

# Notes and gleanings

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power of suggestion was "If you want Peace, prepare for War." Countless millions of slain, countless sacked cities, millions of brutally treated woman and children in all countries, testify to the utter falsehood of that catchword and yet — even in my time at school, we were told and taught that not only must we prepare for war in order to obtain peace, but "it is glorious to die for one's country." Never by any chance were we told, nor taught, that it might be just as glorious to live for one's country!

Another sinister catchword, found in the Old Testament and, therefore, of undoubted antiquity, was that "eye for an eye" slogan, which, in our time was translated into the simple "wie Du mir, so ich Dir." You need not go to the American Gangsters to be thrilled with frightful misdeeds, murder, rape, arson and other crimes, you can find them all in the Old Testament, among the stories of those ancient nations, so sturdy of character, as we were told and so stern in their sense of duty and who believed in the catchword of "an eye for an eye."

To come to quite modern times, we need not much help to discover faithful reproductions of these old sayings, not, perhaps faithfully translated as far as the wording goes, but quite as faithful *i.e.* efficient, as far as their influence is concerned. Need I enlarge and remind you of such slogans as "the red letter," the "Bankers' ramp," the "Doctor's Mandate," etc.?

You, dear Reader, may begin to wonder why, in spite of the terrible effect of these catchwords, Humanity has progressed at all? Perhaps, because a gentle Providence, indulgently guiding the unsteady steps of poor Humanity across the catchword-paved path, has helped it to tread warily along the narrow dotted line between the catchwords.

At the present moment, progress, political and economical, is being held up by the obvious fact that the economic battle now raging all over the world — the immediate successor to the battles of the armies in 1914-1918 — is causing untold losses, suffering and a great waste of accumulated wealth. The material reserves of Humanity are being engaged in this battle and are being slowly but surely reduced. High taxation, confused currencies, slowly but surely deteriorating standards of living in most countries, want on the one hand, inability to get rid of accumulated goods on the other, all these terrible signs of disorganisation are a direct result of the economic war now devastating the world.

As the Ostriches bury their heads in the sand on the approach of an enemy, so we see Nations, all over the world, entrench themselves behind high and yet higher tariff-walls, in a similar endeavour to obtain shelter from an approaching enemy.

Buy British! Buy French! Buy Swiss! etc. Do we not all know and feel that madness lies that way?

Do we not all know and feel that the various Nations are doing the wrong thing?

Listen to the conversations in bus, tram, train or Underground and you will hear that nearly everyone discussing tariffs opines that "well, let's give them a chance, let's see what happens, let's have them, so as to have a weapon for negotiations." It seems to me about the same argument, as if a man who suffered from a very bad disease went deliberately to a Specialist who, to his certain knowledge had treated about half a dozen similarly afflicted men for the same disease and failed each time and utterly, Poor fish!

But arguments avail nothing in this case. The fact is that, we are all suffering from an overdose of the same disease, and that disease may be likened to a panicky feeling which drives men and women, whole Nations in fact, along one certain line of action, stampedes them so that they rush headlong with never another thought but the one that is burning dully in their brain, that feeling which Zola, describing the "over the top" rush of soldiers called so finely "la fuite en avant."

That disease, to my mind, is *Nationalism*.

Nationalism, not in its finer and better, but in its savage, brutal sense, in that sense which makes men and women boastfully exclaim "right or wrong, my country first."

*This Nationalism is our enemy!*

Instead of it, we must substitute a sane Internationalism, by which I do not mean a sloppy, spineless admiration of everything foreign in unfavourable comparison with our own. By sane Internationalism I mean that cultivation of our sense of belonging to a larger unit than our family, our village, our canton or county, our country. We Swiss, for instance, are *Europeans* and, in a still larger interpretation, citizens of the World.

Just as some of us are "Züriger," others "Bärnermütze" others again Riebländlers or Vaudois or Genevois, so we are all Swiss and just as some of us are Swiss, others German, others English or French or even Scotch, so we are all Europeans.

Once we get this larger interpretation of Nationalism or as it will then be called Inter-

nationalism in our heads, we have progressed a very big step forward. Because once we feel that we are all *Europeans*, we also feel the stupidity there would be if we were to fight each other with arms, instead of settling our differences judiciously. Because again, feeling ourselves to be *Europeans*, we would soon consider it extremely stupid too to fight each other with economic barriers, such as tariffs, various currencies, etc.

And, a *United Europe* would form a big entity and a big force for *Peace*.

For us Swiss in a foreign country, although a *European* one, the problem of considering ourselves as *Europeans*, though Swiss, is not so very difficult. A difficulty may arise in the case of our children, if we are too much Swiss and try to force our children, though they are born and brought up in England, to retain their Swiss characteristics.

As far as my observations goes, and I may add that I have watched many cases for a quarter of a century, the understandable desire of a Swiss born Swiss that his offsprings should be Swiss too, does not work out very well in actual practice.

I was listening in the other night to Bernminster broadcasting a series of songs sung by the "Berliner Bubensinger." Mostly Swiss songs, sung beautifully well and a rare treat for an elderly Swiss like myself. While I was listening with eager ears, with my whole inner self tuned in and keyed up to catch every note, while I was feeling Swiss through and through, I doubt very much whether many children of say 18 years or so, born and brought up in England, but born of Swiss parents here, would have appreciated that music, those songs, as I did.

Our native country is the one we ourselves have been born into. It is not necessarily the country of our father and our mother. Our country is our native country, irrespective of our parentage. I think that holds true anywhere, unless, of course, we are born into a colony of definitely Swiss character or Italian or French character. There are such colonies in London and among those children my contention might not hold good. But, in those cases, I contend that the children are living among surroundings which are foreign to the country in which they are living and, by following up my argument set out above, we come to the same conclusion.

It is not my province, nor my privilege, nor my duty to teach other people what to do with their children. But many a father and mother in our colony may be sorely troubled over just this aspect of a chapter in their lives and in that of their children and they may wonder whether they are doing wrong, whether they are untrue, unfaithful, disloyal to their beloved home-country if they allow their children to grow up as English or whatever the case may be. To those I would say, with all the conviction of which I am capable, "let your children grow up with their playmates, do not trouble about your old allegiance which is firmly implanted in your heart but which means very little to your children. Rather than let them grow up with a half-felt, half-understood allegiance to a home-country they may see occasionally on a holiday, or of which they may hear wonderful stories, etc., let them grow up *Naturally* and, when they are old enough, let them decide for themselves. They will thank you later on.

And this is one aspect of that *Internationalism* which, I think, we ought to embrace, because beginning with the children, we are teaching them the great truth that one country is as good as another, that one European is as good as another, that we are all members of the same *European* family and that our efforts, our unceasing efforts, must tend towards the bringing together of the now artificially kept apart members of that family.

That way lies progress! That way lies Peace!

#### PERSONAL.

We hear with pleasure that our friend M. A. Desponds, who left London some time ago for Roubaix, has been last week elected "Président de la Société Suisse de bienfaisance de Lille et du Nord de la France," and we are sending him our heartiest congratulations on behalf of our readers and his numerous friends.

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