

Reminiscences : how I got into the sergeant's good books [end]

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FRANZ BURRI.

Late Editor of DER AUSLANDSCHWEIZER.

In the May number of our contemporary, *Der Auslandschweizer*, which is published in Graz, our colleague Franz Burri, takes farewell from his readers; he does this in an excellent article, headed *Rückblick-Ausblick*, of which we give a few extracts.

We take this opportunity to express to our colleague across the sea, our deep admiration for his work, which he had so admirably done, in face of almost unsurmountable odds.

A fearless, clean fighter, a stout heart which warmly beat for his native land, has, we hope, only temporarily laid down his pen.

The Swiss Colony abroad can ill afford to lose a man of such outstanding qualities; may time heal some of the bitterness which he now feels towards those, who have through indifference and want of judgment, made him seek another field of activity, and may he, this is our fervent wish, before long once again take his pen up, the pen which has well served his country. We are proud to call Franz Burri, a colleague of ours.

ST.

“Das Schicksal will es so haben. Es ist nicht zum ersten Male, dass es für mich heisst, Abschiednehmen. Das ist mein Los seit zwei Jahrzehnten. Da war einmal der Abschied vom Elternhaus, brutal, lieblos, weil man ein Proletariatskind war, dessen Vater gar früh dahinschied und das Brot recht schmal war. Dann kam das Auswandern, weil die Heimat kein Brot geben konnte und für Männer eigener Kraft keinen Platz hat. Abschied von den schönen lieben Heimatbergen und blauen Seen, um in der Ferne und Fremde eine neue Welt zu bauen. Ich habe sie gebaut mit Zähigkeit und Ausdauer — aber sie fiel zusammen, Bitterniss und Not zurücklassend. Wiederum musste ich frisch beginnen, einen Boden schaffen, um zu arbeiten, vorwärtszukommen. Ich hatte nie Protektion; ich musste selbst meinen Weg suchen, mein Ziel erringen. Gehungert und gedurbt habe ich, durchgerungen durch eine Welt der Bosheit und des Neides hiess es — durchgerungen, recht mühsam und hart, habe ich mich.”

“Ich habe im ‘‘Auslandschweizer’’ keine

Frage aufgeworfen, ohne nach reiflicher Überlegung zu wissen, was ich wollte. Dem Dienste meiner Heimat und meiner Mitbürger im Ausland habe ich mich gewidmet — eine mühevollen, sorgenreiche, undankbare Arbeit.

Meinen Schicksalsgenossen im fremden Lande wollte ich helfen und raten, denn gerade in der gegenwärtigen Zeit der Krise und Not brauchen die Schweizer im Auslande nicht patriotische Vorträge und Kulturpredigten — sie brauchen reale Dinge, sie brauchen Existenzmöglichkeiten und einen Bissen tägliches Brot. Was nützen uns alle Vorträge über die Heimat, wenn wir dabei verhungern. Und das ist doch in der gegenwärtigen Zeit das Los des Grossteils der Auslandschweizer.

Um raten und helfen zu können, gründete ich die *Schweizer Heimat*, die dann später um ihren wahren Charakter auch nach aussen hin deutlicher zum Ausdruck zu bringen, in *Der Auslandschweizer* umtaufte. Ich wollte durch diese Blattgründung ein Sprachrohr schaffen, welches mit aller Energie die Interessen der Ausgewanderten wahr und schützt.”

Ich nehme Abschied von allen, den Freunden und Gegnern, den Gut — und Schlecht — Gesinnten. Die einen werden mein Scheiden bedauern, die andern werden es bejubeln. Abschied ist immer schwer. Wenn man einer Sache das ganze Herzblut gegeben hat, ist der Abschied doppelt schwer. Und doch, es muss sein! Ich habe auch für meine Familie zu sorgen und Patriotismus ist ein furchtbar schlechtes Geschäft.

Vor einiger Zeit weilte ich einige Tage in der steirischen Bergwelt, hoch oben, zweitausend Meter hoch. Dort habe ich alle Bitterniss begraben, die mich in den letzten Monaten begleitet hat. So vieles liegt in meinem Herzen drinnen in dieser Stunde des Abschiedes.

Begreifend, wenn man Jahre hindurch einer Sache diene und vom Schicksal genötigt wird, sich umzustellen. Den Bergen habe ich mein grosses Leid geklagt — und dabei Erleichterung gefunden.

Lebet wohl, liebe Landsleute rund um den *Auslandschweizer*. Ich scheide aus einer alten, lieben Welt, aus einer Welt, die mir bisher alles bedeutete, weil heimatische Klänge in ihr

lebten — ich ziehe in eine neue Welt, heimatfern und heimatfremd. In neuer Arbeit will ich vieles vergessen, vieles neu bauen vor allem eines: eine neue Heimat schaffen, weil ich die alte verlieren musste.”

NEWS FROM THE COLONY.

SWISS RALLY TO WHIPSNADE.

We are glad to report, that the idea of a Swiss Rally, which emanated from our Birmingham compatriots, has been very favourably received in the London Colony.

This is only as it ought to be, as our friends in the Midlands wish to get into closer touch with their brethren in the Metropolis; it is not only for social reasons, but there might arise in the future, problems which affect everyone of our compatriots, and to solve these, we must show a united front, and in order to affect this we must know each other.

We are informed that several of the London Societies have made, or are making arrangements to go to Whipsnade by char-a-banc, a good many will go by train, others again by motor car.

The contingent from Birmingham (about 130), will have luncheon at the Pavilion, and those who wish to join them are cordially invited; in order to facilitate the catering arrangements, it would be advisable, for those who wish to have lunch (3/6) to inform Mr. Brun, the President of the Swiss Club, Birmingham. (Address: Mr. P. Brun, 179, Heathfield Road, Handsworth, Birmingham). A good many of the London visitors will combine this outing with a pic-nic, but it is hoped that by 2 o'clock the participants should meet at a certain spot, which we shall mention in next week's issue.

So that we should know each other, this year's 1st of August badge will be worn. (1/-) There will be no speeches, which in itself adds to the attraction of the outing.

It is hoped that all the participants will take tea together for which a certain part of the Refreshment Pavilion will be reserved.

We therefore make a hearty Appeal to our readers, and their friends to attend this Rally, as we feel sure that it will be an enjoyable affair.

REMINISCENCES.

HOW I GOT INTO THE SERGEANT'S GOOD BOOKS.

(CONTINUED).

By ST.

There was not the slightest doubt that Sergeant Rösti was in dire distress; he had started his report with a perfectly new pencil, and after he had jotted only a few lines down, he kept on biting bits off it, thus reducing it to an infinitesimal size. Surely, I argued to myself, he can't be that hungry, especially as I have seen him doing full justice to his evening meal barely half an hour before. I could not watch this mental agony any longer; in spite of his having made the first few days of my soldiering career a perfect hell, a feeling of sympathy and pity took hold of me, and mustering all my courage, I asked him again to let me write the report for him. I could see a battle raging within him, on one hand he welcomed my offer, on the other hand he was afraid to lose some of his authority. He gave me a searching look, was I going to take advantage, should he submit to my entreaties, he no doubt turned over in his mind, but there I stood in all my humbleness, two large brown eyes filled with human understanding, with an expression of willingness to relieve him of this arduous task. Even a sergeant has a heart sometimes, — with a deep sigh he passed on his papers to me, saying, “Let me see what you can make of it,” after a few explanations I set to work. I put heart and soul into it, never before in my life have I racked my brain so much in order to make a good job of it.

Line after line, page after page followed each other, and when, on finishing, I passed it on to him, I eagerly watched him reading it. “Not so bad,” was his verdict, “I'll copy it,” and that night, I could perceive the silver lining on the dark clouds which overhung my young soldiering career. The next few days brought me some relief, I saw a slight improvement in the treatment towards me, his authoritative voice sounded to me less harsh, and once or twice he even had a word of praise, I began to think that even a soldier's life has its recompenses.—

Then came the great day, which proved to be the turning of the tide. Sergeant Rösti asked me to meet him later in the evening at a certain Restaurant in the vicinity of the barracks, this request completely unnerved me for the rest of the day; I was at a loss to understand what the reason of this unexpected meeting could be. Punctual to the minute I turned up at the appointed place, he was awaiting me. He greeted me rather cordially, saying that he had turned over things in his own mind, and that he had

come to the conclusion, that I was after all quite a decent fellow to which I replied that I never had any doubts about it. This reply was perhaps a bit unfortunate as it seemed to put a slight doubt into his head whether I was really congenial. Anyhow, after much fidgeting and coughing, which betrayed a certain nervousness, which I had never noticed before, he acquainted me with the fact that he suffered from a complaint, which is commonly called “love-sickness.” — As an explanatory remark I ought to mention that sergeant Rösti was a member of the worthy guild of bakers. — The cause of this not unfrequent disease, was apparently the daughter of a well-to-do miller, from whom the sergeant bought his flour. “Oh you artful devil,” I thought to myself, he bargained no doubt not only for the sacks of flour but also for the daughter of his supplier, this man had an eye for business. To cut a long story short he asked me point blank whether I would be agreeable to compose the letters to his heart's desire, as he was not very handy with his pen, and considering the report which I had written previously for him, he thought I would be the very man for this job. This request put me somehow in a quandry, first of all I had but little experience in this kind of work, secondly the person to whom I had to address myself in the most endearing terms, was a complete stranger to me. — An undertaking of this kind was certainly not as easy as it looked, was it an honest thing to do, I asked myself, but after sergeant Rösti assured me with a faltering voice (so different to the one I used to hear) that Rösti was awfully fond of him, and asked him, before taking a tender farewell, behind the garden wall, to write to her, I made my mind up to accept his proposal. To enable me to execute this task in an efficient manner, I had to cross examine the sergeant rather thoroughly, a task in which I found a certain delight, his stammering answers to some of my searching questions made up for a few of the humiliations I had undergone previously.

I explained to him, that, as he did not possess a photograph of Rösti he must give me an accurate description of her appearance, as I could hardly talk in my letters of heavenly blue eyes, when in reality they were green or black, nor could I write about a dainty little rosy mouth, when this organ was rather an outsize, or again about the sweet little ears, in case they were like cabbage leaves. Then the colour of the hair would be of great importance, in case I alluded to golden locks, when in reality they were straight and ginger.

I also wanted to know approximately the size of Rösti, explaining that I could hardly write about her tender, slight appearance, in case she should weigh over 12 stones, also the size of

her boots would be required, as I had visions of bringing in the “fairy feet which had stepped into a lonely soldier's life.”

These questions were very embarrassing to sergeant Rösti, and also to me, he blushed violently on several occasions, but when I, as a final shot, asked him with a piercing look whether he had ever before kissed his Rösti, he simply went purple; he flatly refused to answer, but after I had explained in so many words, that this was a most important matter, as sooner or later that would have to appear in the letters, he admitted that he had tried, but somehow had missed the mark, I looked at him in a sort of “how could you sergeant” way. I also found out, that Rösti was fond of dancing, and could play the piano with one finger; also that she was rather sentimental, the latter fact was important, I made my mind up to rub it in thickly.—

After having devoured a bottle of Neuchâtel in honour of Rösti, and the future happiness of the two lovers, I was told to depart, the sergeant explaining to me, that it would not do for us to be seen together, this rather hurt my pride a little, here was I asked to collaborate in paving the way to eternal bliss, and yet I must not be seen with the one for whom I was willing to expose some of my tenderest and innermost feelings; but with a click of my heels and a brave military salute I drowned those feelings, and went back to the place which harboured so many disappointments. That night I could not sleep for a long time, visions of Rösti kept me awake, from the description received that night, she answered many of my longings, was I in love with Rösti too? I asked myself, what a disaster that would be, and for the first time since I slept with 36 of my comrades in the same *sanctuary* I did not mind the awful snoring of some of them, it sounded like music, it was like a symphony of love, and the last words which I whispered into a hard pillow were, — Good night, Rösti dear.—

The following evening instead of going out, I stayed behind in order to compose the first letter to the unknown one. It was, what I considered short and sweet, not too much to the point, and yet intimating that an aching heart was filled with a great longing, it was so to say the opening chapter to life's greatest drama. When I showed it that night to sergeant Rösti, it met with his approval, although he thought that a sign depicting a kiss, or a mark intimating a falling tear might have conveniently been inserted, but I strongly objected to this, as I thought it wiser to play the big guns later on, when the signs of her affection would be more apparent. That letter was copied the same night by the sergeant on pink paper, the envelope bore a stamp rather

CITY SWISS CLUB

Selon la coutume suivie depuis plusieurs années, le City Swiss Club a tenu sa première réunion d'été au Brent Bridge Hotel, Hendon, le mardi 7 juin.

Le beau temps, jusqu'alors assez rare cette saison, avait consenti à s'allier aux organisateurs pour offrir une soirée fort agréable aux 80 et quelques participants, membres, dames et amis. Le parc de l'hôtel, où il fait bon se promener après le dîner pendant qu'on prépare la salle pour la danse, présentait son meilleur aspect.

Le nombre relativement restreint de membres présents par rapport à celui beaucoup plus élevé d'invités prouve combien ces réunions sont appréciées des habitués, qui y perçoivent une occasion éminemment favorable d'y apporter des amis, toujours les bienvenus. Nous relevons la chose pour dire aux absents qui ne le savent pas le charme de ces réunions de famille, d'amis, sans grand appareil, où, l'on danse, où l'on s'amuse, où l'on rencontre une atmosphère sympathique, gaie, reposante, tout ce que l'on veut pour oublier une fois, pendant quelques heures, les soucis et les fatigues du travail journalier.

Une autre réunion semblable — la dernière de la saison d'été — aura lieu également au Brent Bridge Hotel le mardi 5 juillet. Ajoutons, pour ceux que cela intéresse, que de nouveaux arrangements ont été faits en ce qui concerne l'orchestre et qu'une autre innovation sera le prix du dîner à 6/6 (service non compris).

J.Z.

UNIONE TICINESE.

The annual outing of our Society on Sunday 12th June to Maidstone, met with the greatest success, having been favoured by beautiful weather. Starting from the Schweizerbund at 10 a.m., the two coaches hired were soon complete and at the last moment we had to find accommodation for another 7 people, making the total of 100 participants including several private cars. The additional booking was due to the fact that certain members turned up at the last moment.

crookedly put on, which, according to the sergeant's explanation, meant exactly the one thing which I would not mention in the letter.

These were days of anxiety for both of us, what would happen to me, I argued, should this letter rudely end Sergeant Rösti's love aspirations, would not his wrath fall on my innocent head? and what would my life then be; curiously enough I dreamt that night of a soldier's funeral, was it prophetic I wondered the next morning on waking up? Then one morning came a blue envelope addressed to Sergeant Rösti, one sharp glance at it revealed to me that the stamp too was pasted on at an impossible angle, which evoked in me a sigh of relief. With eager eyes, I watched the recipient opening this little billet doux, after perusal he put it in his tunic, with fingers which slightly trembled, and when we were alone a handshake from the sergeant rewarded me for my labours of love. "She liked it," he said, and two days later a second letter left the barracks, a little longer, a little more tender, containing "one chaste kiss" for the first time; I had again to rule out tears, explaining that a sergeant should not weep over a thing like this, anyhow, not in the beginning, if it should be necessary later on, we could always hold the letter under the pump.

Again a reply came back, in which Rösti wrote that she never thought that her admirer could write such loving letters. That evening we drank another bottle of Neuchâtel in a far away little inn, lest the sergeant should be seen in company with the one, who could not make a bed, or the one, who wore a pair of pink pyjamas.

In the meantime, the treatment which was meted out to me by the sergeant improved considerably, and dark hints were passed round amongst my comrades, that I must have bribed him. One fine day I even gave a back answer to sergeant Rösti, a thing which nobody ever dared to do, the members of my platoon nearly collapsed, they were under the impression that I must have gone suddenly mad, it being a hot day; the sergeant winced, but did not say a word. From that day, I advanced my status in the eyes of my colleagues, there was no more mocking laughter at my awkwardness, it was also whispered around, that an uncle of mine was an army-corps commander, a rumour which, when it came to my ears, I did not contradict (much to my shame) fullwell knowing that my uncle was only an army chaplain. (*O vain heart!*)

One evening the sergeant told me that I could now get a little bolder, as Rösti's answers were very encouraging; he intimated to me that perhaps a little poetry would not be out of place, he thought of inserting a poem which he once learned in school and for the reciting of which he received a prize, it started:

We reached the Cannon Restaurant at 1 p.m., where Mr. G. Veglio, an old member of our Society, had a most sumptuous lunch ready, and I feel sure everybody was delighted with the reception Mr. Veglio gave us.

Our worthy President Mr. W. Notari was unfortunately unable to be with us through personal sorrow — but even in the midst of pleasure we could not forget him, and we all wish to extend to him and to his family our great sympathy in their recent bereavement.

In the afternoon we proceeded by coach to Mr. Tompsett's farm at Collier Street, about 5 miles from Maidstone, and here again Mr. Veglio provided a jazz band with tea dansant, and a good many of our members indulged in the game of "Boccie" so much liked by the Ticinesi, whilst others preferred to enjoy the sunshine and country scenery in quiet spots or on the river and rifle range.

We had amongst the party some very distinguished gentlemen — Mr. Oscar Gambazzi, our Socio Benemerito and faithful secretary for over 30 years. Mr. S. Tettamanti, who was associated with our Society as far back as 1886, and last, but not least, Mr. Boehringer with his family, so well known to a good many of our members, and being of a most amiable nature and liked by everybody.

I wish to thank all members and friends, on behalf of the Entertainment Committee for the warm support extended to us by turning up in such gallant numbers — I say gallant for most were accompanied by charming Ladies. Where there are Ladies, there is always joy and laughter — they not only brighten us through their charming personality, but they harmonize with the bright colours of nature in their beautiful dresses.

To those gentlemen who have honoured us with their presence I express the Society's sincere thanks hoping that we shall have the pleasure of seeing them again amongst us on future occasions and a particular thank to Mr. Veglio for his excellent fare.

Viva il Ticino — Viva la Svizzera.

R. Orelli.

*"Lieblich war die Maiennacht
Silbercöcklein flogen"*

I thought it was a good idea, although perhaps not quite adequate, considering that we were then deep in the month of August, but when he suggested that this poem should be signed by him as his own product, I energetically protested, that it was not fair to Lenau, and if it should be found out, it might undo all the good work which so far had been achieved. I suggested that either he or I should write a verse or two, and after he tried in vain to kindle his poetic flame, I put the following lines down:

*"Steh ich in finst'rer Nacht
Einsam auf kalter Wacht,
Gedenk ich dein."
Herzlichen mein."*

It only afterwards dawned on me, that we were still in August. He thought that was fine (I didn't), and copied it was. That very letter contained a considerable number of kisses, allusions to heavenly eyes, a warm beating heart, sun kissed locks and dainty hands. Nightingales were singing and chirping throughout the letter, it was simply an orgy of loving and tender thoughts, and if dear Rösti would have been near me that evening, I would have forgotten myself, sergeant or no sergeant. Rösti on copying it, actually had a tear in his eye, but I made him use the blotter. Rösti must never, never know that tears disgraced this martial face, the weeping must be left to women.

That letter did it, I was convinced before hand that it would, I poured into it the feeling of my own lonely heart, it would have softened even a heart of stone. For the first time since our mutual conspiracy, the sergeant showed me the reply, there it was, in simple affectionate language she told him, that she loved him, and that she has told her mother all about it, and that he may call. Needless to say that I dined that night at the canteen, in full view of my comrades with the sergeant, and more than one bottle was carried away from the table, and if it would have lasted much longer I too would have been carried from the table. — Owing to the fact that the sergeant was now allowed to call, my job as writer came to an end, but many a pleasant evening I spent with Rösti, and what was the subject of our conversation I need hardly mention. When the day of our parting dawned, he told me that I would get the very day, my calling up papers for the non-commissioned officer's course, and so it happened. Now to this day, I do not know whether I achieved this with my pen or through the merits of my military achievements. — Good luck! I shouted to sergeant Rösti, when he left the barracks, and when is the wedding to be?

63. SOIREE ANNUELLE SUISSE

in der Westminster Central Hall.

Zu diesem alle Jahre stattfindenden Familienfest unserer Colonie möchten wir unsere Landsleute aus allen Gauen der Heimat herzlich einladen. Das Programm, ist abwechslungsreich und so sind wir sicher, dass jedermann etwas mit heimnehmen wird. Gemütswerte gilt es in dieser Zeit doppelt zu pflegen, weil der Alltag für viele so drückend ist. Die Pause dauert von 8-9 Uhr. Da werden die Festteilnehmer ihren Hunger stillen und ihren Durst löschen können. Der Reinertrag der Einnahmen wird unserer Hilfsgesellschaft überwiesen werden, die wie eine sorgsame Mutter für unsere Armen und Alten sorgt. Deswegen wer an diesem Abend teilnimmt, der darf ein Empfänger und Spender der Freude sein.

POUR LA "FETE DE JUIN"!

C'est le nom d'une fête que Genève célèbre chaque année. C'est aussi celui que nous autres de Londres pourrions donner à la rencontre annuelle que nous aimons tant. Nous n'aurons pas le lac, ni le Salève, ni le Jura, pour cadre de notre fête. Mais l'imagination aidant un brin, nous nous sentirons quand-même en Suisse, et les chants, les drapeaux, les dialectes sonores, la "Stimmung" spéciale de ce soir-là, nous transporteront bientôt au pays comme par un coup de baguette magique. A jéni prochain donc, sans manque.

R. Hoffmann-de Visme.

THE DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE.
THE VITAL RESPONSE OF THE CHURCHES.

By Dr. ADOLF KELLER.

Education and Extension Sec., Universal
Christian Council, Geneva.

There is a great deal of vagueness concerning the attitude of the Churches to this Disarmament Conference. For some, this work for international peace is the last hope, which can only be followed by despair. For others it is such a wordly undertaking that Christians prefer to have nothing to do with it. The Disarmament Committee of Chris-

4 Years later. November 1914.

On the Route Porrentruy — Bonfol, 11 p.m.

Tramp, tramp, tramp,—through nearly a foot of snow a long column of tired soldiers wended their way towards the frontier, it was a bitterly cold night, and snowing hard, not a sound could be heard, only in the distance the muffled roar of heavy guns in action. Over there too, columns were marching, marching towards death, over there war, war to the bitter end, — here still peace, — still hope to see those from whom one parted only a few months ago, but for how long, perhaps to-morrow the furies of war would be let loose. —

Tramp, tramp, tramp, — onwards with heavy loads, with a heavy heart, here and there a groan, a caught, perhaps even a half uttered oath, suppressed in order not to break the awful stillness of the night, an ice cold wind lashed the snow into reddened faces, frozen fingers convulsively gripped the snow covered rifles, to-morrow perhaps, that weapon might stand in good stead. — Suddenly a loud challenge, "Who goes there?" some sharp commands, our column has come to a standstill, there was some conversation going on in front, nobody cared—sleep, sleep—is all that was wanted and yet it must not be. Snow clad soldiers are passing us now from the opposite directions, no words are exchanged, it looks like a long procession of ghosts, suddenly they stop too, I enquire to which unit they belong, and was told that they were the 2nd company of the 3rd Battalion being relieved from the frontier outward posts: this was the Battalion and company, sergeant Rösti belonged to, "Is sergeant Rösti with you," I enquired from one of the men? "Not sergeant," he replied, "but sergeant-major now!" and down the line went a tired whisper of the name of my old sergeant. Out of the darkness his countenance suddenly appeared, hallo sergeant-major! I shouted in a half loud voice, here corporal St., a glance, a handshake; how is Rösti? I enquired half fearing that it might awaken unpleasant memories? fine she is, and so are the two boys, glad to hear I said,— then a command, — onwards —tramp, tramp, tramp,—a parting handshake, a glance, and gone was he, but now a feeling of gladness and of joy overcame me, the darkness of the night seemed to me less apparent, there was just a glimmer of light piercing through the wall of heavy snow-flakes, the thought that I had given Rösti to the sergeant, and two strapping boys to my country, made me feel glad, surely, I reasoned with myself, never before had I taken up my pen for a nobler cause. That day on snatching a few hours sleep, I dreamed again of Rösti and her bonny boys.—

The End.