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EDITOR'S POST-BAG.

London, May 20th, 1950.

The Editor,
Swiss Observer,
London, E.C.2.

Dear Mr. Stauffer,

"Charity Begins at Home."

With your article in the S.O. of May the 12th you certainly hit the nail on the head.

I wonder, however, whether our folks at home are the only ones to be blamed for it. Memories are sometimes short, so let us go back a few years. When the bombs came down over London, when we could not buy a decent bottle of wine under £3.0.0., or anything else for that matter, most of us said "The first time I can go to Switzerland, I shall have a good time." This time came in 1945/6, we received £100.0.0 Basic allowance, £10.0.0 per day for business, for as many days as we liked.

We arrived in Switzerland after years of absence, entered a restaurant and read the menu which made our mouths water and noticed that a bottle of Neuchâtel costs Fr.5.—. We invited a friend or relative to have one with us. The other guests in the Restaurant heard from our conversation that we came from London, they praised us for having endured the bombing and won the war against Hitler. They shouted "Good old Churchill" and this made us a bit swollen headed and we ordered another bottle.

We knew from the olden time that, if a party of Swiss sit together, each one pays his own drink, but being accustomed to the English habit, we were eager to show the Swiss how we "Engländer" behave at home and stood another round. With this we started to spoil our friends and relations and we were considered the "rich uncle from America." Everywhere we were greeted and fêted as if we Swiss in London had won the war ourselves. We liked it (and don't say you did not!) and this spoilt us and when we came to Switzerland again, we did not want to show that we are worse off and the whole process of generosity was repeated.

When our friends from Switzerland come to London they like this "old Spanish custom" or standing "a round" but, having spoiled them in Switzerland, they take it for granted and "stand around!"

As far as the "whip round" amongst the Colony

is concerned for assisting Swiss Societies to come over free of charge, I quite agree that this practice should stop, but having been responsible for the "Basler Jodler" to come to London for the re-birth of the "Schweizerbund" I would like to mention that no member of the Colony has been approached for financial assistance. The loss was paid by 6 friends who in 1946 had a wonderful reception from them and we were anxious to reciprocate. They entertained the Swiss Colony at the 1st of August Festival in the Coliseum free of charge in gratitude for the entertainment we have offered to them.

With the money which has been spent during the last 4 years on our hard-currency-friends, we could almost build a Swiss Centre or at least support the "Swiss Observer" so that it would no be necessary to forecast the closing down of our only official paper because of lack of interest and funds to carry on.

Yours sincerely,

E. SIEGRIST.

OUR NEXT ISSUE.

Our next issue will be published on Friday, June 9th, 1950.

We take this opportunity of thanking the following subscribers for their kind and helpful donations, over and above their subscriptions: J. C. Wetter, O. Wuest, Swiss Benevolent Society, Auckland (New Zealand), Mrs. J. A. Lanz, V. Trottmann, J. Heimerdinger, A. Engelbert, E. Oggier.

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