

Notes and gleanings

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on against the handicaps of tariff walls abroad, high costs of production at home, and low wages in competing countries, would by this time be in a parlous condition indeed without the timely aid of artificial silk. In many articles the Swiss mills could not compete with the French and Italian manufacturers, who pay much lower wages, on a basis of pure silk; but by the skilful use of artificial silk to cheapen a given article the balance can be, and usually, is, redressed. Naturally, the competitor is apt to retaliate with an article containing still more artificial silk, but in the battle of wits which ensues the Swiss weaver pretty well holds his own.

In the cotton trade the problem presents itself somewhat differently. Swiss cotton spinners claim to have been the first to investigate seriously the possibilities of artificial silk mixed with cotton, but they were forced to abandon it, except in the case of the very finest goods, by reason of the fact that in almost all countries goods containing artificial silk now have to pay duty as though they were made entirely of natural silk. Every branch of the Swiss textile trades works principally for export. In ordinary cotton goods the use of artificial silk is impossible, since the price is not high enough to carry the duty. With very fine goods, however, it is just possible, and very striking effects are obtained. I have seen some double voiles destined for the United States, with an artificial silk weft stripe pattern, produced on a drop-box loom, which find a ready market in spite of the duty. Such goods, however, are produced only by a few large and well-organised mills, in which the difficulties of preparing artificial silk for the loom have been overcome. At first the prepared warps were supplied by the artificial silk makers on the beam, all ready for the loom, and the weft on shuttle pirns; this system was found too expensive, in addition to the fact that the yarns were usually too soft for the fast-running cotton looms. Experiments were made, with the result that the cotton mills using artificial silk on a sufficiently large scale now do their own winding, warping and sizing.

The knitted goods trade absorbs large quantities of artificial silk, chiefly as a substitute for cotton. A well-known cotton spinner who also owns a hosiery factory is converting the whole plant of one of his spinning mills in order to spin staple fibre into hosiery yarns. Here, again, silk interests do not appear to be damaged, but rather assisted. Pure silk hosiery is still made and has its market, while the simultaneous production of artificial silk goods keeps a large quantity of machinery running and spreads overhead charges, thereby allowing the classic article to be sold more cheaply than would otherwise be possible.

In embroidery manufacture artificial silk is now used a good deal for the design instead of mercerised cotton, but the consumption here is not so great as it should be by reason of the chronic depression of the embroidery trade. Large quantities of machinery have been scrapped during the last few years in St. Gall, and the process does not appear to have come to an end. The Basle ribbon trade is also severely depressed, and mills continue to close. Artificial silk is used as much as conditions permit, and will find an extensive application when trade improves.

The use of artificial silk waste, or "artificial schappe," is not being neglected. The important Industrie-Gesellschaft für Schappe in Basel, which has a dozen mills in Switzerland and France, reports that good results have been obtained from the use of this material.

On the whole, the prospects of the industry in Switzerland are very bright. The mills are by no means over-capitalised, and are well run. Their product is of a very high quality, and commands a good price in foreign markets; at home it constitutes an effective weapon in the hands of the textile manufacturers."

The Relief of Liechtenstein.

How the damage due to the Rhine inundations last autumn is being made good, under Swiss supervision, in the little principality, is described in the following article from the *Observer* (June 24) :

"An interesting experiment is going on in the little Principality of Liechtenstein, on the right bank of the Rhine, between Switzerland and Austria, formerly a part of the latter country but now in postal and customs union with Switzerland. By the disastrous inundations of the Rhine last September and October extensive stretches of fertile soil were covered with sand and pebbles, especially near the village of Schaan, where these materials have been deposited a yard deep in places. The desperate population, unable to remove them (and not trying very hard to) appealed for foreign help.

Pacific, Socialist and anti-militarist organisations, including the Quakers, took the matter up and organised a volunteer service, granting a free journey, board and lodging, but no pay. An extensive propaganda attracted volunteers to Liechtenstein from all countries of Europe, chiefly Swiss, Scandinavians, Englishmen, Germans and Frenchmen, though some even have

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come from such distant countries as India.

The majority of the volunteers being of Teutonic blood, they did not take long to create a sort of common language, by which they understand each other quite well. Those whose mother tongues are Latin find somewhat greater difficulty in taking part in the conversation, and in the discussions that fill the evenings, discussions of a highly abstract and idealistic tenour.

They certainly form a strange gathering. Some have come with the expectation of getting cheap holidays and an opportunity to loiter about. Others are real idealists and try to prove the possibility and efficiency of a strictly communist community. There are many students among them and boys of rich and even aristocratic origin.

The Berlin Communists and Paris anarchists are active in these discussions. At one of the first gatherings they protested against compulsory washing and going to bed, and against discipline in general, on the ground that those were odious reminders of military service.

The work is going on under the supervision of the Swiss Military Department, which furnishes tools and old uniforms, and prevents any extravagance and loosening of order and discipline. Without that, the whole experiment would certainly go to pieces."

The Watch Trade on the Watch!

From the *Times* (June 27th) :—

The Swiss Chamber of Watch Manufacturers has issued a warning to all Swiss watchmakers against a scheme which the Soviet Government is now preparing with a view to creating a watchmaking industry in Russia.

The Soviet Government, it is said, intends to devote 3,200,000 gold roubles (£320,000) to the manufacture of clocks and 5,500,000 gold roubles (£550,000) to the manufacture of watches of all models. Even if the Soviet Government has the necessary capital for starting this industry, it lacks the necessary expert workers for producing clocks and watches. It therefore proposes to send to various countries, among which is Switzerland, some Russian technicians to study watch and clock making.

The Swiss Chamber of Watch Manufacturers strongly urges all Swiss manufacturers to prevent Russian agents from entering their workshops and to prohibit their employment as workers."

Where Husbands are Plentiful!

A Swiss girl temporarily staying in London has been fortunate in getting the *Daily Mail* (June 25th) to publish some rather bold statements about the marriage facilities in the Bernese Oberland. Anyhow, it is refreshing to learn that there are still some places in the world where the weaker sex is obviously not compelled to call in the aid of the latest products of the chemical industry in order to find favour with the chosen swain. Thus speaks the Bernoise :—

"A Swiss girl like myself from the Bernese Oberland visiting England for the first time is astonished by the preponderance of women almost everywhere, and the consequent desperate struggle for husbands, and the enormous number of old maids and potential old maids.

In the villages of the Bernese Oberland the men are in the majority, every eligible girl is keenly competed for, and spinsters are rare. A maiden endowed with the average good looks and intelligence has no need to worry about her chances of getting married. Her principal fear is that she might make the wrong choice, for she has the pick of at least three or four desirable young men.

There are always more men than women at dances, and it is a common sight to see half a dozen and more lonely males sitting out, lucky if they get five or six dances in the course of the evening with a girl. You rarely see the pathetically common sight in England of women walking home alone or in couples on holidays or after work hours. A Swiss girl need never be without a male escort.

The scarcity of girls in my country is not attributable to the birth rate, but to the fact that there is no work for most of them in the villages and they seek domestic service in the towns. A large number go abroad as domestic servants in order to learn languages. Some return able to speak English, French and Italian fluently, and

are able to get well-paid jobs in Swiss hotels, the ambition of most Swiss girls who have managed to avoid marriage when very young.

The men stay at home because there is work for them on the land, for it is difficult to employ machinery in these mountainous regions.

There are only two old maids in my village. The sweetheart of one of them died many years ago, and she has remained true to his memory. The other has always been very eccentric, and she is so devoted to her cattle that she buys her milk rather than allow her cattle to breed. With the exception of the cows, they all live under the same roof."

* * *
The Swiss Council of State on 22nd June approved a decree for the creation of a permanent Swiss Legation in Turkey.

QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES.

BONDS.	June 25		July 2	
	Fr.	S.	Fr.	S.
Confederation 3% 1903 ...	81.25	81.00		
5% 1917. VIII Mob. Ln ...	100.90	100.75		
Federal Railways 3½% A—K ...	86.10	86.55		
" " 1924 IV Elect. Ln ...	101.50	101.60		

SHARES.	June 25		July 2	
	Nom.	Fr.	Nom.	Fr.
Swiss Bank Corporation ...	500	812	500	811
Crédit Suisse ...	500	939	500	952
Union de Banques Suisses ...	500	730	500	730
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	2727	1000	2768
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	4850	1000	5000
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe ...	1000	4000	1000	4010
S.A. Brown Boveri ...	350	595	350	598
C. F. Bally ...	1000	1585	1000	1595
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	870	200	886
Entreprises Suizer S.A. ...	1000	1190	1000	1198
Comp. de Navig n sur le Lac Léman	500	500	500	505
Linoleum A.G. Giubiasco ...	100	320	100	324
Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon ...	500	875	500	863

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