

# Social and Personal

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guide-book spoke highly of them, and we took its word on the matter, for the heat quelled all curiosity. But I was not to escape from Sion so easily as I had hoped. What the Swiss too picturesquely call an "omnibus" train took us on to Montreux—being an omnibus because it stopped everywhere."

Martigny he greets with the exclamation: "What horrible joker named the town 'Martigny' and gave it a station without a tap—least of all a cocktail!" May God forgive the man this "horrible joke," because it was terribly hot, so hot that he was "almost beyond suffering and looked with deep envy at a lady's poodle vis-à-vis finding relief by lolling out its tongue."

With these remarks he leaves the Valais to enter the Canton of Vaud. Severed from the Fendant, Amigne, Dole, etc., a complete change overtakes him. He loses much of his humour and develops a quiet, serious vein. In Chillon he is not much impressed with Bonivard and the story of his sufferings, and finds that "six years in a dungeon was no uncommon experience of the 16th century, and that the hero nevertheless lived to the ripe old age of 74. The sight of the great lake and a cool breeze had, however, considerably revived him, as he was already able to quote Byron:—

"Chillon! thy prison is a holy place  
And thy sad floor an altar—for 'twas trod,  
Until his very steps have left a trace,  
Worn, as if the cold pavement were a sod,  
By Bonivard! may none those marks efface,  
For they appeal from Tyranny to God."

In another paper, *The Christian World* (Sept. 22) this time, the same writer gives his impression of Geneva and the Lake. It is pleasant to read in these days an English word in favour of Geneva when there seems to be an organised drive against her and to be reminded that the town of Calvin, Rousseau, Madame de Staël, Amiël, Hodler, to quote a few names at random, is not a small provincial nest where one's mental horizon is bound to be reduced, as some would like to make us believe, but the home of many desperate, yet triumphant causes. But enough of this; the bubble has been pricked at the last meeting of the League of Nations, and let us hear what the writer has to say and how he describes Geneva when he approached the town on a beautiful summer evening:—

"On our left there was still a glimmer of sunset, and, belonging half to heaven and half to earth, almost indiscernible, rose the snowy outline of Mont Blanc and the bolder outlines of less distant ranges. And there was one sight on my right that filled me not with wonder, but with wondering. It was a long palatial stone facade facing the lake, the old hotel that was now the home of the League of Nations. Here was the reality, the actual symbol of all the aspirations that a few of us, altruists, who believe in the future of mankind, had brought, and were desperately keeping, into being. This League, and this home of it, have come out of the feelings akin to despair felt by those who looked upon the European conflagration as a threat to the whole of civilisation. A revolt against the insanity of war, and the enthusiasm of men like Lord Robert Cecil and General Smuts, backed by a large section of the public, have forced this League into recognition.

So that, as I looked upon that dark pile, without a single light, wherein a few days there was to be another world assembly, I reflected that this was perhaps the only concrete good that had come out of and remained to us of those nightmare years which have left Europe in ruin and starvation. Strange, if out of that building should come a moral force that will regulate the world and make war a dark chapter in barbarism. It is a lot to hope, to struggle for, but Geneva in her vivid history has been the home of many desperate and triumphant causes.

You will hear in Geneva, as elsewhere, strong criticisms of the League. It is stated locally that Geneva is not a suitable base. The strength of the Swiss exchange makes it an expensive Mecca for most nations, and its geographical position is such that it is almost a cul-de-sac for international transit and

communication. Be this as it may, Geneva has had the honour of seeing the League begin its work on its soil—the home, too, of the Red Cross Societies."

A writer in the *Blackburn Times* (Sept. 24) is a lover of historic reminiscences and associations, and if he did not describe himself as an "old Blackburnian" one would be inclined to think that he is an old Swiss who, after an absence of many years, makes a patriotic pilgrimage to the holy places of Switzerland. Already in Paris, in the Jardin des Tuileries, he remembers the Swiss Guard, who, after a stout defence, when everybody had already abandoned the unfortunate Louis XVI., only laid down their arms by order of the king. It is not without a thrill that we follow the traveller in his peregrinations through Lucerne to Sempach, Altdorf, Tellsplatte, etc.

"Next to it is the old Kapell Brücke, which is roofed over and painted with scenes from the lives of St. Leger and St. Maurice, and from Swiss history.

Among the chief places of interest in the town is the famous cathedral, with its two slender spires, built in 1506, and the magnificent organ, on which performances are given daily. The Lion of Lucerne is a magnificently conceived and admirably executed work of art, cut in relief on the face of the rock. It commemorates the death of twenty-six officers and 760 soldiers of the Swiss Guard who fell in the Tuileries Palace in Paris, in defence of the king and the royal family, in 1792.

The following day we went to Sempach, historically connected with a battle fought there between the Swiss Confederates and the Austrians, under Duke Leopold, in 1386. A small chapel contains a picture of the battle. Later we visited the birthplace of the heroic Winkelried at Stans, a pretty village situated amid large orchards. We saw the handsome monument erected to him, and on the fountain in the market place is a bust of the patriot.

Finally we arrived at the mountain village of Andermatt. After visiting the church and quaint village, we returned to Goeschenen on foot, following the winding roads as they twisted in and out down the gorge. A little distance down the gorge the Russian monument suddenly came into view. This monument takes the form of a cross cut in the side of the cliff, and was erected to perpetuate the memory of the Russian army which entered the village of Andermatt in 1799 and forced the French to retire. The construction of this portion of the road was one of immense difficulty, as the workmen had first to be let down from above by ropes to blast a foothold out of the rock. After taking several photographs we had to hurry along as well as we could on a scorching day in order to arrive in time for one of the few trains back to Fluelen.

At Fluelen we boarded a train which took us to Altdorf, celebrated as the scene of the well-known story in the life of William Tell. The spot where Tell stood is marked by a colossal statue of the hero in plaster (!), and the tree under which the boy stood is said to have been blown down, and now a fountain marks the spot.

The road from Fluelen to Tell's Platte, known as the Axenstrasse road, is most picturesque, as it runs parallel to the shore of the lake, thus affording visitors a magnificent view with the mountains beyond. It has been for the most part cut out of the face of the rock. A short walk winding down the cliff brought us to the ledge on which stands Tell's Chapel, built in 1368 and rebuilt in 1880 in its original form, in memory of Tell's escape from the boat in which Gessler was conveying him as a prisoner. The walls of the chapel are frescoed with scenes from Swiss history."

(To be continued.)

## SOCIAL AND PERSONAL.

The Swiss Minister and Madame Paravicini have returned to London.

The marriage of Mr. Alfred Stauffer to Miss Elsie May, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Sidney C. Phillips, of Point House, Woodborough Road, Putney, S.W.15, took place on Saturday, October 15th, 1921, at St. Margaret's Church, Putney Park Lane, S.W.

Mr. Georges Dimier will show on Thursday, November 3rd, a series of photographs which he has taken during his recent holiday trip in the Swiss Mountains. (See Advert.)