

Notes & gleanings

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Naret Lake and the Giacomo Pass, traversing the Binn valley, pursued their course down the Rhone valley and reached the Geneva aerodrome Cointrin at 7.57, where the machines were overhauled and the benzine tanks refilled. At 9.30 the flight was resumed, the planes landing on the Sternfeld near Basle at 10.45, departing again for the ultimate goal, Schaffhausen, which was safely reached at 12.10 p.m., terminating an enterprise which does great credit to our Swiss military aviators. It may be added that the actual flying time occupied in making the complete circuit is $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours less than the time taken by the late Oscar Bider two years ago for a little shorter circuit.

The aerodrome of the "Ad Astra" in Interlaken is receiving increasing patronage from visitors desirous of taking flights over the majestic giants of the Bernese Oberland.

The opening of an aerial service between Lausanne and Paris will shortly be realised. Further services between Lausanne—Genoa and Lausanne—Milano are the subject of advancing negotiations.

* * *

A committee of prominent political and military personages have decided to invite public subscriptions for the purpose of erecting a modest monument in commemoration of the late Oscar Bider, Switzerland's first and foremost pioneer in aviation.

The Municipal Council of Berne has offered a site for the monument on the Kleine Schanze promenade, facing the wonderful Bernese Alps, which Bider was the first to fly over by aeroplane.

* * *

The "Bodensee," the last of the Zeppelins to be handed over to the Allies, left Friedrichshafen on Sunday,

July 3rd, en route for Italy. Traversing Switzerland from north-east to south-west, it passed at a low altitude over Zurich at 7.20, Berne at 8, and Geneva at 9.45 a.m., then crossing the Swiss frontier headed for Italy, landing near Rome.

NOTES & GLEANINGS.

Commenting upon the Souvenir-booklet which was sent by the Commercial Intelligence Department of the Swiss Legation to the Editors of the London and Provincial Press, the "Yorkshire Observer" writes in the issue of July 12th:—

THE TRADE OF BASLE.

"The Chamber of Commerce of Basle has issued an artistic and interesting souvenir of the spring conference of the Manchester Textile Institute, which was held at Basle in May last. The book is really a handbook to the trade and commerce of the town, and gives an interesting glimpse into the manifold business activities of that important centre of industry. Switzerland is a country almost wholly devoid of natural advantages. It has no raw materials, and practically owes its present position in industry and commerce to the genius and resource of its inhabitants. It is where highly technical skill is required that Switzerland has excelled, and in its chemical and pharmaceutical industries it has done much valuable work. The present position of the country is a beautiful illustration of how much can sometimes be done out of very little if the matter is gone about in the proper way. The Swiss have every reason to be proud of their achievements. In the old days they had to assert their independence, which was not always an easy matter in presence of powerful and sometimes not very particular neighbours. New problems for Switzerland, as well as for the rest of Europe, have arisen out of the world war, and are in process of being solved. Switzerland has its schemes for its own development, particularly in regard to the Rhine, which, when carried out, will add to the country's importance and will also assist in the reconstruction of Central Europe."

Feuilleton.

LOUIS DE ROUGEMONT

(† June 10th 1921.)

(By Dr. A. LATT.)

It was owing to mere chance that I became interested in Louis de Rougemont. I am indebted for this acquaintance to "The Daily Graphic." The last time I got hold of a copy—that of June 11th—I noticed a photo, representing a naked old man riding a giant turtle. The accompanying text stated that Louis de Rougemont, the notorious Swiss adventurer, who with his tales from the bush had hoaxed and amused the world some 23 years ago, had just died at the Kensington Infirmary at the age of between 85 and 90 years.

From another copy of "The Daily Graphic"—dated 1st or 2nd January, 1920—I secured a cutting with the photo, of an old, white-bearded man leaving the London Homœopathic Hospital, where he had undergone an operation. The patient had been admitted to the hospital shortly before Christmas under the name of Louis Redmond. As some letters, evidently intended for this man, arrived at the hospital addressed to Louis de Rougemont, the curiosity of the doctors and staff was excited, but the mystery man left without giving a key to his identity. "A press representative," says "The Daily Graphic," "who called at the hospital was not allowed to see Mr. de Rougemont, or Redmond, on account of his poor condition. The resident medical officer said the old man was very much opposed to publicity. 'If you speak to him,' said the doctor, 'you will upset him; he does not want to see anybody at all outside his own friends. All the letters which are addressed to him in the name of Louis de Rougemont he refuses to open.' Inquiries made at Queen's Gate, Kensington, said to be his address, showed that the old man was very little known in the district."

I then tried to get first-hand information about my queer

countryman. He was unknown at the Legation, and figured in none of the lists of the various Swiss societies. Mr. Geo. Forrer, who for many years had been Swiss Vice-Consul in London, knew the case well. "Louis de Rougemont was a remarkable fellow," said my informant; "though his book is a fraud, he must have had the strangest life that one could imagine for a Swiss. He has long been forgotten by the public, which used to discuss with real passion this modern Robinson Crusoe. You see, he is still alive and doing well"—and Mr. Forrer handed me a copy of "The Daily Chronicle" of 30th July, 1915, from which I quote the following passages:

"Louis de Rougemont, whose famous story startled the world some years ago, has been married in London at a West-end registry office, the bride being Miss Thirza Cooper. The lady carries on an occupation in Regent Street as a financial agent, under the name of 'Cooper,' mainly transacting business with clients in London and Paris. The wedding ceremony, according to one who was present, was quite 'a simple affair,' no friends or relatives being present, except a lady and gentleman well known in London society. Mr. de Rougemont looked well and happy and bore himself in debonnaire fashion. . . ."

Then there follows the usual description of the dress and good looks of the bride who took Louis de Rougemont as her third husband.

"She met him in London for the first time some few months ago, in connection with literary work, and found him a delightful 'child of nature,' recounting for hours together tales true and marvellous. She said, when discussing her husband with mutual friends before her marriage, 'one cannot be dull in the company of Louis de Rougemont. His imagination is livelier than that of other men. And then, when he represented the truth interestingly, the world called him an outrageous liar.'

"I believe in Louis de Rougemont. He will yet startle the world with the revelation of a great truth, and those who have thrown stones at him will live to see his name vindicated before the world."

M. and Mme. de Rougemont are now preparing for a trip to Australia, in connection with 'a highly interesting discovery,' the nature of which, however, is being kept a profound