

# Home news

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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

Widespread devastation was caused by cloudbursts which were experienced at the beginning of last week over several districts in the cantons of Basel-Land and Solothurn. Heavy rainstorms are also responsible for inundations in the inner and eastern part of Switzerland, especially the Pilatus region. Several people have been drowned by falling into swollen streams, whilst others were struck by lightning.

\*\*\*  
The National Council has voted a credit of 13 million francs for war material and the equipment of recruits.

\*\*\*  
The much-discussed Art. 22 of the new statute regulating the employment of civil servants, and which deprives the latter of the right to strike, has been passed in the National Council by a large majority. It is said that the Socialist and Communist parties are launching a referendum with the intention of eliminating this restriction.

\*\*\*  
Compulsory unemployment insurance was added, during last week-end, by large majorities of the electorate to the statute book of the cantons of Basel-Stadt and St. Gall. In the canton of Neuchâtel the electors have refused to sanction a bill which deprives those in arrears with the payment of their taxes of the right to vote.

\*\*\*  
A strange position has arisen by a ruling of the Regierungsrat of the canton of Berne to the effect that postal autos using the Grimsel Pass have, in future, to submit to the general rules of the road. By a privilege created some years ago by the Federal authorities, ordinary traffic has to travel on the outside of mountain roads, thus reserving the postal autos, even when passing other cars, the safe inside.

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At the suggestion of the Grosse Rat of the canton of Aargau, the electors are to be asked to increase the daily emolument of its members from Frs. 3 to Frs. 10.

\*\*\*  
Instead of a budgeted deficit of about 220,000 francs, the accounts for 1925 of the town of Winterthur disclose a surplus of nearly half-a-million francs.

\*\*\*  
Monsieur Felix Calonder, a former President of the Confederation, who not long ago spent some time in the London Colony and who is now at the head of one of the International Commissions (Silesia) created under the Versailles Treaty, was entertained to dinner last week at Berlin by the German Chancellor Marx, assisted by President Hindenburg.

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The proceedings against no less than 5,563 deserters, i.e., of Swiss who did not respond to the mobilisation order during the Great War, will become void as from the 1st of October this year under the Statute of Limitations.

\*\*\*  
The index figure of the cost of living compiled by the Swiss Co-operative Societies (Konsumverein) for the month of May shows a further drop of 1.7, thus establishing, with an index of 154.6, the lowest figure recorded since the end of the war.

\*\*\*  
During the forthcoming army manoeuvres, Aarau with its 10,000 inhabitants will have to find accommodation for about 5,000 soldiers of the Fourth Division during the night from Sept. 24th—25th.

\*\*\*  
The commandant of the voluntary fire brigade of Buchs was acquitted by the local tribunal of the charge of negligence. During a rehearsal in February last year one of the fire escapes came into contact with a high-tension circuit near Gonzenberg, killing four firemen on the spot and injuring a fifth seriously.

\*\*\*  
An epidemic of typhoid has visited the cantonal lunatic asylum Königsfelden (Aargau); 71 of the inmates and attendants are seriously affected, and five deaths have taken place. The cause of the outbreak is a mystery.

\*\*\*  
For mortally wounding a companion with knife thrusts in the course of a dispute, Gottlieb Amsler,

of Densbüren, has been sentenced at the Zurich assizes to four months' imprisonment.

\*\*\*  
National Councillor Jacob Gutknecht has died in Ried (Fribourg) at the age of 60. A farmer and landowner of some importance, he has since 1899 uninterruptedly occupied the position of "syndic" in his native commune Ried.

## AN APPEAL

on behalf of the Victims of the Recent Disastrous Cyclone in Switzerland.

In order to succour the numerous victims of the recent cyclone which swept over part of the Jura, especially the region of La Chaux-de-Fonds, the Swiss Minister in London has opened a relief fund and addressed a letter to this effect to the presidents of the different societies in London. We gather that the Swiss Institute has already circularised its members with very gratifying results, whilst the Union Helvetia is organising a ball and one or two other events, the proceeds of which will be devoted to this fund.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KYBURG."

### "Serving the Lord in Little Tibet."

That there still exists the spirit of religious adventure and of sacrifice is shewn by the following (*The English Churchman*, June 17th):—

Some eighteen months ago there came to England a young believer of Swiss nationality, who had before him a set purpose.

In July, 1917, he came to a knowledge of his Lord and Saviour by the reading of John iii, 16, and writes: "The Lord gave me grace to understand that I was saved to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven."

He was enabled to enter a Bible School in Switzerland and studied there. The way was opened for him to attend lectures in two hospitals, and later he was for two years in France. He then came to England and had further medical training at Livingstone College. For all his needs he asked in faith, nothing wavering, and proved not one word fail of all His good promise. Since the Lord had led him thus far he doubted not that He would go with him still further.

Having read much of the need of the peoples of Little Tibet, he felt called to preach the Gospel of Christ in that needy field. At this juncture he was confronted with many difficulties, and much prayer was made on his behalf that the Lord would open the way before him and lead him in a straight path. In a very short time he again proved all things possible to them that believe. All his need had been supplied, the booking of his passage to Bombay was further evidence of God's overruling hand, and he went forth upheld by a band of faithful, praying friends. Having by the mercy of God a safe journey, he joined an experienced missionary. It was not long before he was in active service. His letters are most encouraging. He tells of the physical needs of the people. Disease so often caused by neglect, and how grateful they are to be relieved of their sufferings. They are informed long before his arrival that he carries medicine, and it is wonderful to read of how he performs operations quite successfully, being thrown entirely upon God for all needed wisdom and strength. Truly our young friend has great opportunities. He is becoming acquainted with the language, and is already able to read a little from the Gospels to his patients. His heart yearns to tell them of the love of God.

And yet, I cannot help feeling that there are countless numbers of patients very much nearer than "Little Tibet," and I wonder whether Christ, had He known our present-day slum districts, would have directed the activities of his followers to foreign countries.

The glorious weather we are enjoying now directs our thoughts more and more towards the Highlands of our native country. "Off the beaten track" is the motto of many, and the following from *The Nation and the Athenæum* (12th June) gives a charming description of a not less charming spot:—

### La Gruyère.

Hidden away in the depths of the Fribourg Mountains in Switzerland is the shy little barony of La Gruyère, so modest that fame—the fame of its tasteful cheese—seems to have come to it against its will.

A simple pastoral province sheltering a community of old-fashioned people, La Gruyère presents a scene that still embodies the romantic air of the Middle Ages—historic castle walls looking down on misty valleys, quiet villages among the fields, where life has not changed for centuries.

Here the visitor will discover the jodeler, startling the woods and the lonely heights with his carolling. It is the home of mountaineers and cowherds. It is the home, too, of the bizarre but stirring national song, the "Ranz des Vaches," or "Chaunt of the Cows," which goes thus quaintly:—

"Lè z'armaillis dei Colombetté,

De bon matin se sanlèvá, ha! ha! ha! ha!"

This ancient song, written in the patois of the Fribourgeois, will stir a chord in the hearts of Swiss the world over. Its first line signifies that "the belled cow of Colombetté arose early in the morning," and its whole inspiration, like that of its more famous French cousin, "Sur le pont d'Avignon," which it recalls, is essentially of the people, expressing their pastoral tradition. Such a homely aspect of these hardy people is scarcely known to the mere globe-trotter, who envisages the Swiss either as an Alpine guide or as a hotel waiter!

In the Middle Ages, La Gruyère was more or less an independent barony ruled over by feudal lords, whose friendly interest in the people became proverbial. The last Comte de Gruyère, whose castle still stands intact, died four centuries ago. His stronghold stands on the top of a great rock, beneath whose brow curious old house: in the Gothic style huddle for shelter. Away on every side the fields sweep up to the mountains and are lost in the upland forests.

La Gruyère has no modern hotels to satisfy the tastes of 100-per cent. globe-trotters, but a pleasant scattering of comfortable old-fashioned inns where you can eat, drink, and be merry in the least complicated of ways. At every meal there are jugs of the wonderful Gruyère cream and plenty of rich, cool butter; and nothing in the world is more delicious than the trout they give you, fresh from the mountain streams.

For climbers there is the great Moléson, the Rigi of French Switzerland, and if really stiff ascents are wanted, there are innumerable peaks yet more rugged, such as the uncouth Gastlosen.

But I think of La Gruyère essentially as a country to saunter through quietly. To climb up to the Alps and sleep on straw in the Alpine chalets; to talk with old men over a brimming tankard and hear the charming legends of the country; to stroll unhurriedly from village to village and see the quiet activity of the people—these are the pleasures I would seek in a visit to La belle Gruyère.

### Death of an eminent Basle Surgeon.

In the *Lancet* of June 19th appears the following sympathetic necrologue on Gerhard Hotz, M.D., Basle and Würzburg:—

The death of Prof. Hotz is a severe loss to surgical teaching, and removes a figure loved and honoured far beyond his native city. Gerhard Hotz was born in Basle on June 8th, 1880, the son of Dr. Rudolf Hotz-Linder, teacher in the High School. He took the Fedare qualification in 1905, became surgical assistant in the Bürgerspital under Prof. Enderlen, and followed his master to Würzburg in 1907, where he gained a thorough introduction to modern surgical methods and began to acquire organising ability. After taking his degree in Würzburg in 1909 he received the title of professor in 1911, and shortly afterwards refused an invitation to Chicago in order to become surgeon in charge of the Deaconess House in Freiburg. It was while he was there that war broke out and Hotz received permission from the Swiss Army Medical Department to remain in Freiburg, where he took over a large part of the systematic teaching and became responsible for a war hospital which, with its adnexa, gave him at times 600 beds under his personal care. At this period he made intensive studies of gunshot nervous injuries with Dr. Hoche, director of the Nerve Clinic, and with an extensive surgical practice lived an extraordinarily full life, complicated by shortage of food and harassed by the activities of enemy aeroplanes, which destroyed the Anatomical Institute close to his hospital.

In 1918 Hotz returned to Basle to occupy the surgical chair left vacant by the departure of de Quervain for Berne. The position of a professor of surgery in a continental clinic is something different from what we know in this country. He is the absolute head of a surgical