

Here and there in the Alps

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and returned to find that the thirty denizens of the rocks had seized the opportunity of exploring the international city.

A number of the monkeys were seated on the roof of a neighbouring building from which any number of succulent bananas could not tempt them. The reason for this was clear when an irate householder discovered that his kitchen had been raided. The least appealing of the exploits of this particular group was when one of them captured a rare water fowl from the zoo and solemnly plucked it alive.

LOCAL.

BASLE.

For the second time within three weeks the offices of the French Consulate in Basle were visited by burglars. The first time an amount of 500 frs. was taken and the second time nearly 2,000 frs. disappeared.

On going to Press we hear that the Petrol Tanks at the Swiss Federal Railways station goods Depot in Basle caught fire. Heavy explosions occurred, the entire Fire Brigade of the town and surrounding villages have been summoned. Two people were seriously injured.

The accounts of the Municipal Tramway Co., for the first 6 months show a deficit of 230,967 frs.

ZURICH.

M. Emile Hardmeier from Uster, a member of Parliament (National Council) since 1917 is not seeking re-election. (The parliamentary elections are taking place in autumn of this year.)

Two detectives of the cantonal Police were shot at, when they questioned a cyclist whom they suspected. They made use of their revolvers in self defence, and the man was killed. Investigations have proved that the man, named Otto Bickel had a very bad criminal record.

The death is reported from Zurich of Dr. E. Cesane, a well-known advocate, at the age of 81.

GENEVA.

From Geneva comes the news of the death of M. Louis Chauvet, a former President of the Municipal Council.

BERNE.

The "Niesen" Railway has celebrated its 25th anniversary, the first train leaving for the "Niesen-Kulm" on the 15th of July 1910.

LUCERNE.

A monument erected to the memory of Isabelle Kaiser, the well-known writer was inaugurated at Beckenried. The monument was executed by the sculptor Hans von Matt.

THURGAU.

National-Councillor Ullmann and States-Councillor Böhi, will not contest their seats at the next Parliamentary elections. Dr. Ullmann entered Parliament in 1911 and M. Albert Böhi is a member since 1910.

AARGAU.

Max Koenig, late manager of the firm Frikart, A.G., Ironmongers in Zofingen, has been condemned to three years imprisonment for fraudulent bankruptcy.

NEUCHÂTEL.

Dr. E. Morel, for fifty years (1883-1933) Professor of Theology at the University of Neuchâtel, has died at the age of 77. Professor Morel was a *doctor honoris causa* of the Universities of Glasgow and Padua.

ST. GALLEN.

M. Jakob Herzog, who was a teacher at the "Städtische Knabensekunderschule" in St. Gall for 49 years, has celebrated his 90th birthday anniversary.

NEW ALPINE ROAD.

A new road is approaching completion in Switzerland which will form an important and long-desired link between the Engadine and Canton Ticino.

At present there is no road along the north western shore of the Lake of Lugano, and travellers to St. Moritz must proceed to the southern end of the lake and cross through Italy round the hills bordering the Lake of Como before they can turn north eastwards along its western shore to Cadenabbia, Menaggio, and Chiavenna, and so to the Maloja Pass.

The new road will obviate this detour. It runs north eastwards from Lugano along the lake to Porlezza in Italy at the lakehead, and thence on to Menaggio, where it reaches the old route. This Italian section has been in existence for many years, but it has hitherto stopped some way short of the Swiss frontier. On the Swiss side proposals for cutting a road along the lake shore have been advanced since 1869, but owing partly to their difficulty, and more especially to their effect on the natural beauty of the district, they have not been executed.

A road along the lakeside would have ruined its picturesque character; it would have marred the famous Rock of Gandria, and destroyed the whole charm of the village of Gandria, at present unapproachable except by water or the footpath which climbs over the Rock. The village clings to the steep hillside with its feet in the lake.

The new road, therefore, has been cut high up on the cliffs, so as to pass above the Rock and the village. The people of Gandria regret the number of steps which they will have to climb to reach the road, but they must realise that to cut a road through the arched alleyways of their village would rob it of all attraction for visitors.

The existing road, which runs to the summit of Monte Bre from the village of Castagnola, now a suburb of Lugano, has been widened and straightened to a point where it makes a hairpin bend some 300 feet above the lake. Here the completely new section begins. It soon enters a curving tunnel and issues on to the side of a deep cleft in the mountain side. The road crosses this on a viaduct carried on stone arches, and enters a second tunnel lit at intervals by side shafts, through which are glimpses of the lake below and the mountains on the far side.

Further on the road runs along an almost precipitous stretch of cliff, protected at places by covered galleries against falls of rock, and cuts through a third tunnel above the Rock of Gandria. Passing above the red roofs of the village it begins a gentle descent towards the Italian frontier. A paved footpath, a metre wide, occasionally juts out beyond the road over the cliffs.

The way runs through vineyards, olives, and cypresses. The cliffs are covered with luxuriant vegetation, the product of the Italian sun and the frequent showers; lizards run about the stones, and the workmen are sometimes startled by discovering snakes of imposing length — always considered deadly — sleeping under paving stones. Over the lake buzzards fly, mewing and swooping to pick up refuse from the surface. They are highly regarded in these parts as scavengers, keeping the lake cleaned of carrion.

Gandria is the last Swiss village, and the Italian frontier is reached at another tunnel which pierces a huge rock bastion dividing the two countries. On the other side, the traveller is in the district known to readers of Fogazzaro's novels as "Il Piccolo Mond Antico." The lovely little towns of Orta and San Mamette, standing among cypresses and oleanders at the lakeside, lead through the Val Solda to the lakehead at Porlezza, and so over the hills to the Lake of Como at Menaggio.

It is hoped to open the new road for traffic in October, and by arrangement with the Italian Government, Swiss mail coaches will then maintain a daily direct service between Lugano and St. Moritz, passing through Italian territory. The run is expected to take four hours. Private cars and tourists coaches hope to do the journey in three hours.

The road will be a boon to all those who want to make a quick exchange between the snows of St. Moritz and the more languid delights of Lugano, and will also make a notable addition to the scenic highways of Europe. It is comparable both in construction and beauty with Axenstrasse round Lake Lucerne, but will be unique in Switzerland as an Alpine road passing through Italian lake scenery.

O.

COMMODITY MARKETS.

The Swiss Bank Corporation has issued a second edition of its useful booklet dealing with the organisation and working of the principal commodity markets. The text, which has been revised and enlarged, has been compiled in consultation with authorities in the various branches of trade which are described. Copies of the booklet may be obtained on application to the Swiss Bank Corporation, 99, Gresham Street, E.C.2.

HERE AND THERE IN THE ALPS.

Miniature Sketches.

Of the three little mountain states Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden which pronounced their declaration of independence in the "Ewiger Bund," or perpetual pact, on August 1st, 1291, Schwyz has ever since remained the heart of Switzerland. It has given the Confederation its name (Schweiz) and its coat-of-arms, with a change only having been made in the shape and placing of the cross. It is said that the original flag of Schwyz was entirely red, and the little white cross which now appears in the upper right hand corner was a distinction bestowed upon the Schwyzers after a campaign at Besançon. The federal flag displays its cross in larger form directly in the center of the red field, and this same arrangement, but with colours reversed, was, as a compliment to Switzerland, adopted by the International Red Cross Society, which came into being at Geneva on August 22nd, 1864, with Jean Henri Dunant, a philanthropic citizen of Geneva as its founder.

That Schwyz, the tiny cantonal capital, and the districts of Steinen, Seewen, Auf Iberg, Brunnen and the Muotta valley, which made up the state in the beginning, were much more populated in their early days, is indicated by the historic records showing, for instance, that 1,500 men of Schwyz participated in the Besançon campaign, also by the fact that of the three pioneer cantons Schwyz assumed leadership.

A delightful patrician atmosphere prevails to-day yet in the little town of Schwyz, which is impressively located at the base and on the slopes of the twin peaks of the Mythen. Here one encounters a "Herrengasse," a freie Reichsgasse, and along these and other less pretentiously named thoroughfares stand fine old patrician residences. High walls, towers and gables are some of their visible marks of distinction, and through handsome wrought-iron gates one gets glimpses of the attractive gardens in which they stand.

As Schwyz was the victim of a big conflagration in 1642, all these residences were built afterwards. Among these mansions are included the Reding houses, homes of branches of one of the most illustrious families of Schwyz, whose name appears 45 times in the annals of the state's chief magistrates. Thus, in a beautiful framework of trees in the Schmidgasse, which leads to nearby Brunnen, on the lake of Lucerne, beckons the Reding von Biberegg residence, with the family's escutcheon above the hospitably open entrance gate. Higher up in the town rises like a fortress the Ital Reding domain.

The spacious, sloping Rathaus Square is, however, the beauty spot of Schwyz. Here, as its name suggests, stands the medieval City Hall, whose two main façades are strikingly adorned with frescoes from Swiss history. Portraits of 53 magistrates, from 1544 on, are displayed in the large council-chamber. A fountain, crowned by a standard bearer, rises on the square and on the north side of the quadrangle invites the lofty church of St. Martin. Behind this edifice are two interesting chapels, "Heiligkreuz" and "Kerchel," the latter reminiscent of the days when the liberty-loving, independent Schwyzers had been temporarily excommunicated by the Pope, and had been forbidden to celebrate divine services "on" Schwyz ground.

A three-stoned tower behind the Rathaus, known as the "Archiv," houses some of the most sacred Swiss documents, including the priceless original deed of confederation between Schwyz, Uri and Unterwalden. It is written in Latin and bears the date of August 1st, 1291. At Schwyz it becomes clearly apparent to a visitor that these pioneer Swiss were by no means an ignorant people of herdsmen, as some of their haughty oppressors chose to describe them, but men of culture, courage and unusual foresight.



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