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# The Swiss Observer

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**Where are you going this day week?  
To Herne Hill, for the Swiss Sports, of course!**

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## HOME NEWS

The new article of the Federal Constitution facilitating the naturalisation of foreigners residing in Switzerland has been accepted by the voters with a majority of nearly three to one. It is expected that about 2,000 foreigners, mainly children born of a Swiss mother, will acquire Swiss citizenship every year. Generally speaking the new law created no political controversy; scarcely 50 per cent. of the electors went to the polls. In the following table the three rejecting cantons are printed in italics.

	Yes	No
Zurich	106742	16468
Berne	33458	9523
Lucerne	7290	1481
Uri	1938	1149
<i>Schwyz</i>	1812	4896
Obwalden	1200	906
Nidwalden	922	416
Glarus	3763	1200
Zug	1203	414
<i>Fribourg</i>	3935	5124
Solothurn	9439	1600
Basel-Stadt	13611	1363
Basel-Land	6474	1319
Schaffhausen	8027	1188
Appenzell A.Rh.	6322	1827
<i>Appenzell I.Rh.</i>	281	1779
St. Gall	24049	23087
Grisons	7689	4023
Aargau	33192	14120
Thurgau	17956	5316
Tessin	5009	3705
Vaud	39743	28103
Wallis	4807	2133
Neuchâtel	4067	970
Geneva	4952	416
Total	347915	132525

It will be noticed that the largest majorities in favour were recorded by the cantons most affected by this problem: Geneva 14 to 1, Basle 10 to 1, Schaffhausen 7 to 1, Zurich 6 to 1, etc. Appenzell I.Rh. can always be depended upon for saying no to any proposal emanating from Berne. In Schwyz the Catholic-Conservative party resisted the revision whilst Fribourg, another Catholic centre, was little interested in the change.

Replying to a memorandum to the Federal Council submitted by leaders of the female suffrage movement in Geneva, the Council states that the granting of the votes to women would require a revision of the Federal Constitution.

A number of cantonal and municipal proposals were also placed before the electorate during the week-end. In Berne the procedure under the penal code undergoes a revision, the Insel hospital and the gas works are to be extended and a plot of land (Belpmoos) is to be acquired for the purposes of an aviation school.

In a by-election at Zurich the previously unsuccessful Dr. Häberlin (Radical) returns to the Stadtrat with 18,802 votes, his opponent, Dr. Brupbacher (Communist) obtaining 12,183 votes. A Bill regulating civil aviation and another extending unemployment insurance found favour.

In Basel-Stadt the members of the Regierungsrat (Executive) were granted the long overdue increase of Frs. 2,000 in their emoluments.

The electors of Obwalden refused to sanction the proposed addition of 11 to their Kantonsrat, the number of its members remaining at 28.

The civil servants of the town of Solothurn are to receive an increase in their salaries necessitating an extra annual expenditure of Frs. 46,000.

In connection with the recent frontier incident when two Italian deserters were without much ado handed back to the Italian frontier guards, the Ticinese States Council has now, as a disciplinary measure, suspended for one month the chief of the cantonal police, Capt. Ferrario.

The Ticinese poet Francesco Chiesa was made an honorary doctor of the University of Rome last Saturday, when all the professors and students and a distinguished gathering of scientists and politicians attended the impressive ceremony.

M. Robert Hofmann, one of the founders and a former president of the Secretariat des Suisses à l'Etranger in Fribourg, died in La Tour-de-Peilz at the age of 50 after a prolonged illness.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

### Henri Dunant.

Of the many references which appeared in the English Press to remind us of the centenary of Henri Dunant's birth the following from the *Catholic Tablet* (May 12th) contains some singular allusions. We do not wish to quarrel with our contemporary. Belated religious polemics cannot impair the merit of Henri Dunant, and it has certainly not been enhanced by the fact that he was a Protestant; his work is above factitious conceptions. We firmly believe, however, that if the lofty ideals of our great compatriot had been identified with any particular religious doctrine they would not have obtained that unqualified universal response which culminated in the creation of the International Red Cross and which, thanks to the very absence of that association, is developing on a much wider basis than the original founder ever dreamed of. We do not dispute that the "Camillians" distributed milk of human kindness at the battle of Solferino, though we have never heard of it before, but we do know that similar acts of charity are on record from many other battlefields before that memorable date, though the noble dispensers have not been canonised. We are also informed that the Camillian samaritans wore red crosses at Solferino, but the *Tablet* omits to point out to its readers that this is in no way responsible for the ultimate adoption of this particular escutcheon.

"Let all due honour be paid to the memory of Henri Dunant, founder of the International Red Cross organisation as now established at Geneva. Last Tuesday was the centenary of Dunant's birth. But, in asking that he may have the whole of his "due" honour, it is not ungracious to express the hope that he and the Geneva Red Cross will no longer be given credit which belongs to others. Not very many years ago, an English Catholic lady published through Messrs. Burns, Oates & Washbourne a well-informed and soundly argued book called "The First Red Cross," in which it was shown beyond all possibility of contradiction that Catholics were the pioneers of succour for the wounded and dying upon the battlefield and that the trained men who risked their lives in this noble work wore a Red Cross as their emblem. We are alluding to the splendid sons of Saint Camillus de Lellis, who was himself a soldier. The Camillians had been risking their lives as trained helpers of the wounded on many a battlefield for hundreds of years before the Geneva Red Cross was heard of. In the remarkable book already mentioned, it is shown that Henri Dunant must have seen the Camillians wearing their Red Crosses and giving first aid at the battle of Solferino. Everybody who knows anything about the Geneva movement is aware that Dunant's Red Cross work was the outcome of his Solferino experiences. He wrote a book describing the sufferings of the wounded on the Solferino field, and therein pleaded for an international organisation which should be respected by the bel-

ligerents on both sides, in the sacred name of our common Christianity.

It is now more than sixty years since the splendid effort of Henri Dunant was crowned with success. Delegates from sixteen countries repaired to Geneva in 1864, and there drafted the famous Convention by which it was agreed that ambulances and field-hospitals should be protected from gun-fire by the flying of a flag with a Red Cross on a white ground. This humane movement quickly made progress until "firing on the Red Cross" came to be regarded as a barbarity which placed the perpetrator of such an outrage beneath the contempt of civilised peoples. Long may the Geneva Red Cross flourish; and long may the memory of Henri Dunant be venerated! None the less we must express our deep regret that certain persons connected with this great work seem determined that its Catholic origin shall be buried out of sight. The biographies of Henri Dunant which have been appearing this week have laid stress on his coming from "an old patrician and Protestant family" and on his early enthusiasm for the Y.M.C.A. movement. Whether these strongly non-Catholic associations disposed him unfavourably to the Catholic Church we are not in a position to say; but the fact remains that Protestants are surprised and even a little indignant when they are told that Dunant cannot have helped seeing the Red Cross Camillians in the thick of the fight at Solferino. A few years ago we were shown a correspondence with the Editor of the official magazine of the Geneva Red Cross. Unhappily this gentleman, who had published a misleading review of the English book, "The First Red Cross," which we have already mentioned, refused to let a rejoinder on points of fact be placed before his readers.

Somebody may ask how it has come about that the Camillians have not spoken up more loudly as the rightful heirs to Red Cross honours. They are still a vigorous Order; indeed, it is often said in Rome that no parish in the Eternal City is more splendidly worked than that which is staffed by the sons of Saint Camillus de Lellis. Although they are not likely to thank us for saying so, it is within our knowledge that these devoted men are conscious of the injustice that has been done to them. Not for the whole world, however, would they cry out against the Geneva Society, seeing that it is doing the very work which was so dear to the soldier Saint who was their founder. Moreover, the Geneva Convention was signed at a time when there was still an enormous amount of prejudice against the Religious Orders, so far as the Protestant Powers were concerned; and the Camillians knew that it would do much more harm than good to the cause of wounded soldiers if the work of the Catholic pioneers were harped upon."

### The Uri Landsgemeinde.

The disappearance of this old historic landmark has not passed unnoticed in the English Press. The *Outlook* (May 12th) has the following short note:—

"The news that the canton of Uri is to abolish its annual assembly of its male citizens would have fluttered Victorian doves. I suppose that hardly anyone reads Freeman nowadays, but it was once orthodox to teach Englishmen to look to Uri and, I think, Appenzell, for surviving examples of the tribal moot, from which democracy sprang. Indeed, the doctrine may have helped to found the popularity of Switzerland as a holiday resort, but winter sports and votes for women have proved too much for the Teutonic tradition."

and the *Times* (May 11th) publishes a lament from a correspondent:—

"It is with much regret that I learn from the telegram from your Geneva Correspondent in to-day's issue that in the Canton of Uri the Landsgemeinde, or open-air Legislative Assembly of male citizens, is no longer to be held; a regret which will doubtless be shared by those who have read the account of these historic assemblies in Freeman's "Growth of the English Constitution," or Capper's "Shores and Cities