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The Swiss Observer

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HOME NEWS

The Home News from the German parts of Switzerland is unavoidably held over, and will be included in our next issue.—Ed.

ARTISTES SUISSES AUX TUILIERIES.

Le Salon "des Tuileries," après avoir promené son titre d'origine à la porte Maillot est installé maintenant à deux pas de l'Esplanade des Invalides, rue de l'Université, au Palais des expositions. Il s'y trouve du reste fort à son aise et admirablement éclairé.

Synthèse de tous les salons qui se succèdent chaque année à Paris, on croit y rencontrer et l'on y rencontre peut-être des artistes des "Français," de la "Nationale," de l'"Autonome" et des "Indépendants." Entre le peintre qui a fixé sur ses toiles, et opportunément, le transbordement du corps de l'ambassadeur des Etats-Unis à Brest et le départ du *Tourville* qui l'emporta, le 5 avril, et le sculpteur qui offre aux Parisiens l'image du jeune prince Henri de France sur le socle duquel une main féale a déposé des fleurs de lys, il y a place pour des fauves, des sages, des naïfs et même pour des artistes ayant tout épris de leur art.

Parmi les Suisses qui y figurent, nous en rencontrons qui sont connus, d'autres qui le seront et sans doute quelques-uns que l'on ne peut identifier parce que le catalogue du Salon ne donne pas d'indication d'état civil, mais dont on présume l'origine à la signature tout au moins, car on ne connaît pas en art une tendance qui soit proprement helvétique.

Il n'y a évidemment rien de commun entre le buste de James Vibert par lui-même et le buste de femme de Casimir Raymond; le masque rigide du premier et l'expression sensible du second sont aussi différents l'un de l'autre que l'Aigle presque égyptien de W. Wuilleumier et l'Ondine dans laquelle Paulo Rothlisberger a fait revivre à la perfection une figurine de Tanagra.

Chez les peintres, la diversité n'est pas moindre. Autant de tempéraments que d'œuvres; aussi bien ne voit-on pas quels caractères spécifiques ils pourraient posséder en commun. De la supra-sensible ébauche que Claire-Lise Monnier a consacrée sous le nom de *Famille* à un homme, une femme et un chien, aux *Nus* de Théophile Bosshard dont la scrupuleuse sensibilité pénètre avec des nuances infinies de couleurs et de formes les corps qu'il finit par dépouiller de leur apparence charnelle, il y a un monde; il y a également tout ce qui sépare l'improvisation de la volonté créatrice, et la joie en fait-elle absente, les créations de Bosshard existent; il serait regrettable qu'il les enfermât dans une formule.

On n'éprouve pas la même crainte devant la nature morte que Raoul Domenjoz a peinte avec le souci d'atteindre la réalité des choses sans les en dépouiller au profit exclusif de l'esprit. Son *Intérieur*, fait d'une table portant une statuette, des livres et des fleurs, est remarquable en dépit de l'ordre volontaire qui règne dans la disposition des objets; la raideur qui en résulterait disparaît grâce à la composition harmonieuse des tons soumis à une dominante bleue dont les nuances sont exemptes de toute fadeur.

Une excellente *Marine* d'Esther Dumas, dessin rehaussé d'un port, fait penser à une eau-forte malgré les bruns uniformément foncés des nuages, de l'eau et du sol. La vigueur de ce morceau contraste singulièrement avec le petit tableau, du reste charmant, un port tout de rose et de bleue, qui l'accompagne.

Les envois de René Francillon et de C. A. Bischoff sont intéressants; le paysage du premier, quoique un peu fade, les nus du second retiennent l'attention.

UNE INTERESSANTE DECOUVERTE DANS L'HORLOGERIE.

Un horloger de précision de Genève, M. P. R. Jaccard, vient de découvrir un mécanisme que l'horlogerie cherchait depuis deux siècles: l'échappement à force constante et à longue durée. Le principe de M. Jaccard, qui pourra s'adapter aussi bien aux montres qu'aux pendules, pendulettes, automates, baromètres, etc., permettra de fabriquer presque sans augmenta-

tion de frais, des mouvements marchant avec une régularité parfaite pendant six semaines, trois mois ou même plus d'une année. Une première expérience va être officiellement contrôlée par notre Observatoire, où un chronomètre monté avec le dispositif de M. Jaccard va prendre part au concours annuel et devra par conséquent marcher 52 jours sans être retourné.

Il est hors de doute que l'invention de M. Jaccard est appelée à avoir un grand retentissement.

L'AFFAIRE DU CREDIT MUTUEL DE LA CHAUX-DE-FONDS.

Le Tribunal fédéral vient de statuer sur le recours qui avait été présenté contre le jugement du tribunal cantonal neuchâtelois relatif à la faillite de la banque le Crédit mutuel de la Chaux-de-Fonds. Le tribunal cantonal avait condamné les anciens administrateurs du Crédit mutuel à payer solidairement 300,000 francs d'indemnité à la masse de faillite. Le Tribunal fédéral a décidé de faire porter la responsabilité aux six administrateurs qui étaient en charge pendant la dernière phase de l'activité du Crédit mutuel et les a condamnés à payer solidairement une somme de 20,000 francs. Deux autres ex-administrateurs, M. Paul Montandon et les héritiers de Jean Pilet, décédé, sont mis hors de cause. Les frais du recours ont été portés à la charge de la masse de faillite; les frais de la procédure cantonale sont partagés entre les deux parties.

LA PROPAGANDE BOLCHEVISTE PARI LES ENFANTS SUISSES.

La propagande bolcheviste, qui pousse dans notre pays toutes les tentatives possibles sans se laisser décourager par de nombreux succès, s'efforce insidieusement d'atteindre l'enfance. Si la récolte est plus tardive, le terrain est plus facile à ensemenner.

Voici, par exemple, la feuille communiste de Bâle, *l'Arbeiter Jugend*, qui publie un appel de Moscou pour l'organisation d'une "semaine d'enfants," pour la défense de l'Union soviétique, et contre les organisations "bourgeoises" de jeunesse et l'enseignement religieux. On y trouve la relation d'une conférence du communiste allemand Max Hölz (condamné jadis pour participation à une émeute à main armée), de la présentation aux jeunes révolutionnaires de St-Gall du film soviétique *Potemkine* et de l'activité des cellules des "Pionniers rouges" à l'école. Un pionnier raconte "Comment je fais de la propagande à l'école." Suivent une série d'anecdotes du même genre.

LES VALAISANS A ST. GINGOLPH.

Pendant longtemps, les Valaisans habitant la partie française du village de Saint-Gingolph purent exercer leur droit de vote dans les affaires cantonales et communales. Cette liberté très large fut supprimée en 1927 à la suite d'une interprétation sévère de la loi sur le droit de vote et les citoyens du canton habitant la partie française de ce village ne furent plus autorisés à voter.

Un recours de droit public vient d'être adressé à ce sujet au Tribunal fédéral, qui l'a rejeté comme non fondé, de sorte que désormais seuls les citoyens habitant effectivement la partie suisse du village de Saint-Gingolph pourront encore voter sur les affaires cantonales et communales.

UN LAUSANNOIS DOCTEUR EN SORBONNE.

M. Félix Vaney, professeur de mathématiques au Collège cantonal de Lausanne, a soutenu lundi matin, à la Faculté des sciences de Paris, deux thèses de mathématiques. Dans la première, s'inspirant des récents travaux de M. Elie Cartan, M. Vaney a étudié "le parallélisme absolu dans les espaces à 3 et à 7 dimensions, et le principe de trichotomie dans les espaces à 7 dimensions." Le second se rapporte aux séries trigonométriques. M. Vaney a été chaudement félicité par le jury, qui lui a témoigné le plaisir qu'il avait pris à ce voyage dans l'infini, en accompagnant le titre de docteur de l'Université de Paris de la mention "très honorable," la plus haute récompense décernée par la Sorbonne. M. Félix Vaney était déjà docteur de l'Université de Lausanne, titre qu'il obtint à la suite d'une thèse sur certains propriétés des polynômes hypergéométriques.

LE GENERAL HIGGINS A GENEVE.

Lors de sa réception au quartier général international de l'Armée du Salut, le nouveau chef de celles-ci, le général Edward J. Higgins, avait manifesté son intention de venir visiter ses camarades suisses. Il a mis ce projet à exécution, et venant de Bâle, il est arrivé en notre ville, précédé de deux jours par sa femme, Mme

Higgins, qui, elle aussi, appartient à l'Armée depuis son enfance et qui est venue présider les grandes fêtes de l'Ascension auxquelles participent toutes les sections romandes, soit plus de deux mille salutistes et neuf corps de musique.

Il a été reçu le matin dans les locaux de l'Union chrétienne, après avoir passé devant l'objectif des photographes.

Le général Higgins a succédé en février dernier au général Bramwell Booth, dans les conditions que nous avons relatées, et a été élu par le Haut Conseil après avoir rempli pendant dix ans les fonctions de chef d'état-major, le poste le plus important à côté du général. C'est dire que toutes les branches et le mouvement de l'organisation lui sont familières. Agé de 64 ans, il jouit de la plus grande confiance, non seulement dans les rangs de l'Armée, mais encore auprès de tous ceux qui s'intéressent à l'œuvre admirable qu'elle poursuit.

HOMMAGE AU PROFESSEUR DR. CESAR ROUX.

Le Conseil de l'Université de Paris vient de décerner le titre de Docteur *honoris causa* de l'Université de Paris à cinq savants étrangers parmi lesquels le Dr. César Roux, ancien professeur de clinique chirurgicale à l'Université de Lausanne et le professeur Einstein, de Berlin.

FROM THE TICINO.

FALLING BIRTH-RATE.

A recently issued Bulletin of the Cantonal Department of Health gives certain statistics about the population of the Ticino which have aroused some alarm in various quarters. The birth-rate, at 16.5 per thousand, is only slightly higher than the death-rate, and if the permanent emigration overseas is taken into account, the Ticinese population of the Ticino has been slightly falling for several years.

Many Ticinesi will naturally think that numbers do not count and also that we have the well-known maxim of economics that "bad currency drives good currency out of a country." One point which appears to alarm the apostles of "big battalions" is that the birth-rate among the foreign residents of the Ticino is, proportionately, substantially higher than that of the Ticinesi. Of 2,577 children born in 1928 no less than 656 were foreigners and 1,921 Ticinesi.

One dark spot in the statistics is certainly the fact that whilst there are only three cantons in Switzerland where the birth-rate is lower, the Ticino holds the first position as regards the percentage of deaths among babies. This is attributed to a certain extent to climatic conditions, especially during the summer months, but in a large measure to the fact that women in the Ticino tend to work unduly hard. A lengthy discussion on this subject took place recently in the Grand Conseil and the Department of Health is expected to do what it can to mend matters. However, it is only natural that we cannot expect to escape from the effects of economic conditions and the general trend of mentality of the world in which we live.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES.

For several months the political parties of the Ticino appear to have been manoeuvring for position, although the next contest is still about 18 months ahead. The rather constant pressure exerted from Berne upon the authorities of the Ticino tending to prevent the natural impetuosity of the Ticinesi from creating "incidents" with our southern neighbours, and particularly the Salvini affair, seem to have somewhat undermined the allegiance of the Socialists to the Socialist-Conservative block, which holds the majority in the Government. The Socialists give the impression of being ready for a change, of course, but the Liberal-Radicals, the strongest party in the Canton, although no doubt desirous of having the Socialists on their side, do not seem to be keen to go out of their way to court favours.

The situation is to a certain extent dominated by the fact that, as the Socialist party two years ago only narrowly qualified for one seat in the Cantonal Government, and as Liberal-Radical stock has been rising for the last few years, it would not be out of the question that, with some further addition of strength, the Liberal-Radical Party might regain, single-handed, a clear majority in the Government. Whatever course events might take, there is perhaps not one Ticinese in London who is not glad to be outside the reach of the heat-wave atmosphere of the politics of his Canton.

"LES ARMES REUNIES."

On Thursday of last week the well-known military band "Les Armes Réunies" of La Chaux-

de-Fonds was given a rousing reception by the Municipal Band and authorities of Lugano, during their one day's stay in the town on their way to the Lago Maggiore. They treated the population of Lugano to some fine concerts, and our friends from the Jura can have entertained no doubt as to the warmth of the welcome.

FRONTIER INCIDENTS.

A lengthy discussion took place last week in the Grand Conseil of the Ticino concerning instructions issued by the police with a view to avoiding the recurrence of frontier incidents. The discussion arose from an interpellation criticising the Department of Police for the instructions issued by the police station at Stabio to licensed establishments in the immediate vicinity of the frontier to suppress discussions and rowdyism inimical to our neighbours. The instructions were criticised as being contrary to the established rules of liberty, as far as Switzerland is concerned. Mr. Cattori, head of the Department of Police, explained, however, that the Cantonal authorities had been specially requested by the Federal Council at the end of February last, after a series of incidents, to take steps to see that the peace should not be disturbed in future, if possible. Mr. Cattori defended the instructions issued from Bellinzona to the frontier police stations as being quite legal, although he admitted that the communications by the local police of Stabio to licensed premises somewhat exceeded the mark and the "circular" has been withdrawn. The critics declared themselves "so far" satisfied.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KIBURG.

Security in Switzerland.

I confess I had to read the following article—*Time and Tide*, 26th April—twice before I really was able to enjoy to the full its meaning. We are rather used to read very flattering articles about Switzerland in the British Press and when one meets one which succeeds, in a most delightful manner to hit off also some of our most characteristic shortcomings, it is doubly welcome, I think.

"In the generous rivalry in which the nations of Europe have been engaged in the last ten years—the race towards that security which the statesmen of Europe have united in proclaiming as the new ideal—it has been painful to observe the lagging steps of Switzerland. Switzerland's reputation for brilliancy has never indeed, quite equalled that of France or Italy. The mercurial flashes of an Aristide, the Jovian rumblings of a Benito, could never have issued from the sweet but placid Alpine pastures; yet the country of Tell and Zwingli once occupied an honourable place among its peers, and even in the nineteenth century, the Swiss Federation claimed to be the chief Continental stronghold of civic liberties.

"The more lamentable, then, was the purblind obstinacy with which Switzerland in recent years rested on her fast-withering laurels. She appeared to cherish the delusion that a defensive national militia, a neutrality internationally guaranteed and jealously guarded, and a series of arbitration treaties, constituted a sufficient contribution towards the great ideal of security. Undoubtedly, pernicious influences were at work. Perhaps poisonous emanations from the so-called Spirit of the League had floated miasmically across the boulevards of Geneva to take away the brains of sturdy Swiss citizens.

"But fortunately even this citadel of reaction is beginning to totter at last. The Swiss Federal Council has appointed a mixed Central Commission to study the protection of the civilian population against gas warfare. It is a small step indeed, but it is a step along the right road, and we hope that Switzerland will soon be following the rest of Europe along the path which their statesmen (with the one lamentable exception of Denmark) have recognised as alone leading to security. The Swiss do everything well, and we have no doubt that when the recommendations of the Mixed Commission are issued, they will be found to combine the maximum of protection for the population with the minimum of dislocation to the important tourist traffic. Dug-outs in the mountains can, of course, easily be arranged, and the sacrifice of picturesqueness need only be small.

"The towns present a more serious problem. Many aged and timid persons of both sexes frequent Switzerland for their health, and might find the atmosphere of their rest-cures marred if the pretty features of their Swiss chambermaids were suddenly to be found concealed under masks of rubber, when emergency practices are ordered. Perhaps—we venture the suggestion with all diffidence—at the national gas-drills, the customary harsh Klaxon might be replaced by loud-speakers giving out a peculiar yodelling cry, sufficiently like the old sounds of less enlightened days to preserve the atmosphere, but subtly distinguished to signify danger. The cows represent a real difficulty. Their masks will, of course, be hung round their necks, and it should be easy enough to shape their covers in the outward form of the traditional cowbell. But what of the old melodious tinkle? That will pro-

bably have to go; but then there has never been lacking a morose section of opinion which maintained that the concord of sweet matutinal sounds, for all its suggestion of rich creamy chocolate in the preparing, was not really worth the broken sleep which it involved. Such practical men will doubtless find far greater satisfaction in watching the nicely drilled herds rally round their guardians, with true Swiss efficiency, at the warning yodels, and submit to the swathing of their absurdly pacific faces in the latest implements of security."

With regard to the last few lines of the above, all I say is "Things I should like to see illustrated!"

Some little time ago we had a Swiss project for bridging the English Channel, and a very good idea it looked to my lay-mind, too. Now comes another Swiss, Mr. Otto Probst, of Zurich, who intends to fly

To America in Twelve Hours. (*Daily Mirror*, 22nd April):—

"If the plans of a Swiss inventor materialise, a vessel he has designed will be able to travel at over 300 miles an hour—as fast as a Schneider Cup seaplane. Mr. Otto Probst, of Zurich, is the designer of this remarkable craft, and he has arrived in London to submit his plans to the British Government. "My vessel is a 'projectile boat,' driven by explosive forces which are my secret," Mr. Probst told the *Daily Mirror* yesterday. Motive power, he added, was rather similar to that used in rocket cars.

"Mr. Probst claims that any great Power that adopted his craft for its navy would be practically unbeatable on the sea. Cigar-shaped, with a cabin in the nose and the explosive chambers in the tail, the boat could be controlled either by a pilot or by wireless from the land, he said. If controlled by wireless, it could be loaded with explosives and used as a gigantic torpedo, from which no ship could escape since its speed is so great. The minimum speed is about 80 miles an hour, and naturally the pilot and passengers are entirely enclosed in a cabin. The craft skims on the surface of the water like a hydroplane, and could easily cross the Atlantic in twelve hours.

"In peace time it would make a wonderful pleasure and commercial craft, and in war time a fleet of "projectile boats" would be impossible to hit even with the most modern guns. The most suitable and practical size for such a boat up to the present would be about fifty yards long with a beam of two and a half yards. Trials with one five yards long have been very successful. I want Britain to adopt this invention, but if this Government declines it, I shall offer it to the United States authorities."

Suppose it is true! Suppose the British Government obtains possession of this wonderful appliance which will enable it, when worked out in practical fashion, to master the seas in a sense hitherto undreamt of, would it not be fine? And, after all, we all know, I think, that the world at large could have not a better policeman than John Bull, who would see to fair play for all being enforced everywhere. The millennium, perhaps, draws nearer? What?

Meanwhile, however, and, perhaps, just to prove that there are many kinds of wars and not all of them sanguinary affairs, we have

War on Words in the Ticino. (*The Observer*, 28th April):—

"Though Lugano and Locarno and many other places in the Ticino live on "Fremdenindustrie," the Ticino patriots feel none too kindly towards their visitors. They are now leading an attack on inscriptions and advertisements in other languages than Italian; not even French and German, which are "national languages" in Switzerland, find favour in their eyes. The inhabitants of Interlaken or Lucerne do not mind such harmless mottoes as "On parle français" in the window of a barber's shop, or "English spoken" at the door of a chemist's. But the Ticinese—at least some of them, though not the hotel-keepers and shopkeepers—are of a different mind.

"A motion has been carried in the Legislative Assembly charging the Government with the maintenance of the Italian character of placards, inscriptions, and advertisements in the streets. The Government, doubtful of the legality of the proceeding, approached Professor Burckhardt of the University of Berne with the following questions: Have we the right to forbid the public exhibition of any inscription in a foreign language? If not, can we demand that such texts be preceded by a translation in Italian, written in larger print? May we levy a special tax on foreign inscriptions, and, if so, how high may it be? Professor Burckhardt answered that there is such a right, and that, as the Constitution does not provide for them, the Canton is free to settle them as it likes.

"If the patriots have it their own way, such dangerous words as "Tourist Office" or "Münchener Bier" may disappear. The unpatriotic "Change" at the banks will be overshadowed by a larger "Cambio" and the treacherous "Fahrkarten" at the booking office by a fat "Biglietti." The intended tax opens a field for wild speculation, especially as the expert suggests the careful distinction between "more and less" foreign languages, English belonging to the "more."

"But there is a well-founded rumour that the circles interested in the comfortable accommodation of visitors have approached another expert, who, being in their pay, will be somewhat more considerate towards their business interests."

In a sense it is quite right and proper that the Lingua di Dante should be defended and upheld and kept free from foreign elements, as much as possible. But, in practice, our friends will find that a language is, like all living things, subject to change, and words which are foreign to-day may be not so a couple of hundred years later. I remember the German efforts to substitute "Gesichtserker" for "Nase," the latter word being foreign! But very few even of the most enthusiastic followers of the pure-language movement, went as far as to describe the result of a boxing bout "blutender Gesichtserker."

Further, wrong ideas may be given, as for example happened to me in Rome, years ago. Although I rather prided myself on my knowledge of the various brands of beer, I was startled to find "birra di Monaco," as up to then I had never heard that the little Principality possessed an exporting brewery. I found out, in tasting the stuff, that it was my old friend the veritable "Münchener Bier."

At the present moment when we read so much about unemployment, the following from the *Times*, 27th April, is probably of interest:—

How Switzerland deals with Unemployment.

"As a result of the steady decrease in the demand for embroideries and "passementeries" and the consequent menace of unemployment to a large number of workers, the Federal, Cantonal, and rural authorities have taken energetic steps in order to institute new means of gaining a livelihood, by the creation of new industries in those districts principally affected.

"Thus in the Canton of Basel, the home of the "posamentiers," or "passementerie" makers, no fewer than seven separate courses in market gardening were given by expert gardeners, special attention being devoted to the cultivation of peas. These one of the principal Swiss tinned goods manufacturers guaranteed to purchase. Special places in the big markets are to be reserved for the sale of the so-called "posamentier" fruit and vegetables. Further, the sum of 3,000,000 frs. has been allocated for the creation of a special board for the promotion of fruit-growing among these "posa-

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