

Our rationing

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Reformation in Scotland. The grave, noble bearing of the four reformers offered a symbolic contrast between the ostentation of Episcopal Geneva and of the new age which opened with the preaching of the pure Gospel. The reformers were followed by "Syndics," that is, the magistrates who presided over the famous Plebiscite of May 21st, 1536, whereby the people of Geneva officially adopted the Reformation.

Once established, the Reformation strove to develop education in order to form a new generation of conscientious, enlightened ministers and magistrates. In 1559 the College and Academy were founded and became a famous nursery for ministers and teachers. The public greeted with due deference a group of professors from the Academy "Regents" of Calvin's College. After them came a great Bible borne on a tripod. The essential character of the Reform could not be better brought out than by reserving the place of honour for the Book which Calvin had made the charter for the new Geneva, thereby winning for his city the name "Protestant Rome."

After winning liberty and repulsing the final assault by the Duke of Savoy, Geneva was ready to write one of the finest pages in its history. French and Italian Protestants who were persecuted and threatened with extermination preferred to leave their homes rather than renounce their faith. They looked towards Geneva as a haven of safety. First to come were Vaudois of Piedmont, who were represented in the procession by a group of their authentic descendants. Geneva was also a city of refuge for the French Huguenots, victims of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. These came in their thousands to seek shelter in the little Calvinist Republic, wherein they soon formed an intellectual working-class élite. This event was symbolised by a trophy representing somewhat originally the Edict of Nantes torn in pieces.

In the succeeding two centuries Geneva, which became a literary, artistic and intellectual centre, shone throughout the world. Later political and religious struggles appeared to eclipse Calvin's influence. But the Christianity of Geneva still retained vigour, and was to bring forth its finest fruit. In 1863 a Genevan Christian, Henri Dunant, founded the Red Cross which made Geneva the city of Charity. The motto, "*Inter arma caritas*," was, inscribed in gold letters on the sides of an allegorical "float" representing the Red Cross. Is there not in this institution, which to-day benefits millions of wounded and prisoners of war, an outstanding manifestation of that Christian spirit Calvin made to shine forth over Geneva and through which Calvin made to shine forth over Geneva and throughout the world?

OUR NEXT ISSUE.

We hope to go to press again on Friday, September 25th, and wish to thank the following subscribers for their welcome contributions towards the steadily increasing costs of production, viz: Mrs. Ellison, Mr. A. Kunzler, J. H. Speich, Dr. J. Arpel, E. Wey, J. H. Meyer, Mrs. Streit, G. Luzio, H. Pfärter, C. Filliez, W. Weber, V. Tenger, L. Musy, J. Blaser, J. H. Brutsch, M. E. Lichtensteiger, F. Isler, H. E. von Gunten, J. C. Bachmann, J. C. Nussle, Mrs. M. Heinzelmann, L. W. Krucker, J. J. Huber, E. Belart, H. E. Burnier, J. Heimerdinger.

OUR RATIONING.

The following two casual articles in the English Press treat this subject from different angles; the first one is from the "Daily Sketch," July 28th, and perhaps stresses the matter unduly for the comfort of English readers.

Those of us who are sometimes inclined to complain about our minor difficulties in obtaining favourite foods should think of Switzerland.

The little mountain republic is now almost completely cut off from the outside world. Conditions in the towns are almost intolerable.

Like ourselves, Switzerland depended in normal times on imports for most of her food supplies, and these have nearly all been cut off.

A friend from Geneva tells me that at places like Lausanne and Berne meat is an unheard-of luxury. Transport is so difficult that peasants do not bring their produce from the hillside farms.

The only access to France from the whole country is through the little town of Annemasse, on a single-line track outside Geneva. But at the frontier and in the railway station, although the officials wear French uniform, they are closely watched by Gestapo agents in civilian clothes. Black market smuggling across the lake from Evian les Bains, home of the famous mineral water, has reached formidable proportions.

The second one from the "Glasgow Herald," August 3rd, is on philosophic lines and suggests that brains are at a discount in Berne as far as rationing is concerned; the same applies, of course, to this country though in a lesser degree.

The Swiss have set a very bad example with their meat-rationing, which is based on a different scale. The most meat is given to the most deserving, and all "intellectuals" are given the minimum ration. The reason advanced by an expert is that intellectual work does not require great energy. "Even genius is quite gratuitous," said this rationing person, "and involves no strain on the body as a whole."

The implications of this doctrine are deeply disquieting to all those who work with their brains, when they work at all. A thorough-going intellectual is convinced that his mental efforts put a serious strain on his sanity, if they do not positively imperil his life. He watches the simple toil of navvies and steeplejacks with undisguised envy. How pleasant it would be to indulge in such healthy and invigorating exercise, and then return in a warm glow to an evening of leisure, untroubled by high and dangerous thoughts.

But these are pleasures the intellectual cannot know. Suppose he is pursuing the True, the Beautiful,

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and the Good. It is not a well-paid occupation, but it may sound simple and easy enough. That is where you are wrong.

The True at once raises the problem of the Subject-Object relationship. It would be merely laughable to imagine that phenomena are to be taken at their face value. But is there any fixed and valid relationship at all between the Object-As-It-Appears and the Object-As-It-Is? Is there any Object at all? Not to put a tooth in it, is there any Subject? Are you there? I don't know. Am I here myself? I really couldn't say.

The Beautiful raises the Subject-Object relationship in an even more baffling form, with the old weary dispute of the Standard of Taste. As for the Good — words cannot describe what a bad business the Good is. To put it in a nutshell, the Good is what appears to be desirable in view of the needs of a harmonious relationship either with the Absolute or with a social complex, or, as Mr. Bertrand Russell would say, with neither. On the one hand there is the Transcendental, and, on the other, there is the police.

The man who handles such problems cannot sleep all night for thinking of them, and cannot keep awake all day because he has not slept at night. There is no respite for him, no Fair, no Break for Music. An intellectual's work is never done; indeed, it is never begun. "No loss," you may say, like a Swiss expert. "What is the sense of all this airy, insubstantial stuff? Give me something I can get my teeth into."

And so says the intellectual. That is why he would like some extra meat.

THE DEFENCE (FINANCE) REGULATIONS AND SWISS INVESTORS.

The following discourse in the House of Commons will probably interest some of our readers; it is reprinted from the "Financial Times," August 5th.

Sir Herbert Williams asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the House of Commons whether his attention had been drawn to the case of two Swiss citizens resident in Switzerland who derived a considerable income from a British company; that pending a settlement of excess profits tax and income-tax they desired to make a payment on account to the Treasury out of the funds standing to their credit in this country, but were informed by the Bank of England Foreign Exchange Control that before it would be permissible for the payment to be made it would be necessary for the Bank to be satisfied that these sums were available for transfer to Switzerland; and why he was preventing foreigners discharging their obligations in respect of United Kingdom taxation for which they were liable?

Sir Kingsley Wood replied: Yes, sir, but I am quite unable to accept the implications contained in my hon. friend's question. The effect of the Defence (Finance) Regulations is that any debts due in the sterling area by a person resident elsewhere can only be paid by the remittance of foreign exchange or by the use of sterling funds properly due and transferable to a resident outside the sterling area. It is therefore not permissible for residents in the sterling area to pay debts on behalf of non-residents except with such

funds. I am satisfied that this provision is necessary in order to protect the country's foreign exchange position.

Under these circumstances I think that my hon. friend will agree that the inquiries in this case were properly and reasonably made in order to secure satisfactory evidence to show that the funds in question were properly due and transferable to non-residents and could therefore be used to discharge their obligations.

Sir Herbert Williams said the only money those two Swiss citizens had was money that they made in this country. Why should they not pay their taxes in this country?

Sir Kingsley Wood: It is obviously in this country's interest that this course should not be adopted.

SWISS STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.

Through the courtesy of the London Office of the Swiss Bank Corporation we are enabled to publish the quotations of some of the leading stocks.

	19/8/1942.	5/8/1942.
Swiss Bank	477	457
Crédit Suisse	543	519
Banque Fédérale	378	358
Suisse Réassurances	3300	3280
Nestlé	852	802
Industrie Aluminium	2950	2765
Brown Boveri	683	638
Industrie Chimique	5790	5600
Motor Columbus	356	346
Ateliers Oerlikon	520	—
Sulzer	1155	1062
Confederation 3% 1936	102.15%	102.50%
Jura-Simplon 3½% 1894	102.75%	103%
Cia. Italo-Argentine	138	134

LETTER BOX.

J. D. B. — Birkdale. It certainly seems monstrous that an airmail letter posted in Basle on March 24th should only have reached you on August 8th, but we do not think that the delay is entirely due to the interference of censors; you are probably the victim of postal vagaries which even in normal times are exceptional. A German censorship cannot be avoided but in our experience it is seldom applied and is generally indicated by the stamp or label of the "Wehrmacht." As a further instance of the freakish behaviour of the postal service under existing conditions we might add that a telegram posted on August 10th somewhere in the north of England and since confirmed by letter has not yet been delivered to the writer.

J. C. N. — Bognor. A Swiss lending library still awaits the initiative of a Carnegie-minded compatriot. We are told a few copies only of Leutenegger's "Menschen im Urwald" reached this country and none are for sale. The book was published by M. S. Metz, in Zurich, from whom under the Defence (Finance) Regulations it cannot be ordered until after the war.

J. B. — Nairobi. Many thanks for your aergraph and bank transfer since received. We are delighted to learn that the Swiss Observer is in such great demand in your part of the globe.

A. G. — Wimbledon. We have read the article in the "Daily Mirror," and do not propose to comment upon it. The "political geography" of that American professor is beyond our comprehension.