

Notes and Gleanings

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erblickt hat. Er hat diese Welt wieder verlassen, bevor die Spanne eines Menschenalters abgelaufen war. Wir aber, die wir um ihn trauern, erinnern uns der alten Wahrheit, dass es am Schluss aller Dinge nicht darauf ankommt, wie lange ein Mensch gelebt hat, sondern wie ein Mensch gelebt hat.

Als in den ersten Zeiten des Grossen Krieges eine unerbitliche Notwendigkeit die Spannung aller verfügbaren Kräfte von Kriegführenden und Nichtkriegführenden verlagte, sah sich, wie heute noch Jedermann erinnerlich, die Eidgenössische Regierung veranlasst, ihre Vertretungen in fremden Ländern in dem Masse auszurüsten, das den an sie gestellten Forderungen des Schutzes und der Hilfe entsprach. Dass für diese erste Aufgabe, die für jeden Einzelnen naturgemäss ein gut Teil Verantwortung mit sich brachte, nach bestem Wissen und Gewissen Leute ausersuchen wurden, deren Fähigkeiten und Gesinnung volles Vertrauen rechtfertigten, ist eine Sache der Selbstverständlichkeit. John Walter Sterchi war einer von denen, die dem auf sie gesetzten Vertrauen in weit mehr als anerkennenswerter Weise Genüge getan haben. Als er im Jahre 1915 als zugewandelter Beamter seine Tätigkeit auf der Kanzlei der Schweiz. Gesandtschaft in Grossbritannien aufnahm, wusste er sich zotzusagen vom ersten Tage an die Anerkennung seines Chefs und seiner Mitarbeiter durch fleissige, gewissenhafte, nie ermüdende Arbeit zu erwerben. Ich bin in der glücklichen Lage, hierüber heute, am Tage seiner Bestattung, aus eigener Erfahrung reden zu können, da er mich in jenen Anfangszeiten seiner Wirksamkeit in London unter den Mitarbeitern der Gesandtschaft gefunden hat.

Als ich, nach dreijähriger Abwesenheit, im Jahre 1920 vom Bundesrat auf den Londoner Gesandtenposten berufen wurde, fand ich Sterchi noch immer im Kreise der Mitglieder unserer Gesandtschaft. Sein scheidender Chef, der Gesandte Carlin, der ihm im Tode vorangegangen ist, hatte ihn inzwischen, in Anerkennung seiner vorzüglichen Dienste, zum Chef der Kanzlei mit Erfolg vorgeschlagen. Nicht nur gereichte es mir, bei meinem Antritt, zur aufrichtigen Freude, Sterchi an höherem Posten hier wieder zu treffen, die mir dadurch zugesicherte Mitarbeit eines so zuverlässigen Beamten an verantwortungsreicher Stelle gab mir zugleich, für die Erfüllung meiner eigenen Aufgabe, ein Gefühl der Sicherheit, das während der nahezu fünfjährigen Tätigkeit nicht einen Augenblick ins Wanken gekommen ist.

Sterchi war ein Mann von ruhigem, stetem Arbeitssinn und Pflichtgefühl. Wie er seine Pflicht tat, so erwartete er von Andern, dass sie die ihrige tun. Dem Vaterlande hat er Alles gegeben, was des Vaterlandes ist, als braver Soldat, wie als treuer Beamter. Und als er ein durch nichts zu trübendes Eheglück in seiner Verbindung mit einer Schweizerin gefunden hatte, hat er mit wackerem Mute seine kleine Familie durchs Leben geführt, durch ein Leben, dessen Beschwerlichkeiten und zeitweise Sorgen sein Zutrauen und seine Freude an dem, was es ihm Schönes bot, nicht zu schwächen vermochten.

Ich darf wohl heute im Namen aller Derer sprechen, die ihn kannten, im Namen meiner eigenen Mitarbeiter, im Namen seiner Freunde, im Namen seiner Landsleute — und nicht zuletzt derjenigen, die der Hilfe bedurften — wenn ich scheidet von dem Geschiedenen, mit einem Worte des Dankes und des herzlichsten Eingedenkens. Er ruhe in Frieden!

Fischers Lied "Am Grabe," das unsichtbar vom Letzter in erhebender Weise von einem Herrenquartett gesungen wurde, erschallte wie ein letzter Gruss aus weiter Ferne. Wieder spielte die Orgel — Chopins Trauermarsch und die Schweiz. Nationalhymne — und langsam, den Leidtragenden folgend, verliess die Gemeinde das Gotteshaus; draussen aber besprach man in kleinen Gruppen noch lange das seltsame Schicksal, das so grausam und so plötzlich einen lieben Mitbürger uns im jüngsten Mannesalter entrisen hat. Glückliche, wer sich mit den Worten des Dichters trösten kann:

Wie Augenblicke fliehen, so flieht des Menschen Zeit;
Wie Gras und Blumen blühen, blüht seine Herrlichkeit.
Ein Hauch des Windes wehet und sie ist nimmer da.
Dein Wort nur, Herr, bestehet, und bleibet mit Trost
[uns nah.

Von den Leidtragenden wohnten dem Gottesdienste bei: Frau Gerber (Schwiegermutter des Verstorbenen), begleitet von Herrn und Frau Siegrist, Herr Sterchi (Bruder), und, geleitet vom Legations-Waibel, Herr Minister Paravicini und das gesamte Personal der Gesandtschaft.

Anwesend waren ferner: Pasteur Hoffmann-de Visme, und die Herren Baer, Matzinger, Forrer, Neuschwander, Müller, Bertschinger; Vertreter der hiesigen Schweizer Gesellschaften und Institutionen; und von persönlichen Freunden die Herren Alex. Baume, Gamper und Heister.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By A. W.

La saison d'été, en Suisse, touche à sa fin. En dépit de la pluie, de la neige et du brouillard, nos hôtels n'ont pas désempli, et cette saison a été la plus brillante depuis de longues années, un vrai record si l'on en croit les statistiques du *Money Market Review and Investors' Chronicle* (6 Sept.):—

The summer season, which is now nearing its end, has been the best, from the point of view of the number of visitors, recorded in Switzerland for the past 15 years, in spite of the cold and unsettled weather which prevailed during August.

The mountain resorts have been full up for many weeks, and at Zermatt and Villars, for instance, the number of visitors has exceeded even the pre-war totals.

The influx of tourists was not smaller in the tows, and, during the last week of August, four people had to sleep, at Geneva, in rooms intended for two. Passenger traffic has been on the increase on all the mountain railways, and the Federal Railways showed a profit of £560,000 in July alone. As for the postal motor services over the Alpine passes, they have been a great success, and they transported 90,951 persons between 14th July and 17th August, compared with 76,830 during the corresponding period of 1923.

Mountain climbing has not been easy on account of the storms which raged during the latter part of August, and many accidents have occurred to guideless parties. As was the case last year, most of the foreign visitors have been British and American.

The autumn resorts are also filling up, and winter programmes are now in hand on a bigger scale than ever.

The Playground of Europe.

Sous ce titre, le *Star* publie un intéressant article d'Algernon Blackwood. Le voici tout au long:

Not idly has Switzerland earned the name of playground: it is a place where body and mind may play. A holiday there suggests no grave and solemn issues, provides no unmanageable emotions. portentous questions of armament or disarmament are not thrust upon the imagination of this peaceful, happy land, where even poverty rarely meets the eye. Its excellent little army, sufficient for defensive needs, but not intended for aggression, is never visible obtrusively. It has no navy. In Switzerland the traveller feels light-hearted. He can play.

This note is struck the instant the frontier is crossed. Coming from less settled countries, where all kinds of rules and restrictions harass travel, a burden is lifted from the soul. There is a naïveté about the clean, spotless station, so spick and span; about the kindly officials who smile and answer questions without resentment; about the very platforms, where you may leave small luggage lying anywhere without the least fear of its being stolen. The note of play is struck at once. Even pick-pockets, and sharpers of the usual kind, are entirely forgotten, and seem impossible. Suspicion of your neighbour disappears. There is a childlike atmosphere of mutual trust. An empty country, complain some, without light and shade. There is truth in the complaint; an imaginative, active mind must find Switzerland too uniform to live in permanently. For a holiday, however, this very absence of disturbing contrast is precisely right.

Undesirables do exist: but they are individuals and not a class. In the more "fashionable" resorts, especially in the pretentious caravanserais de luxe, whose managers are often foreigners, and where the standards of more sophisticated countries have been introduced, the traveller may be "done in the eye," unless he keep that eye well peeled. But these places are not characteristically Swiss. They are, I think, the sores and danger spots that mar the spirit of the playground. In the simpler places, and in the smaller, less pretentious hotels, although it is frankly "your money that they want," there is no desire to cheat and swindle and make too cunning bargains. The shop-keeper will run after you down the street, holding out fifty centimes you overpaid him by mistake; a concierge, a chambermaid, on your return for a second visit after an absence of a fortnight, will hand you some trifle you left behind on leaving. Socks, handkerchiefs, collars are not stolen from your bedroom. The spirit of uncommonly fair play is a rule here.

To me, coming to Switzerland from lands like Egypt, Russia, even from France, Italy, Germany, there is always a feeling of entering a region of forgotten childhood. It is the land where you must be light-hearted and forget your troubles. It is difficult, indeed, to feel too serious. It is the land where, in every hotel without fail, you get ice-cream for dinner on Thursdays and Sundays—a law of the Medes and Persians, where big men "jodel" as though their hearts, like their voices, must crack and break; where solemn cows carry ludicrously large bells about their necks, making a Stravinsky ballet on slopes of grass too steep for you to keep your balance with dignity—cows, moreover, that delight your sense of childish amusement because a naughty one has its bell removed by way of punishment, and proves by its behaviour that it suffers considerably from this indignity before the rest of the herd; cows that, from a distance, look like toy animals of painted wood stuck here and there to satisfy the tourist; and convince him that condensed milk does come from sunny Alpine pastures just beneath the everlasting snow.

There is, indeed, this atmosphere, charming and light-hearted, of an immense doll's house and garden. Christmas trees, beautifully made in the factory, stand upright everywhere, all exactly alike. Chalets, daintily put together, also made to measure, dot the flowered slopes at every conceivable angle. Snow, surely of cotton-wool, has been carefully and articially gammed on against a sky whose blue has, equally, been laid on by huge factory brushes. The vivid emerald green of the grass is of a quality guaranteed neither to fade nor run. There run the toy railways up absurd gradients, the open carriages lined with many tourists, who wear feathers in the sides of their peaked felt hats, with sprigs of edelweiss in the coloured hand-bands. Toy steamers dot the shining surfaces of calm glass lakes, and family groups sit quaffing golden beer out of stone mugs in gardens, verandas, terraces along the shores.

In the streets of every little town this air of being a playground for the young is carried into yet further detail: for the number of enticing confectioners' shops is bewildering. Chocolate and sweets are displayed in the majority of windows, while toys and coloured

picture-postcards that only a child could want to buy seem everywhere. It is difficult to entertain grave, solemn thoughts in such an atmosphere. The mid turns, rather, to hoops, to pop-guns, to fancy paper caps, almost to tip-and-run or hide-and-seek. In winter, of course, this characteristic of being a playground for the young is still more emphasised; and those who do not really enjoy standing on their heads, plunging into deep snow, or racing at dizzy speed on toboggan ski and luge, had better stay at home to crawl down Piccadilly in the fog.

A superficial view, admittedly, of this delightful playground of Europe. Switzerland has its troubles of every sort and kind, only they are not thrust upon the tourist's sight and mind. He can ignore them and enjoy himself. A view, moreover, that holds true up to a certain elevation—up to the tree-line to be accurate. From 7,000 feet upwards the country is in serious mood, and not to be played with, much less trifled with. Here is the region of the climbers, where attempts at foolish play are punishable with death in very terrible form. Here you must go armed with weapons of attack and defence in the shape of ice-axe, rope and crampons.

Climbing, like all other kinds of sport, is doubtless a form of play, but it is grave and earnest play. Below the tree-line the tourist may stand on his head, eat delicious pastries, or even jodel, to his heart's content; but from 7,000 feet, roughly, upwards, he must watch his steps and keep his wits about him. Danger, grandeur, awe are his companions; strenuous effort, acrobatic skill, extremes of heat and cold, an alternative exhaustion and exhilaration the conditions of his play. A country that provides these contrasts fairly earns its title as a playground, and the player can make his choice as to whether he prefers above or below the tree-line—or combines the two.

"A True Example of Democratic Government."

La Suisse, à la tête des nations dans la cause de la liberté, et Genève, "the city of peace," ont été décrits de façon vivante par Mr. C. Wade lors d'un banquet du Bradford Rotary Club à Bradford. Nous en publions quelques extraits tirés du *Yorkshire Observer*:

Mr. Wade said Switzerland was not only the playground of Europe, but a true example of democratic government. Visitors to Geneva were conscious of a sublime spirit which governed and inspired the people. The motto of the people, "All for one and one for all," enshrined the Rotary spirit.

Their Society of Public Utility gave practical expression to the belief that children were the greatest asset of the State. They took special charge of destitute children, and by a wise system of education, apprenticeship, and the provision of colonies for young people, made their future secure as far as was humanly possible. Experts agreed that the Swiss system of educating and training children was an excellent pattern for other nations.

Half a century ago it became illegal to employ children under 15 in Swiss factories, and the factories were not ruined. Switzerland was also the first nation to open the doors of universities to women. Its intense love of peace had encouraged every crusade against ignorance. And the joyous side of life lacked no stimulation.

A strong passion for music and poetry characterised the people. The glorious scenery, the legends and the romantic history of the surroundings fostered these characteristics.

The individual and social systems of labour were well understood, and the Swiss people seemed to make wise use of both. Commodities, such as farm products, appeared to be dealt with co-operatively and with satisfactory results. During his visit not a single beggar had been met with in the streets and neighbourhood of Geneva. The swift rivers Arve and Rhone were harnessed to a variety of enterprises and provided healthy employment for a large proportion of the people.

The cost of military per head was less than that of any other European country, and the people were thus enabled to deal generously with worthy causes.

The beautiful city of Geneva was pervaded by an air of liberty, learning, and peace. Generations of good men and women had made Geneva their home while they laboured for a new heaven and a new earth. This pleasing cosmopolitan city was the most fitting place in the world to welcome a League whose object was to establish world-wide and lasting peace. It would be well if those who entertained doubts as to the wisdom or utility of the League would visit the centre. Such visitors would soon become conscious of the efficacy of bringing face to face representatives of States.

M. Latty et la cuisine en Suisse.

Ceux de nous qui ont en l'occasion de faire des randonnées dans nos campagnes et de s'arrêter pour un repas dans une de ces bonnes aubergeries où l'on mange si bien, ne seront pas étonnés de lire dans les lignes suivantes, tirées de la *Westminster Gazette*, ce que Monsieur Latty, le Chef du Savoy Hotel et une des plus grandes autorités en matière culinaire, pense de notre cuisine:

M. Latty is full of new cookery ideas just now. He has just come back from a six weeks' holiday on the Continent, where he has been touring in his little car, discovering new dishes.

"It is in the humble homes of Savoie, of Switzerland and Northern Italy," this chef of a great hotel told a surprised "Westminster Gazette" representative, "that I pick up hints. There are few better cooks in the world than the people you find in those places.

"I spent my time dropping in from house to house, and I found a number of new things that I am presently going to put on the Savoy menus."

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