

Successful synthesis of the hormone acth in Switzerland

Autor(en): [s.n.]

Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - (1963)

Heft 1443

PDF erstellt am: **09.08.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-696288>

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CELLO RECITAL

The readers of the "Swiss Observer", who may have seen the announcement in the last issue, will be pleased to hear that the recital given at the Wigmore Hall on Monday, 28th October, by the cellist Aurora Natola was a great artistic success. Miss Natola, who is our compatriot by marriage (her husband is the Basler René Bickart), now lives in Geneva. She had chosen a most interesting programme, with works by Boccherini, Beethoven, Bach, Debussy and Schumann, and interpreted it with great intelligence and feeling.

Both "The Times" and the "Daily Telegraph" gave her very flattering notices.

A NEW DISCOVERY IN THE VALAIS

From Sierre in the Rhone valley a narrow, deep gorge can be seen, the Val d'Anniviers. This lovely and most picturesque valley forks again higher up, on the one side there is the Val de Zinal and on the other the Val de Moiry, and here on a green plateau, 4,600 feet above sea level, lies the typical Valais village of Grimentz. Its houses are built in the local style of roughly hewn logs, its streets are so narrow that no cars can pass. Yet, Grimentz is easily accessible from Sierre by a modern, well built road. Grimentz has much to offer for winter and summer vacations, the one and only hotel has just been completely renovated to include every modern comfort. There is a skilift and plans are under way for the construction of an aerial cableway. Above all, this part of the world is a wonderful country for hiking and mountain climbing. A well-kept footpath leads to Zinal and there are many other possibilities in the fascinatingly strange atmosphere of a remote Alpine valley the inhabitants of which are said to be descendants of the Huns who broke into the Valais in the 6th century.

SUCCESSFUL SYNTHESIS OF THE HORMONE ACTH IN SWITZERLAND

Among the pituitary gland hormones, the hormone ACTH (abbreviated from the English adreno-cortico-trope) plays a primary role in that it stimulates the activity of the adrenals which results in an increase in the secretion of cortisone. ACTH has therapeutic virtues very similar to those of cortisone and may be used in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis. ACTH, in its natural state, is composed of a chain of 39 amino-acids and is classified as a polypeptid with a very complicated structure. A large pharmaceutical factory at Basle has just succeeded in synthesizing this hormone. The most complicated polypeptid thus far synthesized has a chain of 24 amino-acids.

[O.S.E.C.]

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