

# Notes and gleanings

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**Catching a Chamois alive.**

"Observer," 9th inst.:

The first heavy snowfall, which occurred during the last days of October, covered the Alps with a layer up to six feet thick in places, sufficient for the first attempts in skiing. It was, however, considerably reduced by the subsequent milder weather. Only in altitudes above 4,500 feet did it remain practically intact. Further snow has now fallen, and it may be said that winter has definitely settled in the higher slopes. At present the snow-limit reaches down to 1,600 feet above sea level.

It does not often happen that November affords such fine conditions for skiing as this year. The chamois hunters are not so pleased: the snow has ruined their sport, rendering rock-climbing and picnicking very doubtful pleasures. On the other hand, the deep and, as yet, very soft snow hampers the chamois in their movements and renders their tracking and shooting much easier. Two men on skis have accomplished the never-before-heard-of feat of catching a chamois alive.

**Swiss Government and Dublin Show.**

Irish News, 8th November:

At a meeting of the Council of the Royal Dublin Society, Ballsbridge, Professor J. Joly, F.R.S., F.T.C.D., president, in the chair, a letter was read from the President of the Federal Government of Switzerland, through the Free State Minister for External Affairs, conveying the thanks of the Swiss Government for the congratulations of the Society on the achievement of the military team representing the Swiss Army in winning the Aga Khan Cup outright at the recent Dublin Horse Show.

His Excellency the President expressed, on behalf of the Federal authorities, their thanks to the Government of the Irish Free State, the Ministry of Defence, the representatives of the Irish Army, the Royal Dublin Society, and to the people of Ireland for the cordial reception which had always been given to the Swiss team, and for the measures taken to render their stay in Dublin so agreeable. The Swiss team will retain the happiest memories of their stay in the city.

**THE BASSANESI TRIAL.**

On Monday morning, the 17th inst., five judges of the Federal Tribunal, with Judge Agostino Soldati as President, gathered in the hall of the Town Council of Lugano for the trial of Giovanni Bassanesi and his seven accomplices. All appeared with the exception of the Frenchman Gaston Brabant on behalf of whom a deposition was put forward proving that he had no charge to answer.

As soon as the preliminary formalities had been gone through Me. Moro Giafferi caused a little sensation by submitting to the Court a set of documents received the day before from the French Air Ministry in which the French authorities certified that at the time of the flight Bassanesi had all the titles required to undertake flights in France as well as abroad. Something of a sensation was also caused when Colonel Isler, a Swiss aviation expert and first witness for the prosecution, under cross-examination by Me. Moro Giafferi, had to admit that he himself did not quite know the regulations and whether Lodrino was or was not a recognised landing place.

During his evidence Bassanesi was repeatedly tripped up by the President for straying on to the political side of the matter, and was told that the whole trial merely concerned the fact that his pilot licence was not in order, that he was not entitled to fly from Lodrino and that he had not carried a log-book in his aeroplane. Bassanesi again strenuously resisted the desire of the Court to know the name of his companion during the flight over Milan. Judge Soldati rebuked him for not telling the full truth when first cross-examined, immediately after the crash, but Moro Giafferi pointed out that it was inhuman to have so closely cross-examined Bassanesi when he was lying between life and death, and that to shield his friends so as to spare them from death, if they happened to set foot into Italy again, answered a higher moral purpose. As regards the counts of the indictment Me. Moro Giafferi contended that according to Swiss law, and in view of the Franco-Swiss Air-convention, Bassanesi was perfectly in order with regard to his pilot licence and was also entitled to fly from Lodrino.

However, the turn of Tarchiani and Rosselli and their witnesses, Count Sforza and Filippo Turati, came the trial went over to the political field, for long periods. All the accused Italians told in evidence that, before embarking on the enterprise, they had carefully studied the Franco-Swiss air-convention and considered they were perfectly within the rules in doing what they did, but as they would have done the same even if they had known that they were breaking the regulations they were prepared to suffer without murmur the punishment which might be meted out to them. Being all highly educated men, their evidence makes fine reading and enthralled even the judges on the Bench, however much it had

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been the intention to keep Fascism in the back ground.

Tarchiani explained the activities of the anti-fascist organisation "Justice and Liberty," how the fight came about and how proud he was to be among the accused. At one point he added: "I am grateful to the Ticino, this sacred land of liberty, which by remaining faithful to its traditions has made the enterprise possible. We have found here friends, inspiration and generous help, which shows how the Italians can live free, under free institutions. On one of your monuments in this town we have read 'Free and Swiss.' We cherish to believe that it is possible to be 'Free and Italians' and it is for this we are fighting!" The president pointed out they fully appreciate such sentiments, but we have to avoid difficulties with the Fascist Government.

When Tarchiani told in evidence that no prior arrangement had been made to meet the Ticinesi implicated in the affair Judge Soldati pointed out it seemed rather strange that in every Ticinese they happened to approach they found a wholehearted anti-fascist, but Tarchiani retorted that wherever there are free men there are anti-fascists.

One of the passages of Rosselli's evidence reads: "Let me clear up a point or two. I shall keep within the limits. With Tarchiani and Bassanesi and untold thousands of other Italians we are fighting to bring Italy back to liberty and civilisation—a free, democratic, republican Italy, within a liberal Europe. The State we dream of is one like Switzerland and the freedom we are seeking is the same as you have. As a boy I was brought up to love William Tell who fights the tyrant Gessler.

I had a home, it has been burnt down, I had a newspaper, it has been suppressed and destroyed, I held a University professorship, it has been taken from me; I had friends and Masters—Amendola, Gobetti, Matteotti—they have been murdered. In order to defend my country and my personal dignity I have suffered imprisonment, internment and exile. We are fighting to-day with the same spirit with which the Swiss of old fought the State which oppressed them. In the whole enterprise we merely thought of the gesture of humanity: the two young men who flew over Milan were carrying in their hearts the words of the Swiss Federal Constitution."

After Rosselli had spoken rather at length of the traditions of Switzerland and the laws of humanity, Judge Soldati brought the proceedings back to the small points at issue with the remark: "Yes, as men we can feel the fullest possible sympathy with you, but as Magistrates . . . well, we have the regulations to enforce." The venerable Filippo Turati and Count Sforza spoke with warmth of the unrivalled reputation the accused enjoyed in Italy and of the conditions under the Fascist Government.

One point made by National Councillor Tarchiani in the summing up was that as the prosecution do not claim that Bassanesi and his accomplices did anything punishable under the Penal Code, but merely disregarded administrative regulations, Swiss law makes only the principal author answerable for the offence and all the accomplices must therefore be acquitted.

The trial finished on Wednesday, November 19th, and on the Saturday following sentence was delivered condemning Bassanesi to four months imprisonment and a fine of 200 Swiss francs, but all the other accused were acquitted. As Bassanesi had, however, already been detained for over four months he walked out of Court a free man. O.B.

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