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without taste in matters of art. He is eminently practical rather than artistic or imaginative. That architects and those whom they serve hanker after such picturesque dwellings is, therefore, strange.

The mountain chalet is far less fragile than it appears to be at first sight, for the lower construction is generally of stone, to a height of 7ft. or 8ft., the stone having been hewn out of the mountain side. Upon this solid and weather resisting foundation the upper structure of sawn timber or logs is erected. To withstand storms, the deep shingle roof is sometimes weighted heavily with miniature rocks. The small huts of the cow herds, as well as the cowsheds themselves are nearly always protected in this way. The durability of the building is truly astonishing; both roof and walls are impervious to the heaviest weight of snow. A destructive avalanche may descend upon them, hiding the little house from sight, and perhaps asphyxiating the ill-starred occupants; yet the dwelling sustains no damage worth mentioning. Nothing could be more solid; the chalet scarcely quivers when exposed to the full blast of a winter gale.

The steep pitch of the roof and the very wide-spreading eaves are features which add much to the picturesque quality of the chalets. But their object is the strictly practical one of throwing the snow clear of the buildings and protecting the wall surfaces both from snow and rain. A characteristic feature is the outside staircase, which sometimes provides the only means of reaching the upper floors.

The lower part is used for storage, the upper storey being given over to living room, bedrooms, and kitchen. A large family may necessitate a second storey; usually, however, the householder finds it unnecessary. But the dweller in the valley below, who has built a lordly chalet for his pleasure, may have demanded of the architect four storeys. Hotels of considerable size are often built on the chalet model.

Brackets, cornices, balustraded and open-work galleries and balconies, all engagingly carved, are included in the scheme. The carving serves to exploit portraits, texts, homely sentiments, a line from a poem, religious thoughts (inspired by the Herr Pastor), and the year the house was built. The inscriptions are in the decorative Gothic lettering. A typical one, from a chalet in the Bernese Oberland reads:—

Gott bewahre dieses Haus,
Und die da gehen ein und aus.

Repairs are noted in the same manner, as well as births, deaths, and marriages, a journey to a distant land, the return of the traveller, a formidable avalanche, together with its date, and other major and minor events. There is, for example, in the Valais Oberland a chalet which, constructed in the mid-eighteenth century, has its walls literally covered with inscriptions. Many of these are dated, and, going a long way back, they are of particular interest to antiquaries. The building, the largest of its kind, is lit by no fewer than 113 windows, some of which are too small to let in more than a shaft of light. The Schweizerhof, a famous Maloja chalet on the edge of a most enchanting lake, wherein the speckled trout obligingly allow themselves to be caught by the least expert anglers, also runs to many windows. Maloja, it may be noted, is reached from St. Moritz by the old-time diligence, a survival of the past.

Much of the carving is the work of Italians, especially in the Upper Engadine, which borders on Italy. These people are particularly skilled in decorating the window-frames, panels, and friezes entrusted to their care; each delightful embellishment thoroughly satisfies the most exacting connoisseur. The Swiss carvers are not best pleased at the importation of foreign labour, arguing that capable artisans abound nearer home.

When during the construction of a chalet, the chimney has received its finishing touch, a little fir-tree is fastened to the masonry, the national flag keeping it company. Everyone concerned with the building of the domicile is bidden to lunch by the hospitable owner; many workers are pledged in Engeldiner, the generous red wine of the country. The architect makes a patriotic speech, which includes references to William Tell and poetic quotations; the oldest carpenter and the senior mason prove no less eloquent. Mirth and jollification prevail; the guests are happy and contented.

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To the Editor of the *Swiss Observer*—

I must crave your indulgence if I have not yet found time to reply to the questions raised by my letter, published in your issue of the 17th August last.

Let me say that I realized at the time that my letter was bound to raise a good deal of criticism and comment. This is all to the good, but strange to say whatever adverse comments there have been, appear to be limited to individuals who, by virtue of their age, are safely protected from the regulations and injustices which I have made it my duty to publicly protest against, publicly, because I feel that publicity is the very soul of justice, and that through publicity alone can we ever hope to obtain some measure of redress and relief.

What is all the more surprising is, that even my most hardened critics, when confronted with facts and details, readily admit that it is illogical and illegal for the authorities to do this, that or the other. Why then should I have refrained from plain speaking? Has Swiss democracy and republicanism sunk so low that a citizen shall be afraid of saying what he means and feels about the actions of the authorities, whether Federal or cantonal? And when the Federal Council is reducing the Swiss abroad to the status of "Heimatloser," why should I be afraid to say that I do not cherish such an honour?

It has been a source of great encouragement to me to have had the assurance from numerous individuals, both Ticinese and other Swiss, that the time has arrived when the whole question of the Military Exemption Tax and Passports should be thrashed out in earnest. After all, it is the most important question which concerns us Swiss abroad. It is no use denying the fact that the regulations now in force have caused widespread discontent not only here, but nearly everywhere, and if a census were made I feel sure it would be found that Swiss have been denationalised by the thousand if we include those Swiss born abroad who, having the choice of two nationalities, give up the Swiss in order to escape the rigours which they would, in the natural course of events, be subject to.

The two principal questions which my letter of the 17th of August raised are those of the legality of the regulations in question and the undue rigour in which they are applied. I do not intend to enter into these two questions in detail in this letter, but shall do so in forthcoming issues of your paper, if I may be allowed.

Great capital seems to have been made by the authorities of a decision by the Federal Tribunal in the case of a Zurich citizen, which decision is being made good use of to brush aside criticism of the regulations which arises from time to time. I have in my hands this particular verdict (covering 15 foolscap sheets) and I must say that the question before the Tribunal was merely whether in that particular case a refusal of passport was justified. The circumstances were very much against the citizen in question as the authorities were in a position to prove that there had been consistent and wilful evasion of the law over a period of four or five years. The amount of the tax was not in dispute.

After having very carefully considered the Federal Tribunal's verdict in this particular case, I am more than ever convinced that the majority of refusals of passports must have been made in illegal circumstances and that, in reality, the regulations complained of constitute a breach of the Constitution and of the law by the Federal Council.

I refer to this because this same verdict is quoted in the comments reproduced in the letter you published in your last issue, over the signature of Mr. J. Eusebio, emanating from the pen of Mr. Carlo Maggini, one of the political leaders of the Ticino, about which I shall have further to say at a later stage. No doubt, when fuller facts and comments are put before Mr. Maggini, he will be able to see that there is a considerable difference between the case dealt with by the Federal Tribunal and the points on which I, together with my friends, are seeking redress.

In closing these general comments I would like to mention I am pleased to hear from various of my friends, that there appears to have been a very considerable change of heart, on the part of the Authorities, during the last couple of months, so that if we should achieve even only a fairer application of the regulations, as they are, a substantial measure of success will already have been attained.

Yours faithfully,

W. Notari.

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