his entry in the book—"the first ascent of the Gross Nesthorn," starting, I suppose, by way of the Ober-Aletsch Glacier. It was very many years later that the Nesthorn was climbed over the Unterbachhorn and up the S.E. ridge. Judging from the appearance of this tremendous ridge, as I stood on the summit of the Unterbachhorn (11,733 ft.) three weeks ago, I should imagine that the ascent of the Nesthorn (12,533 ft.) by this route must be a matter of exceeding difficulty.

We would call attention to two things in this letter. The first is the approval of the *absence* of the motor; whereas in the extract given below the increasing popularity of motor traffic is equally approved. "One man's meat is another man's poison." The second is its mention of the "Playground of Europe." It seems we cannot get away from it; it may therefore be just as well to accept it as inevitable—like death and taxes.

The pat on the back, administered by the *Morning Post* (Sept. 8th), is, as might be expected, given with due restraint and decorum:—

Travelling has now returned to pre-war conditions. But the Swiss Railways are at present in the throes of electrification. Fares, consequently, apart from luggage charges, which seem somewhat high, remain at about double the rates of 1914. Even so, the actual third-class rate is based on a scale slightly lower than that still enforced on English railways. As the process of electrification advances, it is asserted, rates will decrease, but such a step will be impossible before 1924 at the earliest. Passport and all forms of police control of visitors have been entirely suppressed.

Motor traffic is increasing in popularity. The recent opening of the Grisons roads over the Julien Pass to St. Moritz should be much appreciated by motorists visiting the Alps in their cars. The Federal Post Office has continued and improved its automobile diligence services all over the major mountain roads, such as the Furka, Grimsel, Lukmanier Passes. There is no better way of seeing the Alps in comfort and with rapidity. The vehicles are good and the fares reasonable. Public chais-à-bancs also ply from centres, such as Interlaken and Lucerne.

Swiss hotels have not altered much since 1913, but there can be no question that the prevalent rise in the cost of living, and, still more, the post-war restlessness of labour, are strongly reflected in their interior economy. The introduction of the eight-hour day in the kitchens and the constant demands of the Hotel Employees' Trade Union have entailed a large increase in the domestic personnel at far higher wages. Moreover, during the war very many houses became heavily indebted to the banks. It is not surprising, then, that the old-time lavish fare, that was a feature of most Swiss hostilities should be visibly curtailed. But on the whole the food nearly everywhere is both adequate and appetising. Though, too, many houses cannot afford to embark upon redecoration or improvements, the scrupulous cleanliness of the Swiss and the kindly Alpine climate have continued to conceal many shortcomings.

Hotel tariffs throughout the country have now been stabilised by the action of the all-powerful Hotel Proprietors' Association. It should be possible, however, to gain a clear idea beforehand of what a holiday in the Swiss Alps is going to cost the intending tourist. A cost of half a sovereign a day is a good mean to work upon in the case of all less pretentious houses. The pamphlet of the Association, obtainable at all tourist offices, quotes the minimum prices for hotels owned by members of that body. These minimum

rates compare favourably with those in vogue at nearly every other holiday resort throughout Western Europe. Extras, however, have an irritating habit of creeping into the daily account. Visitors are, therefore, recommended to take two precautions. In the first place, when writing for rooms, they should state in detail what they require in the way of baths, tea, etc., per week; secondly, they should ask for an inclusive charge at so much per week or per day, especially for a winter stay.

The attitude of Swiss people towards English travellers has undergone marked change since 1918. The prevalent mistrust of the foreigner has entirely subsided. In its place there has arisen a certain admiration for a nation that shouldered the burden of war as England has done. The Swiss now look to England as the most sane nation in Europe; their courtesy to British tourists is noticeable without being exaggerated.

Many thanks for thus making known the friendly feeling of the Swiss people towards the British!

#### Prevention of Simple Goitre.

"Thyroid enlargement is not the serious problem 'in this country that it is in Switzerland and some 'of the American States,'" says the *Lancet* (Sept. 8th). After dealing with the exhaustive study of this subject in America, the article contains the following reference to the method of combating the problem in Switzerland:—

Dr. R. Klinger, of Zurich, instead of sodium iodide, employs an organic iodide which is non-hygroscopic, very stable, practically tasteless—a vegetable fatty acid compound which is combined with chocolate and made into tablets, each containing 5 mg. of iodine. This method has been employed in all the schools in the cantons of St. Gallen, Berne, and Zurich with most striking results—e.g., incidence of goitre among all the school children in the Canton of St. Gallen: January, 1919, 87.6 per cent.; January, 1922, 13.1 per cent. The possibility of harm from a very small dosage used by the authors is negligible. A mild rash occurred in but 1 per 1000 of the cases treated, and in Switzerland not a single case of rash has been seen, nor has a case of exophthalmic goitre been produced. It comes to this—that if in endemic goitre districts every woman would keep her thyroid saturated with iodine during every pregnancy, she would not develop goitre, nor would there be any tendency toward goitre formation in the thyroid of the child. If every girl would keep her thyroid saturated with iodine during adolescence, that is from the age of 11 to 16 inclusive, none would develop goitre. A large majority of the goitres in boys are congenital, and could be prevented by the administration of iodine to the mother during pregnancy. In young individuals with thyroid enlargement of recent development the curative effects of iodine are very striking, and amount to complete relief. In long-standing goitre, neither iodine nor desiccated thyroid are of much value in relieving the deformity.

#### ROUND AND ABOUT.

With reference to the appeal, published in our last number on behalf of a "Swiss Rifle Association" to be formed I have received up till now communications from sixteen compatriots, and I am confident that in the near future the required number will come forward. There is, of course, no obligation connected with such an application; those interested in the matter will have to meet later on and decide on the ways and means by which the object in view can best be realized. There are no insurmountable difficulties, and it should be quite possible to send a small team to next year's "Tir Fédéral" in Aarau, similar to what is being done by some of the other Swiss colonies overseas.

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At the extraordinary meeting of the Swiss Mercantile Society, held last Wednesday, the proposed new rules in connection with the Education Department were passed—not without giving rise to some interesting discussion. When a vote of credit to defray the expenses for printing the annual report was submitted by the President, the latter came in for some heckling, chiefly by Messrs. Braga and Werner, who maintained that the issue of a report without the previous approval of a members' meeting was contrary to "tradition." No fault was found with the report, it being a question of principle, and the meeting subsequently sanctioned the necessary expenditure, adding a unanimous vote of thanks to the Committee for the admirable way in which the varied activities of the Society had been recorded in this report.

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Preparations are now in full swing for the social life in our colony during the coming season. As will be seen in another column, the cinderella dances of both the City Swiss Club and the Swiss Mercantile Society have been fixed. Arrangements are also well in hand for the annual gathering of the colony, the banquet of the City Swiss Club, which will be held on the last Friday in November (Nov. 30th) at the Victoria Hotel, Northumberland Avenue, where our friend, Mr. E. DeVeigny, wields the sceptre.

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The other clubs are also busy offering, in their own way, recreation and distraction; the only cause for regret to be recorded is the fact that the "Brighter London" movement has not yet recognized the necessity of insisting on some ultra-late trains, in order to allow the club habitués to reach their far-off homes in comfort and without further excitement. The other evening it would appear that one of our countrymen, well known and respected in banking and financial circles, "chartered" a taxi-cab for the conveyance of himself and a friend, another shining light in money matters, to their respective homes on the northern heights. The taxi driver was evidently bent on giving his "fares" adequate value for money to

be extracted, for after taking them all round the western hemisphere of our big metropolis, he finally reached exceedingly undulating ground near the "Bull and Bush," Hampstead Heath (unfortunately "closed" at the time). In fact, I understand that the experience of this drive was tantamount to having "a rough night at sea," and it is hardly surprising that the unbargained-for efforts of the taximan produced in our illustrious City magnate a nightmare of "far too acute exchange movements." The cab having finally owned up to mechanical defeat in trying to negotiate a particularly mountainous bump, the driver decided on a "back-wardation" operation, only to land his taxi in a ditch, where a broken drain pipe took out the "inflation of the currency" of the "off" wheel, and our friends thereupon had ample time to take stock of the illuminated "counters" of the firmament and prepare for the forthcoming "settlement." However, "All's well that ends well"; our two countrymen were ultimately safely "deposited" at their own hearths, and ever since this little episode it is noticeable how remarkably steady the Swiss rate of exchange has remained, a feature which would certainly suggest that our City friend has definitely set his face against "violent movements" of any sort!

#### FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

The budget of the Swiss Federal Railways for the year 1924 foresees expenditure of Frs. 72,342,550 for construction account. In the report on the budget and prospects the railway authorities point out that the returns for 1923 will show a most satisfactory improvement, both in regard to the working accounts and the result of the profit and loss account. It has, however, in view of the present uncertain conditions, been necessary to maintain a reserved attitude towards unduly extensive construction. And the actual volume of traffic, it must always be remembered, still remains behind that of pre-war years.

The expected revenue in 1924 is put at Frs. 375,000,000, which is 31 millions higher than the 1922 figure, while expenditure is figured out at Frs. 278,000,000, or 35 millions less than 1922. This leaves a surplus of revenue over expenditure of almost 97 million francs. Such a result would be an improvement of 66 millions on the 1922 accounts and of 18 millions on the 1923 budget figures.

The returns of the various privately-owned railways are always an interesting barometer of the state of the "tourist industry" in Switzerland, and the August traffic, which are now to hand, show notable improvement in many cases. The Pilatus Railway carried 98,863 passengers in August, against only 76,530 in the corresponding month of 1922, while for the first eight months of the present year 233,000 persons travelled, as compared with 178,000 last year.

The figures of the Wengernalp Railway and that on the Jungfrau are not so imposing as regards the volume of traffic, but show a corresponding improvement.

The Metallwarenfabrik in Zug closed the business year 1922-23 with a net profit of Frs. 380,528, as compared with Frs. 378,700 in 1921-22. A dividend of 7 per cent. is again being paid. The progress of the company during the year was on the whole satisfactory. This was largely due to the increased export of Swiss enamel goods, and though the profits on exported goods were only small, the increased output nevertheless made it possible to reduce working expenses. The enamel department is working to full capacity.

#### STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.

BOXES.		Sept. 11		Sept. 18	
		Frs.	Frs.	Frs.	Frs.
Swiss Confederation 3% 1903	...	77.00%	77.00%	76.50%	76.50%
Swiss Confed. 9th. Mob. Loan 5%	...	100.62%	100.62%	100.62%	100.62%
Federal Railways A—K 3 1/2%	...	80.37%	80.37%	80.27%	80.27%
Canton Basle-Stadt 5 1/2% 1921	...	103.25%	103.25%	103.37%	103.37%
Canton Fribourg 3% 1892...	...	71.62%	71.62%	71.50%	71.50%

  

SHARES.		Sept. 11		Sept. 18	
		Frs.	Frs.	Frs.	Frs.
Swiss Bank Corporation	...	500	645	645	645
Crédit Suisse	...	500	674	681	681
Union de Banques Suisses	...	500	532	525	525
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	3300	3300	3250	3250
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	2245	2180	2180	2180
C. F. Bally S.A.	...	1000	1020	1035	1035
Fabrique de Machines Oerlikon	...	500	665	664	664
Entreprises Sulzer	...	1000	600	622	622
S.A. Brown Boveri (new)	...	500	293	288	288
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	157	163	163	163
Choc. Suisses Peter-Cailler-Kohler	100	106	110	110	110
Comp. de Navig'n sur le Lac Léman	500	492	485	485	485

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