

Au point 510

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80 YEARS OF BALLY'S SHOE FACTORIES, LTD., SCHOENENWERD.

It was in the year 1851 that Carl Franz Bally came to Schoenenwerd and laid the foundation stone of the great world firm, C. F. Bally, A.-G. The moment appeared to be an extraordinarily favourable one, the manufacturing of shoes by machinery not yet having been adopted in Switzerland.

Although the conditions were very advantageous there arose great difficulties during those first years caused by the public not trusting machine manufactured shoes or preferring the foreign made article to the home manufactured one, a trait in the Swiss national character which one may perhaps still find to-day. These foreign shoes were at that time mainly sold by hawkers. It was only in 1857 that Bally took up relations with South America (Montevideo & Buenos Ayres) and that further developments became possible. Soon relations with England and Egypt also followed, and the first selling organisations in South America and London could be started.

The founder who died in 1898, transferred his business in 1892 to his two sons, Arthur and Edward, who continued the concern under the name "C. F. Bally & Sons." In 1907 their sons entered the firm after having been carefully prepared for their career, and the business was changed into a private limited company held mostly by the family. In spite of the growing difficulties owing to foreign competition, e.g. the sale in the LaPlata states dropped to 1/10, chiefly as a result of increased tariffs the firm infiltrated most European countries as France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Belgium, Scandinavia, etc. Moreover, a further development of the sale organisation aided the expansion.

But already at that time there appeared difficulties with which the Swiss industry also of to-day is confronted: the great expansion of social institutions, high wages, the lack of raw materials, high tariffs and a relatively very small market in the home country. On the other hand, goods being manufactured under quite different conditions threatened to swamp the home market.

Such was the situation in 1914, when the Great War broke out. At first there occurred a lack of orders. But soon a great change took place owing to the fact that foreign factories were working under special Government Control which made it impossible to meet the existing demand or they were hampered in acquiring the necessary raw material.

It might be interesting to hear something about the many obstacles placed in the way of manufacturers by the warring Powers who forbade raw material already delivered being used for enemy countries. A special institution of Control (Société suisse de surveillance économique) thoroughly watched the utilisation of the material and the finished product was controlled before being exported. The supply of raw material became more and more difficult, the costs of transport increased especially after the submarine war had been started in 1917.

There followed some bad years after the conclusion of peace. High war taxes, the strongly

diminished buying power of some countries, the absolute exclusion of nearly 200 millions in Russia and other States in the East, the depreciation of foreign currencies in addition to the high Swiss currency, the dumping of so-called Valutaware, general uncertainty and falling leather prices caused a rapid decrease in the export and resulted in the crisis of 1921 in which the firm also became involved. However, the improvements in the general conditions soon aided the firm to overcome the depression and the production which had dropped in 1921 to 1,825,000 pairs rose again to 3,222,000 pairs in 1925. A further development took place up to 1928 when especially the market in the U.S.A. was a very lucrative one. But soon the Czechoslovakian mass production working under entirely different conditions which swamped, and still is swamping the whole world market, forced various countries to increase their tariffs on boots and shoes, which fact affected the export of Swiss high grade shoes.

Another problem which became more and more difficult was how to meet the rapid changes in fashion in the great centres, London, Paris and New York, and how to supply these places with goods within the stipulated time.

After temporary improvements, the firm entered the great depression from which the whole of the world is suffering at the present time. More than ever, all countries are attempting to support themselves by their national industries, and by erecting not only protective but really prohibitive tariffs. And more than ever Switzerland, which owing to her limited home market never could, and never will, be able to compete with the foreigner in cheap mass production on large scale, and which is confined to the production of higher class goods, finds herself hard pressed to find the necessary markets abroad. Let us hope that this turning of political frontiers into economic barriers will only be temporary and that international trading will ease itself again once we have passed through these critical days.

Perhaps a few words about financial organisation of Bally Ltd. may be interesting. The first limited company of the shoe factories was formed in 1907, a purely manufacturing company with a capital of 8,000,000 francs. This Company gradually founded other manufacturing companies in France, Austria, U.S.A., South Africa and America. In 1921, owing to financial reasons, it was decided at a general meeting to convert the C. F. Bally Ltd. into a Holding Company, which is actually holding all the participations in the shoe factories and sales organisations. The initial capital of 8,000,000 francs in 1907, has been increased several times and amounts to-day to 40,000,000 francs. The various shoe factories in Schoenenwerd and other nearby villages which had been in the possession of C. F. Bally Ltd., were transferred to a newly founded Sister-Company: "The Bally's Shoe Factories, Ltd."

The firm is celebrating this year, the 80th anniversary of its foundation. It falls at most critical times and the utmost energy of everyone is required to overcome the great difficulties.

à coups de fusils." C'est signé: "Le caporal-observateur."

As a war book the volume can, of course, not claim the notice and publicity obtained by similar diaries who have been in "the thick of it." The observer on Point 510 might be compared to a picture-goer who, from a safe seat, complacently enjoys a most adventurous film play. He has even time, during dull moments in the performance, to study books. He is all the same a very keen observer and can derive as much diversion from the continual change of the surrounding landscape through the bombardement, as from a dialogue between trees and storms during a natural hurricane; the butterfly without which no modern war story is complete, also plays her part.

The absence of a strain of humour which relieves the monotony of these at times gloomy tales has no influence in sustaining the interest right to the end of the book. We quote one little incident which perhaps testifies to the presence in the modern Swiss of an ancestral trait whilst illustrating his submission to what some of us think is an unjust burden:

"Ce soir, trois hommes de la compagnie de Beurnevésin ont déserté. Il sont venus jusqu'ici, sans être inquiétés, ont laissé les fusils, baïonnettes au canon, contre la clôture, ont passé la frontière et se sont annoncés de l'autre côté, au factionnaire. Avec les deux déserteurs du B. R. d'avant-hier, ça fait cinq. Quelle épidémie! Tous ces hommes, s'ils en reviennent, seront jugés et condamnés par les tribunaux militaires suisses. Je souhaite pour eux que le tribunal tienne compte des circonstances largement atténuantes. Mais une sanction s'impose. *Dura lex, sed lex.* Sans ça, où irions-nous? Il paraît qu'à la Légion, on apprécie énormément les volon-

CONCERT—NEWS.

Mr. Arnold Dolmetsch announces a series of three Concerts to be given in the Hall of the Art Workers' Guild, No. 6, Queen Square, Bloomsbury, W.C., on Wednesday evenings, January 20th and 27th, and February 3rd, 1932, at 8 o'clock. The Programmes, given herewith, will consist of English and Continental Chamber Music of the 16th, 17th, and 18th Centuries, on the contemporary instruments. The Family of Viols will be heard separately in characteristic Pieces and in Consort in Fantasies from a precious MS. in Mr. Dolmetsch's possession. The varied resources of the Recorders will be shown in English Consort Pieces, in brilliant Sonatas and in obligato parts to a Pastoral Song by J. S. Bach, where their sweet notes mingle with the voice creating an atmosphere of tranquil beauty. In lively contrast to this is the Cantata by Mondonville. Here we find a lavishly ornamented Harpsichord part combining with the Violin obligato and florid Voice part to produce an unusual effect of colour and brilliance. It is interesting to note how the character of the instruments varies with the diverse treatment of different composers and periods.

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From Mrs. Dolmetsch, "Jesses," Haslemere, Surrey.

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2. Aria for Soprano with Two Recorders, Viola da Gamba and Harpsichord. "*Schafe Können Sicher Weiden.*" *J. S. Bach.*
3. Sonata No. 9 in D Major for the Viola da Gamba and Harpsichord. *A. Kühnel, 1698.*
4. Sonata No. 5 for Recorder, Viola da Gamba and Harpsichord. *Mons. Senallé le Fils, 1710.*
5. English Suite in A Minor for the Harpsichord. i. *Prelude.* ii. *Allemande.* iii. *Courante.* iv. *Sarabande.* v. (i) *Bourree.* (ii) *Bourree.* vi *Gigue.* *J. S. Bach.*
6. Sonata for Harpsichord and Violin, No. 4 in C Minor. *J. S. Bach.*
7. Prelude and Fugue for the Clavichord in D Major from Book I of "*Das Wohltemperirte Clavier.*" *J. S. Bach.*

"FUNNY CUTS."

EN APPEZELLER.

Ein Appenzeller Bauer sitzt im Zug und stösst fürchterliche Rauchwolken aus seiner Pfeife. Die gegenüberstehende Dame sagt ziemlich stark: "Sie, ich kann das Rauchen nicht vertragen." — "s'isch au nid schön, wenn d'Wiber rauchet," spricht er und dampft fröhlich weiter.

taires suisses dont l'effectif dépasse déjà huit mille. Fait curieux et d'une incontestable valeur morale et psychologique: de nombreux Suisses allemands parmi eux. La plus grande partie des volontaires sont en règle avec leur pays, et chose inouïe, je me suis laissé dire par un officier français, ils envoient du fond de leur tranchée leur taxe militaire à leur chef de section, en Suisse. Quel trait simple et grand! Ces volontaires-là, les idéalistes, je dirai, les vrais, ou mieux encore, les purs, l'engagé par conscience au nom des éternels principes de la morale universelle, voilà le soldat-type de l'avenir. Dans deux ou trois siècles, l'historien et le moraliste feront au volontaire suisse de la guerre, la place à laquelle il a droit."

and here is the counter-part.

"Un caporal français, déserteur, s'annonce au poste. Médaille militaire, deux fourragères, deux blessures, trois ans de guerre. Belle figure du poilu à la Scott, de l'illustration. Il y a quinze jours que ce malheureux a déserté; il vient de loin, du côté de St-Quentin, et s'est glissé de secteur en secteur jusqu'à la frontière suisse où il est venu s'échouer. Les horreurs qu'il a vues et vécues ont fini par le terrasser. Il ne raisonne plus; il ne sent plus, il touche à l'indifférence la plus absolue, les nerfs anesthésiés. Il ne retournera pas en France, c'est inutile. Mes paroles les plus persuasives demeurent sans prise. Tout lui est égal: il est décidé.

Nous le faisons diriger sur Beurnevésin où le commandant de compagnie l'adresse à la brigade. Là-bas, on l'a encore longuement sermonné, mais en vain."

We believe "Au Point 510" will be much appreciated by all those who have been mobilised in the last war as it will call back to their mind memories of active service.

AU POINT 510.

This is the title of a little volume of 140 illustrated 8vo. pages published by Victor Attinger of Neuchâtel and offered at Franc 3.50 (in paper cover). The author is Charles Gos, who describes in diary form, life and incidents in a Swiss observation post during the first two months of the 1914-1918 frontier occupation. Point 510 is situated at the Southern extreme of the Franco-German battle line near "Pierre des trois Puissances" a strategic point where the activities of the opposing armies could be conveniently viewed; its importance may be gleaned from the following extract:—

"Je m'étais toujours promis de savoir pourquoi les Français nous interdisent d'avoir de la lumière à l'observatoire du P. 510, sans quoi "ils tireraient dessus à coups de fusils," suivant la formule transmise par une consigne orale, en marge de la consigne réglementaire. Cette menace qui pèse sur le 510, et qu'aucun accord intergouvernemental n'a jamais ratifiée, est si étrange que j'ai voulu en avoir le cœur net. Car enfin, Français ou Allemands, sympathies ou non, nous sommes maîtres chez nous et n'avons d'ordres à recevoir de personne. Il doit exister sûrement une bonne raison à la base de cette clause. Voyons ça! Je dépouille avec minutie la pile des cahiers de quart et je trouve cette note écrite gauchement, au crayon, en marge des premières observations: "Il résulte du bombardement de cette nuit par les batteries de Moos et de Rüderbach sur la batterie du point 500 que les Allemands ont réglé leur tir sur le falot-tempête de l'observatoire suisse du P. 510. En conséquence, les Français font savoir que si le dit falot est de nouveau allumé, ils l'éteindront