

# Home news

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The final stage in the development of the institute will be the construction of the top of the Sphinx of a meteorological station, which is to work in connection with the Zürich Meteorological Office, and for the erection of which the Swiss Alpine Club has presented a sum of about £900. Once that work is completed — probably next year — the Jungfrauoch will be one of the best equipped Alpine research institutes in Europe.

#### LOCAL.

##### ZÜRICH.

M. Adolf Meyer, the well-known Swiss Sculptor, who lives in Zollikon, has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary.

The new town Hall in Horgen, which was built at the cost of 910,000 frs. was inaugurated by States Councillor M. Maurer.

M. Paul Keller, for twenty years Pastor at the "Neumüster," has died at the age of 69.

M. Adolf Hug, senior partner in the firm Hug & Co., Zürich, Music Publishers, has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary.

##### BERNE.

M. Joseph Choquard, late National-Councillor, has died at Porrentruy at the age of 82. The deceased played for many years an important part in the political sphere of the canton of Berne. When 26 years old, M. Choquard became a member of the Grand Council, and he kept his seat for 14 years.

In 1890 he entered Parliament (National-Council), he kept his seat until 1895. In 1900 he was again sent to Parliament and this time he sat for nearly 30 years in the National-Council. M. Choquard was a member of the Board of the Swiss Federal Railways and the Cantonal Bank; for many years he was "Statthalter" of Porrentruy.

##### URI.

By the death of M. Martin Gamma, late "Landammann," the canton of Uri loses one of its eminent citizens. The deceased entered the "Landrat" in 1896, and 19 years later (1915) he represented Zug in the National Council, the same year he was elected a member of the cantonal government.

He retired from Parliament in 1925, and from the cantonal cantonal government a year earlier. M. Gamma was for many years the leader of the Liberal-Democratic Party of the canton of Uri.

##### FRIBOURG.

At the age of 65, died in Fribourg, M. Joseph Pauchard, since 1907, editor-in-chief of the "Freiburger Nachrichten." From 1901 to 1906 the deceased was in holy orders first in Therwil (Basle Country) and later in Berne. M. Pauchard was a member of the Central Committee of the Swiss Press Association.

##### ZUG.

M. Hermann Gallmann, a member of the cantonal government since 1924, has died at the age of 68.

##### ST. GALL.

Colonel Jos. Otter, for many years commander of the "Schiessschulen" in Wallenstadt and a former commander of the Mountain Brigade 9, has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary.

#### WHAT OTHER PEOPLE THINK OF US.

##### A Visit To Switzerland.

Red roofs peeping through trees, more trees, a strip of blue, blue, Lake Geneva, dotted here and there with white and red sailed boats, then dominating the whole scene lie the Alps of Savoy, towering high into the clouds their white topped peaks, lords of creation majestic ... yet looking down tolerantly on the trivial activities of mankind, the meaningless hum and bustle of modern life, bestowing peace to the frenzied mind and balm to the troubled soul giving a sense of proportion to a world that has lost its sense of proportion.

Not only for its geographical position was Switzerland chosen to be the birth-place of that idealistic fancy, the League of Nations. For in the very air, there seems to be a sanity, a balance, a calmness which is conspicuous by its absence in almost every other country.

##### A Tolerant People.

This sanity and balance is reflected in the Swiss themselves. They are tolerant, polite, kind, very honest, thrifty, even responsive to other people's point of view and to new ideas. They are clever. Most of them speak and think in two languages, French and German and do very creditably in English. What boatman in this country could talk to one in French and German? How many waitresses, hall porters, road sweepers? Even those in this country who have been taught French and German for six years or more at school cannot be said to speak either language. There must be something fundamentally wrong in the teaching of foreign languages to

permit of such a length of time being more or less wasted. What does it benefit one to know all the conjugation of irregular verbs which are very rarely used in conversation? What use is it to be able to recite in parrot fashion, a long list of prepositions that require the subjunctive mood when the subjunctive is avoided in conversational French?

##### Tourist Types.

One should learn to speak a foreign language first, then bother about the rules that govern the finer points of grammar. It can't be that we, as a nation, are too stupid to learn to speak a foreign language fluently and yet ... look at these two common types of people abroad who afford me amusement mingled with pity. There is firstly the arrogant type who calls the Swiss "foreigner" when he is the foreigner in their country; the one too lazy (or too stupid) to remember his schoolboy French and thinks that if he speaks English loudly and slowly enough, everyone will be magically endowed with a thorough knowledge of English and fly to do his bidding.

Then there is the conceited type who starts off in French with an English accent one could cut with a knife and looks most hurt when he is not understood. The fault is not his. Oh dear no! "These foreigners can't even understand their own language." Of the two types I prefer the former. He is amusingly dense but the second is pathetically obtuse. Most things can be forgiven anyone if they tickle one's sense of humour.

However, let it pass! what strikes the traveller in Switzerland is the eagerness of the Swiss to speak English. They have not that silly self-consciousness when speaking in an alien tongue that assails so many English people when abroad. The Swiss are eager to discuss everything in England and of England from the King and Queen and the little Princesses (for whom they have a tender regard) to the playing of the bagpipes in Scotland. I heard rather an amusing anecdote (I can vouch for its truth), of a lady who enquired of a policeman in her best French for Cook's office "le cabinet de Cook." You can guess the sequel when you realise that the French word for Public Convenience is "cabinet." The lady was not escorted to Cook's office but the above-mentioned place and left there at the threshold with a most courteous bow. "Toujours la politesse!"

The Swiss are the most honest people in the world. You can leave your luggage on the platform of any station in the country and it will be there when you go back for it. Foreigners struggling with the intricacies of the franc and centime know that they will never be given wrong change or charged too much.

##### Confidence in England.

As soon as the Swiss know that you are English, there are delighted smiles, cordial handshakes, and frantic attempts on the part of everyone to get in his "little piece" in English first. Their confidence in England manifests itself when even shopkeepers, in a very small way, accept English money with the remark that one can go to Heaven or Hell with the English pound.

With my feeble pen I have not the presumption to describe the scenery. Sufficient be it that from now on my idea of Heaven, is not, as it used to be perennial summer in a little cove in Cornwall, but perennial summer in Switzerland.

##### Chillon.

One place did make so deep an impression on me that I will try, though with some diffidence, to describe it. This was the Château of Chillon. Chillon! The very name breathes out History, Poetry, ungendered hate and Martyrdom. Imagine a very cold grey turreted castle arising sheer from the depths of the sapphire blue lake, surrounded by towering snow-capped mountains. After gazing with spellbound eyes for some minutes with thoughts of Byron flitting through my brain, my soul shuddered with the realised grim purpose. It was a prison! A prison from which there could be no escape. One of its most famous prisoners was Bonnivard, a Genevese, who was imprisoned in a noisome dungeon for six years chained to a pillar, by the cruel Duke of Savoy, whose power he was brave enough to resist. It is on this pillar that Byron overcame with Bonnivard's tragic story, has inscribed his own name. He went away so deeply impressed that he wrote that famous poem "The Prisoner of Chillon."

"Chillon! thy prison is a holy place

And thy sad floor an altar for 'twas trod,  
Until his very steps have left a trace,

Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,  
By Bonnivard! May none these marks efface  
For they appeal from tyranny to God."

N. M. C.

(Enfield Gazette and Observer.)

##### PERSONAL.

We extend our sincere sympathy to M. and Mme. Marins Paschoud in Paris; M. Paschoud's mother having died in Lausanne at the age of 81.



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