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CHRISTMASTIME.

There has been a practical answer to our last article in this paper—a young girl, although engaged in business, has begun to visit the poor and has found no little satisfaction in this charitable work. Others of our countrymen and women, who have a similar urge, may also find solace in this work.

It is at a time like the present, when our earliest memories recall the joys of Christmas, that the thought for others ought to be uppermost in our minds. These "others,"—unsere Mitmenschen,—may not assert the right to share our thoughts and love; yet they are keenly aware of the fact that at Christmastime love is less selfish, the mind more open. These "others" are our poor, our aged, and the lonely members of our colony, wounded in the battle for existence. In their heart also is alight the ray of hope that shone from the manger, the cradle of the greatest of humankind. And in the measure of their expectation, may and shall we answer. They expect so little. Their joy is so great with the smallest offering, when they see that their hope has not been in vain. These, our old friends, for whose welfare we are anxious all the year, deserve our care for the simple reason that they are bearers of such a large portion of ill success, poverty, illness and insecurity. It appears almost as if they were our substitutes under these burdens.

Could we but find the room to tell of their sufferings individually.—I remember the case of an old man, nearing 70, living in a cellar with his family. His work was washing dishes in a hotel, always until late and often until the morning broke. As a boy of five he was first employed at a match factory; throughout life he was held back. One night, returning dead tired from work to his home in South London, he sank down exhausted, and was found huddled on a door step. His one anxiety was to get home where, despite the poverty, all was kept clean and neat and tidy. But into this home of his stalked the spectre illness, invited by the absence of sun and the unwholesome air. First a daughter, an excellent needlewoman, had a nervous breakdown and was removed into a home. Then her brother, a few years younger and of a noble disposition, was laid into the grave, and finally the most precious member of the circle, the wife, his faithful and uncomplaining partner for 30 years, died in hospital of pernicious anaemia. Our old friend, this hero of life's many battles, is now beyond his work; what are we going to do, we, who have the power and ability to help?

Another veteran of 80, who it has been our privilege to support, has peacefully gone to rest a few months ago. Up to within a year of his death he was active as chef in the kitchen of a small hotel.—And how shall we present the sad case of an able, eager and lovable man of middle age, whose devotion to work for ten solid years without a holiday has resulted in a state of complete nervous exhaustion? A father of four children, to-day in a home for nervous disorders, where we have visited him. He has told us that his inability to work often fills him with a sense of utter and absolute shame. Just consider such a statement from the lips of a man, whose incapacity is due entirely to his devotion and sense of responsibility! Thanks to the charitable instincts of our countrymen, we are in the position to assist his family.

The world is lost! To many of our compatriots the world is lost, when, but for factors over which we have no control, each one of us should find his way without stumbling. Let us consider how often a seeker after work, honest, willing and capable, will lose a job because of his deceptive appearance! How often a man is too old at fifty, since age is regarded as a disability! What a dreadful thought, to visualise old age in such want that death itself is a release!

But now, at Christmas, when we sing "Freue dich, freue dich, O Christenheit," the hearts of those to whom our service should be given are filled with an awful longing for the happy days of early youth, at school in a sunny Swiss village, or playing in the crisp snow at Christmastime. In those days, the harshness of life was still unknown to them. But now, lost in the welter of London, in a poor and unhealthy home, it is the dream of Christmas which brings back to them the songs of youth, of that golden youth which has passed for ever. Their mute appeal to you is "Our youth you may not give us back, but you can spare us some of your love, as it used to be at home, when we could run to mother with our woes and wishes. Oh, for the joy of those early Christmases!" You may and must not let their mute appeal go unheeded. If you can but think yourself in their place, you will help and rest satisfied.

It is our belief that none of those who assist in our work every Monday evening could ever be dissatisfied with their lot, since they constantly see greater pain and heavier burdens. Our finest Christmasgifts will be thankfulness and joyfulness. We close with the appeal that all of you Compatriots, who are capable, will enable us by

your gifts to spread joy and happiness. Our heartfelt thanks in advance.

The Swiss Benevolent Society, London.

UN ARTICOLO?

Stagione morta questa. Mentre nel treno accoccolato in un angolo, guardo fuori attraverso l'appannato finestrino mi compiacio di fantasticare e di filosofare a mio modo. Le goccioline di pioggia, che si divertono a filar via lungo la lastra di vetro, le paragono, per esempio, ad altrettante vite umane. Alcune vanno dritte al fondo per infrangersi... altre invece devono seguire numerose tortuosità prima. E degli umani lostesso! Taluni hanno la vita piana, ben delineata, altri tortuosa... ma poi tutti ci infrangiamo, moriamo! Quindi a che giova il nostro continuo affanno? — E quei polli che, noncuranti, con un colpettino di collo ogni tanto scuotono via l'acqua, mi insegnano come si dovrebbe noi pure, esseri superiori ai polli (almeno noi ci vantiamo di esserlo!) scuotere via con un'alzata di spalle, le amarezze della vita.

Attraversiamo la galleria del Ceneri. Il treno corre via sotto la montagna squarciata e riempie del suo faticoso respiro quella volta. Pochi passeggeri nello scompartimento. E tutti sonnecchiano... eccezione fatta d'un bimbo che si diverte a tempestare di domande la sua mamma che dovrebbe essere un'enciclopedia vivente! Ah! piccoli tiranni quanto pretendete voi dalle mamme! — Mi piacerebbe poter penetrare nella mente di questi miei compagni di viaggio. Sono certa che mi divertirei molto di più che ad osservare da una poltrona di cinema, una pellicola passare sullo schermaglio. E dove trovare un migliore, un più interessante cinema se non nel cervello umano? Qui, in un baleno, passiamo in rivista tanti ricordi di vita vissuta, tante speranze, tanti ideali; qui noi godremmo lo spettacolo d'una vita immaginativa, come ogni individuo se la crea, a suo modo, secondo le sue aspirazioni. Ma quante volte noi saremmo tentati di spezzare quella pellicola del cervello umano, specialmente se nella mente di una persona scorgiamo quanto a noi non va assolutamente, o ci vediamo noi, riflessi con un aspetto tutt'altro che simpatico, proprio così come ci vede quel cervello! — Ancora ancora possiamo assistere al cinema ad uno spettacolo nel quale un nostro simpatico divo fa la parte di villano... ma veder noi in quella parte... ah no! non va. Per buona sorte che la nostra fronte è di ossa e non può riflettere le immagini che si agitano dietro di essa! Ahimè se fosse come il vetro di questo finestrino di treno che lascia, con la sua trasparenza, scorgere cosa c'è all'altro lato! — Che figura farei io se dovessi vedere, leggere nel pensiero tutti i fedeli lettori dello "Swiss Observer" mentre scorrono su queste mie stramberie? Eppure... prima di decidermi a scriverle ci ho pensato ben bene... Ho passato in rassegna non so quanti soggetti da svolgere che potessero interessare, almeno nei minimi termini, i miei lettori. Parlar loro di mie avventure personali? Uhm! Interesserebbero gli altri? (quelle forse veramente interessanti per ragioni mie proprie non le racconterei io...) Descriver loro questo Ticino? Così piagnucoloso come è oggi? farebbe una figura misera... Ah! Sbaglio. Alzo gli occhi e davanti a me vedo ergersi una collina, un susseguirsi di colline anzi, che, così velate dal leggero velo di umidità, così colorate dalle mille tinte calde autunnali, tutta una gamma di colori più salienti—sfumature d'oro e di porpora, di violaceo e di verde offrono uno spettacolo unico, e le parole non possono descrivere quel non so che d'inesplicabile che si sente nell'animo davanti ad una mostra così ricca, così profonda. E i rigagnoli lucenti, come ondulate lame di acciaio, attraversano le praterie, scorrono, cantando pianamente per tema forse di svegliare la natura che sta per addormentarsi, accanto agli alberi spogli, dalle poche foglie; ma foglie, foglie ovunque sono sui campi, sui sentieri ed il piede mollemente in esse si affonda. Ci vorrebbe un pittore... e poi anche lui riuscirebbe a copiare su d'una tela questo quadro che solo la Natura può saper fare? Meschinità degli umani di fronte a tanto splendore! Ma non meschinità umana quella dei robusti lavoratori che scavano l'aspra roccia ribelle, che lavorando con il piccone e con la mina, stanno strappando al Ceneri parte di esso per formare un'altra galleria, che l'unica

esistente ora da sola più non può rispondere al grande movimento di questo percorso; il binario unico più non basta, ce ne vuole un secondo, e l'intelligenza dell'uomo, la sua forza fisica lotta con la materia e vince! —

Se non altro la filosofia serve a qualche cosa: aiuta ad ammassare il tempo ed a riempire qualche colonia di giornale. Tò, più o meno filosofando, sono arrivata alla mia destinazione: Lugano, tutta in movimento oggi perchè è giorno di mercato e nonostante la pioggia gente intorna ce n'è mica male... ed una colonia o circa di giornale è stata riempita! Un articolo questo? Lascio a voi l'arduo compito di battezzarlo... ripeto, lo scrivere non è più cosa facile: il pubblico s'è smalizzato, legge e vede troppo e allora che cosa dobbiamo raccontargli?

Elena Lunghi.

"PARTY TICKETS" TO SWITZERLAND.

Several of our readers have expressed a wish that we should arrange for a party, to travel on "party rates" to Switzerland, on the occasion of the Christmas holidays.

To meet our readers and their friends, we are willing to accept applications for a party of not less than 15 persons, to leave London for Bâle via Folkestone-Boulogne on Wednesday, December 23rd.

Departure from Victoria at 2 p.m.

Arrival at Bâle, Thursday, Dec. 24th, 6 a.m.

The ticket is valid for 33 days and the holder can return at any time within this time. The cost of the ticket is £6 16s. 2d., second class, return. (Ord. fare £8 10s. 9d.) plus 1/- booking fee per ticket, which must accompany each application. It is advisable to communicate with us as soon as possible in order to allow us to make the necessary arrangements in good time. (Return Journey, leave Bâle 12.25 a.m., arrive in London 3.30 p.m.)

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