

Notes and gleanings

Objektyp: **Group**

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

Band (Jahr): - **(1923)**

Heft 124

PDF erstellt am: **06.08.2024**

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Inhalten der Zeitschriften. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern.

Die auf der Plattform e-periodica veröffentlichten Dokumente stehen für nicht-kommerzielle Zwecke in Lehre und Forschung sowie für die private Nutzung frei zur Verfügung. Einzelne Dateien oder Ausdrucke aus diesem Angebot können zusammen mit diesen Nutzungsbedingungen und den korrekten Herkunftsbezeichnungen weitergegeben werden.

Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. Die systematische Speicherung von Teilen des elektronischen Angebots auf anderen Servern bedarf ebenfalls des schriftlichen Einverständnisses der Rechteinhaber.

Haftungsausschluss

Alle Angaben erfolgen ohne Gewähr für Vollständigkeit oder Richtigkeit. Es wird keine Haftung übernommen für Schäden durch die Verwendung von Informationen aus diesem Online-Angebot oder durch das Fehlen von Informationen. Dies gilt auch für Inhalte Dritter, die über dieses Angebot zugänglich sind.

when figures are wanted, so that only the sound waves created by the vowels impress the microphone, while those created by the consonants are lost."

The machine is not large. Mr. Bandli describes it as a cube of about 16 in., weighing about 60 lbs. It stands on a small table, such as is used for an ordinary phonograph or typewriter, and in the upper part of the table is a small 1-16th h.p. electro-motor and a battery.

The person using the machine starts the current by turning the interrupter, waits a few seconds until the wheels have obtained the necessary speed, and begins talking in a distinct, but not a loud voice into a specially built microphone in which every sound wave creates corresponding alternating currents. These are amplified and pass through a series of apparatus, called distributors, which, in combination with a series of synchronised devices, produce the typewriting on the paper to be written upon.

This paper is rolled on a cylinder similar to that of an ordinary typewriter, but placed vertically.

All I wish to say is that I do hope this wonderful inventor will show up to better advantage than our "late boxing champion"!

Notable Swiss Pictures.

Daily Telegraph (3rd Oct.):—

As Turner proved, it is not necessary for a painter to be of Swiss or Italian nationality in order to do justice to the colour glories of Alpine lakes and valleys. On the other hand, a painter who is a native of a land of majesty and beauty of outlook and who grows to love the compelling scenes around him has the advantage of being both a national and natural interpreter. Most people come back from Switzerland with vivid impressions of the grandeur of the mountains and glaciers gilded with that "heavenly alchemy" of which Shakespeare wrote. To those and others the drawings and pictures by the Swiss artist Professor Hans Beat Wieland, now being shown in the Gieves Gallery, should bring back exhilarating memories. It is obvious that the painter has developed a power sufficient to grasp the mightiness of his themes, and that the study of them is a continuous and unflagging fascination. He has the gift of suggesting real sunlight, and in this respect such works as "The Garden of the Presbytery at Grindelwald" and the vivid drawing of old maple trees casting their shadows on the stony surfaces is especially fine. A moonlight picture, "The Bishop in Wallis," is another noteworthy composition showing affinity of mountainous scenery to the billowy sea, and the decorative effect of tree shapes is evinced in a spring-time glimpse of Lake Lucerne. Even the tourist who did not envisage the wealth of colour and beauty that lay before him will be (or should be) stirred by this Swiss painter's glowing interpretations.

Writing of "Alpine Lakes and Valleys" reminds me of a funny paragraph which I found in the *Morning Post* (6th Oct.):—

Why go to St. Moritz to enjoy the delicious trepidations of falling into a crevasse when you can have all that sort of thing in Victoria-street? The yawning chasm cut by our road breakers down the side of the thoroughfare would give splendid practice with ropes and ice axes. As for tobogganing, the 'bus makes an excellent substitute. In the Alpine storm of Wednesday one daring seventy-sixer put the Cresta Run into the shade. Loaded with daring tobogganers, as it was, it skidded off the narrow track and landed with wonderful skill upon a narrow ice bridge. The planks being, but stood the strain as true to his principle of "Safety First," the driver decided to go no further. He received no congratulations for his daring exploit, or his splendid traffic, but was merely cursed for holding up the traffic.

As I have lately been to Switzerland and in my native town of Winterthur, this paragraph appealed to me, because at home I found, for the second time, the principal street "up" and going home, late at night, it was a favourite sport to try and manage the "peaks" along the Marktgasse. I won't say more!

Anent my paragraph some time back, *re* "Opium Traffic," I am glad to print the following from the *Yorkshire Post* (6th Oct.):—

Dr. Carl Huescher, Swiss Consul-General in Canada, announces that he has been authorised to state that the Swiss Federal Council unanimously agrees to immerge ratification by the Government of the International Opium Convention and will strictly enforce the law suppressing the drug traffic.

And this, in turn, brings me to a highly interesting article in the *Manchester Guardian* (8th Oct.) on:—

The League's Influence.

Discussion on the League of Nations and the Fourth Assembly took place in Berne on October 5th in the Swiss Senate. Owing to the extreme slowness of Swiss Parliamentary machinery, the Governmental report on the Third Assembly was formally the matter of discussion, but in fact the debates principally dealt with the Fourth Assembly.

It is rather surprising that the last Assembly, which generally had not a very good press, nevertheless obtained a rather warm reception from the Swiss Senate. Even the former adversaries of Switzerland's adhesion to the League were considerably less sharp in their criticisms in the Senate than in the months ago. Those in Switzerland who strive for withdrawal from the League were much disappointed by the categorical statement of the previous leader of the Senate opposition to Switzerland's adhesion, the Conservative Col. Bruegger, who declared he could not assume responsibility for any action in favour of withdrawal.

Radical Senator Bolli, who was one of the Swiss delegates to the Fourth Assembly, stated that he had always been sceptical as to the League, but now recognised that it opens the way towards improvement in international relations. Those who believed in the possibility of the development of the League of Nations idea among peoples must co-operate with League efforts, although knowing that progress could only be slow. The Catholic Senator Raebler criticised those who undermine the League by their negative attacks. Humanity, he said, had need of hope for a better future.

The Swiss Foreign Minister, M. Motta, declared he had arrived at Geneva with great inner dissatisfaction. He returned, however, with a lightened heart. The League had rendered invaluable service to the cause of peace, and had furnished proof of its moral effi-

ciency. He himself had been a witness at Geneva that the moral influence of the League during the Italo-Greek conflict calmed the minds of the two opposed parties. The September experience at Geneva justified hope of the evolution of the League of Nations.

The same speakers discussed the draft treaty of mutual assistance. The inclusion of Articles 6 to 8, concerning complementary defensive alliances between certain Powers, was strongly criticised, and Colonel Bruegger regretted that the Swiss Delegation did not vote against the draft treaty instead of merely abstaining. The Foreign Minister explained that the abstention was not at all a sign of sympathy with the treaty. Swiss permanent neutrality, he affirmed, would remain totally unchanged, and would prevent Switzerland's adhesion to any treaty guarantee. M. Motta observed that it was very doubtful whether the treaty will ever come into force.

To my mind, Ständerat Raebler is entirely right in criticising those who try to undermine the League by merely negative attacks. It will generally be found that those critics are among the people who have never yet endeavoured to help the League along, who really are against it in principle, or rather, because they refuse to envisage a world which would not be based any longer on "Raubtier" organisation, now commonly called "civilisation"! How any Swiss, with the history of Switzerland to go by, can be against the League of Nations, is a complete mystery to me. Should we be less Swiss, if we were members of the United States of Europe, than now? Is a Bernese less Bernese now than he was when Berne stood alone? What about the difference happily existing between our Eastern and Western compatriots? Is it not just that difference which, paradoxical as it may sound, welds us into one homogenous whole?

Internationalism in Infancy.

The Christian World, (4th Oct.):—

The paper from which I cull the following interesting article ought to disarm critics who, in reading the title, might have jumped to a wrong conclusion and accused me of nefarious designs on their political beliefs!

A month ago I fell into Elysium. I am still wondering how such a person ever managed to get there, and why they did not turn me out as an undesirable alien. But no alien is undesirable to them; they have such faith and hope in human nature.

Môtó—that is the Sanskrit for "Mother"; they all call her that—met me on a wayside station between Lausanne and Geneva. She was bareheaded, and had brought a small handcart (a sort of miniature hay-wagon) for my luggage. We packed it in, and trundled off along three kilometres of dusty by-road to the lakeside; and on the way she told me a little about the people I was to meet under her roof—rooms, I should say, or patch of sky, for we lived mostly out of doors. In the first place, there were the children staying over the holidays, for Elysium is a school where boys and girls of many nations work and learn and play together. Môtó is the foundress and head-mistress. About a dozen of them were there at the time—Swiss, Austrian, Italian, German, British, and American negro (the latest addition to the family—a delightful little youth). Then quite a crowd of guests were staying at the schoolhouse, in the annexe on the shore, and in various chalets and cottages close by. These summer visitors ranged from the warden of a city settlement to a five-year-old girl of Italian-Brazilian parentage who mostly appeared in a diminutive tangerine bathing garment. Most of the party I met in the lake, for my hostess suggested a dip by way of refreshment after my night journey, and it was the hour of the second morning bath. At the end of the landing-stage a burly Swiss received me hospitably. His somersault dives were the subject of much admiration and envy. He proved to be the gardener. I swam out in almost tepid blue water, gazing between strokes at the hazy, tumbled peaks of Savoy on the other side. Life seemed very good, if a trifle queer.

You soon became one of the large family. It is so easy, really, if conventions of class, creed and nation are wiped right out—and they soon are in a community where everyone shares in the daily work. The only professional help we had was that of cook and gardener. The former was the mother of a pupil, who, having come to visit her daughter, begged to join the staff in any capacity. She was certainly an adept at egg, cheese and vegetable cookery—the staple foods in that vegetarian "ménage," for Môtó is nothing if not thorough, and, as a pacifist, she holds sacred the life of Brother Ox and Brother Sheep, as well as all human life.

So the establishment yielded no bones for Médor, the dog.

Now, the school is run on modern free principles—that is, the theories of Montessori are applied to children of all ages, who decide for themselves what lessons they will do, if any. Then why not let the dog decide whether or not he wished to be deprived of animal food? Certain of the guests scented the chance of "getting at" Môtó beautifully, so we arranged a mock trial of her for wilful misfeeding of the dog, Médor. Wigs and gowns were produced from the charade cupboard; various rôles allotted: the hall arranged to represent a court; witnesses unblushingly coached in their evidence; twelve jurymen and true appointed as jury; some of rather tender age, under a foreman of avowed partiality for the canine plaintiff. Counsel for the prosecution spoke in English. He maintained that Médor, an animal of uncertain pedigree, faintly resembling a stocky spaniel, with lemon replacing the usual liver colour, was really a St. Bernard, stunted by unnatural diet. Counsel for the defence, a Swiss lady of international reputation, pleaded, in eloquent French with correct legal tags interwoven, that the dog's birth and puppyhood in a German prison camp accounted for any defects, and that he was healthy and well nourished. Telling evidence was given by the cook as to the serious effects of vegetable diet on her own figure, once slim (so she averred), and similarly on Médor's. The accused proffered cheese to the plaintiff to prove his preference for such food, but this cogent piece of evidence was contradicted by his appearing five minutes later with an enormous bone in his mouth, which he proceeded to enjoy very audibly beneath the judge's seat. At this point the accused burst into tears to try to move the jury, and I saw two grey eyes raised wonderingly, and a little hand gently stroking Môtó's foot, for one small person thought the tears were real.

Saturday evenings were always festive in some way, for everybody loved dressing up and "pretending." Then Sunday was a day of the utmost peace. Directly after breakfast came prayers, as usual, beginning with a piano solo, followed by hymns and reading, or the telling of a story, or possibly an address. Then people scattered to church or Friends' meeting in Geneva, or to local churches, or perhaps to the quiet of the lakeside with a book. The week-days slipped by all too fast. A party would go off with sandwiches up into the forest-clad Jura mountains to the north to enjoy the marvellous panorama of the Alps, or we might row across to the French side of the lake, keeping a weather eye open for the sudden wind which, almost without warning, lashes the water into great waves. And an hour away by train or steamer was Geneva—that bright, trim, virtuous-looking city of many bridges and many languages, with its memories of Jean Jacques Rousseau and Calvin, and its modern international touch. It is a little disappointing to find that the Palais des Nations, the headquarters of the League of Nations, is merely a converted hotel; but once inside, you cannot but be struck by the efficient organisation of this huge office. The reference library deserves whole-hearted admiration, and the careful distribution of posts, from highest to lowest, among representatives of many nations and both sexes. I had hoped to be present at one of the meetings of the Assembly which take place in the large hall of the Hôtel Métropole, but was greeted that morning (Sept. 6th), in the motor launch crossing the Rhone, by one who announced that the sitting was cancelled, presumably on account of the Italo-Greek crisis. It was a great disappointment, for I was leaving for Paris that night. A very dejected person went and fed the swans behind Rousseau's statue till the sunshine and the deep blue of the lake and the gleam of Mont Blanc's snow dispelled the gloom. Then back to Elysium to take farewell.

It was afternoon when I got home. I had a last plunge in the lake with the boys, who then went off to work at their wireless installation while I dallied in the sun and kept gazing over at Mont Blanc and pondering over things. Why did I love this place so much? What was there in the spirit of it, which made one so strangely content? How was it that I could live happily at close quarters with people whom a month ago I should have judged impossible cranks? That I could find washing up and peeling potatoes amusing? That I felt no surprise when the washer-woman took her place at table with the rest of us? I can see her still as she came into the "salon" at the end of her day's work, received her money, and then kissed Môtó warmly on both cheeks, beamed affectionately at her, and said: "It is that I like so well to work here for you."

I think perhaps it is all due to Môtó and Mont Blanc. She, in her simple, direct goodness and love of all, creates an atmosphere of sincerity and good-fellowship; Mont Blanc, in his serene whiteness, stands for purity of ideal and the striving after the highest. Such was my Elysium. Is it really one of the small beginnings of that new world which we hoped to see rise from the smouldering ashes of the Great War? Who can tell what may be achieved by the faith which removes mountains?

After the above, it will perhaps do us good to come down to more materialistic matters; and I will close up this week's survey by the following, from *The Times* (6th Oct.):—

Swiss Railway Electrification.

The Swiss Parliament has accepted a proposal to accelerate the programme of electrification of the Federal Railways, which will be completed in 1925, instead of 1930.

The electrification of the Swiss Federal Railways is making good progress, and so far, 257 miles, out of a total of 1,800, have been electrified. Electrically driven trains are now running on the Isella-Brig-Sion line (Simplon), Berne-Thun, Chiasso-Lucerne (St. Gothard), Arth-Goldau-Zoug-Immensee-Rothkreuz, and Lucerne-Zurich lines. Work is steadily progressing on the Sion-Lausanne line, which will be ready at the end of this year; on the Lucerne-Basel, Thalwil-Richterswil and Lausanne-Yverdon sections, which will be ready in the course of 1924; next year work is to begin on the Zurich-Berne and Geneva-Renens lines, which will be electrified in 1925, so that, at that time, nearly 503 miles will be equipped with electricity. Contracts for the construction of 104 electric engines will be placed next year, and at the end of 1924 the Federal Railways will be in possession of 174 electric and 983 steam engines, against 124 and 1,063 respectively in 1923. The Railways Board has decided also to purchase a certain number of oil-driven or Diesel engines in order to make trials on the secondary lines.

The electric engines, which are being constructed in the Brown and Boveri (Baden) and Secheron (Geneva) works, have so far given excellent results. The recent trials made on the St. Gothard lines show that the fastest train covers the distance from Zurich to Chiasso (151 miles) in 4 hrs. 37 min., compared with 5 hrs. 19 min. when steam engines were used.

Up to the end of 1922 Switzerland had expended £8,800,000 on electrification, of which £5,560,000 was for rolling stock; in 1923 expenditure will amount to £2,600,000, including £760,000 for rolling stock; and £2,800,000 (£1,000,000 on rolling stock) will be expended before the end of 1925, a total of £17,760,000.

MISCELLANEOUS ADVERTISEMENTS

Not exceeding 3 lines.—Per insertion, 2s.; three insertions, 5s.—Postage extra on replies addressed to *Swiss Observer*.

BOARD-RESIDENCE.—Single and Double Rooms, overlooking large gardens; use of drawing-room; very convenience; good cooking; very central; Swiss proprietor; terms from 2½ gns.—41, Tavistock Square, W.C.1.

SWISS FAMILY offers comfortable HOME to Swiss lady or gentleman; terms moderate.—Reply, "W.S." c/o "Swiss Observer," 21, Garlick Hill, E.C.4.

HOME FOR GENTLEMAN: close Crouch End Station; tariff terms; references exchanged. — 28, Avenue Road, Highgate.

TO LET, Charming Bed-Sittingroom, newly dec. and furn., with breakfast, eventually full board, with Swiss family; half an hour from City; all conveniences; family life.—Write, "W.N." c/o "Swiss Observer," 21, Garlick Hill, E.C.4.