

Here and there

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Othmar Schoeck is a disciple of Max Reger, but his music has none of the intellectual aridity which some people dislike in the German master. Everything in it expresses colour and passion. He is a great romantic, and has a power of expression which has hitherto never been attained by any Swiss composer.

Although he has had to act as conductor to different Swiss choral societies and choirs, he is really, above everything, a composer. There is nothing he likes more, nothing he is better fitted for. His first—and perhaps still his best—medium of expression was the song. He published a first set of fifty 'Lieder' in 1909, which were characterised by a certain mild melancholy. A second was printed in 1917, followed in 1922 by four other collections, all of which were published by Breitkopf & Härtel, Leipzig. The first of these collections contained music to twelve of Eichendorff's songs; the third was written to Goethe's poem 'Der Gott und die Bajadere.' The fourth, called 'Hafislieder,' is of an Oriental character.

In the course of the last twelve or fifteen years Schoeck has gone through a remarkable development. Whereas he began by composing somewhat in the vein of Schubert—with whom many compare both his music and his personality, others seeing a resemblance in him to Hugo Wolf—giving the voice the melody and allowing the piano to take a very secondary place, in his later songs the piano plays a more and more important part, depicting all the shades of meaning in the text which the voice closely follows. The spell of his most recent songs lies just in the particular blending of voice and piano by which expression is given to all the different sensations evoked by the words.

Schoeck has not, however, only kept to the composition of songs, he has also written a good deal of music for choirs, one of the most important of these works being the music written to Walt Whitman's 'Beat, Beat, Drums' which was produced with great success at the annual meeting of Swiss composers in Zurich in 1920. Another famous choral work is his 'Postillion,' composed for a male choir and orchestra. He has also written several compositions for violin and string quartets.

During the last few years Schoeck has attempted the opera. He wrote the music for Goethe's singspiel 'Erwin und Elmire,' which was very well received when it was produced at one of the last meetings of the Goethe Association in Weimar. His comic opera 'Don Ranudo,' which was produced in Zurich in 1920 for the first time, was considered in Germany to be quite a revival of the old comic opera form. 'Don Ranudo' is written on a comedy by Holberg, which was arranged as a libretto by Schoeck's Swiss friend, Armin Rieger. It is a comedy which makes fun of the vanity of the pedigree. Schoeck's next opera was 'Das Wandbild,' which was produced in the Stadttheater of Halle. His last opera, 'Venus,' the performance of which at the Zurich International Festival was considered an event in the history of Swiss music, has already been commented upon in this paper. There seems to be no doubt that the world will yet hear great things about this native of a country hitherto not specially famous for its composers, though noted for other good things. British music-lovers will certainly be anxious to have an opportunity of enjoying his music before long."

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We are at all times open to correction, all the more when it emanates from such a distinguished contemporary as the *Anglo-Swiss Review* (July). Anent some correspondence in one of the London dailies, we recently stated (see *S. O.* June 24th) that the highest peak in Switzerland was the Dufourspitze (Monte Rosa massive). For this our Swiss friend has hauled us over the coals by remarking that "Monte Rosa is not only Italian in name, but is to a large extent in Italian territory." We are much obliged for this interesting information, but at the same time wish to point out that the *Daily News*, in testing the knowledge of its readers, asked for the highest "peak," and not mountain. Peak, according to Nuttall's, is defined as the top of a hill ending in a point, and this would seem to dispose of the first part of the argument. The second part is not put so forcefully when our contemporary states that "Monte Rosa has eleven peaks, and the Swiss-Italian 'frontier runs across them; but, after examining various maps of the group, we have failed to find the line marked 'with such clearness as would enable any individual mem-

ber of the group to be claimed as wholly Swiss." We will not challenge the accuracy of these particular maps, and we have no grudge against the other giant, the "Dom," but we refuse to doubt the wisdom of the powers-that-were in naming the highest Swiss peak after the greatest Swiss general. However, we are quite open to conviction if, for the benefit of future generations, the editor of the *Anglo-Swiss Review* wishes further to establish the fact by motor-ing us in his Rolls-Royce to the place in dispute; in the meantime we would refer him to Attinger's Dictionnaire Géographique de La Suisse, which gives the position of the Dufourspitze as "District Viège, Canton de Valais."

* * *

If all the international conferences being held now could realize the objects for which they are convened, the millennium would be here. Some instructive and startling opinions were voiced last week at the International Neo-Malthusian and Birth Control Conference at which Switzerland was represented by Prof. R. Michels. As war will cease to be a remedy against over-population, birth control will have to be adopted. Apart from alleviating the lot of the poor and suffering, it is claimed that this would abolish mobs and crowds from the world, and all the waste, weariness, cruelty and disaster that mobs and crowds entail. It seems to us, we are emulating in a modern form the very effective practice of the Old Spartans.

* * *

According to statistics just published the foreign population of London (registered as residing in the Metropolitan Police district) has slightly increased during last year, the Swiss quota being 876 (Americans 883, French 707, Japanese 252).

HERE AND THERE.

By J. H. Corthesy.

Now the holidays are on the question of the weather becomes of primary importance to holiday-makers, and as F. W. Thomas humorously says in the *Star*: "There is a certain quality, a sort of sheer cussedness about our climate, which it shares in common with cats, mules, dress bows and collar studs. None of these things will do what you want them to do, except when you don't want them to do it. . . . At divers times I have laid myself out to write encouraging remarks about our weather, to boost the stuff, and give it a leg up. On every occasion it has gone back on me and let me down. . . . Starting as late as possible on Friday night in order to lessen the risk, I turn out a couple of columns about sunshine and May-blossom, with hairy tramps sitting on stilees, and butterflies, and long white roads. . . . So sure as I do that, in the small hours before Saturday a large and ferocious cyclone comes sailing across the Bantry Bay, where the depressions are made, bumps into the Chiltern Hills, and bursts all over my scenario. . . . Or, encouraged by a falling glass, I write about rain. I get soaked through and through in the execution of my duty, stand under railway arches, talking to ice-cream merchants and baked-potato men. And then get up in the morning to find a couple of heat waves sitting on the lawn, and somebody starting an anti-washing campaign to save water. . . . It is all very discouraging. . . ."

A state of the weather which is further emphasized by the remark of the conductor as a dark gentleman got off his omnibus in the Strand: "What sort of a chap was that?" An inspector answers: "What they call a Parsee, I expect; they worship the sun, them fellows." "Coo!"

said the conductor, "I 'spect 'e come over 'ere for a rest, then!"

The testimony is an absolute contradiction to the statement made during the last heat wave that the Gulf Stream had altered its course, owing to a railway wall built in Florida, and was giving special attention to the English coasts. This must have been due to a misapprehension. The Gulf Stream could only have come on a short excursion!

* * *

Unreliable weather is serious enough, but an unreliable political situation may bring infinitely more serious consequences. Lovat Fraser, in the *Sunday Pictorial*, sounds the alarm:—

"... On the invitation of Mr. Lloyd George, thirty-four nations solemnly agreed at Genoa not to attack each other while the Hague Conference was sitting. Within two months the Pact of Peace has automatically ended. I fear that Europe is rapidly moving towards an unplumbed abyss. . . . The outlook is far worse than it was three years ago. The very existence of civilization is menaced by the swift decline in the value of the Continental money. We are not realizing the terrible possibilities which lie beneath the smiling surface of daily life. One goes abroad and sees crops waving in the wind, cities and towns busy and seemingly unchanged, well-clothed folk dining in cafés and eager for amusement, trains running, motor-cars whirling along, all the outward appearances very much as they were ten years ago. There appears to be no visible cause for anxiety. So it may have seemed in ancient Rome when the northern barbarians were tobogganing on their shields down snow-clad Alpine slopes on their way to the sick of Italy! . . ."

However, the world has some brilliant statesmen and politicians, and since the Earth has retained its potentiality for producing enough for all its inhabitants' comfort, the thing evidently at fault is the world's organisation or administration. Too many cooks spoil the broth. And so long as "extremes" form the ruling principles, there can be no proper balance in the world's administration. Exact balancing conditions are necessary in every direction, as we know, in order that every individual's existence should be normally maintained. We are all tight-rope walkers, and it is better the rope be taut. It is no use for anybody to expect the accomplishment of far-fetched ideals. We may dream about them, put them into rhyme, but they will not work in practice. Equality exists nowhere in nature, and man cannot be stronger than nature. But man may be considerate. It is his duty to be so. When man forgets his 'so-called "rights" and starts thinking of his "duties," the solution of the world's administrative problem will not be far off.

* * *

Harold Owen, in the *Evening News*, in an article entitled "The Discouragement of Work," diagnoses the situation with a clear insight. He concludes that "post-war optimism was merely the descendant of a pre-war fallacy: the fallacy that there can be social amelioration by the discouragement of work." "I need not," he says, "enter into the proof that governmental policy since the war on industrial matters has favoured and followed that fallacy.

"Cutting out every debatable point, and even the effect of the Trade Boards, 'the dole' stands not alone, but only as a symbol of the tendency to encourage the belief that political ingenuity can discover a satisfactory and permanent solution of the irksome problem of work—that a beneficent State can supersede individual effort. . . .

"When a man can be punished for honest work, and

that insanity is consistent with the whole tendency of the time, we have clearly reached a point when our conceptions of the province and functions of government must be drastically revised."

* * *

A Bayonne woman named Schwartz put her mattress out of the window to air, and an hour later remembered that £150 worth of diamonds were hidden in it. The police searched the house and the bushes and grass outside without finding the jewellery. "I have it," said Mrs. Schwartz, "I'll pray. That will bring them back quicker than anything." She knelt and offered a prayer, but was interrupted by the door bell. "Found these outside in the street," said a freckled-face boy. "Belong here?"

If that woman, whose power is so effective as to bring back diamonds "quicker than anything"—however precious these stones may be called—would use that power to bring food to the homes of the world's poor, and if her prayers were as readily answered, healthier thoughts would prevail, and the idea of work which requires strength to back it up would, like snowdrops, pierce through ignorance of natural laws and take its proper share in man's attention, and hatred caused by suffering would likewise vanish.

Or if in Coué's language we were saying, "We are getting better and better," instead of thinking, "We are going from bad to worse," human affairs might greatly improve.

* * *

While the world is moved by waves of hopefulness following on depression, science, to which much is due for a gradual constant alteration in its mode of existence, never relents, and new discoveries succeed each other.

Brighton—which has just seen its carnival through the rain—provides an astonishing claim from one of its scientists, Mrs. Maude Dickinson.

Mrs. Dickinson states she has discovered a certain minute "something," about the size of a large pin-head, which is, she says, not an insect, but "perhaps belongs to the vegetable life—perhaps is the source of life," and whose form and luminosity can only be recognised under a powerful microscope, and resembling the "self-created" scarab or beetle of Ancient Egypt. The scarab's properties are as marvellous as any that the Egyptians attributed to their chief amulet. It forms crystals *outside* and *away* from the bottle in which it is contained.

The property of creating and of projecting particles of "matter" exists in radium and in a lesser degree in other metals, and is thus possessed by other materials.

* * *

"Billie" Hughes, the Prime Minister of the Australian Commonwealth, has a way of his own for mastering things.

Hearing a member of the Federal Parliament, who is very proud of his running powers, speak of his prowess one night after a late sitting, Mr. Hughes declared he could "beat" him.

The challenge was accepted. At the word "go!" the M.P. sprinted off down the lamp-lit street, but Mr. Hughes remained where he was and shouted excitedly, "Stop thief! Stop thief!"

Out dashed a constable, and seeing the fleeing form he promptly collared him. The prisoner protested and gave good reasons for his speed, but when Mr. Hughes sauntered down and coolly disowned him, the M.P. was mightily embarrassed. The Premier finished the course at a gentle trot, and, having proved his ability to win, returned and obtained the release of his disgruntled opponent.

Mr. Hughes' method of winning was an adaptation—with a variation forced by circumstances—of the tactics of

the crawfish in "Le Renard et l'Ecrevisse." The crawfish won the race by hanging to the tail of the fox and freeing himself at the moment when the fox, having reached the goal, turned round to find out if his little backwalker crustacean competitor had made any progress, when a kind of "There you are, then!" from the crawfish told him he had been "fooled."

FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

Recent New Issues.

Three Swiss municipalities have come into the capital market in the last few weeks, the amount to be raised in each case being three million francs. In the case of Fribourg, the first of these borrowers, the loan was required to cover the partial consolidation of the existing floating debt, amounting to 1,600,000 frs., and further to meeting the expected deficit on the 1922 accounts. The new loan will be redeemed in 25 years, the issue price being 97% and the rate of interest offered 4½%. Allowing for the profit on redemption at the end of the term, the yield to the investor at the issue price, therefore, works out at about 4.7%.

Thoune and Lugano are each proposing to issue 5% loans, which will be offered to the public at 99%.

Another interesting new issue has been that of 6% bonds by the Paris and Orleans Railway Company. The amount of this loan was 50 million Swiss francs, of which half was underwritten by a syndicate of Swiss banks. The bonds were offered for public subscription at 92½% and are redeemable at par in 1934. The capital and interest are guaranteed in the same way as in the case of the bonds recently issued in London by the same company, that is to say, the French Government give them what virtually amounts to a guarantee.

Maggi Accounts.

The Maggi Company in Kempttal has now published its accounts for the year ended 31st of March last. The gross receipts amounted to 3,040,494 frs. as compared with 3,359,437 frs. last year. General expenses increased from 1,364,545 frs. in 1919-20 to 1,673,588 frs. in 1921-22, leaving a net profit of 1,366,905 frs. (1,994,891 frs. last year), to which was added a carry forward of 62,562 frs. It is proposed to pay a dividend of 8 per cent., as last year. The Kempttal company is, of course, the parent company for a number of concerns manufacturing preserved food stuffs, not only in Switzerland, but in various countries abroad.

Society for Chemical Industry in Basle.

In view of the prevailing conditions and of the very difficult times through which the chemical and dyestuffs industry has been passing it can hardly have come as a surprise to the shareholders of the Society for Chemical Industry to find that the dividend for 1921 was only 7% as compared with 15% in the previous year. The net profit was 1,471,890 frs. as compared with 3,190,503 frs. in 1920. The accounts are, however, by no means unsatisfactory. Trading profit amounted to 6,782,360 frs., showing thus only a small reduction as compared with 1920. This was due to the greatly reduced cost of manufacturing. General expenditure increased slightly. The report points out that it was possible to avoid a loss on stocks by adopting a very cautious policy in the matter of purchasing raw materials. On the other hand, sales declined and prices were steadily falling. Foreign competition from countries with a depre-

ciated exchange was very severe, and the protective measures taken by many of the countries which had formerly been the company's best customers caused a great loss of markets.

The Company has greatly increased its foreign interests during the year. The item "participations" in the balance sheet is the criterion of this extension, and shows a rise from 13 to 21 million francs. This is due to a large advance made to the American subsidiary, the Cincinnati Chemical Works, and to the formation of a new selling concern in New York known as the Ciba Company Inc., with a capital of \$1,500,000.

A Boon to Visitors to Switzerland.

The inauguration of a system of Postal Travellers' Cheques, which can be bought in England and cashed without formalities at any Post Office in Switzerland, will be greeted cordially by all intending visitors. The essence of the new scheme is its simplicity. The cheques are issued in booklets, each containing ten cheques of fifty or one hundred francs, as required, and are sold by the Swiss Post Office's London agents, the Swiss Bank Corporation, at the current rate of exchange. It is expected that as soon as these cheques become generally known, hotel proprietors and even shopkeepers will readily accept them, so that the holder of a cheque book will be, to all intents and purposes, provided with ready cash wherever he may go, without being obliged to carry bank notes. The cheques can only be bought in complete booklets, but any unused cheques may be returned to the Swiss Bank Corporation and will be refunded at their full face value at the exchange of the day.

STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.

BONDS.	July 11th		July 17th	
Swiss Confederation 3% 1903	77.50%		77.00%	
Swiss Confederation 9th Mob. Loan 5%	102.25%		102.25%	
Federal Railways A-K 3½%	81.90%		81.95%	
Canton Basle-Stadt 5½% 1921	104.15%		104.00%	
Canton Fribourg 3% 1892... ..	74.25%		74.70%	
Zurich (Stadt) 4% 1909	100.80%		100.80%	
SHARES.				
	Nom.	July 11th	July 17th	
	Frs.	Frs.	Frs.	
Swiss Bank Corporation	500	606	611	
Crédit Suisse... ..	500	630	640	
Union de Banques Suisses... ..	500	535	535	
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	1315	1365	
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	970	997	
C. F. Bally S.A.	1000	852	860	
Fabrique de Machines Oerlikon... ..	500	540	540	
Enterprises Sulzer	1000	540	567	
S.A. Brown Boveri (new)	500	315	331	
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Co.	400	200	207	
Chocolats Suisses Peter-Cailler-Kohler... ..	100	109	106	
Compagnie de Navig'n sur le Lac Léman	500	470	465	

PERSONAL PARS.

Mr. H. Siegmund, of the European and General Express Co., Ltd., has left town with his family for a sojourn in Switzerland.

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