

Another Treasure Island

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ANOTHER TREASURE ISLAND.

One of the great difficulties in life which everyone has experienced to a greater or lesser degree is to find out what is worth doing, what should be left out, and what order of priority should be given to the things we decide to do.

Often the choice is made for us by circumstances; our professional activities are almost dictated to us, and what is left for us to choose often looks negligible. Yet, a visit, a letter, a friendly word, may have repercussions out of proportion with the action performed.

Considering that what we do prevents us at the same time from doing something else, it is important, in weighing the pros and cons of our decisions, to leave room for the imponderables, those unknown factors dependent on intuition rather than on logical reasoning.

If Mr. Schneider, our Consul in Manchester, had given full weight only to the questions of time, petrol and effort spent on the journey to Leeds and back the same night, he might have replied: "I wish I could visit your club again but considering my previous visit not so long ago and my other commitments, I must decline your invitation for the moment . . .". Yet he came to our Yorkshire Swiss Club and took us for an hour and a half on a fascinating journey through the Philippine Islands. A month earlier, Dr. Morgeli had carried us to Switzerland on the wings of imagination or better still, suspended to the "balloons in the sky" of his wonderful coloured film. We had been home again, crossing our streets, climbing our mountains, paddling across our lakes and, more exciting still, running with our children.

With Mr. Schneider, the experience was entirely different: new landscapes and new skys, occupations and institutions foreign to our western conceptions, and people young and old offering such a contrast with us both in colour, customs and costumes. Furthermore, one could not but feel now and again a kind of suggestion that their ways, strange as they appear, may be as good or better than ours; a reminder that our conception of civilisation may not be always the best or, at least, that it may contain elements of very

superficial value. The slides were of the best choice and highest quality, the words were carefully selected and sparingly used, but above all, the speaker made us share his human interest in those people to such an extent that his lecture became a striking illustration of what Mr. Churchill had said about real eloquence: 'What matters, of course, to some extent is what you say, but more so: the way you say it; and still more: what you are!' Most of the sixty members of the Yorkshire Swiss Club who met Mr. Schneider not only thoroughly enjoyed his excellent lecture but came out of it with something to think about, something wider and more important in the long run, than the many problems and difficulties probably waiting for them when they returned to their homes and their various occupations.

To add to the pleasure and value of the meeting, there was also Mr. Hoffmann, the Chancellor of the Consulate, who was paying us his first visit. Such human contacts bring us, Swiss abroad, more closely with those who are officially responsible for our welfare and for the interests of our country. Any idea of bureaucracy becomes irrelevant when the name at the foot of a letter or a circular evokes a friendly face and personality and so creates the atmosphere in which co-operation becomes natural and mutually profitable.

J.P.I.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

An Interesting Lecture.

At Brown's Hotel on March 11th, 1952.

Prof. D'Espine gave us a most interesting talk on the relationship between religious and political problem. He pointed out that there were two ways of approach to this problem, namely either to consider the duties and responsibilities of a Christian to political life, or the religious problem which presents itself to the citizen. The question would seem to be, whether the solution of the political problem does not in fact depend on the faith of the members of the community and that therefore the two problems are one. It was this aspect that the speaker dwelt on.

If we take the term "political" in its original and widest meaning, as affecting the whole vitality, balance, prosperity and health of the community, we cannot help being disturbed at present conditions even in countries like England who's civic sense is so highly developed. In the Western World, the decline of morality in every sense, combined with political apathy constitute a very bad climate for the younger generation to grow up in. The remedy to this state of things has been sought in the imposing of order from the outside as in totalitarian regimes, but without ultimate success. A true remedy can only be imposed from the inside by men who themselves believe in christian principles and act exclusively upon them. The speaker then enumerated the main precepts on which christian morality is based, and ended this stimulating and practical talk with an example illustrating his remarks, namely the decisive importance of the Wesleyan revival at one of the most critical moments in English History.

X.Sp.



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