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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The accounts for 1925 of Basle Town are budgetted to close with a deficit of over two million francs. During the discussion in the Grosse Rat the Communist members proposed to strike out the amount of Frs. 63,000 in favour of the theological faculty of the University. They also insisted on the provision of suitable and heated rooms for the use of the unemployed.

M. Ignace Paderewski, the well-known pianist and a former President of the Polish Republic, has been elected an honorary citizen of Vevey.

The secretariat of the Schweiz. Kaufm. Verein (Soc. Suisse de Commerçants) has addressed a petition to the Federal authorities in Berne, suggesting that ways and means should be studied and found in order to enable commercial students and clerks to reside in foreign countries.

In order to protest against the supposedly unsatisfactory conditions under which a messenger in a Basle florist business was working, the Communists had arranged a demonstration last Saturday afternoon in front of the shop, which is situated in the centre of the town. Threatening speeches were delivered, and the crowd, on the arrival of the police, refused to disperse. After reiterated warnings the police drew their swords, with the result that eight demonstrators were more or less seriously injured by cuts. The occurrence is to be made the subject of an extraordinary meeting of the Grosse Rat.

By a small majority, and a weak participation, the electors of the Canton of Berne rejected last Sunday the proposed reduction of the numbers of the Grosse Rat. The latter consists at present of 224 members, which number it was intended to reduce to 203, mainly by basing the number of representatives on the number of the Swiss population, excluding foreign residents.

General Ulrich Wille died in Zurich at the age of 77 during the night of January 30th/31st. We publish in another column an appreciation from one of the Swiss dailies.

Mrs. Weber-Bodmer, who died recently at St. Gall, has bequeathed an amount of Frs. 200,000 for charitable purposes, chiefly missionary work.

## EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

**Un charivari sur une place historique.** — Le pays de Schwytz est le moins pacifique des petits cantons du centre. Son histoire est pleine de querelles et ses landsgemeinde de plates et de bosses. Sous l'ancien régime, au temps des capitulations militaires, les Durs et les Doux se tombaient dessus à bras raccourcis; la première moitié du siècle dernier vit toute une série de tumultueuses landsgemeinde, où cornus et onglus se livraient bataille à coups de gourdins. On vit plus d'une fois des grêles de pierre assaillir la tribune des magistrats et le landammann quitter précipitamment la place avec le chapeau enfoncé sur son chef vénérable. La landsgemeinde n'a pas survécu au Sonderbund, mais l'esprit belliqueux des siècles passés n'est pas tout à fait mort.

On l'a pu voir dimanche soir à Schwytz après le rejet par le peuple du projet de construction d'un nouveau bâtiment gouvernemental. Les districts avaient voté contre le chef-lieu, qui en éprouva une vive irritation. La foule, réunie sur la place du bourg, décida de s'en prendre aux chefs des opposants. Des musiciens ambulants furent hissés sur un char rustique, qui accompagné d'un bruyant cortège fut successivement conduit devant les maisons des principaux négatifs.

La première victime du charivari fut le président de la commune, Conrad d'Hettlingen, qui avait refusé de signer un appel en faveur du projet repoussé. Il fut honoré d'un copieux charivari, puis ce fut le tour du principal auteur de l'échec, l'ancien conseiller aux Etats R. de Reding, dont les ancêtres ont présidé, au cours des âges, mainte landsgemeinde tourmentée. Des hurlements indescriptibles, nous apprend le principal journal

local, la "Schwyzer Zeitung," mêlés à des injures diverses accompagnèrent un vigoureux bombardement des fenêtres à coups de pierre et de morceaux de fer ("sic"). Après un quart d'heure d'offensive, la foule se porta au faubourg d'Ibach devant la villa de l'ancien président du Conseil national, M. Bueler. Ce dignitaire fut, lui aussi, gratifié d'épithètes nombreuses et diverses. Puis la troupe, devenue fort rauque, s'alla rafraîchir le gosier dans une auberge encore ouverte au défilé de l'heure de police et située, cas aggravant, à côté du poste lui-même.

Ayant repris des forces, la phalange des mécontents fit, vers une heure du matin, une nouvelle incursion sur la maison Reding, dont une cinquantaine de vitres volèrent en éclat sous une grêle de pierres mêlées de morceaux de bois et de fer, tandis qu'éclataient des pétards et même, suivant notre confrère schwytois, des coups de revolver.

Les assiégés prirent le parti de téléphoner au directeur de police ce s'ils ne recevaient pas le secours de la maréchaussée, ils répondraient des fenêtres. Tiré de son lit, ce fonctionnaire apparut à 4 heures du matin sur le lieu du combat où sa présence et sans doute aussi la fatigue causée par ces diverses agressions, dispersa les manifestants.

Ce incidents inspirent à la "Schwyzer Ztg." une vertueuse indignation. Sommes-nous, écrit-elle dans la Russie de Lénine ou dans un Etat ordonné? Ce degré d'émotion a de quoi rassurer. L'évocation de la Russie de Lénine au sujet de l'effervescence de citoyens turbulents de leur naturel trouve tout simplement que les Schwytzois ont, depuis longtemps, repris l'habitude de la tranquillité.

(Gazette de Lausanne.)

**Le service étranger.** — Le premier-lieutenant de cavalerie Jean-Victor Kohler, fils du colonel Kohler, directeur de P.-C.-K. à Vevey, qui a fait jadis un stage de plusieurs années à Saint-Cyr et à Saumur, a été transféré dans l'armée française du Maroc, où il a vaillamment combattu.

Cet officier vient de recevoir la croix de guerre, et a été cité à l'ordre du jour de l'armée, pour faits de guerre, par le maréchal Lyauté, commandant en chef. Cette citation est libellée comme suit:

Kohler, Jean-Victor, lieutenant au 17<sup>e</sup> escadron d'auto-mitrailleuses de cavalerie, remarquable commandant de peloton, plein d'entrain, de calme et de sang-froid, s'est distingué au cours des opérations sur le front nord, en particulier le 22 juin 1924, à Sker où, appelé à repousser une attaque qui menaçait le flanc du campement, a conduit ses troupes à proximité de Pennemi et les a dirigées à pied sous une vive fusillade. (La Suisse.)

**Berne n'aura pas d'aérodrome.** — Les pourparlers engagés pour la création d'un aérodrome pour la ville fédérale ont échoué. Le dernier projet qui voulait construire l'aérodrome près d'Ostermündingen, a dû être abandonné à cause des grandes sommes que demandait l'Etat de Berne comme indemnité. Le projet de Bethléem, proposé par le colonel Immenhauser, a dû être également abandonné parce qu'il aurait fallu abattre une partie de la forêt de Bremgarten, ce qui aurait causé des frais beaucoup trop élevés. Le projet du Beudenberg a subi le même sort parce qu'il est très difficile sur une place où il y a à chaque instant des exercices de cavalerie, de faire atterrir des avions sans dangers. Pour 1925, la ville fédérale n'aura donc pas d'aérodrome: seul un service local entre Berne Bâle pourra être fait.

(Courrier de Genève.)

**Une propagande indiscrète.** — La campagne entreprise par les "Etudiants de la Bible" se poursuit sans relâche en Suisse, si bien que des nouvelles peu réjouissantes arrivent de plusieurs cantons—entre autres du pays de Saint-Gall et de la région argovienne—sur l'accueil réfrégerant réservé à l'empressement excessif que mettent messagers et messagères à distribuer des brochures, des appels et des feuilles volantes aux titres retentissants et bizarres.

Les feuilles locales rapportent que par ci par là, des scènes désagréables se sont passées, en particulier dans le Freiamt où la jeunesse d'un village s'est mise à houspiller ceux qui s'en vont prêchant la ruine prochaine de la civilisation. Dans une autre localité, les zélés étudiants ont été obligés de déguerpir devant les remontrances des hommes sages et dans une troisième, le sort voulut qu'on en vint aux mains.

(Feuille d'Avis de Lausanne.)

**Une commune où l'on ne s'en fait pas.** — C'est celle de Zurzach, petite ville argovienne de 1300 âmes. Les comptes du caissier communal de Zurzach pour 1922 et 1923 ne sont pas encore rendus; les contribuables payent leurs impôts quand la tête leur

chante, de sorte qu'il y en a qui n'ont rien payé depuis des années. Depuis une année et demie, on ne tient plus de procès-verbal des séances communales, etc.

(Confédération.)

**Originelle Bussenzahler.** — Die vom Basler Polizeigericht wegen des Linksgehens auf der Wettsteinbrücke zu einem Franken Busse verurteilten "Gesetzesverächter" beginnen sich derart über die Verordnung lustig zu machen, dass sie die der Polizeigerichtskasse abzuliefernde Busse in möglichst kleinen Beträgen einzahlet. So ist es in den letzten Tagen wiederholt vorgekommen, dass auf das Postscheckkonto der Gerichtskasse eine ganze Menge Einzahlungen im Betrage von einem Rappen gemacht worden sind, so dass sich das Postscheckbureau veranlasst sah, die Postbureau anzuweisen, künftighin solche Einzahlungen zurückzuweisen. Der erlaubte Mindestbetrag soll 5 Rpp. betragen. (Volksblatt.)

**Exercice illégal de la médecine.** — Dans son audience du 13 courant, le Tribunal de police de Neuchâtel a condamné—pour infractions à la loi sur l'exercice des professions médicales et à l'art. 262 du Code pénal—les nommés Maire L.-D., à Cornaux et Schaffroth Ch.-E. à Lutry, aux peines de 300 et 200 francs d'amende, ainsi qu'aux frais liquidés à 63 fr. 50.

Voici brièvement exposés les faits qui ont motivé cette condamnation: Maire, qui se dit herboriste, a traité de nombreuses personnes atteintes de maladies diverses en leur administrant une drogue qu'il vendait à raison de 15 à 20 francs le litre. L'analyse faite par le Laboratoire cantonal a révélé que cette drogue consistait en un simple mélange d'eau salée et d'alcool de menthe, valant de 20 à 30 cent. le litre! Maire—et Schaffroth qui lui tenait lieu d'assistant et de voyageur—gagnaient donc gros en abusant de la confiance du public et en contrevenant à la loi; ils doivent avoir pu constituer ainsi une réserve leur permettant, sans la diminuer trop, de payer leurs amandes! Ils s'en tirent donc à bon compte, Maire surtout, qui avait déjà été condamné à Genève pour les mêmes motifs.

Une fois de plus, le public est mis en garde contre les agissements des peu scrupuleux "guérisseurs" qui pratiquent la médecine sans autorisation et par conséquent en violation de la loi.

(Le Neuchâtelois.)

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By "KYBURG."

### To-day's Great Thought.

"To-day is the to-morrow you were longing for yesterday!"

### Finger Prints for Babies.

Daily Express (2nd Feb.):—

A law has been passed by the authorities of the Canton of Argovie that all babies must be weighed, measured, and their finger-prints taken within twenty-four hours of birth, and any birthmarks noted on an official form. The doctor or nurse is held responsible for the legal registration of the child.

This law is in consequence of a case which was tried at Feldkirch, in the Tyrol, recently, when the magistrate gave a "Solomon's judgment." Two boys, both one year old, were placed in a children's home by their mothers, and one of the boys died while being bathed.

The two mothers claimed the surviving child, and the matter was threshed out in court. The magistrate, after the arguments of both sides, finally decided that the boy should be kept in the home until he was three years old, and then be brought to the court, so that any likeness to one or the other woman may be noted by medical experts.

What with finger-prints, wireless-tele-vision, etc., it will soon be impossible for anyone to do anything which is "sinful if done by others," but "gaining experience if done by oneself," without fear of immediate detection. We are fast approaching the ideal state.

Meanwhile, I am glad to inform my readers, my remarks addressed to the Turks in our last issue have had the desired effect, and I read in the Morning Post (26th Jan.) that—

The Swiss aviator, M. Mittelholzer, who is on a flight to Teheran, has arrived at Baghdad.

### The Theatre in Switzerland.

The Stage (22nd Jan.):—

The Swiss are essentially modern in their institutions, and although the Swiss theatre is in every way different from the theatre in our own country, it is full of interest, and represents in concrete form the main characteristics of this

reticent race of people. It is in some respects a model worthy of consideration by larger countries.

A great English dramatist has said, "We are creatures that look before and after; it will be well for us if we look round a little and see what is passing under our very eyes." If we obey this injunction, we find much of which we are in ignorance. The national drama of Switzerland is called the *Festspiel*. The object of the performances that are held in the open-air is to keep in remembrance the great historical events of the country. The most popular representations are scenes from the life of William Tell, which have been given at Altdorf, Hochdorf, Cham, Brugg, Altstathem, and Calvin, towns that are associated with the Swiss hero. The Battle of Stoss has been commemorated on the very scene of the fight. Another festival that has been held in recent years is one in memory of the Battle of Sempach. It was in this battle that Arnold of Winkelried performed the deed of valour celebrated in Wordsworth's lines—

He of battle martyrs chief,  
Who, to recall his daunted peers,  
For victory shaped an open space,  
By gathering with wide embrace  
Into his single heart a sheaf  
Of fatal Austrian spears.

Other representations that have been given are of the birth of the Confederation, the foundation of the City of Berne, the battles of the Swabian War, including the Battle of Dornach, which was played under the walls of the ancient castle from which the fight took its name. The Swiss are proud of their heroic past, and they dearly love the *Festspiel*. It is part of their lives, and brightens the hours of loneliness no less than the hours of pleasure. They regard it as a solemn act of national loyalty, and the performances are characterised by the greatest reverence. Conspicuous is the impressive genuineness and simplicity in the representations often given by humble peasants.

Switzerland contains a play-going public anxious to see good plays well acted—a public that acknowledges the power of the stage as an educator. The thought always uppermost in Swiss minds is that the generation of to-morrow is largely plastic in the hands of the generation of to-day.

Touring companies, as we know them, which quickly pass from one town to another, are unknown, and would be useless in Switzerland, a country of only 4,000,000 inhabitants, subdivided into three parts, with three distinct languages—French, German, and Italian.

There are but few towns in any part of Switzerland that possess a theatre, and if we take any one of these three sections of the country—French Switzerland, for example—and examine its theatre, we find that the year is generally divided into two seasons—for drama and comedy from October to March, and Opera from March to June. The members of a permanent repertory company are engaged, and usually consist of about twenty artists from the Paris theatres. In the other sections, artists from the principal German and Italian theatres appear.

Performances by the company are given three or four times during the week, together with a Sunday matinée and evening performance. The country long ago opened its doors on Sunday. Weekly or fortnightly a single performance is interchanged with the troupe from another town or with a French touring company.

The plays produced are many and varied, both in style and authorship. From the programme of a theatre in French Switzerland for the present season of comedy and drama, I find 27 plays are produced—12 comedies, 2 musical comedies, 3 melodramas, 3 vaudeville pieces, 2 modern dramas, and 5 classics. The list includes 'Peer Gynt' (Ibsen), 'L'Arlésienne' (Dumas fils), 'Denise,' 'Les Plaideurs' (Racine), 'Les Précieuses' and 'L'Avare' (Molière), 'Le Barbier de Seville' (Beaumarchais), and excellent translations of Shakespeare, Wilde's 'The Importance of Being Earnest,' and the evergreen 'Charley's Aunt.'

With reference to the actual comfort of the audience in the theatre, seating accommodation, etc., it can be said of many theatres, it is like the solution of a cross-word puzzle—hard to find, or, in the words of Bernard Shaw, "the people who go to the theatre are not nearly so comfortable and happy as they might have been had they stayed at home."

It is the custom in many theatres—a custom almost mediæval in its quaintness and oddity—for a well-known literary man to deliver a lecture of about thirty minutes' duration before the commencement of the play. It is usually of an interesting and educative nature, but I prefer—for the reason that a Swiss audience is kept waiting from twenty to thirty minutes between each act without any orchestra—that the homily be delivered between the acts. It can be said, however, that the lecturer and manager are mindful of the fact that the best customers are from the middle classes, and the lectures are

within the understanding of the ordinary person.

It is to-day in the interest of the foreign actor to take employment in Switzerland, owing to the greater value of the exchange. An average rate of pay is about £50 per month, which is a much better rate than in France or Italy to-day. The number of Swiss professional actors is very limited, and without the foreign artist the Swiss theatre could not exist.

In spite of the fact that the majority of the theatres are in receipt of a subsidy from the towns, it is difficult to finish the year with a profit, although before the war sufficiently large profits were made. The prices are a little below those charged in a first-class English theatre, and the entertainment tax adds 10 per cent. on to the price of the ticket.

At Hertensheim, near Lucerne, there is an open-air theatre from June to the end of August, which, during the past few years, has produced plays that have not previously been given under these conditions. The artists are experienced and enthusiastic members of the Max Grube School, and are well known in Berlin and other important German towns. I have been present at several excellent performances of German and other classical plays. The standard of production and acting is high, and the effort, which is certainly in the direction of a natural and healthy theatre, is worthy of commendation.

The Oberammegau of French Switzerland—Mezières, a village near Lausanne, with its famous Théâtre du Jorat—is well known for its annual productions of plays written by the Swiss playwright René Morax. For the coming summer he has specially written a new play, 'Judith,' a tragedy in three acts, according to the Bible, with music by M. Henri Honegger. 'Judith' is one of the fourteen books of the Apocrypha, and the story is of a beautiful and brave woman, of her entry into the camp of the enemy, of her encounter with and subsequent murder of the Assyrian leader, General Holofernes. The Swiss are justly proud of this theatre and of their famous playwright.

I can speak in admiration of the members of the Swiss theatrical profession, whom I consider the most human, most philanthropic, and most generous in the community.

Personally, I have never been in a theatre where a play was preceded by a 30 minutes' address, and I am fairly sure I would have patronised that theatre once only! But then, "Kyburg" is rather fastidious in his taste as regards playgoing, and prefers something more lively and colourful to a lecture.

#### International Rifle Match at St. Gall.

*Morning Post* (23rd Jan.):—

The International Rifle Union having requested the Swiss Delegation to organise the 30 and 50-metre matches in 1925, the Committee of the Swiss Competitions Association has entrusted the organisation of the international matches to the St. Gall Rifle Association.

I think that in the above the distances should be 300 and 500-metres, instead of 30 and 50-metres. St. Gall is famous not only for its embroidery, but especially also for the loveliness of its girls.

#### Winter Sports.

Like King Charles' head, this subject keeps bobbing up again and again, and won't be kept away. Some of my friends think it funny to send me picture postcards from Swiss alpine centres and little charming out-of-the-way villages, with messages, "Du fehlst nur noch," "You ought to be with us," "Thanks for giving us the tip, we are having a wonderful time," etc. Well, I am glad they are enjoying themselves, of course, only . . .

#### The City of Queer Trades.

by Victor MacClure in the *Evening Standard* of Feb. 4th has nothing to do with Switzerland, but, in view of the cross-word puzzle craze now raging, I think it might interest a great many of our readers, because it contains a lot of seldom-heard words. Besides, it is interesting and informative.

There must be quite a number of people who could tell right off what a "secret springer" is. To some, however, the name would conjure up a picture of one who got into a corner all by himself and kept on doing secret and catlike pounces.

Then there's the "herald chaser." The herald chaser, one imagines, hasn't much of a job. He waits at street corners until a herald passes, then darts in pursuit. While it lasts, or when it occurs, it must be quite exhilarating, but it can't happen often enough to make the waiting intervals anything but tedious. Heralds aren't seen in the streets more than once in the period made famous by Mr. Wyndham Lewis. Perhaps, after all, herald-chasing is quite a respectable trade—probably concerned with nothing more exciting than engraving.

If you are in the head and bugle business, you work in romantic materials like erinoid and galalith, but you won't puzzle the uninitiated so much as you would if you were a manufacturer of, say, orchil and cutbeard. You might, indeed, manufacture grab—whatever that may be

—or you might import box shooks—whatever they may be—but for obscurity the thing to do is to make crinkore.

There's a right fruity old-sherry-and-biscuits flavour about the collection of fee farm rents, and surely the only place where you could put up your brass plate would be Doctors' Commons. If on the same stairway there could be an average stater and adjuster and a genealogical searcher, your office premises would be probably unique.

How does the dye-wood chipper do his chipping? one wonders. His occupation brings to mind the Spanish Main and the buccaners, who found relaxation from their piratical occasions in the curing of beef and the logging of dye-wood. But if, as one imagines, the dye-wood chipper merely sits on a bench and whittles with a penknife in his stained fingers at sundry billets of inky wood—then the glory has departed indeed. I'd sooner be a buhl-cutter, or keep an eel-pic house.

It is interesting to note that one doesn't make or deal in cheese—one is either a "factor" or a "monger." But, on the other hand, one manufactures chignons and frizettes, while bunion paste is merely made. There's a respectable amount of trade done in anchor-smithing, and one supposes that the anchor-smith is ready enough to hobnob with the lighterman, the granary-keeper, the haulier, and the wharfinger. Somehow these apparently varying trades are linked up.

How does one "throwst" silk? There are quite a number of practitioners of this old trade mentioned in the "London Directory." The fustian manufacturers are not second in numbers, and it is pleasing to learn that they are ready to deal, not only in cords and twills, but also in moles. One wonders, in this regard, if they employ many catchers.

The fellmonger of Shakespeare's day is still represented in the "London Directory," but he is in the company of pursuits that Will of Avon never knew. There may have been willow merchants in William's time, but what about makers of chrysarobin, carnauba wax manufacturers, coaque makers, salvage buyers, and compilers of cable codes?

There are hundreds of strange occupations mentioned in the "London Directory"—enough to make cross-word puzzle constructors happy for years. And, by the way, will next year see these gentlemen themselves numbered among those employed in the queer trades of London?

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