

# Notes and Gleanings

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**NOTES AND GLEANINGS.**

By "KYBURG."

I hope our Editor will find room for the whole of the following article by H. Wilson Harris, which appeared in the *Daily News* on the 14th inst. and which, I venture to believe, is of very real interest and importance to us Swiss, inasmuch as it shows that, given patience and real goodwill, international problems can be settled by discussion. After all, as I never tire of pointing out, the various different nations are nothing but various and different members of one family, and in nicely behaved families disputes and differences of opinion, even if they are due to economic causes or questions of *amour propre*, are settled amicably and without the different members of that family flying at each other's throats. And as long as families exist which can settle their disputes amicably, so long will I believe that Nations can be brought to do the same, provided that feeling of brotherly love is inculcated into the children's mind, as much as is the case now where children of one family are concerned. It is all a question of degree and proportion, and those who disbelieve that the human family will finally reach PEACE make me feel tired.

**The International Mind.**

An American professor, scouring Europe for what he might succeed in finding, asked me a day or two ago what traces there were of the appearance of anything like an international mind. It is an interesting question, which most of us must have put to ourselves many times in the last few years. You put it to yourself, naturally enough, at Geneva. You put it to yourself, to more purpose, when you get away from Geneva, and try and estimate what Geneva really counts for in the world. It is better in some ways to see Geneva at a distance.

That at least is the view of a leading statesman who knows the seat of the League well and lately expressed genuine concern lest the international atmosphere should grow so potent there that under its influence Government delegates would make decisions and accept settlements which their Cabinets away in the materialistic surroundings of some distant capital would refuse to endorse.

That, however, is by the way, though it is an aside worth pursuing in itself. On the whole, the dangers of too much international mind are negligible. The tendency is all the other way. Drive out Nature with a pitchfork, said the Roman poet, and back she comes all the same. You can use much the same words of nationalism. Not, of course, that that is a bad thing. Too little nationalism might be as grave a misfortune for the world as too much. The problem is how to keep the gold in national self-consciousness and get rid of the dross.

Some illustration of the difficulties attending that process is provided by the recent conference of the International Federation of League of Nations Societies at Lyons. Nothing could be more international than the motives underlying such a body's existence. It consists, as the name implies, of societies in every country corresponding to the League of Nations Union in Great Britain. The purpose of each society is to promote League principles. When they unite for an annual conference, the suppression of purely individual aims and interests may reasonably be expected to be carried further still.

How far did this in fact happen? To begin with, it has to be recognised that the presence on French soil of a German delegation to attend a conference essentially political in character, was in itself a challenge to the international mind, and the fact that the head of the delegation was Count Bernstorff, German Ambassador at Washington till America declared war, was not calculated to simplify matters. Difficulties did in fact arise beforehand, but they were surmounted as the result, largely, of the good sense and right spirit of the French League of Nations Societies. As a result, the presence of the Germans at Lyons, the perfectly harmonious relations established between them and the other delegates, and the cordial reception given to a wholly reasonable speech by Count Bernstorff on reparations, were all items to enter on the credit side of the "international mind" account.

Now for the other side. What sort of political questions were down on the agenda of the conference? To begin with, that able and eloquent negro from Haiti, M. Dantes Belgarde, who made so profound an impression at the Second Assembly of the League in 1921, was there to plead the cause of his country against the United States, which has considered it necessary since 1915 to put Haiti under temporary American occupation.

In the second place, there came the Lithuanian delegate, bent on fighting the whole weary battle of Vilna over again. Thirdly, there appeared a curious anti-Soviet Russian delegation (survival from the day when Sovietism was believed to be only a transient phase) to register as comprehensive a Russian claim to Bessarabia as Zinovieff himself would ever frame, and denounce the Polish-Rumanian alliance in terms quite intolerably provocative.

Here, as has been said, is to all appearances the other side of the shield. From west and east and south they come, each to grind their own particular axes, altogether more concerned over a national grievance than over promoting international co-operation and developing an international mind. Such a judgment may be superficially plausible. In reality it is largely unjust. In the first place, grievances on a man's own doorstep or at his very fireside mean something very different to him from the impression they make on an unconcerned observer half-a-dozen streets away. Due account must be taken of what the Haitians, rightly or wrongly, think about America, or the Lithuanians, rightly or wrongly, think about Poland.

But the real point is not that. The real point is the background. Why do nations with a grievance betake themselves straight to Geneva, or even to Lyons? To what do they make appeal? To what but to the beginnings, at any rate, of an international mind. In whose impartiality and justice some confidence at least has already been created? *Securus judicioris orbis terrarum.*

The world—mirrored officially at Geneva, unofficially at Lyons or somewhere else—itsself unconcerned in the quarrel, gives its just and disinterested verdict. That, no doubt, is putting the thing a little too high. The disputants are not always surrounded by a wholly dis-

interested ring of spectators. One or other of them may have friends in the crowd, and often has. But the bulk of the crowd is disinterested, and gives judgment accordingly. We have had not merely a world-conscience, but a world-conscience beginning to be articulate.

That is some answer to the question we started from. Geneva gives it constantly. The Hague gives it even more constantly. A conference like Lyons (mention ought to be made of the valuable work done there in connection with minorities, disarmament, education and other matters) gives it in its measure. The thing is there. What it needs now is to gather strength.

And once we have settled our earthly business to our satisfaction, we may turn to other worlds and let them know how wonderfully well we manage ours, and the following may give us help towards discovering a new sphere of activity.

*Daily News* (16th July):—

**Giant Telescopes in Alps.**

In order to enable the general public to witness to the best advantage the planet Mars, which, between now and the middle of August, will be at its closest proximity to the earth—a circumstance which will not recur for over three-quarters of a century—two giant telescopes, intended for the future observatory on the Jungfrauoch, Switzerland, 11,340 ft. above sea-level, will this week be placed in position on that mountain.

Astronomical observations are particularly favourable at this season, and there is a railway station to the observatory—the highest in the world—served from Wengen, in the Oberland.

Writing of telescopes in the Alps brings me to think of the brave, but unfortunate effort which was recently made to climb Mount Everest. I now read in the *Evening News* of July 12th:—

Provided the necessary financial support is forthcoming, an attempt to climb Mount Everest (29,002 ft., the highest peak in the world) will probably be made by an expedition composed exclusively of Swiss early next spring.

The leading spirit in the project is a well-known Swiss Alpinist with experience of climbing in the Himalayas. Only picked guides under 35 will be taken.

Instead of cumbersome oxygen apparatus, the party will be supplied with a quantity of small tubes containing compressed oxygen which can be injected into the thigh when respiration becomes difficult.

There are, of course, some people who cannot see the usefulness of such attempts. But looking back on the British attempts of these last few years and especially the one of this year, which, alas! cost two heroic lives, I am sure the sacrifice has not been in vain. Think of all the countless thousands of schoolboys reading about the wonderful bravery and the almost superhuman efforts and tenacity of purpose exhibited by those gallant gentlemen, and think what a wholesome character-building effect such reading must inevitably have upon future generations. Can you then still fail to understand why the great sacrifice was not in vain?

**A Fishing Holiday in Switzerland.**

Disciples of Izaak Walton will be glad to read the following, especially if they are about to arrange for this summer's holiday. If any of them, thanks to my directing their attention to it, meets with good luck and does not know what to do with all the trout he is pulling out, the Editor will probably be able to let him have 'Kyburg's' Swiss address, especially in September, and 'Kyburg' will try to rise to the bait!

*Morning Post* (12th July):—

Switzerland, like all mountainous regions, is extremely well watered. Consequently good fishing abounds, not only in the lakes, but in the innumerable streams flowing into them. Keen fishermen, therefore, contemplating a holiday in the Alps, should not forget to include a fly rod and a few casts and flies amongst their kit. In addition to the joys of landing an occasional good basket, it will give the fisherman the chance of getting into the heart of the country, and seeing things denied to the average tourist on the stereotyped routes.

When planning a fishing holiday in Switzerland it is important to remember that most of the big rivers, such as the Rhone, Inn, Aar, and the Rhine become almost unfishable once the hot weather brings down the snow-water from the glaciers. Then, again, many mountain streams are too broken or too difficult of access for fishing.

In French Switzerland anglers generally concentrate on the Rhone Valley district, which abounds with trout rivers. Prominent amongst these is the Grand Canal, which empties into Lake Geneva between Villeneuve and the mouth of the Rhone. In recent years, land reclamation has robbed the canal of much of its current, but good trout are still plentiful. Farther up the valley is the Stockalper Canal, formerly controlled by an English club, where for a modest fee one can fish over a stretch of eight miles. Headquarters should be made at Montreux, or at Aigle, which latter place also has a good trout river known as the Grande Eau. The Avencan at Bex is another good stream, while the Pissevache at Vernayaz affords excellent fly fishing.

The Broye and the Sarine, best fished from Chateau d'Oex or Montboven, are both well stocked, but an additional licence is necessary after the Sarine enters the canton of Fribourg. These restrictions also apply to the Broye, an attractive river which meanders in and out of the cantons of Fribourg and Vaud. The upper reaches can be comfortably fished from Vevey. Sierre at the east end of the Rhone Valley was formerly a very popular district for anglers of the old school, and at least one British disciple of Izaak Walton has settled down there and founded a pisciculture establishment. The Rhone can be fished here until the snow water comes down, when attention should be diverted to the Bramois between Granges and St. Léonard, or the other side streams which abound thereabouts.

On the other side of Switzerland the Erise between Delemont and Birsfelden, near Basle, provides unusually good fishing. It is, however, somewhat off the beaten track, and the difficulty is in securing convenient headquarters. There are innumerable streams,

all well stocked, in this region, but unfortunately most of the waters are private.

In the upper Engadine fish are plentiful in the lakes and their multitudinous tributaries. Fine specimens are frequently caught in the Maloja lake, while the Inn near Samaden, and other nearby streams, offer good sport, although much more difficult to fish on account of the crystal clearness of the waters. The fly can also be used on the St. Moritz lake, but accounts vary as to its success.

In recent years Federal and private enterprise has done much towards restocking the Swiss rivers, and with the re-awakening of interest, fishing in the Alps is quickly regaining its pre-war popularity.

**Alpfahrt and Thalfahrt**

forms the subject of the following article in the *Hampstead Advertiser* of July 10th:—

A peep at the pastures of the High Alps during the summer will reveal herds of fine cows, sounding a quaint melody with their bells as they graze in the brilliant sunlight and tended by good-hearted, happy fellows attentive beyond praise to their charges. Formerly in the upper Engadine the cowherds used to invoke a blessing on the pasture at sunset and, with a wooden milk funnel as a speaking trumpet, make an appeal for the protection during the night of the cattle and themselves. Both the going of the cattle to the mountain slopes and their return to enter upon long, dreary, winter captivity are occasions of importance. While at the beginning of the summer the cows are urged to fight among themselves for leadership, at the end the victor is led through the streets by its proud owner and the herdsmen naturally celebrate their return by a certain amount of jollifications. In the Unterwalden this merriment used to take the form of a festival called the Golden Threshold or Cowherds Kibbi, a luxury called Kilbespeise, a dish of butter and whey, being the chief relish at these times. The welcome home, as it really was, began with a church service followed by a gay procession, in which figured the banner of the Alpine cowherds. Conspicuous at the head of the procession marched two of the herdsmen, strange-looking figures, disguised as gnomes, carrying fir trees in their hands and playing all sorts of tricks to the fearful delight of the eager, curious children. A merry day was succeeded by a still more merry night, during which singing, dancing, drinking and card-playing were all freely indulged in.

It was 'Kyburg's' great good fortune last September to witness the Thalfahrt at Urnaesch, and a prettier picture it would be difficult to imagine, and at the same time so 'urichig' Swiss.

In his "Lied von der Glocke" Schiller says: "Das Schönste sucht er auf den Fluren,"

and the following, which I saw in the *Manchester City News* of July 18th, will, I hope, give pleasure and evoke half-forgotten pictures also among many of my readers:—

**Swiss and Italian Flowers.**

Although on their recent tour in Switzerland and Italy the Manchester Field Naturalists were chiefly on holiday bent, the wealth of flowers by the wayside could not be resisted. In the parks and gardens round the towns an abundance of floral beauty outshone the rich green foliage from which it sprang, whilst many fine specimens of such well-known trees as horse-chestnut, lime, sycamore, ash, poplar and plane were to be seen.

Up the mountain these trees were left behind, and belts of pine and fir were passed, whilst rare floral treasures were glimpsed at the side of the railway; until reaching the top, the awe and majesty of the scene enthralled the travellers. In the search for Alpine flowers over thirty specimens were obtained and identified with the aid of Hoffman's excellent book, as well as several varieties of gentian and many examples of dainty little primulas, perfect miniatures of our greenhouse varieties.

Motoring and walking through meadows high above sea-level, the travellers found not only flowers, but flowering grasses which added to the beauty of the landscape, and the homely forget-me-not shone with so deep a blue that it seemed as though reflecting blue of lake and sky together.

On the southern side of the St. Gothard tunnel, grape vines, with their graceful growth, began to clothe the hills and valleys, mulberry trees were being shorn of their leaves to feed the hungry silkworms, and, nearing Lugano, the vegetation became subtropical. The flowering trees included white magnolias, with their handsome bloom and lovely perfume, pink and white oleanders, smacah, palms, acacias and tulip-trees in flower. Whole hillsides covered with dark-leaved Spanish chestnut, tasselled with delicate flowers, were broken by the grey of the olive and the dark, slim form of the cypress, and passing through Intra on Lake Maggiore, we drove along an avenue of limes almost veiled down with bloom which exhaled a delicious odour.

On the same day cherries were seen in abundance, apricots, locusts, mulberries, figs, almonds, filberts, oranges and lemons in fruit, pomegranates with their glorious red flowers, and walnuts everywhere. The writer also noticed fruit forming on a few plantains, and some trees in the distance which looked like guavas.

The Italian houses seen from the lake were often brilliant splashes of colour with petunias, geraniums, carnations and nasturtiums hanging from windows, doors and balconies, the latter sometimes overhanging the water and wreathed in grape and passion flower vines, making one say feelingly: "No wonder artists come here for subjects."

**S. M. S. "SOUPER FAMILIER."**

There is no doubt that all those (to the number of 95) who were present at the "Souper familier", which took place on the 18th July at the Union Helvetia, thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

It was very pleasing indeed for the new Committee, only elected a few weeks ago, to witness such a good response to their first appeal to the Society's members and friends.

The "Souper familier," as announced, was given in honour of the 36 members forming the party of the "Union Suisse pour l'Enseignement commercial," at present on a tour in the United Kingdom. Mr. G. E. DeBrunner, former President of the S.M.S., took the Chair, and proved once