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The Swiss Observer

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EASTER 1938

Not since those tragic years 1914-1918 has it been so necessary to remember that the dark times of Good Friday will be followed by the feast of the resurrection, Easter.

Indeed, the wonderful weather we have enjoyed so early this year, the quick coming of Spring bringing in its wake those always fresh wonders of Spring flowers and the reviving scent of the freshly cut grass, the rising sap in the trees, these natural phenomena, repeated each year and rejuvenating us each year, have been sent us so early this time, to remind us of the above mentioned truth.

During the cold winter months, when icy blasts send us shivering beneath the blankets, when grey mornings, dark and foreboding, fill our soul with dread of what might come to pass, we might be forgiven for giving way, at times, to rank pessimism. The daily papers we read at breakfast, or in the train going to and fro our daily task, have, lately, pondered to our fears and it is really a marvel that so many of us have been able to avoid nervous breakdowns.

It would be folly to pretend that with the coming of Spring our fears vanish, or need make room for optimism.

The whole world presents a sorry spectacle. Wars and threats of war everywhere. Nations arming to the hilt to be strong enough to oppose possible enemies. To arm to prepare for peace, they say, but in our hearts and after the lessons History has so freely taught us, we know perfectly well that that saying is as fallacious, as most generalisations.

Nations are like children and children have a habit of wanting to make use of the toys Father Christmas has given them.

But, although we realise that the world and Europe in particular are going through very troublesome times, although we realise, when thinking of the ruthless suppression of individual liberty and of the freedom of speech and thought in all the so-called totalitarian States, that humanity is now writing one of its darkest pages in the Book of History, a page, compared with which the one relating of the Spanish Inquisition is a mere "thriller," we yet realise too that this page will represent an unhappy phase in the History of Mankind and nothing more.

God gave man a soul, that is Freedom and I, personally, know that all attempts to suppress that soul, that freedom, must, in the end, come to nought, because such attempts offend against a Divine Law.

It is, of course, true to state that the advent of the totalitarian States was made possible, probably fostered, by the Great democratic powers of Europe, the so-called "victors" in the last great war.

For what ultimate purpose, God smote those democratic powers and peoples with blindness, so that this present state of affairs became not only possible, but inevitable, we shall not know in our lifetime.

Let us, therefore, not idly hurl imprecations at Hitler, or Mussolini or Stalin or even Franco, who, after all, are only the instruments of some higher purpose, or, like Attila in his time, the Scourge of God.

Let us rather examine, each for himself or herself, how by our own thoughts we erred in the past and how our lack of charity helped to bring about conditions which we deplore and have reason to fear.

Easter is a good moment to indulge in a little chat with one's self. Nature, as stated, contrives to make us feel better and more optimistic and it is, therefore, easier, to feel more charitable too.

A fairly long experience teaches me that it is difficult to keep resolutions, whether they be New-Year's resolution or those made at any other time. But, I argue, the mere fact of making resolutions is a sign of grace, because in order to make a resolution you have to examine yourself and find out what is required. And that, in itself is a wholesome operation, bound to help.

Above all, let us cling to the promise of the Resurrection, without which the human family would be utterly bereft of hope and sink down to the lowlier level of our dumb friends.

Perhaps we might remember a famous saying by Goethe which I have always thought to be a fine definition of what we mean by a "Gentleman"

"Edel Sei Der Mensch, Hilfreich Und Gut" and try to live up to it in all our dealings.

Kyburg.



HOME NEWS

(Compiled by courtesy of the following contemporaries: National Zeitung, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, St. Galler Tagblatt, Vaterland, Tribune de Genève and Schweizerische Verkehrszentrale.)

FEDERAL.

GERMAN PROTEST TO SWITZERLAND.

Dr. Köcher, the German Minister at Berne, made representations to the Federal Political Department of Switzerland followed an incident which occurred at Arbon, a little Swiss village on Lake Constance.

German Nazis living there organised a meeting in support of the German plebiscite. When the meeting became known a large group of indignant Swiss citizens, belonging to all political parties, gathered at the meeting-place and demanded that the Nazis should disband. It is reported that some Swiss forced their way into the hall after it had become known that a picture of Herr Hitler and Nazi flags were displayed. The police intervened when fighting began between the Nazis and the Swiss demonstrators.

It is understood that the German protest demands the punishment of those responsible for the incident.

ALLEGED GERMAN WATCH ON SWISS CHURCHES.

The Gazette de Lausanne says that Germany has special agents who keep a watch over the German Evangelical Churches in Switzerland as well as over the religious newspapers of the German-speaking cantons. It is stated that recently, in a Church in the Aargau, one of these agents took notes during a sermon given by a German pastor and openly said that he would forward them to Germany. The Press of the Swiss Protestant Churches have asked the Government to put an end to the activities of these agents, and of the organization on which they depend.

NO MORE GERMAN "SWITZERLANDS."

Berlin News.

The name "Switzerland," which has been given to the hilly parts of many German provinces, as in the "Saxon Switzerland," is to be abandoned "since German mountains and valleys need no foreign descriptions."

All names containing "Switzerland," are to be replaced by purely German names such as "Saxon Rocky Range."

The official organ Tourist Traffic writes:

"These comparisons must stop immediately. We owe this much to our self-respect."

Non-German place names are being Germanised.

But instructions have been issued that such "Germanisation" should not be reported in the National German Press.

(Eo. We are pleased too.)

SENTENCES IN SWISS TRIAL.

M. Todtli and M. Isler were found guilty of spying upon political refugees. M. Todtli, who did not appear, was condemned to three months' imprisonment and ordered to defray nine-tenths of the costs. M. Isler was acquitted but ordered to pay the remaining tenth of the costs.

A Berne lawyer, M. Lifschitz, presented voluminous documents on the Swiss Fascist organisation which revealed its direct relation with Germany. It was also shown that the headquarters of the Russian fascists are at Harbin, Manchuria, and that the anti-Semitic centre at Erfurt had paid agents in Paris.

Counsel for the defence argued that the Russian Fascists were not in close contact with the German Secret Service, and consequently

Isler could not be an accomplice of Todtli. Isler's counsel asked for his acquittal on the ground that he had acted in good faith.

The President of the Tribunal affirmed that the political character of the "world service" of Erfurt was well established and that Todtli was a German agent and that he had furnished information prejudicial to persons living in Switzerland to a foreign political organisation and to the German authorities.

SWISS PRESIDENT AT THE "NÄFELSER JUBILAEUMSFABRT."

In his oration at the "Näfelsler Jubiläumsfahrt," Dr. J. Baumann, President of the Swiss Confederation, brought the greetings of the Swiss Government to the people of the canton of Glarus. He referred to the events of 550 years ago, and said: The battle of Näfels has not only sealed the destiny of the canton of Glarus, but it had its reaction on the newly founded Confederation, through the heroic deeds of our forefathers the enmity of Austria towards our country was forever broken."

During his address M. Baumann referred to the international situation, repeating what he had recently said in the Swiss Chamber, that Switzerland will defend its independence to the last drop of blood.

DUTCH VISITORS AT THE FEDERAL PALAIS.

A large number of Dutch visitors to the Basle Fair, including representatives of the town of Rotterdam, and the Utrecht Fair, accepted an invitation from the Municipal authorities to visit the Capital of the Confederation.

After having been shown around the town, the visitors were received by M. Baumann, President of the Swiss Confederation, who was accompanied by Federal Councillor Obrecht, at the Federal Palais.

M. Baumann, in his address, referred to the long and friendly relations which had always existed between the two countries, expressing the wish that commercial relations might in the future become still closer. The President finished his oration with best wishes for the Queen and the Dutch people.

M. Graadt van Roggen, General Manager of the Utrecht Fair replied on behalf of the visitors, expressing his satisfaction of what they had seen during their stay; he said, "May the friendly relations between the two countries always remain firm and solid."

LOCAL.

NEUCHÂTEL.

The 8th "Comptoir" was opened at Neuchâtel, and will last for ten days, nearly 200 exhibitors are represented.

FRIBOURG.

The death is reported from Siders, of M. Edouard Glasson, who played an important part in the economic and artistic sphere of the canton of Fribourg, at the age of 61.

ACADEMY CINEMA.

Oxford Street.

Le Roi S'amuse.

It is not my custom to encourage my readers to go to films unless I am sure they will appreciate them and so I did not write an account of "Une double crime sur la Ligne Maginot" as I felt that this film would appeal only to a limited number, but I do advise you all to go to see "Le Roi s'amuse."

It is one of the funniest films I have seen — I am going myself to see it again and am sure I shall enjoy it just as much as the first time.

The film is adopted from the play by de Flers and Caillaret. I saw the play many years ago and enjoyed it, but I think I like the film even better. It has been brought up to date and has lost none of its savour and I think has even gained by the transformation.

The story deals with the adventures of a King of a small and mythical state during a visit to Paris to sign a commercial treaty between his country and the Republic. The story is more than funny; it is a delightful satire. I am not going to spoil your fun by giving any details but when I tell you that the principal parts are taken by Victor Francen, Raimu, Popesco and Gaby Morlay, you may be sure that I am not exaggerating.

Go and see "Le Roi s'amuse" and if you do not think it witty, write to the Swiss Observer and abuse as much as you like.