

Miscellaneous advertisements

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NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

Readers will have noticed from last-week's issue that "Kyburg" has taken a long vacation to obtain fresh inspiration in Switzerland. *The Swiss Observer* cannot do without his article, and we will continue to deal with references of Swiss interest in the English press, although we must be excused if they are not dispensed up with his customary "mustard and cress"—especially the "mustard."

Young Swiss and England.

A meeting of the Swiss Economic Commission to deal with this important question took place last Friday (Aug. 24). The presence of the Swiss Minister was much appreciated. M. Paravicini detailed some of the numerous cases where the intentional non-observance and violation of the existing aliens restrictions by our compatriots (as regards seeking employment in this country) had thrown considerable and somewhat unpleasant work on the staff of the Legation—a circumstance which was not apt to bring about a modification of these regulations by the English authorities; he welcomed any practicable suggestions contributing towards a solution of the present state of affairs, which is certainly unsatisfactory from the point of view of those of our young fellow-countrymen who are anxious to complete their commercial education by accepting employment in this great business centre. After a lengthy discussion a few members undertook to work out a working arrangement, to be submitted to the Swiss Minister on his return from Switzerland.

The Holiday Season.

If the regular and fascinating articles in the English press are any indication, the season should prove lucrative to our hotel industry, but some reports from the home country are not so optimistic. This summer has certainly been an "ace" as far as fatal accidents are concerned, but in spite of this—or perhaps because of it—the call of the Alps has not diminished in persistency, thus giving the lie to the old Valaisian proverb that "in the end 'the mountains always win.' A lofty description of an open-air service, entitled "How beautiful 'upon the Mountains,' appeared in the *Christian World* (Aug. 16th); here it is:—

Ten o'clock of a radiant Sunday morning on the side of a Swiss valley south of the Rhône. Far below in the deep gorge rushes the river Trient on its way to join the Rhône at Martigny. Here, a couple of thousand feet above it, are hamlets and little fields—tiny horizontal shelves wrested by man's wit and effort out of the perpendicular, banked up with rock and cultivated to the utmost inch. (How they work, these brave Swiss! They never haste, but neither do they rest.) Above and around, the pine forest, and over all the sheer mountain crags, thrusting stark and jagged into blue, with here and there a patch of late snow.

On the lower edge of the forest, a few yards from the pathway leading to the next village, four-score people are met to worship God in the open air. The Swiss pastor has chosen the place with a fine instinct for the beautiful and the practical. It is a little natural amphitheatre, with moss-covered boulders for seats and trees for pillars. He has a tree stump at the base of the semicircle for a reading desk, and to the trees behind him he has fastened a flag and weighted it with stones, so that the red expanse with the wide square cross in white forms at once a background and a symbol. It is not the Swiss flag, which is red on white, but the flag of the French Evangelical Society, centred in Geneva and working impartially in France and French-speaking Switzerland. In the village of Les Marécottes below, the Roman Catholic is celebrating mass in his church, and the Anglican is holding a service in an hotel, while we of yet another form of faith are also free to worship in the way that seems good to us. Not three hundred years ago, across the Rhône yonder, in the canton of Vaud—and it may even have been here in the Valais—the Vaudois are massacred by their overlords, the Duke of Piedmont, because they claimed to have held their form of worship and their faith pure and free from the tyranny of Rome without intermission since the days of the Apostles. In their anguish they called upon Cromwell for aid, and he wrote letters of such force, not only to the Duke, but to other European potentates, that eventually the intolerant edict was rescinded. It was Milton who composed those letters, and the matter stirred him to flaming wrath for which prose was no outlet, and which found expression in a great sonnet:

Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept Thy truth so pure of old,
Forget not.

And here is God's vengeance—that in those self-same mountains to-day we are all alike free and unmolested, able to worship Him according to our conscience, whatever our nation or tongue or creed, with tolerance and even respect for each other. I do not know if this was the vengeance Milton had in mind; I think probably not. But the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of men.

The Swiss pastor preached for more than half-an-hour without a note—"I beheld Satan fall as lightning from heaven." It was a call to faith and courage, based, not on the ignoring or denying of tragic facts, but on the reality behind them of Christ and the power of His righteousness. He had a beautiful voice, and he spoke with that combination of fervour, simplicity and dignity which is so characteristic of French-speaking preachers. I am struck afresh, every time I hear them, with the wonderful gift of clear and beautiful expression by means of which they convey a passionate and burning conviction. And I am led to ask myself sorrowfully whether French is really so much more beautiful a language than English, or whether our speakers are forgetting the art of using it.

It is an ideal way of worship—in the heart of the most majestic beauty and grandeur, a little company of believers forming a church, their aspirations guided and their adoration voiced by a devout and fervent pastor. There is a sense of immediacy, of unhinderedness, which comes but seldom in cities and buildings. To some of us the glory of forest and mountain, and cloud and river may become symbols comparable to

the bread and wine, and in their midst and by their means we celebrate a communion with the One Omnipotent and Omnipresent God. Medieval theology found an antagonism between Christianity and the happy primitive life of nature which the Greeks personified as Pan; and the legend ran that at the birth of Christ there were heard from rock and pool and meadow wailing voices which cried: "Alas, alas, Pan is dead!" He was not dead; he remained as he has always been, the humble, rejoicing servant of his Creator; and it would be a more beautiful legend which should represent him as entering the stable with the shepherds to bow in adoration before the Holy Child, bringing as a gift all earth's beauty for ever consecrated to His service.

The worldly side finds expression in a contribution to the *Methodist Recorder* (Aug. 23rd) from a member of the "Comradeship Holidays," who describes a day spent in Thun and Interlaken as follows:—

It was a lovely journey, the heat of the sun being constantly softened by the cool breeze of the blue lake. We saw the great giants of the Oberland one by one as we sailed along. The Niessen just above Spiez, from the summit of which, on the Monday, we had seen a glorious panorama of showy mountains; Beatenberg, on the other side of the lake; beautiful Blumlisalp, the best known of all the snow mountains to people who stay in Spiez; and then the wonderful group of mountains which stand like a ring of giants all holding hands—the Ogre, the Monk, the Shrike, the Weather-mountain, and the Young Lady. Those are their real names. Clever people call them the Eiger, the Mönch, the Schreckhorn, the Wetterhorn, and the Jungfrau. The Jungfrau stands towering above Interlaken in the grandest possible stateliness—a magnificent mountain, lovely in shape and constantly changing in its tints and moods. I don't wonder they call it the Young Lady. It is beautiful and interesting in all its changing moods.

In the fine streets of Interlaken we found everybody in holiday attire. Pretty young girls in national costumes, close-fitting bodices of black velvet with embroidery, buttons and beads everywhere, snowy white tops and sleeves and pieces let into the black skirt, white stockings and a head-dress. Well, I think I am pretty good at describing dress or hats. I know what "georgette" is and "tulle" and "chiffon" (and "chiffon") and nunsveiling and "peau de soie" and "delaine" and lots more, but I give those head-dresses up. Imagine a framework of black wire, rising from the shoulders and going right round over the head like a halo round the head of a pictured saint. Stretched on this wire, black gauze or tulle, or pleated and decorated and frilled with embroideries and other gadgets, and a pretty young face in the centre, generally with a crown of golden hair, and you see the pretty sight we saw dozens of times that afternoon. Then there were young men from the mountains with gorgeous plumage in their hats and sleeved waistcoats of black velvet, and embroidery too. They looked picturesque, but not so pretty as the girls.

Home we went for evening dinner to find a very special meal provided. Federal soup (think of that now), salmon caught in Lake Thun, chicken caught in the hen-runs of Spiez, asparagus, and to finish up—guess what! The waitresses all disappeared into the serving-rooms while we looked at our menus and wondered what "chalets glaces" could be. Then a bell rang, and they all trooped forth, bearing each a dish in which stood a dainty little model of a real Swiss chalet, the walls and roof made of chocolate biscuit stuck together, with loads of thick cream. Down came the spoons, the walls fell flat, and inside each chalet was a great heap of glorious ice-cream. By common consent we all clapped heartily when those chalets came on the scene. Then we all rushed to the hotel terrace, where the lovely Blumlisalp could be seen, its snow-fields all bathed in the richest ruddy glow of sunset. Perfectly gorgeous it was!

Some novel hints to women climbers are broadcast in the *Manchester Guardian* (Aug. 23rd), thus:

Thick sandwiches and rough red wine are not poetical accompaniments, nevertheless they make a welcome feast and are indeed a very necessity before the downward journey is begun. For it is almost always the descent which tests the novice, discovering the weak points in her physical armour and quickly revealing what capacity she may possess for becoming a climber of quality.

A novice who finds she has the poise, the sure foot, the steady head, the unflinching nerve, together with a reserve of energy and strength which will carry her through long hours of fatigue, should waste no time in gaining initial practice in difficult "bits" before starting on any long mountain climb. Such experience can best be gained at one of our such famous centres as Zermatt or the Rifel Alp, Grindelwald, or Pontresina. At these places suitable guides can always be found ready to take out a promising beginner and capable of hastening her progress.

To which we should like to add that staying in a boarding-house in Brighton—the address of which we will gladly supply—and climbing up and down the mysterious stairs to and from one's bedroom should prove an excellent introduction and preparation for mountaineering.

The Spahlinger Treatment.

The *Daily Express* and the *Daily Dispatch* (Manchester) have initiated a vigorous campaign in order to stimulate interest with a view to securing the necessary funds for a continuance of Dr. Spahlinger's work. The agreement between the latter and the British Red Cross Society has had to be cancelled, and although the British Ministry of Health has always exhibited a sympathetic attitude, no financial support may be expected from this source until English medical experts have given their considered opinion. The only hope lies with the Lancashire Insurance Committee, which, subject to the approval of the Government, is inclined to make a grant of £100,000. In the meantime Dr. Spahlinger's establishment in Geneva is being offered for sale in order to satisfy, to a small extent, the creditors who claim something like £60,000. During the sixteen years of bacteriological research the whole family fortune has been sacrificed, Dr. Spahlinger's father possessing at one time over £80,000. What strikes a layman as rather strange is the fact that Dr. Spahlinger has turned

down inflexibly many tempting offers made to him by commercial firms for the joint exploitation of his serum and vaccines; he seems to have a complete and utter disregard of money, in fact, he appears to hate the sight and mention of it. The following pathetic personal note is taken from one of the interesting articles in the *Daily Express* (August 20th):—

Imagine a little garden table set in the grateful shade of a chestnut tree in the cobbled courtyard which fronts a square, white, stonebuilt house. You reach it by climbing up a steep roadway shadowed by wonderful trees. On the one hand the Salève frowns down from its 4,000 feet of height into the Lake of Geneva. On the other the Jura Mountains stretch away along their mighty path.

The house is unoccupied save for a few white-coated bacteriologists, a vast population of tubercle bacilli whose incredible numbers are sufficient to devastate a continent, and a wonderful grey-haired old lady.

A little company such as few dramatists would imagine sits round the table. There is a young English bank clerk. A few months ago he was coughing his way to the grave. Now he is cracking jokes and thinking of taking up golf again.

There is a charming young Englishwoman, well known in London. Less than two years ago she was condemned to a consumptive's death. To-day she sits here smiling and happy. The bloom of health is on her cheeks and the note of laughter in her voice. She has just climbed the hill and is not breathless. Her mother smiles delightedly by her side.

There is a young New Zealander with eyes too bright and cheeks too sunken. He arrived not an hour ago from a 13,000 mile journey to the white stone house where he thinks death will be cheated. His wife sits by his side, and the light of hope shines in her eyes.

There is a gallant old Swiss gentleman who has happily watched his family fortune disappear.

The grey-haired old lady of whom one catches an occasional sight through the windows of the microbe-baden house is his wife.

The white-frocked, young-looking man with the piercing black eyes who darts from house to table and back again is his son—Henry Spahlinger.

The grizzled veteran who chats to him is the famous commander of a Colonial army in the great war. He is one of many who visit the White House of Hope to find out for nations and Governments if the young-looking man in the white coat has conquered consumption.

A couple of monkeys play round the table legs. Their experimental days have ended long ago. All they do now is to make mischief in the sunlight.

A few yards away, hundreds of guinea-pigs run quietly about their pens. Half of them are filled with tubercle. They will die, so that others, like the bank clerk, the girl, and the New Zealander, may live.

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