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NOTES & GLEANINGS.

"How Winter Sports began" is related by Ward Muir in *Country Life* (Dec. 3rd). Tremendous efforts—the writer says—are being made by Switzerland to re-establish its *Fremdenindustrie* on the old scale, and in view of the reduction in hotel charges there is no reason why anybody should hesitate to plan a visit on the score of expense. Travelling recently on the Engadine express, in the midst of merry young folk bound on holiday, it struck him that a large proportion of his fellow-voyagers were curiously ignorant of how the winter-sport vogue came into existence:

"We talk of Swiss winter sports. Actually, they are English winter sports. The English laid down the first skating rink in Switzerland in 1876 at Davos. An Englishman, Mr. Hornblower, inaugurated the first toboggan races ever held or heard of in Europe—on the steep road between Davos and the village of Klosters—in 1881. Later it was English enthusiasts who engineered the Cresta Ice Run at St. Moritz, and it was an Englishman, Major Bulpitt, who invented the "skeleton" type of toboggan now universally used for ice-run riding. Harold Freeman, the athlete, a son of the historian of the Norman Conquest, came to Davos in 1884, and was for twenty years president of the (English) Toboggan Club. The first bobsleigh was devised at Davos by two Englishmen, Mr. Bullen and Major Wilbraham. Improvements were elaborated by various English zealots in the Engadin, and to-day there is no resort in the length and breadth of Switzerland where bobsleighbing is not a popular pastime. Even ski-ing, which the Swiss themselves could now hardly do without, was introduced (from Norway) by two Englishmen, the famous brothers Richardson, in 1901, though it may be added that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Dame Katherine Furse had already tried it at Davos some years previously. Curling came from Scotland about 1888. The Belvedere Curling Club was founded at Davos in 1892. Bandy was also a British importation, one of its pioneers being Capt. E. G. Wynyard, the celebrated cricketer.

The name of Davos inevitably keeps recurring in any account of the development of winter sports, because Davos was their birthplace. In the Oberland and the Rhone Valley there have sprung up hosts of delightful smaller pleasure places, but they all 'derive from' Davos, the oldest and still the biggest, with St. Moritz following it as a close second. Davos, of course, claims the advantage of having a literary as well as a sporting tradition. It was here, in 1882, that Stevenson completed 'Treasure Island.' John Addington Symonds, who settled at Davos in 1877, wrote many of his most important books in the chalet which he built there and which still stands in that part of the town known as the English quarter, where a string of villas and hotels connects Davos Platz with Davos Dorf. Other English authors who have lived and worked at Davos were Mrs. Oliphant, Annie Houldsworth, Richard Bagot Beatrice Harraden, 'Dick Donovan' and James Elroy Flecker. For whereas the newer Swiss winter resorts cater for short-stay visitors, Davos, because of its climatic attributes has always had a settled English colony, and is, indeed, as cosmopolitan as Mentone or Madeira. Its season reaches its height in February, as is also the case with its neighbour, St. Moritz where the Grand National toboggan race is often held as late as the first week in March."

* * *

One of the English delegates to the Congress (recently held in Basle) of the International Co-operative Alliance records his impressions of Switzerland in the *Millgate Monthly* for December. He is full of praise for everything Swiss and pays a unique compliment to "Beautiful Basle," in fact, we feel quite proud and elevated in quoting the following lines:—

"O Basle, homage to thee and to thy burghers brave! Poets may not have sung of thee as of thy sister in the west, Geneva, but to see thee once is to love thee; and to love thee is to have a longing to see thee again and to mingle among thy folk once more."

The writer recalls a previous occasion when, travelling through Basle in 1907, the train was later than usual, arriving at 2 o'clock in the morning instead of early the previous evening. The railway station was being closed, and

over a hundred British people were stranded and turned out into the street. However, the Mayor of Basle happened to hear of their misfortune and instantly telephoned—at half-past two in the morning—to all the big hotels instructing them forthwith to open their doors to the forlorn foreigners. This kindly act has never been forgotten, and he sends his grateful salutations to the to him unknown Mayor of Basle.

The reception, the billeting and in fact all the arrangements in connection with the recent Congress have been the acme of perfection. It was impossible to get lost, for at important crossways English-speaking "Dienstträgers" were posted to direct the visitors. He considers the Swiss the very essence of internationalism—it is their birthright, the inheritance of the ages.

"The Swiss people provide the one great example of co-operation in the everyday life of a great nation. Switzerland, the home of the League of Nations, is itself a veritable League of Nations."

"The Swiss speak German, and live the very next door to Germany, but they are not German. The Swiss speak French, and France is just the other side of the Jura mountains—but they are not French. The Swiss speak Italian, and through the Simplon Tunnel is Italy—but they are not Italians. The Swiss speak Ladin, a relic of the old common tongue of the Romans—but they are not Romans. Yes, they speak four languages, not one of which is Swiss. Now they have added a fifth—at least in Basle—and that is English, and good, honest English, too. A generous educational system partly accounts for this, as well as the fact that Basle is the gateway to Switzerland for the flow of English and American tourists, to say nothing of the numbers of young men who have lived in England either in hotel service—or in the commercial life of our C.W.S. Perhaps Charlie Chaplin, too, has helped a little in this direction, for no cinema in the city seemed complete without the effigy of this world's inimitable smiling at you in the entrance hall."

"Basle is eloquent of the part it has played in the history of the Confederation, and, incidentally, in civilisation." Basle is proud of its association with Erasmus, the great scholar, who taught and died here, as is Geneva of the other great religious leader, Calvin, to both of whom the Reformation owed so much. Basle has an artistic reputation, for here the younger Holbein flourished. The influence of Pestalozzi, a near neighbour, is clearly evident in the educational and humanitarian institutions of the city. Its cathedral towers remind us that Basle gives its name to the last of the three great ecclesiastical reforming Councils which was held here in 1431, when it was sought to reconcile the Hussites with the Roman Catholic Church, but ended in defiance of the Pope. Basle also gives its name to the Treaty concluded there in 1795 between France, Prussia, and Spain, which led to Prussia taking under her protection all the States of Northern Germany. The Rathaus, or Town Hall, in its somewhat gaudy Burgundian style, takes us back to the time of 1501, when Basle joined the Swiss Confederation. *And that there are two Basles, separated by the Rhine into Greater Basle and Lesser Basle, is because of the Civil War in 1831, when the discontented Basle country rose up in arms against Basle town.* [The italics are ours.—"S.O."].

Basle, possessing the charm of antiquity and the beauty of modern architecture, is too far away from the glorious Alps to be favoured with typical Swiss scenery, hence the delegates were treated to an excursion to—

"Lucerne, the Lovely, on whose crystal waters of emerald hue we spent a few hours that will for ever be treasured in our golden casket of memory. It was, indeed, an inspiration to be welcomed by a gigantic golden Christ—after the famous sculpture of "Come Unto Me" by Thorwaldsen—which stood, with gentle eyes and gracefully opened arms, on a headland, just beyond which there was revealed to our eyes, as in a wondrous dream, the glory of the lake and the magnificence of the mountains. The tongue was put to silence by the majesty of Nature, where earth rose sheer from the smooth mirror of the lake and in rugged grandeur struggled to pierce the blue of heaven with their silvery, snow-tipped peaks. The eye opened wide in wonder at the Axenstrasse, a highway tunnelled through the massive rock in a series of picturesque galleries, a great engineering feat, second perhaps only to the St. Gothard tunnel; the ear was held in thrall with the story of how the

local conditions all differ on this subject proves how difficult it is, and even the technical press does not venture to solve the problem. The investigation should be entrusted to a small impartial commission composed of first-class water engineers, who would conduct an examination on the spot and draw up a detailed report. Such a commission could be appointed either by the States interested, Switzerland and the State of Baden, or by the Central Rhine Commission. I would like to point out that a similar fight occurred 30 years ago concerning the regularisation of the Rhine from Strasbourg to Karlsruhe, where these three propositions were equally represented and defended. After years of discussion the regularisation scheme was adopted, and from 1906 to 1914 it gave the best results. Nevertheless, it should be added that the up and down stream conditions at Strasbourg are entirely different from those at Karlsruhe."

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The Electrician (Dec. 2nd) cites the figures on the extensive use of electricity published recently in the annual report of the "Vorort," adding that, though in some parts the increased use of electricity was due to the high price of coal, it was mainly due to its cleanliness, convenience and other advantages that the electric service has become so popular.

* * *

The Geneva correspondent of the *Westminster Gazette* (Dec. 6th), writing on Winter Sports, gives a somewhat gloomy picture of the immediate prospects on account of the poor snowfall. There is, of course, time yet for conditions to change and improve by Christmas; everybody is earnestly hoping that such a change will take place soon, as snowfalls are badly needed to replenish all sources of water supply:—

"This winter it is mainly to the British that the Swiss hotel keepers are looking to fill their establishments, for there is hardly any nation, except perhaps the Dutch (of whom there are not very many) who can conceivably afford holidays this season. Trade is too bad, and the conditions of the exchanges continue too abnormal.

The days when a fortnight could be spent in one of the less expensive Swiss winter resorts for 12 guineas, or even 10, including a return ticket, are days gone by, let us not say never to return, but hardly soon. Railway fares have almost doubled, and hotel expenses increased about 70 per cent., which is very moderate, considering how much the cost of all necessities and of service has risen. A fortnight in a Swiss winter resort now, according to the inclusive charges made by the leading London tourist agency, costs nearly £19 which sum does not include tips and small extras, and only covers a second-class return ticket.

There is no doubt that the fact that English people will still have the trouble of getting passports and Swiss visas for those passports does not predispose them to travel to Switzerland. Instead of spending such heavy sums in advertising Swiss winter resorts, the Swiss Government might have been better advised to have abolished passports and visas for British tourists, as has been done for American tourists."

STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.

BONDS.	Nov. 29th.	Dec. 12th.
Swiss Confederation 3% 1903	63.50%	63.50%
Swiss Confederation 9th Mob. Loan 5%	99.40%	99.35%
Federal Railways A—K 3½%	65.95%	67.50%
Canton Basle-Stadt 5½% 1921	97.65%	97.25%
Canton Fribourg 3% 1892... ..	59.75%	59.50%
Zurich (Stadt) 4% 1909	97.75%	97.60%
SHARES.		
Crédit Suisse... ..	520 frs.	532 frs.
Union de Banques Suisses... ..	500 frs.	500 frs.
Swiss Bank Corporation	520 frs.	517 frs.
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	950 frs.	1100 frs.
C. F. Bally S.A.	590 frs.	600 frs.
Fabrique de Machines Oerlikon... ..	405 frs.	410 frs.
Enterprises Sulzer	390 frs.	395 frs.
S.A. Brown Boveri (new)	150 frs.	197 frs.
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Co.	230 frs.	238 frs.

(Pressure on our space prevents us from giving the usual résumé of Financial and Commercial News from Switzerland).

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An ?

(KUSS UND MISTEL.)

Dort unterm Mistelzweig, der von der Ampel

Am roten Bande sich herniedersenkt,

Hast Du am Weihnachtstage par exemple

Mir lächelnd einen ersten Kuss geschenkt.

Seither hat ohne Mistel Deine Lippe

Sich mit der meinen wiederum vereint,

Denn Du entdecktest, dass es mit der Klippe

Um's Mistelzweiglein nicht so ernst gemeint.

So zauberst Du, trotz rauher Wintertage,

Mit Deiner Anmut einen jungen Mai;

Wir suchen scherzend Antwort auf die Frage:

Ob's mit, ob's ohne Mistel süsser sei ?

Doch dauerte das Minnespiel nicht lange ...

Kalt—unerbittlich kam die Abschiedsstund'.

... Ich küsst' ein Tränlein Dir von Aug und Wange

Und dann noch einmal Deinen Rosenmund.

GALLUS.

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