

Belated easter reflections

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growth within the last two years of Basle as a Rhine port.

Basle has become the terminus of Rhine navigation. The city, one of the richest and most productive in Switzerland, is now in direct water communication with Rotterdam, Antwerp and other important Continental ocean ports.

Powerful tugs towing long strings of barges carry goods to and from the new Alpine port. The annual river freight turnover at Basle now exceeds 400,000 tons.

To extend Switzerland's important marine trade of the future several inland navigation companies are now established here. Numerous firms who re-ship merchandise by way of the river and canal systems to Central Europe and the Near East have opened offices in the city.

Nearly £2,000,000 sterling are already invested in the two great Rhine harbours of Basle, which when completed will be among the finest in Europe.

And so we shall be able, if our holidays last long enough and we have a mind to take things quietly and patiently, to go by boat from England to Basle in a manner leisurely and pleasant, if slow, and to admire, en route, all the fine scenery along the Rhine, sing to the Lorelei, or be sung at by her, and, remembering that last bit of news recorded above, sample some of the choicer Rhine wines!

Capital Punishment.

And there is a further reason for choosing Switzerland as a place wherein to spend a happy holiday and a safe one, and that is that murders are less frequent there than in countries where capital punishment is still in force. Says the *Daily Herald* (April 1st):—

The latest statistics from America are extremely valuable as illustrating how valueless "capital punishment" is in preventing murders.

In 1928 the rate of murders in the United States was 10.2 to the million, while in some cities like Detroit it was 16.5, and even New York was 6.7.

Holidaymakers who want to go abroad might go, therefore, with greater safety to Switzerland, Belgium or Germany, where capital punishment is non-existent, while they would hesitate to go to Chicago, which had 498 murders last year.

Poison Gas Peril "Over-estimated."

Safe and wine-growing countries, such as our own dear Homeland, naturally and quite logically produce a frame of mind which can look perils in the face without being frightened too much, and which enables one to see the better side of things in general. So, while we have been getting badly frightened over the prospects of being gassed whenever the next war comes along—a possibility which I fervently hope will never materialise again—one of our Swiss Colonels has formed a less panicky idea of that peril. I find in the *Evening Standard* (April 2nd):

Colonel Betsch, chief of the Swiss Technical military department, in a lecture at Lausanne, declared that too much importance was attached to the efficacy of poisonous gas as a weapon of war, and that a number of favourable factors were necessary before it could be employed.

The most important factor was the wind.

The inefficacy of poison gas on both sides of the belligerent armies during the war was proved by statistics, which showed that deaths from gas amounted to only three per cent. of the large forces engaged, whereas the mortality in the armies from other military arms amounted to 50 per cent.

Colonel Betsch declared that as the utilisation of gas masks had been perfected in all countries the danger from this source for armies had greatly diminished.

Attacks from aerial craft with bombs on large capitals and nerve centres of war would be difficult owing to the great opposing forces of similar formations.

He claimed that an invading squadron of airplanes with the object of unloading gas on a town must come down to an altitude of 6,000 feet so that the poison gas on explosion might have its maximum effect, because from a higher altitude the force of the gas lost its power, and at this low altitude anti-airplane guns would be employed with effect.

But, nevertheless, Heaven forbid that any such theories should have to be put to the test again!

Future of the Swiss Guards.

The problem of the Vatican's Swiss Guard has naturally been discussed lately, now that we have the reconciliation between His Holiness the Pope and the Kingdom of Italy. Irish Papers have given this question prominence, and I quote from the *Irish Independent* of March 23rd the following:—

It is an open question whether or not the new Treaty will necessitate the disbanding of the Swiss Guard. This corps, numbering about 100 officers and men, is recruited from the German and Swiss cantons of Switzerland. An Article in the Swiss Constitution prohibits Swiss subjects from accepting service in the army of any foreign Power.

It is feared, therefore, that the Swiss Guard may fall under the ban when the new Papal State comes into being. The *Giornale d'Italia*, however, puts forward the view that neither this corps nor the three others which form the Pontiff's bodyguard, namely, the Noble Guards, the Palatine Guards, and the Gendarmerie, can in any way be considered foreign armed forces, as they are charged with simple police duties, and membership in them is of an honorary character.

The Swiss Guard has not shouldered a rifle in the Vatican for more than twenty years. It has a distinguished record of loyalty to the Holy See, and was founded in 1505 by Pope Julius II., who recruited 2,000 men, of whom 250 followed him to Rome. They were butchered almost to a man in St. Peter's, where they barricaded themselves during the sack of Rome in 1527.

Swiss Forest Fires.

Many of us have deeply regretted the serious fires which have devastated some lovely spots in the home counties recently. Some of us know those spots well, love their Arcadian beauty, go there sometimes when no crowds are about, and feel happy that Fate has put us into a country the beauties of which are not so majestic, perhaps, as those of our homeland and want more finding, but are sweet and full of the most exquisite charm. And we deplore their defilement, be it by litter left by the thoughtless wanderers, or by fire, so often, alas, due to carelessness.

But still more poignant is our sorrow when we have to read of such devastating fires ravaging some of the most lovely beauty-spots of our beloved Ticino, as reported in the following article from *The Times* (March 18th):—

In consequence of the prevailing drought, several forest fires have broken out in Switzerland during the past four days.

Many acres of forest were destroyed on the hills near Orselina, above Locarno, by a fire which broke out on Tuesday and was not extinguished until Saturday. Great damage was caused to the woods on Monte Salvatore, near Lugano, by a fire which began on Thursday evening, and at one time threatened the hotel and railway station on the summit of Monte Salvatore. A forest fire has been raging since Friday night in Val Morobbia, Canton Ticino. Ten acres of forest have already been destroyed on a mountain above Corcelle, Canton Neuchâtel, by a fire which is now spreading westwards.

Orselina, Monte Salvatore! What music in these names, what *souvenirs* they evoke, what fierce longing to hasten to those beautiful jewels of our sub-Alpine scenery, to hear again the melodious voices of our compatriots, to listen again to the tinkling of the innumerable bells from innumerable little churches, to look down again into the blue waters of the Lakes, to be charmed again by the three jewel-islands set in the middle of the bay off Baveno—the honeymoon islands!—what bliss in remembering those delightful times we had down there. Aye, even when we did guard the railway line early in the war, when we did belong to the "Swiss foreign legion," as our battalion was then called with some justification—even then our friends of the Ticino made us forget our worries and not only showed but proved what staunch Swiss, what brotherly compatriots, what lovable, fine people they were and always will be. Aye, and life was sweet, in spite of the war. And we all, who have such *souvenirs* of our various sojourns in the Ticino, are hurt when we read about devastation bringing worry and loss and anxiety to our beloved South.

SUCCESSES OF SWISS INDUSTRY.

A traveller reports from San Francisco: "It will interest you to hear of an experience I had lately. In the shop-windows here are razor blades exposed with a packing bearing the Swiss cross. I bought a few of them and entered into conversation with the manager. He told me that the blades were the best in the whole world."

It will be a source of satisfaction to everybody that even in America, the home of the razor industry, Swiss blades are able to command a ready sale. —*Schweizerwoche.*

The works Euboelith Ltd., Olten (Switzerland) have received an order of 70,000 sq. m. of Euboelith parquet-floors, for the branch offices of Philip-Lamps, Ltd. in Holland, Spain, Poland and England. The head office of this firm ordered, eight years ago, about 100,000 sq. m. of these floors. This last order does not only concern the factories, but also the offices, the club-houses, and the hospitals belonging to this world concern, with 25,000 workmen.

The Railway Company of the Dutch Indies, who already possess two Brown Boveri locomotives, type I.D.L., ordered from the firm of Brown Boveri & Co., Baden (Switzerland) two new engines for fast trains with individual command and B.B. axles, these two new engines being of the same type and the same size as the preceding ones. They

have, moreover, a different system of brakes and some slight changes of construction. These new engines were shipped at Rotterdam for Batavia at the end of March and end of April, 1928. They ran since July on the line Batavia-Buitenzorg.

A report dated 9th June 1928, addressed to the Company, contains the following mention: "As soon as the new locomotives are on the line, the old Brown Boveri engines Nos. 3001 and 3002, which have been used for three years without any interruption, will be revised."

This is an excellent testimonial for Swiss engines; for we must not overlook the fact that these machines are running near the equator and are therefore constantly exposed to the noxious influences of a tropical climate. *Bis.*

QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES

BONDS.	Apr. 2		Apr. 9	
	Fr.	%	Fr.	%
Confederation 3% 1903	83.50	83.50		
" 5% 1917, VIII Mob. Ln.	101.25	101.50		
Federal Railways 3 1/2% A-K	87.25	87.50		
" 1924 IV Elect. Ln.	102.50	103.50		
SHARES.				
	Nom.	Apr. 2	Apr. 9	
Swiss Bank Corporation	500	815	812	Fr.
Crédit Suisse	500	955	950	Fr.
Union de Banques Suisses	500	702	705	Fr.
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	3460	3428	Fr.
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	4700	4715	Fr.
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe	1000	4350	4260	Fr.
S.A. Brown Boveri	350	570	560	Fr.
C. F. Bally	1000	1390	1365	Fr.
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	847	801	Fr.
Entreprises Suizer S.A.	1000	1260	1260	Fr.
Comp. de Navig'n sur le Lac Léman	500	510	505	Fr.
Linoleum A.G. Giubiasco	100	343	340	Fr.
Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon	500	845	850	Fr.

BELATED EASTER REFLECTIONS.

Easter is such a comfortable holiday, and one beloved of young people. It coincides, although in England rather seldom, with the first flush of Spring, mainspring of gambolling poets and lambs. It is then, also, that the native rhubarb puts on his most glowing garb and grows visibly fatter. Needless to say, the birds begin their song in spring, but what the rhubarb is aching for is not the song but the custard; can man, I ask you, gaze upon the wondrous colour scheme of rhubarb and custard and keep the water from running in his mouth (gazers sucking a bulls-eye being debarred)? Hens, chiefly the neighbours', lay a prodigious number of eggs, and this is another reason why Easter has been fixed at this season.

Now these and many other things do constantly happen in spring, round about Easter. Shall I mention a few more? All the water taps in the house begin to leak because the frost has shrunk the washers. If you have a daughter, her dress allowance wants overhauling, with a possible trousseau thrown in. Then again, the boy's last year's flannel bags show up badly in the bright sunshine, and if it's not a new car Madame wants it's certainly a new colour on the old one. The drawing and dining rooms have long looked for new papers also, but we have not found the correct design yet.

Spring infusing benevolence into the human heart, has fortunately not overlooked the local bank managers, so that the constancy of the old overdraft is and remains a tacit understanding. Yet there is a horrid fear creeping up my spine that, sooner or later, just when the third demand for the income tax arrives, there will be on my breakfast table a neat letter from the Bank, and its bitterness will spread over the porridge and the bacon and eggs and the apple and the marmalade and the coffee.

Still, who would not be alive in spring, tra-la. Is not then everything different, more rose coloured—in fact, every year a little more vieux rose? What are these mean and lowly troubles about money and maintenance as compared to the eagle flights of the mind? Do we not bask in the sunny south, cross oceans in mighty steamers, conquer the highest peaks, invent new and marvellous aircraft, become merchant princes without any effort and carry to the altar the most beautiful lady in Christendom?

Do we not build a palace for her the like of which has never been seen, with fairy gardens and silvery fountains, and shall we not raise a family of poets and painters, statesmen and soldiers?

All this, and much more, in spring, tra-la! A.F.S.

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**and to buy their Tickets
from**

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