

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK
Band: - (1935)
Heft: 692

Artikel: Watchman, what of the night?
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-687360>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. [Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. [Voir Informations légales.](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. [See Legal notice.](#)

Download PDF: 19.11.2024

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

By KYBURG.

Those among us who heard Rudolf Minger, our Swiss Federal President broadcast his New-Year's message from Beromünster, must have hoped that our people at home will harken to his words, close their ranks and exercise a firm march discipline while climbing the steep and painful path lying before them ere they reach, as surely they will, the sunny mountain top from which the outlook once more will be free and glorious. Our Swiss chief watchman gave his call clearly and earnestly.

Where there a watchman calling the time for all the World, honestly and fearlessly, I could hear him: "It's midnight! And chaos, fear and anxiety rule everywhere." and he would be right, with few exceptions.

The world to-day is not despairing. Not quite. There is a glimmer of hope that things will turn out all right in the end, but that hope is due to the incorrigible hopefulness of the human family more than to any sure knowledge of hopeful events.

We know that the Nations still indulge in narrow patriotism.

We know that political and economical frontiers are not only guarded jealously everywhere, but strengthened as much as possible by the erection of new fortifications, gun-emplacements, new trade restrictions, duties, quotas, exchange restrictions, etc.

We know that no people really want war.

We know that everybody clamours for freer trade and the abolition of restrictions.

We know all that, but few of us are prepared to sacrifice our old false gods, such as patriotism in its narrow sense, sovereignty as regards our country and so forth.

Few of us are prepared to sub-ordinate the fate of our own country to a committee of Nations among which our country would be only one part.

And yet, to talk of peace, to talk of trade improvement, to hope for less employment and better standards of living, is futile as long as the various peoples are not prepared to come together, to act together, to live amicably together.

And can you imagine them doing so while the present political and economical barriers exist?

What are the wordy battles which are waged from time to time between one part of Switzerland and another — remember the "fossée" after the war? — What are the feelings the Bernese are supposed to harbour against the Zürihegel, the Thurgauers against other Cantons, etc., compared with the feelings of national hatred which those political and economical frontiers quite naturally beget among the various nations?

We Swiss, however much we may tease each other, good-humouredly sometimes and in what we think is "grim earnest" at other times, we realise when all is said and done that we are Swiss above all and that we are always ready to pour out our blood for the defence of our country.

A very noble sentiment surely. But would it not be much better still if we Swiss, French, Italians, Britons and Germans, etc., came to feel in our innermost hearts that we were ready to defend *Europe* or *Humanity* against any foe, while indulging in our wordy warfare meanwhile and calling each other all sorts of funny names to pass the time and to describe each others characteristics such as we think we see them?

Then our watchman might call a different message. He might then inform us that a few rowdies have just been locked up but that, on the whole, the Town is quiet and peaceful and the night clear and starry.

There is one other thing which I have been ruminating about lately. You know your friend the practical chappie who scorns the advice of mere bookworms or book-learned theorists.

And yet, such is the capacity of modern progress that the theorist gets the better of the practical man in most cases. Father *Goethe*, when he made his *Faust* declared that "all theory is grey," had not visualised modern progress which, demands a frightful amount of theorising and book-wisdom in order to understand its complicated machinery. And by machinery I do not only mean actual engines etc., but all the intricate mechanism without which our modern civilisation would fall to pieces very quickly. Has not an American Magazine stated with some show of plausibility that the whole of our modern civilisation rests on not more than some 50,000 key-men and that we should sink back into pre-historical living conditions if those key-men were to die suddenly?

Of course, the truth that the practical man may be all right for the execution of clearly laid down programmes but that it requires a theorist to work out such programmes, was patent very early in History. Hence the division of Parliaments into Senate and Lower Houses. Hence the Kings Councillors or whatever they were called, hence, one might almost say, the Witch Doctors surrounding the Court in primitive savage Tribes.

Would it not be possible to have a Senate or Ständerat of Europe composed of the most eminent Elders of all Nations. Such body to have the task of surveying the political and economical field of Europe, to diagnose its various diseases and to prescribe the various appropriate remedies. And the application of the remedies, the carrying through of the prescribed cure to be left to Parliaments elected in each country. Such Parliaments would still have a fairly free hand to fashion the executional weapons to suit their countries best.

In other words, what is the use of holding World-Conferences when every delegate has to carry out the strict orders given him by his own Government, instead of being able to listen to others and, in free exchange of ideas and ideals form his own opinion? Let us have a Court of Aldermen of Europe, as stated above, with no National axes to grind but with the duty to do their best by Europe.

Oh yes, I can see a lot of objections too. But most of them could be swept away. Just fancy what such a body of experienced Theorists could achieve, free from the fetters of the Civil and Military Services and their Representatives of each country. Free from all consideration except that of looking after the welfare of *Europe*.

TERRORS OF THE CRESTA RUN.

By EDWARD E. LONG, C.B.E.

There is no doubt about the thrill you get on the Cresta. I should say it is the longest-sustained thrill of any possible in sport, for it lasts upwards of a minute! This is the time it takes for a good rider to negotiate the Cresta, and his descent is one long thrill — from top to bottom.

Sportsmen from all parts of the world are attracted to the Cresta Run. Thronging the icy slopes about it, you will see, during the season, well-set-up, fit and bronzed men of a dozen different nationalities, each of them keen to make the attempt on the record of the Cresta, for to lower this is to do something of which one may be proud for ever in the world of sport.

The Cresta Run is a masterpiece of construction. Its course lies along a steeply-descending valley which winds its way from St. Moritz nearly down to Celerina. The Run occupies the centre of the valley, and is built up between banks of frozen blocks of snow, high enough to prevent any rider from leaping the track. The "Floor" and sides are of glistening ice. For nearly fifty years the experts have been at work on it, and they have succeeded in turning out a course which has a surface as smooth as a billiard ball and as slippery as an eel, and is packed with "surprises" from start to finish.

Down The Valley.

You start off with a steep descent, and when the pace has grown fairly "hot," you take a pitch forward — into the air and, landing safely on the other side, realise that you have shot across "Church Leap!" After this you are able to ease up somewhat to get ready for the "star turn" on the course, an "S" bend, known familiarly as "Battledore and Shuttlecock," around which you hurtle, much as a high-speed racing car takes the "corners" at Brooklands, but with this difference, that you have no time to think, because no sooner have you shot round "Battledore," at an angle which makes the lookers-on think you must turn right over, than you whizz into "Shuttlecock," and as the first bend is on your left and the second on your right, you have to remember to shift your balance or.....!

If you have arrived at this stage, for it is at "Battledore and Shuttlecock" that riders are sometimes shot clean over the course, though rarely with serious injury, then you dash off to Stream Corner, and round this with a sharp drop, under the archway over which the road from St. Moritz to Celerina runs, to "Scylla and Charybdis," where, if one "snag" fails to get you, the other may. Then, having once more survived the ordeal, you catapult across the Cresta Leap and — in a second or so finish in style, and then examine yourself to see how much you have lost of your clothes, or person, by abrasion!

Eighty Miles An Hour!

From this account of the trip down the Cresta, it will be gathered that it is no joke. Nor is it possible for anyone to do it, at leisure. The course is open to members of the St. Moritz Tobogganing Club only, and in order to qualify as a member of this club you must be a very expert tobogganer. Even so, a start is never made with the whole course. It is always opened in sections, first from Stream Corner to the finish, rather more than a third of the course, then from The Junction, about two-thirds of it, and finally from the Top. Riders of previous seasons, holders of records included, as well as novices, practise the course in these stages, and thus get hand and eye in for the big event.

The type of toboggan used is a steel skeleton-frame, with sliding seat, and the kit worn comprises crash helmet, stoutly-backed leather gait-

lets, elbow pads, and steel "rakes" fastened on to the toes of the boots, to check speed. Thus equipped, the Cresta rider takes the course in a prone position, shoots down the run with a spindrift of icy particles behind him at a speed, in places, of eighty miles an hour! He may snatch victory by a tenth of a second, but in order to do so he must display a combination of courage, self-possession and instant decision, as is called for, in such a degree probably in no other form of sport.

The Cresta riders are the pick of the world's champions in other forms of sport. They go to St. Moritz to try themselves out in the greatest nerve test it is possible to imagine, and when one of them wins the "Grand National," the Blue Riband of tobogganing, he is hailed, rightly, as a peer amongst his fellow-sportsmen.

Glasgow News.

ACADEMY CINEMA.

Maskerade.

For once the critics of the daily Press are in agreement with "ck." The universal approval both in the Press and by the Public which has been bestowed upon the film now showing at the Academy Cinema, is a sign that in spite of all that has been said and written about the lack of discrimination on the part of the average filmite, a really good film will meet with that appreciation which it merits. People are flocking to the Academy Cinema to see "Maskerade," and as I was unable to be present at the Press Show, it was not until a third attempt that I was able to see the film.

I have seen most of the films which have been presented to us, backed by all the advertising might of powerful Syndicates, but it is a long time since I have seen one which has pleased me as much as "Maskerade." In fact, I think I must go back to "Zwei Herzen in drei viertel Takt," not the anemic translation which was offered to us in this country under the title of "Two Hearts in Valse Time," but the original German film.

When German films are good, they are very good, though "Maskerade" is not German but Austrian, having been produced by Willy Forst, the creator of "Unfinished Symphony" at the Tobis-Saxha Studios in Vienna.

The scene of "Maskerade" is laid in Vienna in the early years of the present century and deals with the adventures of Leopoldine Dur, played by Paula Wessely. Paula Wessely is a delightful person and her acting is superb and natural.

The opening scenes take place at a Ball at which are present a famous Surgeon and his brother, the Surgeon's wife and the brother's fiancée.

The fiancée wins a muff as a prize in a Tombola. The wife borrows the muff and goes to the studio of an artist whom she has met at the ball. The artist makes a sketch of her dressed — in the muff and a mask. By accident the sketch is mixed up with other sketches and is published in an illustrated paper.

The muff is recognised by the Surgeon who imagines that the wearer is his brother's fiancée. He tells his brother and forces him to go to the artist and demand an explanation.

The artist gives his word of honour that the wearer of the muff was not the fiancée but will not reveal the identity of his model. He visits an aged Countess by whom Leopoldine is employed as a "companion." He induces Leopoldine to visit his studio and sit for him. The situation now becomes complicated, as the Surgeon is not satisfied and insists on discovering the identity of the model.

Leopoldine falls in love with the artist. The fiancée, who had also been in love with the artist in the past, seeks to be revenged upon him and shoots him. The Surgeon who has learnt the truth by accident, at first refuses to attend him, but finally relents and in the end Leopoldine and the artist are reunited.

I have purposely given a mere outline of the story.

I cannot recommend too strongly everyone to see this film, the acting is superb, the photography excellent and the music delightful.

ck.

**WANDERER
GEGEN ABEND**

Novelle von **Marie Bretscher**
98 S. Kart Fr. 3.—

Rudolf von Tavel:
Ich habe seit langem keine neue Erzählung von solch starker, ursprünglicher Bildhaftigkeit zu lesen bekommen.

Gotthelf-Verlag, — Bern-Leipzig.

Erhältlich gegen 5/- von
U. Bretscher, 139 Cannon St., London, E.C.4