

Notes and gleanings

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NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KYBURG.

Once more, dear reader, you will have to put up with me, instead of reading through the always interesting articles our Editor puts before us week by week. He came to see me the other day, explaining that he was due for a well-earned holiday and that he relied on me to do my usual stuff again. It's only for three weeks and I am sure our readers will be glad to hear from you again, etc.

Well, what could I do? I have never been proof against flattery and I have always had a feeling that if I had the running of a newspaper, I should soon put the whole world right, although, as I grow older, if not wiser, the old enthusiasm for fighting the world's battles seem to fade a bit and an inclination to let the youngsters do the fighting slowly creeps over me.

Revenons à nos moutons, however. By the time you read these Notes, our dear Editor will most probably and if the weather is at all friendly, be sitting in a Beer Garden in Switzerland, quenching his thirst with Lager, nice and cool, and drinking in also the lovely scenery all around him. That *Beer Gardens* have their points is the conviction of H. W. Scaman who has the following article in the "Sunday Chronicle" of August 14th, entitled

Let's all dance in a Beer Garden:

Here I am again on the wicked Continent, where people dance round bandstands in beer gardens.

And in a beautiful beer garden beside the lake at Zurich I have just been reading what Canon W. M. Peacock, headmaster of King Alfred's School, Wantage, says about beer gardens.

"If we all danced in beer gardens," says Canon Peacock, "fear and distrust would disappear between nation."

With all due respect for the Reverend Canon, and with all my admiration for beer gardens, I think he exaggerates.

At this moment people are dancing in beer gardens in Munich only a few miles from here, but to say that there is no fear or distrust along this German Swiss border is to say what is simply not so.

Zurich is a German-speaking city. It looks German and so do its people.

They eat German and drink German — but they do not think German — not by any manner of means.

One of the first questions I asked when I got here was: "Is there any likelihood of the Germans trying to claim this part of Switzerland?"

The reply in round German was:
"Let them try it."

Over in Pilsen (Czechoslovakia), the beer capital of the universe, people are dancing in beer gardens, but that is not solving the Sudeten German problem.

Canon Peacock is wrong about that, but he says that "to many English people any place out of England is foreign to them — mysterious, queer, wicked."

"They cannot picture a beer garden as it really is," he says, "an open-air place of innocent amusement, where the local worthies foregather. Live more freely and widely, be citizens of the world. That is my advice to all those who have those left-on-the-shelf ideas."

Well, I have travelled a bit this way and that, but this is the first time I have been in Switzerland.

One reason why I avoided the place is that I am no lover of scenery.

I have seen the Rockies and the Pyrenees, the Grand Canyon and the Niagara Falls, and you can have them.

Scenery attracts too many scenery lovers who are a great nuisance. Wherever there is a waterfall or a pretty hill they swarm like flies on treacle.

And I thought it was impossible to come to Switzerland without seeing a lot of people skipping from crag to crag or gaping at the Alps.

But I have come more than 150 miles into Switzerland and have not seen an Alp. They are all to the South.

What Britain needs after beer gardens is a paint-up-Britain week. Our buildings are too drab.

The Swiss paint their chalets, bungalows, barns, stables and railway stations in every shade from bright blue to pale pink, and from the freshness of the colours they must be laying on paint all the time.

We could do with some of that at home. There would be opposition from those who are always protesting against what they call the

desecration of the countryside, but we could silence that opposition by pointing to Switzerland. If the Swiss don't understand scenery, who does?

In the length and breadth of Britain there is no beer garden like the one I am in now — which is one of thousands.

True we have pubs with bowling greens, and in the country we have hotel lawns with beach umbrellas and chromium chairs. But the same sinister atmosphere clings to them as to the pubs.

The Pharisees sniff at them. People who are accustomed to doing their drinking behind the perforated screens of the pub windows avoid the sunshine.

Millions of British people drink beer, wines, and spirits furtively and sordidly behind closed doors. No wonder teetotalers denounce them and their ways.

If they could come into the open and invite the teetotalers to join them, drinking lemonade if they preferred it, while a band played and the sun shone they would be happier.

What Britain needs, even before a new coat of paint, is the beer garden, to which people of all classes would resort.

In this beer garden are lawyers, doctors, plumbers, labourers, soldiers and clerks, with their wives and children.

All sit at the same sort of tables and pay the same prices. There is no conviction of sin on any face. If you told anybody here that there was a country where people were ashamed to be seen drinking beer he would think you were telling a traveller's tale.

Let us have beer gardens in Britain. Let us also have thinner, colder beer — at least at this time of year.

The only objection I can see to this proposition is that the British after the Americans, are the worst drinkers on earth.

They drink too heavily and quickly, and sometimes for the mere sake of drinking.

That is because laws and restrictions have imposed on them a conviction of sin. They feel that since they are doing wrong in touching a drop, they may as well have a skinful while they are about it.

And people who so misuse liquor are likely to turn a beer garden into a bear garden.

But the new generation, freed from the conviction of sin, ought to have the opportunity to give the beer garden a trial.

I am not quite sure whether the praise of *Beer* is quite to the liking of everyone of our readers. But having been brought up in a wine growing district of Switzerland and remembering the "Stadtbergler" of 1911 as well as vintages of even before that year, I had great trouble, of course, to accustom myself to the wine of the country over here, i.e., beer, especially as English beer is not what suited my palate for a long time. However, growing older, as afore-mentioned, I have slowly and painstakingly developed a taste for real beer and I can to-day discriminate between good beer and not so good beer and, what is more, I can discuss the matter with the air and the jargon of the connoisseur. Need I add, that it is the very modest beer drinker alone who, to my way of thinking, is able to keep his palate keen enough to appreciate fully the subtle flavours of the various brews!

Hence, to the above article I heartily say "hear, hear!"

While writing about beer I might, perhaps, fittingly put in a little story, which appeared in "Church Times" August 12th:

A Chestnut:

I am not sure whether this is a chestnut, but it seems worth repeating. Mr. M. Motta, President of the Swiss Confederation, met Hitler and Mussolini, and introduced some of his Ministers who had accompanied him. "This," he said, "is my Minister of the Navy." "Navy?" exclaimed Hitler. "But Switzerland has no navy?" "Well," replied Motta, "if Italy can have a Finance Minister, and Germany a Minister of Justice, I don't see why Switzerland shouldn't have a Minister of the Navy."

I had heard it in a slightly different form, I think it appeared in the Evening News some little while back, but I do think it is quite good and, si non è vero, ben trovato!

A few words in the tongue of Dante and that reminds me of news which was news to me, not having heard it before, viz., the project of a waterway all the way from Locarno to Venice. Writes the Lincolnshire Chronicle & Leader on 13th August:

Switzerland to the Sea:

Switzerland will have access to the Adriatic Sea if an Italian plan is carried out.

The scheme provides for the regulation of the outlet from Lake Maggiore, one of the most beautiful of the Italian lakes which lies partly in Switzerland; the Swiss town of Locarno is situated on its northern shore.

The water from Lake Maggiore empties into the River Ticino, which in turn flows into the River Po, the largest in Italy.

By regulating the flow of the water and building a navigable channel, it is hoped to make a passage for small ships from the Swiss "port" of Locarno to the mouth of the Po, near Venice.

Once this new shipway has been duly completed, we only want the escalators over and down the Alps to enable boats to travel from London, via Basle, Lucerne-Gottard-Locarno to Venice. That will be a nice, lazy way to spend a couple or three weeks, slowly rolling or floating across the better part of France, sampling the various delicacies of the various countries en route, not to forget the vintages! What a trip during a hot summer's month!

The story about the escalators over the Alps is probably known to all by now. They were meant to enable the Swiss Navy to get quickly from the North to the South of the Mountain Barrier! However, writing about the Alps reminds me of the sad stories we have read lately concerning fatalities especially on the Matterhorn or Cervin.

From talking with English friends and from reading the newspapers here, it seems to me that there must inevitably be a great increase in such fatalities in the coming years. Holidays with Pay, combined with cheap trip arrangements, both great blessings, will bring a lot of people to the Alps who have never been there before and who have not received any preliminary advice or warnings from others, more experienced. They will, or some of them will, try to do foolhardy things, climbs which are utterly beyond them and the Mountain will win in many many instances.

An inkling of what is going to happen is given in the following article from the Daily Mail, Aug. 15th:

Do you know? 100 a day climb the Matterhorn? (Curtailed):

The holiday siege of the Matterhorn reaches its grand climax this month.

School-teachers (why are they such indefatigable climbers?) and other tourists of all kinds are now disporting themselves on the 14,780ft. summit.

"Soon we'll need one-way traffic regulations on the Cervin" (the French name for the Matterhorn), I was told by Otto Furrer, one of the best-known guides, when he dined with me at Zermatt recently.

"I have seen as many as 110 people on the peak at one time," he said. "It is not a difficult climb nowadays, and I or any other guide would be willing to make it seven times a week."

"Climbers should, of course, have some practice for a few days beforehand, to get quite fit, then it's easy, the climb usually taking about 10 hours (up and down) from the hut, which is 10,820ft. high. The hut itself is about six hours' simple climbing from Zermatt."

To the non-mountaineer, climbing the Matterhorn has always sounded a wonderful feat. Memories of the tragic deaths of Lord Francis Douglas, Mr. Hadow, Michael Croz, and Mr. Hudson in July 1865, seem to invest the challenging peak with an aura of tragedy, and to be a grim warning to all but the hardest mountaineers.

These men, with Edward Whymper, had been the first ever to reach the summit. In descending, the rope broke, and all but Whymper and two guides fell to their death.

Now there are fixed ropes at certain difficult places to make the ascent simpler.

Alex Gentinetta, another well-known guide whom I met with Dr. Seiler, who seems to own all the hotels around Zermatt, told me that the guide's fee for the Matterhorn climb is £6 — which indicates how it is regarded as an ordinary day's work. The usual party consists of two guides and two visitors; though occasionally a pair of guides can look after a bigger party.

He added one warning: "There are too many climbers nowadays with too few guides, and that is not good; it is not so safe as all that."

Gentinetta said that the most dangerous climb, possibly the worst in Europe, is the north face of the Eiger. Dozens have been killed in the attempt on this ascent, and no one succeeded until three weeks ago, when four young Germans reached the peak.

They were watched through telescopes, and when snowstorms veiled them from view, eight guides ascended the mountain by the ordinary route, but could find no trace of them at the top.

Yet the four men came down safely, having had to cling all night to perilous ledges while 20 in. of snow fell and winds threatened to blow them into the abyss. Their only injuries were bruises from falling stones.

What a vastly simpler proposition the Matterhorn has become. But, with all its crowds of climbers, guides are finding business less prosperous than it used to be. The growth of winter sports is responsible.

"Nowadays," Gentinetta told me, "guiding would not be profitable if it were not for places like St. Moritz, where the guides give skiing and skating lessons during the winter. In fact, the skiing and skating are more important than climbing as a matter of business for us."

Since the first conquest of the Matterhorn by English climbers, more and more mountaineers have travelled from England to repeat the feat, and Zermatt, from being a tiny peasant village, has been transformed by the Seiler family into a resort equipped with fine hotels.

The Swiss climb chiefly as a means to getting about their mountainous country, and if it were not that the English climb just for sport, these hotels might never have been built.

I suppose it is only a matter of time until there will be an hotel with cocktail bar and dancing on top of the Matterhorn, with a tube like the Jungfrau railway to take tired tourists to the summit.

Then it will be breakfast in London, luncheon in Bâle, and tea on the Matterhorn with, possibly, supper in Paris, Rome, or Berlin.

Naturally the title of the above article is grossly misleading, being one of the Daily Mail's brainy young men's idea probably.

The other side of the picture comes from the Daily Express, Aug. 10th:

He Refused Guide:

A 20-year-old German Heinz Schwarz, who tried to climb the Matterhorn without a guide and without any mountaineering experience, was killed to-day.

He left Zermatt at 3 a.m. with a Swiss friend, Werner Meyer.

An hour-and-a-half later he slipped and fell 210 feet, dragging Meyer with him.

Meyer had severe head wounds.

While Englishmen go to Switzerland, there has come to this part of the world, at least, so far, to Ireland, Lt. Hans Schwarz whose hobby is riding through Europe on Horseback and who, in doing so, sheds no little lustre on the prowess of our Swiss mounted troops. Probably most of you have read the one or other travel book he has published. Myself I treasure the Ride Through France a good dear friend sent me a year or two ago and in which Hans Schwarz describes, more interestingly than any other travel book I know has ever done, some of the beautiful French Provinces, their customs, their people.

Swiss Officer enjoying Horseback Tour in Ireland:

Evening Herald, Dublin, 12th August:

Lieut. Hans Schwarz, the Swiss Army officer, is enjoying his horseback tour of Ireland.

He received a warm welcome on arrival at Castledermot, where he stayed overnight. He obtained a map there showing by-roads, which he wished to use more than main roads, as, he says, the latter are not so suitable for horses.

He also attended a dance at Castledermot, and readily responded to requests for songs, which won him much applause.

Lieut. Schwarz yesterday morning left Castledermot for Carlow. Having stayed there for a short while, he continued his journey to Kilkenny, where he stayed last night as the guest of Capt. Melville, Killreene Lodge.

Otherwise there is really not very much of interest in the British Press at the moment, as far as Switzerland is concerned. There are travel stories galore, descriptions of this and that part of Switzerland. The provincial and parochial papers have long articles by this and that local Worthly who describes his experiences in our wonderful country and, thereby, makes all his readers mouths' water, so that, next year they will go and see for themselves!

The political upheavals, especially, of course, the Austrian Anschluss, have their strong repercussions in our beloved country. Probably recognising the old truth that a people is never conquered as long as it keeps its language, the good people of Zug, that delightful little Canton in the heart of Switzerland — where the Roetheli come from at Christmas! — have taken strong measures, as is shown by the following from The Times, Aug. 12th:

Use of Schwyzerdütsch in Switzerland:

The absorption of Austria by Germany has caused in the German-speaking Cantons of Switzerland a marked Nationalist reaction which is showing itself in language questions.

In recent months the Parliaments of several of these Cantons have permitted the use of *Schwyzerdütsch* — the Alemannic dialect spoken in Central and Eastern Switzerland — in Parliamentary debates. The Parliament of Canton Zug has now gone a step further and has unanimously decided to ban ordinary German from all its proceedings and make the use of *Schwyzerdütsch* compulsory.

I think our good friends of Zug are right. Remembering some of our Zürcher Kantonsraete (Cantonal Counsellors) making speeches in what they fondly believed to be "hochdeutsch" many years ago, I certainly think that it will be much better and at the same time more elegant if such speeches are made in the homely dialects of the various Cantons. What could be more beautiful and Swiss? After all, our Schwyzerdütsch, we always maintain, is quite different from Hochdeutsch. Nobody ever convinced me yet that Ankebot is the same as Butterbrot! Nor has a Guggel the same etymological root as a Hahn!

Another powerful article will meet your eye, the Editor permitting, next week. Good night!

"1938 IN EUROPE."

In two volumes this "travel annual," published in London by W. Aldor, contains entertaining descriptions and informations regarding every single country in Europe — bar only unhappy Spain. It is not a Baedeker or one of the lesser imitations. Those seeking complete historical and artistic enumerations of things to see in the old-fashioned serious manner will do better to stick to their old-fashioned guides. But for up-to-date information on the more worldly joys of travel — sports facilities, best places for food, the culinary specialities and the local wines of each country, where and how to make "whoppee" — there is nothing like "1938 in Europe." This is not to say that the novel "travel annual" entirely neglects the historical cultural and artistic interests. It does contain fairly ample material also in this respect — but it has been relegated into the perspective of importance ordinarily attached to it by the average traveller, who nowadays is out to enjoy himself physically in the first place and mentally only by the way. The editors of "1938 in Europe" are consciously and competently catering for the most prevalent sort of want.

"Switzerland" is dealt with in that same carefree but up-to-the-minute spirit of modern life by our London compatriot G. J. Keller and the English travel writer D. A. Tansley. Those Swiss readers intending to pay their home-country a visit after years of estrangement will find a lot of useful hints and reminders in Mr. Keller's jaunty account to assist them in their choice of place or route of travelling.

Dr. E.

PERSONAL.

Mr. Frank Zogg, of 17, Cavendish Gardens, S.W.4, has met with an unfortunate accident last week when alighting from a bus. He was taken to the Bellingbroke Hospital, Bellingbroke Grove, S.W.11, where it was found that his right arm and left wrist were fractured. On behalf of his large circle of friends we wish to tender sincere wishes for a speedy and complete recovery.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

Messieurs les membres sont avisés que

L'ASSEMBLEE MENSUELLE

aura lieu Mardi 6 Septembre au Restaurant PAGANI, 42, Great Portland Street, W.1. et sera précédée d'un souper à 7h. 15 précises (prix 5/-).

ORDRE DU JOUR:

| | |
|----------------|-------------|
| Procès-verbal. | Démissions. |
| Admissions. | Divers. |

Pour faciliter les arrangements, les participants sont priés de bien vouloir s'inscrire au plus tôt auprès de Monsieur P. F. Boehringer, 23, Leonard Street, E.C.2. (Téléphone: Clerkenwell 2321/2).

Le Comité.

MISCELLANEOUS ADVERTISEMENTS

SWISS LADY in Torquay requires a cook-general, two in family. Write Box No. 4, c/o Swiss Observer, 23, Leonard Street, E.C.2.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Tuesday, September 6th (Dinner 7.15 sharp) City Swiss Club — Monthly Meeting, at Pagani's Restaurant, Great Portland Street, W.1.

Wednesday, September 7th, at 7.30 p.m. — Société de Secours Mutuels — Monthly Meeting, at 74, Charlotte Street, W.1.

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11h. — Culte. M. M. Pradervand.

Les cultes du soir reprendront le dimanche 4 septembre.

Pour l'instruction religieuse et les actes pastoraux, prière de s'adresser au pasteur, M. Marcel Pradervand, 65, Mount View Road, N.4 (Téléphone Mountview 5003).
Heure de réception à l'église le mercredi de 11 — 12h.30.

SCHWEIZERKIRCHE

(Deutschsprachige Gemeinde).

St. Anne's Church, 9, Gresham Street, E.C.2.

(near General Post Office.)

Sonntag, den 28. August 1938.

11 Uhr morgens, Gottesdienst.

Die Abendgottesdienste beginnen wieder am Sonntag, den 4. September um 7 Uhr.

Anfragen wegen Religions-bezw. Confirmandenstunden und Amtshandlungen sind erbeten an den Pfarrer der Gemeinde: C. Th. Hahn, 43, Priory Road, Bedford Park, W.4. (Telephon: Chiswick 4156). Sprechstunden: Dienstag 12-2 Uhr in der Kirche.

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