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new religion, had kept his twelve wives.

As a lady-in-waiting, Mrs. Herbert had to attend to the correspondence, to the wardrobe, to the management of the journeys of her mistress. She kept her company throughout the long travels and remained in her company at the restaurants and pallazos in which they stayed during their stray millionaire wanderings. It was a great life, but, when Mrs. Newhouse decided to set sail for America for the third time (in 1917), Mrs. Herbert declined as she could not face another nerve-racking trans-atlantic journey.

The previous trip had been terrible, with passengers spending a week in their lifebelts under the stress of always imminent alerts. By 1917 the "Lusitania" had been sunk and the submarine war was raging. Thus Mrs. Herbert left her mistress with regret after three years of service and attachment.

For the next five years she worked in *haute couture* as a model and saleslady in the business of *Marthe Dion* in Dorset Street. It was during that time that she married with a lawyer with chambers at Lincoln's Inn, Holborn. With the experience gained at *Marthe Dion*, she opened her own salon in the opposite block. The proximity to her former employer and the contacts established during her experience were helpful in making her own business known to the haute couture public. A single insert in the "Times" informing readers that she had opened shop in Dorset Street was enough to trigger the first customers. From then on, the shop thrived on a clientèle attracted through recommendation and in 1928 Mrs. Herbert opened a full-size shop, with a complete staff of sales ladies, models and dressmakers in Knightsbridge.

Tailoring in the pre-war years was a more lucrative undertaking than it is today. Mrs. Herbert worked for the aristocracy. There was still an aristocracy to speak of and it represented the main market for dresses made to measure. The profession has been made progressively more difficult with the decline of this aristocracy and its habits, with the diminutions of large fortunes and the relative improvement of industrially confected dresses.

Nowadays, complains Mrs. Herbert, only the women with impossible configurations have their dresses tailor made. Marks and Spencers, Lafayette and other similar big businesses, have taken over the work of the haute couture salon. Before the war, there were many highly successful French tailors in London. The depression and the air raids were enough to drive them nearly all back to the Continent.

Mrs. Herbert well knew the world of tailoring. She used to travel to Paris at the seasonal opening of every new

fashion. She dealt with the Paris houses of *Paquin, Martial et Armand* among others. In London, she knew the Royal Family's tailor, Hartnell, and considers that our present Queen is very well dressed—with a small reservation as to the good taste of her hats, however. For Mrs. Herbert, the Edwardian era and the pre-war days were better than today, not only as regards tailoring, but also in the general quality of life. But which elderly person does not feel that way?

The war disrupted Mrs. Herbert's business. Her shop in Knightsbridge was bombed. She sold what she could and engaged in the Women's Voluntary Service—an organisation in which she is still active today. Like so many parents, she had to undergo the anxiety of having a boy in the RAF. Nothing would stop her son from going in the air force. At 19 he went out on his first mission. In the three years before he was shot down over Holland he had been promoted to the rank of squadron leader, had been awarded a Distinguished Air Medal and had carried out over 300 raids. His crew was credited for having destroyed the German battleship "Sharnhorst", anchored in Brest, in broad daylight.

But in 1943, when he had been 21 for only three weeks, he was shot down over Holland. For the following two years the Herberts kept faith and hoped that he had been detained as a prisoner. But when his fellow airmen emerged from the prison camps to tell the tale to the Herberts, they knew that all hope was lost.

This boy had been the joy of their life and Mrs. Herbert still speaks of him with watery eyes. A moving detail which evokes so much of the lost romance of the air war was his great love with an English girl with whom he became engaged shortly before his death. They were made absolutely for each other, recalls Mrs. Herbert. And for the girl it was such a unique and sublime experience that she refused all subsequent proposals of marriage and remains, at 46, a maid for whom no daily and earthly union can replace the memory of past love.

Mrs. Herbert has now been a widow for seven years. She has kept her apartment off Abbey Road, although it is far too large for her, and lives more comfortably than many of the aged doyens of the Swiss Church. She is seen regularly on Sundays although she finds it difficult to hear what is being said in the pulpit.

Her life must surely have similarities with the lives of many Swiss girls who came to England before the first world war to remain there. But she must surely be one of the last ones still there to tell her story.

(PMB)

SWISS CHURCH

SERVICES EN FRANCAIS: à l'Eglise Suisse, 79 Endell Street, W.C.2, tous les dimanches à 11h15 et 19h00.

SAINTE-CENE: le premier et troisième dimanche du mois, matin et soir.

PERMANENCE: chaque jeudi de 15h00 à 18h00.

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CLUB DES JEUNES: tous les dimanches de 12h00 à 22h30, tous les jeudis de 15h00 à 22h30.

REUNION DE COUTURE: le 2e mardi du mois.

LUNCH: tous les dimanches à 13h00.

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PASTEUR: A. Nicod, 7 Park View Road, London, N.3. Téléphone 01-346 5281.

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SERVICES IN GERMAN: at Eglise Suisse, 79 Endell Street, W.C.2, at 10 a.m. At John Southworth Centre, 48 Gt. Peter Street, S.W.1 at 6.30 p.m.

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SATURDAYS: Ecumenical Service at 6.30 p.m.

SUNDAYS: Holy Mass at 9 and 11 a.m. (in English). At 6.30 p.m. (mostly in German).

CONSULTATIONS AND CONFESSIONS: preferably on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays in the afternoon or by appointment.

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CHAPLAIN: Paul Bossard, St. Ann's Church, Abbey Orchard Street, S.W.1. Tel.: 01-222 2895.