

# Dr. L. C. Vauthier in London

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the announcing surrounded by crowds of the artistes, singers, and actors.

One Sunday visitors came to the studio. An honest farmer, accompanied by his children, begged permission to visit the station. The visit stretched itself out interminably, however, and when I became thoroughly tired I took them to the control room and handed them over to an engineer. When they did eventually leave, the farmer suddenly pulled out his purse (a red checkered knotted handkerchief) and solemnly presented me with a two-shilling piece, whilst jerking his thumb in the direction of the engineer and inviting me to "share it with him!"

Although I know that all listeners are critical, it seems to me that the Swiss are even harder to please than the British.

The B.B.C. has to cater for urban and rural populations, but in Switzerland the problem is complicated by the fact that the public is divided into three main religions and three main languages. Although the whole population of the country is less than that of London alone, this faces the management of the programmes with a difficult task, for its means are very limited. There are at present about 100,000 licence holders in the country, and their contributions have to be allotted among five broadcast stations. In the beginning we used to receive a good many letters of approval, but there were also others demanding more programmes of local interest, and the peasant population, in particular, was always clamouring for the yodel songs so typical of our country.

So for two or three months several of our programmes contained yodel songs every week, with the result that the public became thoroughly sick of their beloved yodel songs in a very short while. After that the programme director was left in peace!

Switzerland possesses a large number of artistes, and among the vocalists, violinists, and pianists there are a few who enjoy a European reputation. These, of course, are engaged by the station on many occasions. Apart from these, however, we book prominent artistes from abroad and it has always been interesting to me to observe their varied temperaments.

The French always struck me as being a trifle "sloppy," whereas the British, to my surprise, were nervous from the moment they entered the studio. The Germans, on the other hand, were often far more self-possessed before their performance than afterwards. As for the Italians, their chief worry used to be whether they would be heard properly in their own country, on the other side of the Alps.

At the same time, I should have thought that for the Swiss National Programme which is being relayed from Basle to-night (Wednesday, 14th) the programme might have been arranged so as to include not only three songs in Romansch, but perhaps one in French, one in German and one in Italian too! Perhaps the members of the Liedertafel Basle excel in the old language of the Grisons. Well, we shall hear to-night!

#### Mr. Spahlinger's Demonstration

*New Statesman*, 3rd January.

More than five years ago, after long and detailed observation in Geneva, I published here two articles on the work of M. Spahlinger. In my view, that was already a "deplorably belated inquiry," and it may seem now very late indeed to return to the subject. There has never been the slightest doubt in my mind as to the facts, and I am proud to be able now to refer to those articles. But there have been grave difficulties obstructing the work, such as the exhaustion of M. Spahlinger's resources after colossal expenditure for which he has hitherto had no return; and also various campaigns of systematic vilification and hearty unscrupulous lying which beggar comment, and made it impossible to obtain a fair hearing. However, it is now a new day and we may proceed. In order to save time, the reader might be asked kindly to re-read those long-past articles, and we might then continue; but, as many readers cannot do so, I must briefly resume and quote from them. We must omit all the history and strictly confine ourselves to one part only of the whole subject—and that is the prevention of bovine tuberculosis by vaccination. This may seem a small matter compared with, for instance, the cure of human tuberculosis, from which a death still occurs in England and Wales alone every twelve minutes; but readers of this journal do not need to be assured that the conquest of tuberculosis in man is implicit in the prevention of the disease in cattle as surely as "the music of the moon sleeps in the plain eggs of the nightingale."

Let me quote from 1925:

"There is the problem of bovine tuberculosis. It is of immense importance in all the countries of the temperate zones. Millions of money are involved. It concerns the meat interests and the dairy interests. These are

not all. Despite the deplorably hasty assertions of Koch in London a quarter of a century ago, we now know positively that bovine tuberculosis can and does infect our children through tuberculous milk. Tuberculous meat is not a serious question, except as regards the loss to the farmer, for it does not infect us, thanks partly to inspection and partly to cooking; but tuberculous milk is a universal, potent, everyday source of human infection, and we have done little about it in more than forty years since the bacillus was discovered, beyond the invention of bacteriological tests for the presence of tubercle in cattle, and a certain degree of increased care in the application to milk of such processes as pasteurisation and pulverisation, of which the latter certainly deals with the infection. But we have many thousands of deaths in this country alone every year, caused by milk infection which our existing methods have failed to prevent. . . . What, then, of the cattle which one sees on M. Spahlinger's estate outside Geneva, and which he immunised nine years ago, so that ever since they have been perfectly indifferent to doses of tubercle bacilli, in quantities probably at least many thousands of times greater than could ever enter them under natural conditions? The answer of those who have studied the facts at first hand is that M. Spahlinger has indeed given us, now many years ago, the means whereby, when we please, we may abolish bovine tuberculosis, as Jenner (and the Eastern pioneers of inoculation before him) gave us the power, a century and a quarter ago, to abolish small-pox, and recent bacteriologists the power to abolish typhoid and the paratyphoid fevers.

We may say that the evidence, in these immunised cows, was not checked by any public committee, and that we need more. Let us, then, take steps for public, controlled, crucial tests of the most rigorous description. They should be undertaken henceforth. Nothing could be more welcome to M. Spahlinger or to any other honest investigator in like case. There is no doubt in his mind, or in those of his friends, that the result would be decisive. But I certainly do not consider that M. Spahlinger, who has already spent all his fortune and more on his researches, is now called upon to provide the funds for such experiments. . . . The utter mystery to me is in the failure of the vast financial interests concerned to act effectively. One can only conclude that they are cursed with the stupidity which is the plague of European capitalism to-day and against which, as we know, the gods themselves fight in vain."

The new tests for which I asked in 1925 have been made, in England, during recent months. The delay is at other doors than M. Spahlinger's. At a meeting held in London on December 9th, at which the Aga Khan presided, the responsible and authoritative committee which conducted the experiments published their report. Presumably my present space can be better used than in quoting largely from that report, much of which will be found in the daily press of December 10th. I have had the pleasure of meeting Captain R. G. Buxton, a well-known breeder of pedigree stock, and a member of a family honoured throughout the world—on whose estate and with whose animals the experiments were made. His personal assurance would weigh heavily in my mind, even had I seen nothing in Geneva years ago, and the present report were not signed by many men of the highest repute and experience. Here I need only quote some brief paragraphs from the Aga Khan's speech:

"On behalf of the Committee of Control, it is my privilege to announce that the Spahlinger vaccine for the immunisation of cattle against tuberculosis has been tested here in England, and has proved its efficacy beyond doubt. This vaccine is a perfectly safe and, in all circumstances, innocuous vaccine, for it is produced from *dead* germs. It solves the problem of ensuring that the milk and meat supply of the world can now be made safe from tuberculosis. . . . A number of calves, vaccinated with this vaccine under practical farming conditions, are to-day alive, well and normal, although five months ago they were inoculated with massive doses of hypervirulent living bovine tubercle bacilli. Unvaccinated calves of the same age and weight, which were given the same doses of virus in the same way, died in a month, riddled with the disease, as the post-mortem examinations showed. . . . A safe and practical method now exists of banishing tuberculosis from among cattle. . . . The moment has come when this great beneficent discovery should be announced."

It has, indeed! Five similar experiments, with similar results, have been made in Geneva since last I wrote here: but they were made

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abroad and by a foreigner, and by a vaccine of which the details of preparation have not been published. In reply to a question in the House of Commons Dr. Addison stated that he desired an independent test with experts in bovine tuberculosis. That is exactly what this test was; but of course, more can be made, until, indeed, all living bovines and humans have been gathered to their fathers. At all costs, we must be British.

The word *dead*, in the Aga Khan's statement, is all-important. Professor Calmette, another great foreign bacteriologist, has made a vaccine from a modified strain of living bacilli. Appalling tragedies, holocausts of infants, have on occasion followed its use, and the German Health Bureau has decided to prohibit the use of any living vaccine for tubercle in Germany.

Let us now try to clear our minds of prejudice, and study the facts fairly. It may, or may not, be M. Spahlinger's misfortune that he is not an Englishman, but a Swiss: in any case, his race and nationality have no bearing on the results of these experiments. Even if we doubt the validity of experiments made abroad, we are now faced with a demonstration made in England, by Englishmen of the highest standing: M. Spahlinger performed the vaccinations, and has never been near the place again; and we have here a matter of fact and not of ethics.

What may truly be ethical judgment on a man who, not being a medical practitioner, makes bacteriological discoveries at immense personal cost and seeks to get at least some of his money back whilst serving mankind, may, or may not, be a matter for discussion; but the ethical judgment on those who lie, or blindly deny and obstruct, on account of insular prejudice, or professional jealousy, when the lives and happiness of millions of mankind now living, to say nothing of the unborn, are at stake, cannot be doubtful. They are enemies of the human race, and a painful death from tuberculosis would be too good for them.

#### SWISS Y.M.C.A.

Next Sunday, the 18th of January, the English Conversational Circle will meet at 3.15 p.m. at the club room, 15 Upper Bedford Place, W.C.1. On Saturday, January 31st, at 6 p.m., a lantern slide lecture will be given by Mr. Wallis B. Elliott, Secretary for England of the Missions to Lepers.

#### DR. L. C. VAUTHIER IN LONDON

The Director of the Swiss University Sanatorium in Leysin, Dr. Louis C. Vauthier, has just left London after a short stay on behalf of the organising Committee of the projected International University Sanatorium to be erected at Leysin. The scheme involves the construction of a building for 208 University teachers and students suffering from tuberculosis, at the cost of £208,000. The students are to be enabled to proceed with their studies, enjoying at the same time the benefit of the cure.

The Swiss Federal Council have given their patronage to the scheme and granted a credit of £20,000 for the purpose, thus endowing twenty beds.

Dr. Vauthier, accompanied by M. F. G. Micheli, has met during his stay in London numerous personalities of the Indian Round Table Conference and obtained from them and also from several British personalities wholehearted promises of support for his splendid enterprise.

#### CITY SWISS CLUB.

It was New Year's Day in the Clubhouse.

That day in all the year

When our hearts are filled with gladness

And our . . .

And as a matter of fact it was not New Year's Day but the feast of Epiphany and ck was grumbling as usual and not finding anything better about which to grumble rouspetait tant qu'il pouvait parceqn'il n'y avait pas de gateau des Rois and the President was just in the middle of wishing everyone the Compliments of the Season when ck began to doze and then the Secretary began to read the minutes of the Annual Banquet and he was just about to read what everyone had said when he remembered that it was all in the S.O. and so there was no need for him to do so and ck began to have a nice dream about all the thrilling articles he was going to write for the S.O. during the coming year and how gentlemen prefer blondes but ck prefers brunettes but then ck is not a gentleman or at any rate so some of the correspondents of the S.O. once seemed to think and so it does not matter and then he thought of all the letters all the Jeannettes and Marys and other ladies were going to write and how he was going to reply to them and what Mr. B. would look like if he was clean shaven and what Mr. D. would be like if he wore a beard and what ck would be like if he had any hair on the top of his head but then hair