

J.H.'s weekly letter to his friends and compatriots

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Teaching the Turk.

The following from the *Morning Post* (Nov 22nd) will supplement the information appearing in another column of this week's issue:—

"The case of Turkey might serve as a warning to the rash reformer. She was determined to put on the apparel of Western Civilisation, so she became a Republic, and not only passed a long list of most enlightened laws, but adopted the Swiss Civil Code. And now, according to our Constantinople Correspondent, the discovery is made that no one—not even the Bench—understands these wonderful laws. Of Judges there are apparently some 5,000, many of whom have never studied law, and there are no doubt besides an army of pleaders and solicitors at least equally innocent. Then, of course, there is the Turkish laity, who have probably never heard of Switzerland, to say nothing of the Swiss Civil Code. Little wonder if the Minister of Justice finds himself in some perplexity. He has, however, made a courageous beginning. He proposes to open classes in Angora where the Judges, public prosecutors, and other officials will be instructed in the laws which in the meantime they must administer. We take it that there will be a course for the lawyers later: as for the public they are likely to remain in blissful ignorance of the Swiss Civil Code until they find it, so to speak, laid across them. Let us hope that at least they enjoy their own criminal law, so that they may have the satisfaction of being bastinadoed on their own understandings.

We fear that the Turks will learn in due course that justice depends less on the letter of the law than on the spirit of its administration.

The Swiss Civil Code may be all that its framers claim for it. But some texts of the Koran, honestly administered under a fig tree, would suit the Turk better than all the principles and applications of Western jurisprudence. Yet, after all, we cannot afford to pity the Turk. For is not our own statute book so laden with the burden laid on it by Parliament that our Judges themselves groan as they consider it?

Faked Passports.

How insignificant incidents can be turned into a sensational affair is shown by the following cutting taken from the *Daily Mail* (Nov. 23rd):—

"The arrest at Basle of two Italians while attempting to cross the frontier has revealed the existence in that town of a Communist organisation for the fabrication of false passports. The Italians, who had entered Switzerland by an unfrequented Alpine track, went to Basle, where they were provided with faked Swiss passports at the headquarters of a "Communist Aid" society.

Six Communists are incriminated. It is believed that for a considerable time this bureau has been producing spurious passports on a large scale.

Yesterday a man supposed to be a Communist attempted to cross the Swiss frontier near Les Brenets. When asked for his passport he drew a revolver and fired three shots at an official, seriously wounding him, and then made his escape. A close search is being conducted on both sides of the frontier."

The facts are that two Italian Communists, in order to facilitate their entry into France, were given or lent two passports held by Swiss sympathisers. As soon as they had crossed the frontier the deception was discovered. The complainant action of the two Basle Communists will probably be dealt with by the courts.

The incident at Les Brenets refers to a fugitive from justice who endeavoured to reach Swiss territory, he being sought by the French authorities for a crime committed at Strasbourg.

Mont Blanc Capitalized.

If the intrinsic value of our snow peaks and touring resorts is to be based on the computation applied by the *Daily Mail* (Nov. 21st) we would be the richest country in the world; no doubt, after this discovery, the Alps will be assessed for Swiss property tax!

"A report presented to the National Economic Council by M. Leon Auscher states that in 1913 (and there is no reason to suppose that the number has since diminished) 400,000 tourists visited the French slopes of Mont Blanc, 275,000 the Italian slopes, and 350,000 the Swiss slopes. Supposing that each tourist spends a sum of 50 gold francs in the district for transport, hotel accommodation, and purchase of souvenirs (and this is a very modest estimate), the conclusion is arrived at that in 1913 the "business turnover" of Mont Blanc was 52,000,000 gold francs (more than £2,000,000).

Few industrialists, M. Auscher points out, possess a capital capable of yielding such a turnover."

RECITAL DE Mlle. SOPHIE WYSS.

Notre compatriote, Mlle. Sophie Wyss, est une grande artiste, musicienne, sincère et très sympathique. Elle prend place, en bon rang, parmi les meilleures cantatrices suisses.

Le programme que Mlle. Wyss a composé pour son récital du 14 décembre est, comme son talent, plein des plus belles promesses; et le moins que l'on en puisse dire, c'est qu'elles seront tenues.

Une première partie, dans laquelle figurent les noms de Durante et de Jean-Sébastien Bach, est consacrée à la musique purement classique.

Vient ensuite la musique moderne d'inspiration allemande, avec Brahms et Hugo Wolf, puis ces charmantes mélodies des auteurs français modernes tels que Hüe, Ravel et Debussy.

Tout ceci a été choisi et groupé avec un goût parfait, mais la véritable originalité du programme de Mlle. Sophie Wyss consiste à y avoir intercalé l'élite des compositeurs suisses d'aujourd'hui: Othmar Schoeck, Gustave Doret, Arthur Honegger, E. Jaques-Dalcroze, Pierre Maurice. Tous ceux-là qui ont donné à l'art suisse, à l'art tout court, une expression pure et noble; ils ne sont pas, certes, sans avoir acquis une certaine notoriété, mais on est loin encore, à l'étranger, de connaître leur mérite.

C'est avec eux que Mlle. Sophie Wyss veut se présenter au public de la métropole britannique et affronter la critique.

On doit féliciter cette intelligente artiste de son entreprise, qu'encourageront par leur présence à Aeolian Hall ceux qui, leur journée finie, savent s'intéresser à autre chose qu'au dur "business."

PIERRE JACOT.

J. H.'S Weekly Letter to his Friends and Compatriots.

During the last few days we have received the news from Switzerland and from Paris that the negotiations between the two Governments with regard to the customs tariffs have been anything but successful. The Swiss Press has taken up a firm stand and so have the Chambers of Commerce. Should the negotiations not soon be conducted on a new basis and in a more friendly spirit, then, they say, the existing commercial treaty should be terminated by Switzerland.

It is unfortunate that in the year 1927, nine years after the "war to end war," so-called "customs wars" should again come into prominence. Quite apart from the question of the two countries mentioned, customs wars are going on or are in preparation almost over the whole globe.

True, we have had conferences with the object in view of making international commercial relations easier. But what will be the effect of strengthened protection if it is imposed in a way that precludes almost any fruitful commercial international relations? The answer is "War."

We have now again a conference for the reduction of armaments. I do not know whether or not I should discuss a matter like this in this place, but it appears to me that these matters should be discussed in any place. In addition I have another reason for mentioning these points in the journal of the Swiss Colony, the reason being that we Swiss are only too apt to lose sight of the wider issues while we revel in "Kantonlütli." This last is probably one of the reasons why so often our arguments are taken lightly by our adversaries.

One such instance was demonstrated last week when the meeting of the corporation for an international motor road was unable to elect its constitutional executive committee because there was a difference of opinion as to who should have one particular mandate out of 24 or 25. Instead of coming together and at least trying to solve the problem for the best advantage of the country as a whole, sectional interests, probably only supposed interests, proved a stumbling block. The result will be inevitable delay, even if all goes well otherwise. If agreement cannot be reached soon a great chance may be for ever lost.

A question which a few weeks ago was ventilated in the *Swiss Observer* regarding the payments for a Swiss Legation in the East, can be included in the same category of thought. The question had originally been raised in the *Republikanische Blätter*. It was contended that a payment of, I believe, Frs. 40,000, was an enormous salary for a Minister.

I know that people who never have been away from their homes and who have, probably, to reckon with £200-£250 (Frs. 5,000 to Frs. 6,250) or even less, of yearly salary, must look upon Frs. 40,000 (£1,600) as a fortune. It is, however, not they who write to the papers but men who should know, if not from experience then from information, that in any Capital Frs. 40,000 is a contribution rather than a salary for the Representative of a country. Why, an advertisement in a certain London newspaper (full front page) costs almost as much, yet we expect our Swiss Representative to bring, year in year out, our name, and last but not least what we have to sell, to the notice of foreign governments and people and to entertain on the proper scale for a better-class bank clerk's salary!

We are the sons of a small but wonderful country. We are known and respected for our hard work, but our outlook has been restricted by the mountains. We have to ascend the mountains to gain a wider outlook.

Yours sincerely, JOHN HENRY.

QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES.

| BONDS. | | Nov. 22 | Nov. 29 | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|----------|----------|----------|
| Confederation 3% 1903 | ... | 79.25 | 80.00 | |
| 5% 1917, VIII Mob. Ln | ... | 101.35 | 101.50 | |
| Federal Railways 3½ A—K | ... | 85.12 | 85.40 | |
| " " 1924 IV Elect. Ln. | ... | 101.20 | 101.25 | |
| SHARES. | | Nom. | Nov. 22 | Nov. 29 |
| Swiss Bank Corporation | ... | Frs. 500 | Frs. 798 | Frs. 796 |
| Crédit Suisse | ... | 500 | 845 | 840 |
| Union de Banques Suisses | ... | 500 | 715 | 715 |
| Société pour l'Industrie Chimique | ... | 1000 | 2675 | 2675 |
| Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz | ... | 1000 | 4375 | 4362 |
| Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe | ... | 1000 | 2812 | 2810 |
| S.A. Brown Boveri | ... | 350 | 559 | 555 |
| C. F. Bally | ... | 1000 | 1287 | 1278 |
| Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond.Mk. Co. | ... | 200 | 807 | 818 |
| Entreprises Suizer S.A. | ... | 1000 | 1144 | 1145 |
| Comp. de Navig n sur le Lac Léman | ... | 500 | 540 | 535 |
| Linoleum A.G. Giubiasco | ... | 100 | 152 | 152 |
| Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon | ... | 500 | 727 | 729 |

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