

Personal

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FEEDING A BATTALION.

I have just been reading a very learned and voluminous book by Professor Lehmann on the Castle of Wildegg, near Brugg, and the history of the Effinger family. Our readers may know that the castle has lately become the property of the Swiss nation, the last descendant of the Effinger family having left it to the Confederation, with land and furniture and all. The building has been carefully restored, and now forms a kind of extension of the Landesmuseum at Zurich, of which Professor Lehmann is director. Merely by the way he mentions the late Colonel Rivett-Carnac, who from 1887 to 1895 had his abode at the castle. He had distinguished himself in the Indian service. On his return he was made an Aide-de-Camp to Queen Victoria, and I believe he held this rank until his death (in 1923). From 1895 onwards he lived at the Château de Rougemont in the Pays d'en Haut, but failing health forced him to stay often at Montreux or Lausanne. In his book "Many Memories" (Blackwood & Sons, 1910) he tells us many an amusing experience of his among the Swiss, with whom he was thoroughly at home. Even during the late war he wrote some articles to *The Times* in defence of our country, for which the London Swiss have cause to honour his memory. He was a real "sport" in the true sense of the word, and will long be remembered as the man who organised the rifle shooting competitions between Swiss and English teams, which have so long been a regular institution of the Vaudois and Bernese winter resorts. The following story is a good illustration of the style of the book and of the Colonel's character. The chapter is entitled

A SWISS LUNCHEON PARTY.*

"We had just returned from home and were spending the autumn at beautiful Schloss Wildegg in glorious weather. There were some half-a-dozen friends staying with us, including my good old kinsman and former chief, Sir Richard Temple, and Willy Drummond, late of the Rifle Brigade, a connection of my wife's, and a regular visitor to the Schloss which he dearly loved. The annual Swiss manoeuvres had just been held in the neighbourhood, and the troops were just returning home after a very successful outing. Riding home one morning, I came on the 5th Rifle Battalion marching into the village at the foot of the castle hill, and I recognised the commander, Count von E., a cadet of one of the most distinguished of the historical Swiss families, whom I had recently met at the manoeuvres. When the battalion had taken quarters, I had a talk with the commandant, and he reminded me that several of his family, in the past, had been connected with the Schloss in which my wife and I were living. I told him of several von E. pictures in one of the rooms, and asked him whether he and some of his officers could not come up and lunch with us and see the place, which had considerable historical interest for all good Swiss. To this he readily assented, and said he would be up as soon as he had seen his men comfortably settled down. I cantered home and told my wife we must prepare for some additional guests at lunch, and she, reminding me we were already a party of eight in the house, inquired how many of the officers we might expect to see. I, thinking of the English rule, which would mean such an invitation being accepted by the colonel and perhaps a couple of his officers, answered that we might expect, perhaps, an addition of three to our luncheon party. And the table was in due course laid with four extra places for the expected guests. We did not wait with the luncheon, as von E. had warned me they might be delayed, but we had hardly got far with the meal, when a loud peal at the big bell of the castle announced the arrival of the guests. I went out into the great hall to meet them, and suddenly tramping up the winding staircase appeared von E. in uniform, with a great clanking of sword and spur. Then, with further clank, came a smart uniformed officer, whom von E. presented as his Major. Heels together, a clank of spurs, a bow and handshake, and the Major passed on to make room for another officer, this time a Captain, who was presented and received with due formality. Then came Captain No. 2, and after him No. 3, and so on with half-a-dozen Captains, who all bowed, shook hands, and filed past, making room for the Lieutenants of the battalion. These were led by the Lieutenants of the first grade, a goodly company of about eight, cheery, smart young men. When all these had been duly presented, came the turn of the Second Lieutenants, who to their superiors of the first class yielded nothing either in good looks or numbers. I had given up counting before the junior had made his bow, and passed on into the great hall, and was busy a-thinking how, in the name of fortune, was this goodly company to be fed. Liquor enough there was, I knew, in the cellars, but how about the larder? I marched the battalion up into the beautiful old drawing-room, overlooking the Aar, and begging them to admire the glorious view from the windows, betook myself to the dining-room, where I was met with a chorus of inquiry of "How many

are there?"—for the spur-clanking melody had reached even to the dining-hall. "Eighteen," I answered as calmly as I could. "Eighteen!" cried in horror my poor wife, "what are we to do with such a company?" All I could say was to beg the house-party to finish off their luncheon as quickly as possible, so as to get the room clear and to give me Willy Drummond, a man of resource, to help me through my difficulties. I took him into the drawing-room and introduced him to the battalion; then I took him into one of the huge window-embrasures and gave him my commands. And these, briefly, were: to take the whole party right through the castle from top to bottom, omitting no room or tower or cranny, and to explain all the beauties and interests in detail, and to keep on doing this until I made my appearance and joined them with a look of relief on my countenance. Then I put it to von E. that, his family having in old days been so intimately connected with the castle and its proprietors, he would doubtless like to go round with Drummond, who knew the place thoroughly and was a most excellent cicerone. The Commandant's heels again came together, and he expressed the most ardent desire to explore the castle, a wish which all the company echoed. Then came old Temple and a couple of other men in the house and joined the assembly, and they all filed off up the staircase of the great tower, whilst I rushed to the kitchen, and joining my wife, explored the larder. We were a bigish party in the house, so that luckily there were joints and meats of sorts in reserve, and a big ham, and the well-known galantines from the Lenzbourg-fabrique hard by. Then, thank goodness, the Swiss takes soup at luncheon, and what cannot be done in the way of wonders with the help of Maggi tablets and plenty of hot water? No anxiety at all, then, regarding the soup. This would be prefaced by caviare, which would add dignity to the banquet. So far, so good. Bread, what with the servants' supply, ample. Hot meats sufficient, and the ham and galantines in reserve. The table was added to at both ends, and bread and fruit and flowers and cakes crowded on to it. The soup was to be served so hot that we should have time to marshal the succeeding course. Then there were giant "Kartoffel Salads," and the ladies of the house-party all helped to decorate the table and arrange flowers and fruits to fill up gaps on the much-elongated board. Bottles galore and ice were brought up from the cellars, and in less than half an hour the position no longer looked desperate. I then put myself on the trace of my valuable and astute friend, Willy Drummond and his following, and after some hunting through the many mazes of the old castle I eventually ran him to earth in the very topmost story of the Hapsburg tower. There, in loyalty to my instructions, he had halted the party and was delivering a lecture on the architectural merits of this portion of the building, and the evidences of its having originally been a Roman watch-tower. He saw from the relieved look in my eye that the position was no longer acute. The whole party was very appreciative of the beauties of the old place and the merits of their cicerone. I submitted, however, that they had all promised to take lunch with me, and that, whatever interests the old castle might have, the duties of hospitality must be fulfilled, and that the Châtelaine awaited them below in the hope that they would be pleased to take of such refreshment as the place could offer. Thereupon a gratifying smile pervaded the countenances of nearly a score of hungry-looking warriors, and with much clattering and satisfaction they hurried down the winding staircase of the old tower and made for the dining-room. And it is on record that that scratch lunch was most entirely appreciated, and that its fame as a "Prelate's Speise" was long talked of among the regiments of the Swiss army to the credit of their British hosts, male and female, who assisted on that occasion. And I also learnt the custom of the Swiss army as differing from ours, and which had given us the pleasure of seeing and entertaining so goodly a company of smart officers, instead of the colonel and adjutant, and perhaps one other, as in the case of an invitation to a British corps. In Switzerland, when such an invitation is accepted by a regiment, it is obligatory on every officer who can possibly do so to attend. Any failure is regarded as a slight on the host. In my case it was known that I held the rank of Colonel, and had the honour of being an Aide-de-Camp to Her Majesty the Queen. It was considered imperatively necessary for every single officer, except the one left in charge of the camp, to attend. And the entertainment, which at first gave some anxiety to the Châtelaine, ended in being in every respect most successful, and secured to us in the hereafter several pleasant friends in various parts of Switzerland."

A. LATT.

PERSONAL.

Dr. Paul Lang, who is well remembered in the Colony for his activities as Secretary of the London Group of the N.S.H., has accepted an appointment as Professor of History, German and English at the Lyceum Alpinum in Zuzo (Grisons).

UNSERE ARMEE.

Anlässlich der Einweihung des Basler Wehrmannsdenkmals letzten Sonntag nachmittag hielt Oberst Carl Frey eine patriotische Ansprache, die wir im nachfolgenden wiedergeben:—

Wenn unser Vaterland im August 1914 vom Weltkrieg verschont geblieben ist, so danken wir dies in erster Linie unserer absolut neutralen Staatsmaxime und unseren republikanisch-demokratischen Einrichtungen. Das Schweizervolk hat sich seine militärischen Satzungen selbst gegeben. Es hat nach 1798, dem Jahr der grössten Demütigung, sich langsam wieder aufgerichtet. Es hat im Verlauf des letzten Jahrhunderts an die zehn Mal die Grenze besetzt, im festen Willen, auch dem Stärkeren keinen Einlass mehr zu gewähren. Das haben sich die Grossstaaten gemerkt. Ich erinnere nur an den Louis Napoleon-Handel und an die Neuenburger Affäre.

Das Schweizervolk hat aber auch im Verlaufe jener 100 Jahre an der Vereinheitlichung seiner Armee gearbeitet. Es ist 1874 dem Rufe nach einem Recht und nach einer Armee gefolgt. Im Jahre 1907 hat es seine militärischen Lasten selbst erhöht durch die Annahme der neuen Militärorganisation. Damit hat es die Prüfung seiner politischen Reife abgelegt. Die neue Militärorganisation aber hat allein im August 1914 eine reibungslose und prompte Kriegsmobilmachung ermöglicht, die den Respekt der Kriegführenden vor unserer absolut neutralen Haltung ausgelöst hat, auch für die folgenden Kriegsjahre.

Gewiss, die Demokratie arbeitet schwer, aber was sie einmal geschaffen, das sitzt dafür fest. Wir gehören wohl zu den wenigen Ländern, die dem Soldaten die Waffe ruhig mit nach Hause geben können. Er wird sie nicht gegen sein eigenes Vaterland erheben, dessen Einrichtungen er mit dem Stimmzettel in der Hand jederzeit beeinflussen kann.

Der Dank dafür, dass wir vom Weltkriege verschont geblieben sind, gebührt also erst in zweiter Linie der Armee selbst und vor allem ihrem Ansehen, das sie schon Jahre vor dem Kriege genossen hat. Oder glaubt jemand im Ernste, dass mit der Stärke und Güte unserer Armee auf den Kriegsbeginn hin in den fremden Generalstäben nicht gerechnet worden sei? Ich erinnere bloss an den Besuch unserer Manöver vor dem Kriege durch hohe und höchste fremde Offiziere in Uniform und in Zivil.

Und wie war es während des Krieges? Als die Entente anfangs 1917 einen Durchmarsch der Deutschen durch die Schweiz in den Rücken der Italiener befürchtete, da ist unsere Heeresleitung dieser, zwar unbegründeten, Furcht sofort durch ein verstärktes Aufgebot und eine grosse Armeeebung entgegengetreten. Wie aber, wenn wir das nicht gekonnt hätten? Dann hätte eben die Entente die Sache selbst beorgen müssen und zwar durch einen Einmarsch in die Schweiz. Genau gleich wie 1871. Hätte Bourbaki damals mit Gewalt sich einen Ausweg in die Schweiz bahnen können — und das war sein zweifelter Plan — so hätten wir den Krieg im eigenen Lande gehabt.

Man komme uns also nicht mit Belgien und sage, die Schweizer Armee wäre gegebenenfalls genau gleich überrannt worden. Abgesehen davon, dass unsere Armee stärker war und unser Gebirge einen hartnäckigen Verteidigungskampf besonders gestattet, so frage ich: War denn etwa die belgische Armee wirklich zu nichts da? Hat sie sich nicht geschickt unter dem Schutz der starken Festung Antwerpen auf den linken Flügel der Entente zurückgezogen? Und hat sie nicht in einer dreitägigen schweren Schlacht den Durchbruch der Deutschen nach Calais verhindert? Heute steht Belgien geachtet vor der ganzen Welt da. Hätte es aber den Durchmarsch der Deutschen einfach geduldet, so wären die Truppen der beiden Gegner auf ihm hergetreten. Und heute wäre es wohl ein verachteter Vasallenstaat.

Gerade der Weltkrieg also lehrt, dass die Patrioten Recht hatten, immer wieder, die sagten: Ein Volk, das nicht die innere Kraft besitzt, seine Unabhängigkeit zu verteidigen, verdient nichts besseres als den Untergang.

Das sollte man nicht betonen müssen in einem Lande, wo die Freiheit in jahrhundertlangen Kämpfen gegen die Uebermacht erstritten werden musste. Und ein Rückblick auf unsere Geschichte sollte den Gegnern der Landesverteidigung die Schamröte ins Gesicht treiben. Denn ohne die Tapferkeit unserer Vorfahren erfreuten wir uns doch wohl heute nicht dieser Unabhängigkeit, dieser Demokratie, dieser sozialen Einrichtungen.

Gewiss, das Obligatorium des Schiedsgerichtsverfahrens vermag die Kriege zu vermindern. Die Kabinettskriege müssen aufhören. Aber es wird Kriege geben, so lange es Menschen gibt. Oder muss es nicht zu denken geben, dass es einzig die Grossstaaten sind, die das Obligatorium des Schiedsgerichtsverfahrens nicht unterzeichnen wollten?

So wollen wir also hoffen, dass die künftigen Generationen auch die Lehren des Weltkrieges beherzigen mögen. Und im besonderen wollen wir hoffen, dass die Opfer, die unsere braven Soldaten gebracht haben, auch in Zukunft nicht umsonst mögen gewesen sein. Mancher ist in den Augusttagen 1914 übers weite Meer zur Fahne

* Reprinted by courtesy of the publishers, Messrs. Wm. Blackwood & Sons, from Col. Rivett-Carnac's "Many Memories" (price 10/6).