

Notes and gleanings

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NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KYBURG.

Some little time ago Mrs. Kyburg and I spent a few blissful days in Switzerland. We were just in time to see the apple and pear blossoms at their very best, and what that means only those who have been fortunate enough to see the valleys of our beloved country at the time of the year can realise.

Snowy whiteness, tinged with that faintest possible pinky flush that really does not alter the whiteness, but rather gives it a delicate bloom, just like the bloom on the fresh cheeks of some lovely young maiden, or, to use a simile which may be more to the taste of the older generation among us, just like the bloom on fresh dark-blue grapes, the bloom that heralds a wonderful vintage!

Well, Switzerland in early May, when the meadows are luscious with young, strong grass, covered already with flowers of all kinds, when the apple and pear trees are in their bridal array, when the air is soft, the sky is blue, when the birds waken you much too early in the morning, and when life altogether seems worth living once again, Switzerland in May!

There was, alas a sombre side to the picture. There was the sight of smokeless factory chimneys of idle goods-trucks on the railway sidings, of allotment-workers busy working their plot of garden, when it was quite obvious that their proper sphere of work was within some workshop or another. There were the tales of factories working short time or closed down altogether, the stories of how this and that formerly rich family had lost their all, in short, there was the dread feeling of acute crisis overhanging everything and damping one's outbursts of joy over the various unforgettable delights which Nature provided.

On the whole, however, one's heart was glad to note the serene calm with which people of all stations in life not only accepted, but — and that seemed to me far more important — endeavoured to FIGHT the crisis.

It is true my stay was too short to allow of searching personal enquiries and tests to be carried out. It is true too that I did not visit some of the probably worst quarters, i.e., quarters where the industrial and economical crisis might show off worst. But, at Winterthur and parts of Zurich, at Berne and one or two other towns, I did not see any groups of unemployed standing idly about. What I saw was, as stated already, numerous allotments where before now none such allotments were, and I was told that the authorities not only provide the allotments, but also the seeds and in many cases the tools, so that the unemployed can profitably cultivate their bit of land and grow vegetables and flowers too. For their own use and for sale!

Then again, at Winterthur, private helping activity has stepped in. There is one scheme whereby people who feel better off than others and wish to help, undertake to buy bread for a family. This takes the form of one family instructing their baker to deliver so and so many loaves of bread to another family and charge it up to the first one. In this manner, bread for the family is assured and I was told, that in many cases this makes a lot of difference, because it just enables that poor family to scrape through. Similar forms of helping have been devised, and what struck me most, work smoothly and without much fuss being made, and without the receivers losing caste! That is the great thing. The help is given to those who are out of work through no fault of their own and in receiving such help they know that it does not shame them.

Another thing I noticed. Where before the crisis the men would foregather on some evenings at their usual Restaurant and drink wine or beer, they now, to a great extent still foregather at their usual restaurant, but drink cider which is much cheaper.

Coming from England it was rather strange to compare prices exhibited in windows. One had to think of the Pound Sterling as it was before we came off gold, and then one would have thought that prices of ladies' wear, etc., were rather low. But when one remembered the value of the Swiss Franc and remembered that on changing £10 into Swiss Francs one only received 185 of the latter, instead of over 250, one had to revise one's idea of values.

What next, everyone is asking, in Switzerland as well as over here. I was rather struck by the attitude of my friends at home towards England. I had rather fancied that they would say a few things about England going off gold and then clapping on high tariffs, and I was doubtful in my own mind whether I could explain these actions. — You know how it is, in England one defends Switzerland and in Switzerland one defends England! —

The curious, i.e., to my mind curious, thing, was that my friends exhibited neither anger nor too much surprise. They pitied England. They told me, that England was to be pitied, because it had not been able to learn from other peoples' misfortunes and now had to learn the lesson for herself. That England would, in time, learn the lesson and learn that tariffs are no good, etc., none of my friends doubted for a moment, and they even thought that it was quite likely, that England might regain the leadership of Europe by a really statesmanlike handling of the Lausanne and Geneva Conferences.

This trust in England's innate common sense seems to be borne out by recent happenings at Lausanne and Geneva. Let's hope so!

Mind you, I did not confine my activities in Switzerland to serious investigations. True there was some business, but that would be of no interest to our readers. There also lurks in my mind, a rather fragrant memory of a crisp sizzling hot veal cutlet pinched from the frying pan in the kitchen of a hotelier friend of mine who acts as chief Chef de Cuisine himself and in whose kitchen, therefore — therefore is good, what? — I am wont to take my aperitif when at home. That cutlet, put on a wooden plate and eaten "by hand" tasted better than any other cutlet you ever had, believe me. Then there is another memory of fresh Asparagus from the Rafzer Feld, eaten at Winterthur within four hours of being cut at Rafz. Some treat, boy, some treat! I also found that Haldengut Special Pilsen beer went well with Asparagus.

And above all, I met my chums, the friends of my boyhood days, the friends who belong to my illustrious "Jahrgang" and in whose company I always feel as young again as ever, and whose friendship means more to me than most things. True we have grown serious, true we have all our worries, but TRUE we have our friendship and friendship among men, each knowing the other as he knows himself and each, one might almost say, a part of the other.

That I met my dear mother and sister might be mentioned too, but there I touch upon sacred ground and the intimacy of the home is private. My sister, by the way, expressed delight that our Editor should have published some more of her little poems, thereby creating a small congregation for her work! — Between you and me, I was informed, that the proceeds of the sales of that little book of poems had not allowed my sister yet to buy a villa at Cap d'Antibes, but that she was hopeful! Therefore, need I insist and tell you, dear Readers, what I expect you to do?

But by far the curious thing that happened to me on my stay in Switzerland was the fact that I forgot to write for the Swiss Observer. It's true, I sent the Editor a picture postcard representing the famous castle of KYBURG, and I thought that that picture might, perhaps, be put in, in lieu of my article. Anyhow, returning home to England, I awaited events, and the other day I got such an appealing and appallingly frantic letter from our Editor, that I had to give up a round of golf this afternoon, in order to write the above story.

And now for some gleanings from the English Press. I think there are two which will appeal to our readers, one which appears in LLOYD'S List, 20th June and shows that

Switzerland is operating the fastest air lines in Europe:

The Swiss air company "Swissair" have recently purchased two Lockheed Orion machines, each fitted with a 575-h.p. Wright Cyclone engine, to speed up their services, and particularly for the faster carriage of mail. With the addition of these machines an express service has been inaugurated between Zurich, Munich and Vienna. The flying time between Zurich and Munich has been reduced to one hour from last year's figure of 1 hour 55 minutes, while Vienna is now reached in 2½ hours, as against 4 hours 55 minutes. This includes the intermediate stop at Munich, now reduced from 35 to 10 minutes.

The new aircraft, states "Shell Aviation News," can develop a maximum speed of 360 kms. per hour (223 m.p.h.), but at ordinary cruising speed they will be flown at 260 kms. per hour (161 m.p.h.). They have seating capacity for six people, but "Swissair" are not likely to take more than four, so that besides freight a large amount of mail can be carried. The new express service will make connections between Zurich, Basle, Berne, Geneva and Lausanne, and from Vienna to Bucharest, Budapest, Belgrade and Sofia in both directions. Thus all the capitals of the Balkans can be reached from Switzerland in one day, and the service also provides the opportunity of returning to Switzerland the same evening, after a stop at Vienna of three hours. "Swissair" can consequently claim that they will be operating the fastest air lines in Europe.

and the other, from the Birmingham Post, 18th June, is about

A June Lausanne:

The season last summer was poor. The weather was bad and financial conditions did not permit even American travellers to take prolonged holidays abroad. But this year the Reparation Conference has given back to Lausanne and its port of Ouchy the animation of other days. Delegates, journalists and spectators all have to be housed and entertained on their evenings off. The agitated little manager of the tourist agency on the quay is more agitated than ever in his endeavours to explain boat services in several tongues at once. Foreign voices are heard in all the cafés and the band enthusiastically plays national airs.

Delegates, of course, come straight from Paris and do not approach Lausanne as it should be approached — by water. If you come from Evian across the lake it is at first a faint mauve line until, as you get nearer, its spires and towers detach themselves from the mist. The most ardent of local patriots admits that the town owes much of its beauty to the mountains of the Savoy. Fierce and rugged, they loom out of the shadows on the other side, an extraordinary contrast to the low, tidy hills of Vaud.

Night and Morning.

At this time of the year the oleanders along the front are in flower. There is something in their scent which forbids depression and destroys care. You sit drinking your coffee on the quay, listening to one of the most melodious bands in Europe, and deciding to write your letters to-morrow or perhaps the day after. In the evening the rose-sellers come round, bearing their great baskets of flowers. You signal to the small child who is so irresistible, and buy an enormous bunch of roses which you give to the chambermaid because you are leaving for Paris the next day. I sometimes think the bedrooms of the hotel staff must be like the halls of princes, scented and glorious with the discarded blooms of travellers who have been seduced into buying what they do not want. Later in the season, it will be cyclamen from the Savoy Hills.

The soft air makes you sleepy and you decide, most sensibly, to go to bed early. It is a resolution often made and never kept. The lights come out along the enchanted walk which leads to Vevey, and the tall trees which border it are wrapped in strange shadows. The mysteriously moving lights of steamers glimmer invitingly on the lake.

In the morning the port looks even more "coquet," as the engaging guide-book has it. The boats are painted in such bright colours and the trees are so golden in the sun. On a warm day one stays in Ouchy, but there are things which should not be missed up in Lausanne. Saturday is market day, and all the traders display their wares along the steep, surprising streets. There is a brilliant mass of flowers, and vegetables so incredibly green that you feel idiotically that you must add a cabbage to the already sumptuous menu of your hotel.

Those who do not love the ordered sweetness of Switzerland make their excursions into the Savoy. A boat to Evian, or better still to the kind little country town of Thonon, and then one of the huge omnibuses with solid and engaging drivers will take you to the most remote parts of the French Alps. The drivers do the shopping of the lonely people who live in Savoy villages, and the omnibus is always loaded with vegetables, bedsteads, hen coops, clothing and packets of all kinds. Once an English lady asked the nicest of all the conductors to bring her out a parcel from the town "And your commission?" she asked him. He replied: "Le beau sourire de Mademoiselle." They are a very amiable people.

Vie Pénible.

You wind a precarious way between ravines, cutting your way through the mountains, skirting the edge of precipices, and arrive, let us say, in the Abondance Valley, one of the most lovely in all the wild Savoy. There is a grey-roofed village in an emerald cutting in the hills. You find an old abbey with serenely beautiful cloisters decorated with some thirteenth century frescoes by the hand of an unknown master. At the inn you will receive a warm welcome, and probably a luncheon of trout and cherries. But one must not be unruly romantic. The food is, on the whole indifferent. Only the traveller who prefers aesthetic to material satisfaction will stay there long.

The inhabitants do not understand your enthusiasm. For them, "La vie est pénible." In the little chalets the cows share the living room with the family, or are separated only by a thin wooden partition. The children are pale and overworked. But they admit that to the stranger the country must seem beautiful. The scarlet lilies are out in the meadows, the gentians on the mountains, and the columbines in the wood.

M. S. J.

(Continued on back page).

Gleanings—(Continued)

P.S. At the Hotel de la Couronne a Morat, they have a white wine, which comes from one of the hills opposite Murten and which throws a STAR of such beauty and gives out such an aroma that you quickly forget all earthly worries and, stepping on to the lofty terrace, feel you are in Heaven!

P.P.S. A RECORD: Our famous collaborator Kyburg has just penned an article on Switzerland without mentioning the word "mountain" once.

THE EDITOR'S POST-BAG.

Wien, den 21. Juni 1932.

Sehr geehrter Herr Kollege,

Mit besonderer Genugtuung habe ich Ihre anerkennenden Worte in der letzten Ausgabe des "The Swiss Observer" anlässlich meines Scheidens aus der Auslandschweizer-Bewegung gelesen. Sie haben mir durch diese Worte eine grosse innere Freude bereitet und ich danke Ihnen hierfür recht herzlich. Die Feder freilich werde ich für die Auslandschweizersache wohl endgültig weggelegt haben. Sie ist ganz stumpf geworden! Die Heimat hat für ihre Söhne im Auslande nichts, rein nichts übrig. Jahre hindurch habe ich mich bemüht, in der Heimat ausreichendes Brot für mich und meine Familie zu finden — vergeblich; überall fand ich schöne Worte, aber sonst nichts. Und so riess ich mich los und widme mich dem Dienste eines fremden Staates, der mehr Anerkennung für Fleiss, Arbeit, Energie usw. hat. Wie Ihnen bekannt sein wird, bin ich nunmehr als erster Sekretär der österreichischen Zeitungsverleger-Organisation tätig und redigiere gleichzeitig das Fachblatt für das österreichische Zeitungswesen. Da habe ich wenigstens Anerkennung für die Arbeit, die ich leiste, während ich von gewissen Leuten, die ein alleiniges Recht auf Auslandschweizerpolitik zu haben glauben, nur bekämpft und behindert worden bin. Ich liebe meine Heimat, tief und innig, aber ich hatte endlich genug. Undank ist der Welt Lohn und die Heimat hat mir meine Pionierdienste ebenfalls mit Undank gelohnt!

Mit lieben Eidgenossenegrüssen bin ich nochmals herzlich dankend

Ihr ergebener:

Franz Burri.

FURSORGE FÜR BLINDE AUSLANDSCHWEIZER.

Im vergangenen Jahre war es uns, dank der von allen Seiten zu Teil gewordenen Hilfe möglich, 28 blinde bedürftige Auslandschweizer zu unterstützen.

Wir möchten allen denen, die in hochherziger Weise einen Beitrag gesendet haben auch an dieser Stelle herzlich danken und sie bitten: Vergesst unser Hilfswerk auch in diesem Jahre nicht!

Die wirtschaftliche Krise liegt lähmend auf allen Gemütern und es wird immer schwieriger, für unsere blinden Landsleute die nötigen Unterstützungen zu beschaffen. Von überallher ertönen Hilferufe aus dem Munde sehender und gesunder Menschen. Alle diese Klagen aber übertönt der Notschrei unserer blinden Volksgenossen in der Fremde. Zu allem äusserlichen Elend müssen sie das Licht entbehren und haben keine Hoffnung, jemals unsere Heimat mit Bergen und Tälern wieder zu sehen. Muss ein solches Schicksal nicht ans Herz greifen? Wollen wir da nicht unser Möglichstes tun, damit sie wenigstens nicht darben müssen?

Wir bitten alle Sehenden, die in der Lage sind ein wenig zu helfen: Helft, damit wir unseren armen, blinden Landsleuten beistehen können. Ein Lichtschimmer alter Schweizertrou und Liebe erhelle ihr Dunkel!

Gaben nehmen gerne entgegen: die schweiz. Gesandtschaften und Konsulate, die Redaktionen der schweiz. Zeitungen im Auslande, sowie das Sekretariat des schweiz. Zentralvereins für das Blindenwesen.

Schweiz. Zentralverein f. d. Blindenwesen Sekretariat in St. Gallen.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Sunday, July 3rd — Swiss Rally and outing to Whipsnade — arranged by the Swiss Club Birmingham, together with the Swiss Colony London.

Wednesday, July 6th, at 7.30 p.m. — Société de Secours Mutuels — Monthly Meeting, at 74, Charlotte Street, W.1.

Swiss Rifle Association: Shooting Practice every Saturday and Sunday at the Range, (opposite Welsh Harp, Hendon).

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Th. — "La part de l'homme et celle de Dieu." 2 v. 12, 13. — M. R. Hoffmann-de Visme.

Pour tous renseignements concernant actes pastoraux instructions religieuses, etc., prière de s'adresser à M. R. Hoffmann-de Visme, 102, Hornsey Lane, N.6. (Téléphone: Archway 1798). — Heure de réception à l'église: Mercredi de 10.30 — 12 h.

SCHWEIZERKIRCHE

(Deutschschweizerische Gemeinde)

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(near General Post Office.)

Sonntag, den 3. Juli 1932.

11 Uhr morgens, Gottesdienst und Sonntagsschule

Predigt: Pfarrer W. Dietsche.

Dienstag, den 5. Juli 1932.

Nachmittags 3 Uhr, Nähverein im Foyer Suisse.

TRAUUNG.

Am 25. Juni wurden getraut:

Fritz Maier von Diessenhofen (Thurgau) und Margrit Stadelmann von Frasnacht. (Thurgau).

Während der Monate Juli und August fallen die Abendgottesdienste aus.

Alle Anfragen sind während der Ferien des Gemeindepfarrers an Herrn Pfarrer W. Dietsche, c/o Foyer Suisse, 12, Upper Bedford Place, Russel Square, W.C.1 zu richten, bis zum 28. Juli.