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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER, THANKSGIVING AND REPENTANCE

Our National *Busstag* was celebrated on Sunday, 19th September, by an ecumenical service in which both linguistic communities packed the church at Endell Street. Pastor Marcel Dietler delivered a beautiful sermon on the bearing of the three terms "prayer, thanksgiving and repentance" on Swiss life. He was unmitigating on one of the means by which Switzerland had earned her prosperity, namely the benefits derived from the capitals dishonestly slipped into Swiss banks from poor and needy countries. He said that our national prosperity was not matched by our happiness as a people and recalled that Switzerland's suicide and divorce rates were among the highest in the world. He stated, to the agreement of many among his congregation, that the Swiss were among the "least-smiling people".

On a more personal level, he said that total and undivided commitment to the teachings of Christ was the only way of knowing Him and discovering the power that He gives of living up to His commandments. He ended his sermon by relating a recent spiritual experience that came to him during quite ordinary circumstances, and during which he was seized by the reality of the Lord's personal love. He told his congregation that such experiences, or any other spiritually fulfilling experience, were not the privilege of a few mystics and churchmen. They were open to every person that sincerely "hungered for the Lord".

Our Ambassador, Dr. A. Weitnauer, was among the congregation. Service was followed by a friendly lunch in the hall, symbolically deprived of sweet.

(PMB)

THE "JEUNE GENEVOIS"

This Genevise Fast Day (*Jeûne genevois*) is a holiday. Paradoxically, this is the pretext for all sorts of rejoicings and Genevise continue to celebrate a day of which most of them have forgotten the meaning—now, this day of fasting, far from being a day of rejoicing, is a day of mourning.

It was enacted in 1572 by the Consistory of Geneva, directed at that time by Théodore de Bèze, in memory of thousands of French Protestants put to death in France on 24th August, 1572, in the massacre of the Saint Barthélemy (St. Bartholomew) ordered by Charles IX at the instigation of Catherine de Medici and Henri de Guise. News of

the massacre caused distress and great resentment in Geneva, capital city of the Huguenots and inhabited by a great number of French Protestants. Strong fears of attack by the French and the massacre of the inhabitants were dreaded, but happily nothing happened.

Since then, the "*Jeûne Genevois*" has always been observed, except during the few years of French occupation at the beginning of the XIXth century.

It has been definitely fixed for the first Thursday in September and is, with the Escalade, the most ancient Genevise anniversary. Yet, unlike the Escalade, no official manifestation has been foreseen for this anniversary.

(P.S.)

MRS. BAERLOCHER ✕

We have the sad duty of announcing the death of *Mrs. Marguerite Caroline Baerlocher*, widow of Charles Baerlocher, a citizen of St. Gallen, who passed away on September 5th at the age of 89. The funeral was held at Enfield Crematorium on September 9th and her ashes were scattered beside those of her late husband at the Mortlake Crematorium. She leaves two sons and a daughter (Mrs. M. G. Ilsley, of 10 Grove Road, London E.4) and two grandchildren. We should like to assure them of our heartfelt sympathy.

CITY SWISS CLUB: AN IMPORTANT SPEAKER THIS MONTH

The President of the City Swiss Club has asked us to bring to the attention of our readers the forthcoming *monthly meeting* to be held on Tuesday 19th at 6.30 for 7 p.m. at the Dorchester. The speaker will be Dr. Frank Ellis, M.S., F.R.C.S. a consultant surgeon at Guy's Hospital, Director of the Kidney Transplant Programme at this hospital, Hunterian Professor of the Royal College of Surgeons and visiting Assistant Professor of Surgery, University of California in 1965. Professor Ellis is furthermore the author of 40 papers on surgical topics and has carried out numerous visiting lecture tours of America, Europe and Asia.

The kidney transplant programme at Guy's Hospital is now approaching its hundredth transplant in three years and is one of the most active in this country. It is a leading programme within a co-operative group of transplantation units covering the whole of the South of England. It has pioneered new methods of detection and of preventing the rejection of transplants.

The subject of Mr. Ellis' talk to the members and guests of the City Swiss Club is to be called "*spare parts surgery*". Let us hope that members will turn up in force to listen to this most important speaker!

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

The following subscribers have been and are celebrating their birthdays in October: Mrs. H. Jenne (Andeer, GR), on the same day as Mr. P. Lehrian who was 74 on 9th October. Mr. P. Savoie will be 81 on 17th and Monsieur l'Ambassadeur J. Revilliod (Geneva) will be 66 on 20th of the month. Dr. E. M. Bircher (Bissone, TI) will have his 76th birthday on 23rd October.

Also on 23rd, Mr. Emil Ritzmann, of 20 Bodenweg, Arlesheim, BL, will celebrate his 70th birthday. He used to be with the Swiss Bank Corporation and was a very active member of several Swiss societies in London. He is still a keen gardener, and he and his wife are just off on a trip to Miami to visit their daughter.

Two couples who used to be in London are celebrating their 29th wedding anniversaries on 24th October. They are Monsieur l'Ambassadeur and Madame Jean de Stoutz (Moscow) and Monsieur and Madame Enrico Tosio (Karachi).

Mr. N. H. Leuzinger will be 74 on 31st October and on 4th November Mr. O. Jasser will be 65. On 6th November Dr. and Mrs. Egli will have been married for 35 years, and Mr. Oertli will be 75 on 10th November.

Best wishes and many happy returns!

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MR. BERNER CONVALESCING

A telephone call to Mr. Willy Berner, now taking the firm of Giron Freres at Accrington into his good care, reassured us of the good health of Mr. *Ermanno Berner*. The Swiss Observer's Northern correspondent is recovering in Italy after a series of three operations. To have sustained them at past 70 is quite some feat and we wish Mr. Berner a complete and speedy recovery.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

CITY SWISS CLUB. Dinner with speaker on Tuesday, 19th October (see notice above), Dorchester Hotel. Dr. Frank Ellis, consultant surgeon at Guy's Hospital, will speak on "spare parts surgery". 19th November: *106th Annual Banquet and Ball*.

NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE. Open meeting on Thursday, 21st October, at 7.45 p.m. Talk with slides on Mountain Flora by Mr. A. D. Ruscoe.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY. Monthly meeting on Wednesday, 13th October, at 7.45 p.m.

SECOURS MUTUELS. Monthly meeting on Wednesday, 3rd November, at 35 Fitzroy Square.

SWISS CLUB EDINBURGH. "Kaffeeklatsch" at Mr. Hansjörg Wirz, 10 Kirk Brae, at 8 p.m.

CULTURAL EVENTS

Saturday, October 9. Queen Elizabeth Hall. Ballade by Frank Martin included in the programme played by Paul Tortellier (cello) and Maria de la Pau (piano).

Wednesday, October 20th. Wigmore Hall, 7.30 p.m. Recital by the

pianist Bernhard Billeter (eight Preludes by Frank Martin and works by Beethoven, Brahms and Debussy).

Friday, 29th October. Eglise Suisse, 79 Endell Street, W.C.2. Concert in aid of the Swiss Church under the

patronage of the NSH and the European Liszt Centre. Works by Liszt and Bach. L. Rabes at the organ. Other performers include a cellist, a harpist, a soprano and members of the Royal Choral Society. Silver collection.

AN UNTOLD LIFE STORY

The people with the most interesting lives are not always those who can show the most visible trappings of material success. But then, what is an *interesting* life? The notion of "interesting" is conventional and every life is interesting, even if it is spent in a wheel chair. By that token, who knows the wealth of existence belonging to the old people who come to the Swiss Church, or to any other church for that matter? They have the memory of a story which is never told, not only because it lacks in romantic lustre, but because most of the cast of those who played a role in it have already vanished.

The traditional biography is concerned with a remarkable story of success and romance appealing to the idealism of the reader and inspiring him with a wish of emulation. But such a story pertains more to romanticism and the adventure epic than human truth. The really true biographies should be that of a totally unknown person, the absolute average, one who has never achieved anything worth recording in print.

However, the story of *Mrs. George Herbert*, a frail 85-year-old regular doyen of the Swiss parish in London, is not of this kind, because she has by no means had an "ordinary" existence and is fortunate enough in having a circle of friends who know of it. It is through one of them that I learned that Mrs. Herbert had been Lady-in-waiting to the mistress of Edward VII. This conjured up such a glowing and different chapter of history that I resolved to write her story with her kind permission.

Mrs. Herbert was born in Orvin, in the Jura, in 1886, of a farmer family. She decided at 19 to leave for England, "*pour s'épanouir*" and worked as an "au pair" in an aristocratic family dwelling at Sherborne Castle, with two daughters from whom she learnt English.

In 1914 she entered the service of Mrs. Newhouse, the wife of an American millionaire and one of King Edward VII's last woman friends. Mrs. Newhouse was discreet regarding her five years of association with the then Prince of Wales, and Mrs. Herbert could not therefore enliven this anecdotal chapter of history from any personal angle. All she could say was that Mrs. Newhouse had accompanied the Prince of Wales for many seasons at Baden Baden, had followed him to the Ritz hotels of Paris and other glamorous places, while the life-loving Prince left Princess Alexandra at home, ignoring his Victorian background.

With Mrs. Newhouse, she went to America twice. It was a gay life. In New York, they stayed at the Ritz Carlton, sharing an apartment (for her mistress) and a three-room suite for herself. In the "Lusitania", the ill-fated liner which they took on their westward bound journey, they had a State Apartment.

Mrs. Herbert followed her wealthy mistress across America to Utah, where Mr. Newhouse had started his fortune, and Salt Lake City, where he owned the majestic Newhouse Hotel. There, she had an insight of Mormon life. She visited the Tabernacle and the harem where Brigham Young, founder of the

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