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ful in this country, according to the *Irish Independent* of 19th October, have travelled all the way to Switzerland, and as a result of their visit the afore-mentioned newspaper publishes a long article entitled "Lessons from the Swiss." It is a glowing tribute to Swiss organisation, and the Irish visitors are full of praise for our countrymen and the wonderful methods, some of which the Irishmen state are even quite unknown here, by which they keep the cheese and butter industry at such a high pitch of perfection.

#### Child Welfare at Geneva.

By Dr. C. W. Saleeby (*Daily News*, 4th Nov.): Yes, indeed, we have halved infant mortality in this country in this century. But on inquiry we observe that the figures during recent years show no positive and well-marked continuance of improvement. We have solved half of our problem, and have, apparently, almost "stuck" at the other half. Further inquiry shows that our failure largely expresses itself in the pitiful record of the first month after birth. The infant at this early age we call new-born; it is the neo-natal mortality that still defies us. The birth-rate steadily falls, and our task should be easier, but we are not discharging it.

The National Baby Week Council and the "Daily News," as the reader may be reminded, have observed these sinister facts and are in collaboration for their improvement. There is now in being a competition between our cities and towns, in respect of the reduction of their neo-natal mortality, including the figures recorded up to the end of the present year. The prizes and the honours will be gained by those places which have the firmest grasp of the nature of the problem.

In general, the shocking death-rate amongst new-born babies is due to causes acting upon them before or during their birth. These same causes have already been responsible for the fact that many babies are born dead. Most of the neo-natal deaths are merely delayed results of the causes which produced still-births. Our ideas regarding the proper way to feed and clothe and wash a baby, and so forth, are all hopelessly inadequate in the face of these facts. The lesson is to begin at the beginning. The problem is not peculiar to our country; it is the same in all countries, though notably serious here.

There is, of course, no real beginning. How old is a new-born baby? It is as old as Life upon the earth. All the age-long past of our race and of its pre-human ancestors is there. But for particular purposes we may say that the real beginning is in the adolescence, the becoming adult, the pre-parenthood, as I prefer to call it, of the boy and the girl—and especially of the girl—who will become its parents. And then there is the ante-natal period, all-important for life and death, with its urgent need for the protection of the expectant mother. No country, no city, no area anywhere is really tackling the problem of child welfare that has not an efficient ante-natal system at work. Development of this idea has been and still is pitifully slow.

The International Congress at Geneva resolved that "there should be a wide extension of general instruction in child welfare"; "the foundation of chairs of child welfare in Universities"; "the instruction of future mothers, more particularly by means of ante-natal clinics, in the laws of ante-natal health and of lactation." And lastly, for this is vital to repeat and repeat until we live up to it: "The normal development of the child can only take place under the care of its mother. The aim of child welfare work should be to help the child in its own home, and to secure breast feeding unless medical advice is opposed to such a course. Every nursing mother should be placed in such an economic condition as is essential to the discharge of her maternal functions."

So much for Geneva. No startling new discoveries. All "old stuff": the old truths, new every morning, by which prehistoric childhood survive, as will the children of a thousand years to come.

There is a city in this country where socio-medical work for infancy has been carried further, at greater expense, and with more devotion and skill than in any other. Year after year the results in terms of babies' lives have been signally deplorable. Why? Because where women go out to work there can be no homes, and where there are no homes the nation perishes. You may have, as this city has, a system of municipal midwifery, for instance, which all visitors from foreign countries are told to see, so perfect is it: but nothing avails where motherhood is dethroned. We despise Nature, and she destroys us.

Although the above article deals not with Swiss Child Welfare in particular, I thought that a good many of our readers will be greatly interested by what the famous doctor has to say. In particular, I think, I like the last paragraph, so obviously true and so horribly sinned against by the industrial so-called 20th century civilisation.

And, thoughts turning towards Geneva, fast be-

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coming the home of international bodies, I regret to record a great loss which has befallen the League of Nations through the death of—

#### Dr. Alfred Bonzon,

who has the following tribute by a well-known British Peer in the *Manchester Guardian* of 27th October:—

Sir,—I read with the deepest regret in your issue of yesterday a report announcing the death in Switzerland of Dr. Alfred Bonzon. This is a great loss to the League of Nations. I do not think that many people in this country know what important and difficult work Dr. Bonzon carried out in the Saar from 1922 to 1923 as an envoy of the League. His task was to discover and place in safe keeping all the documents which might be of use in drawing up the list of voters entitled to take part in the plebiscite of 1935.

A former Vice-Chancellor of the Swiss Confederation, Dr. Bonzon possessed great charm of manner, allied with considerable ability. His devotion to the League of Nations was plain to all who knew him, and from beginning to end he carried out his work with tact and success. He won the confidence of the French, and no German had one word of criticism for him. Indeed, his popularity among the burgomasters and other officials with whom he came in contact, as well as with the German population generally, was extraordinary. When in July, 1923, the time came for him to leave the Saar, expressions of regret were heard on all sides, and many in bidding him God-speed added: "Vergessen Sie unser Saargebiet nicht." Many hoped that he would return one day as a member of the Governing Commission.

In July, 1924, he proceeded, at the request of the Council of the League, to Athens to take over temporarily the presidency of the Refugee Settlement Commission, recently vacated by Mr. Morgenthau. He worked with the Commission until April this year, and shortly after that he was again sent to the Saar to examine a further number of plebiscite documents. He returned to Athens in July, and in the last letter which I received from him, dated August 23, he mentioned the great difficulties which the Refugee Settlement Commission were encountering, and added that he had been troubled with an attack of "Athenian fever."

I am afraid the work in Athens must have seriously overtaxed his strength. Certainly he has given his life for the cause which he had so much at heart.—Stamford.

I should have liked to give politics a rest this week, but the Tariff Reformers willed otherwise. As if to give further chapter and verse to my recent remarks under "How It Works," an esteemed reader sends us the following article from the *Anglo-Swiss Commercial Gazette*, which paper is the official journal of the British Chamber of Commerce for Switzerland (Inc.) and, therefore, ought to know what it writes about. Here goes:

#### A Correction.

"Switzerland being mainly German, goods from Germany flood the country; every canton, except those belonging to France, is looked upon as a German preserve, and the Government sees to it that the 'Fatherland' is duly favoured."—Mr. George Cecil in the "Shoe and Leather News."

Last we appear to lay ourselves open to the charge of quoting a sentence apart from its context, let us explain that the above statement appears in an article entitled "The Swiss Shoe Business." We regret that the article in question is too long to give here, but as the statement referred to occurs in the second paragraph, there is no danger of our distorting the general context.

We are not quite sure whether to understand Mr. Cecil's words as an explanation, an accusation, or merely an astonishing example of loose phraseology, nor do we know whether his remarks are inspired by a short "run round" visit or prolonged observation; but we cannot, in justice to the Swiss nation, allow such a sweeping remark to pass unchallenged.

Undoubtedly the territory of Switzerland is divided up into three clearly defined sections, viz., the German-speaking, French-speaking, and Italian-speaking cantons. But to speak of any section as being "German," much less of another section as "belonging to France," is either ex-

aggeration due to the inattention or regrettable inaccuracy of expression, calculated to arouse an entirely false impression in the minds of those who only know Switzerland from hearsay.

Switzerland is neither German, French, nor Italian. It is as separate and distinct a nation as is, for example, the Scottish people. But just as the Scotch are influenced in business and other things by English opinion, so are the Swiss influenced to a certain degree by German, French or Italian opinion. Obviously a man who speaks only German, or rather a dialect based on German, will of necessity be influenced by German literature, or, similarly, French or Italian literature. It is quite another matter to declare that the same man will buy German or French or Italian goods because of a community of language where, as a matter of fact, there is

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