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GENEVA AND THE ENGLISH PRESS.

We have before us a large bundle of Press cuttings from English papers relating to the recent troubles at Geneva, most of the comments, we are sorry to say, are not only unfair but highly exaggerated, some are bordering almost on stupidity.

As an example of how this regrettable incident, has been dished up to the English Public, we publish below an article, which appeared in the "Economist" on November 19th, under the heading: *Butchery at Geneva.*—

We are informed that the Swiss Minister has received innumerable letters from Switzerland, protesting against the way in which the Geneva troubles have been reported and commented upon in the English Press. Letters from Switzerland, addressed directly to the Editors of several London and Provincial papers have been published, some of which certainly achieved exactly the opposite of what was intended, and it would have been far better, if these, no doubt well intended communications would have been suppressed.

It might interest our readers to learn that the Swiss Minister has written both to the *Times* and to the *Daily Express*, the former published the letter immediately *in extenso*, whilst the latter, after the lapse of three days, inserted an *extract* from the afore mentioned document, which by leaving out certain relevant facts, was unsatisfactory. We therefore published the communication of the Swiss Minister to the Editor of the *Daily Express* in full.

The *démarches* of our Minister in London, with regard to his letters to the above mentioned papers, have received universal approval at home, both by the public and the press.

Butchery at Geneva.

The "Economist," Nov. 19th.

If the Conseil d'Etat at Geneva has laid the seeds of a dangerous revolutionary movement in Switzerland, it will only have itself to blame; for the horrible events which occurred on Wednesday of last week seem fairly attributable to an inexcusable combination of hysterical alarm and military incapacity. Let us grant that the course of the municipal election had seen tempers running high, and that Switzerland is no more free than any other country from a sprinkling of subversive Left Wing elements; let us grant that the authorities, having sanctioned a Fascist meeting in a public hall, were under an obligation to protect the meeting from Socialist aggression, and that the demonstration, which was organised outside the hall, was at once ill-considered and provocative. The fact remains that all the evidence from unbiased witnesses is to the effect that the crowd which assembled — including, as always on such occasions, a large proportion of merely curious spectators — was in no sense dangerous; was armed with nothing more deadly than bags of pepper; and was never beyond the control of firm shepherding by the police. To use a company of raw recruits for police purposes in the circumstances was technically rash; and to adopt tactics whereby these troops in single file mingled with, and were swallowed up by, the crowd was a blunder for which a raw subaltern could not hope to be forgiven. To follow up this incompetence by machine-gun fire, turned on the crowd with no more warning than a bugle call, was an act of indefensible butchery. The sequel has been an attempt to whitewash those responsible for the massacre by such wild talk of Communist plots, and by the arrest of the Socialist leader, M. Nicole, on a charge of conspiring to overthrow the State. These patent exaggerations of the "Red Menace" do little to palliate the bungling brutality of the authorities; nor do we imagine that foreign investors with liquid funds lodged in Switzerland will be favourably impressed by the somewhat ridiculous mobilisation of regiments, the constant parading of armed forces through the streets of Geneva, or the hysterical attitude which led to placing the Assembly Hall of the Disarmament Conference in such a state of defence that it was deemed necessary to keep a machine-gun trained on the foreign correspondents' Press room.

To the Editor of the "Daily Express,"
8, Shoe Lane, E.C.4.

Sir,
The "Daily Express," without a doubt, fully merits the general praise of its readers for having promptly exposed the "Foolish canard" of an American paper, which had spread, in words and pictures, sensational reports about storming mobs in London. Exactly the same unpleasant treatment — in general aspect, if not in detail — has recently befallen Geneva, in a certain section of the American Press. I am not even sure that, in their descriptions and comments upon the recent disturbances in London and Geneva, England was "let off" somewhat lighter than Switzerland. It is quite certain that in both instances the exagger-

ations, distortions and misrepresentations indulged in by the Press correspondents call for some sort of protest.

Unfortunately the American Press is not the only one which, during these last weeks, seemed to make a point of publishing disquietening and alarming reports on Switzerland. The tendency can be traced, curiously enough, in articles written by representatives of some of the London and Manchester daily newspapers, both in regard to the Geneva riots and in reports upon the general economic situation in Switzerland.

This, I feel to be acting in keeping with the spirit of your leader "A foolish canard" (November 21st), when I say that the exaggerations and certain mis-statements of your Lausanne Correspondent in his article "SWITZERLAND TOO RICH — CHOKING TRADE WITH GOLD" (November 16th), should not be left unrectified.

I feel bound to explain that the very difficult situation in which my country finds itself to-day is due to the world crisis, to the restraints on international trade and travel, to the heavy costs of production in Switzerland, and not to our adherence to the gold standard. The Swiss Federal Council and their financial advisers are fully satisfied that gold is the best monetary policy for Switzerland, which point of view, by the way, finds full support in the Majority Report (dated June 1932) of the Financial Committee of the League of Nations.

With regard to the hotel industry, there are, I am happy to say, distinct signs of a revival in the tourist traffic, and in the meantime the assistance granted to the hotels by the Government will help them to weather the storm.

It is only natural that there should be some dissatisfaction in Switzerland at the present state of affairs, but to say that "dissatisfaction" is wide-spread would be mere fantasy. The incidents at Geneva and Lausanne have no connection whatever with the economic crisis, but are the work of Communist agitators (mostly of alien origin), whose activities have too long been tolerated by the Authorities. Assistance to the unemployed is organised by the Cantonal and Local Authorities, and no unemployed Swiss citizen need suffer the pangs of hunger.

This is not the first crisis in the history of my country and it may not be the last, but the Swiss are a patriotic and level-headed race who can be relied upon to overcome their difficulties, no matter what sacrifices may be necessary to that end.

I am, Sir,
Yours truly,
C. R. Paravicini.

Swiss Legation,
November 22nd, 1932.

FIFTY YEARS IN HARNESS.



E. SPLEISS.

We have the great pleasure to inform our readers that Mr. E. Spleiss, the Founder of the reputed firm, "The West End Fancy Bakery Co.," has recently retired, after having spent half a century in the confectionery trade.

M. Spleiss was born in 1868 at Schaffhausen; when he reached the age of 15 he said valet to his parental home, in order to serve his apprenticeship as a Pastrycook at Neuchâtel. Having become a fullblown Pastrycook, the "Wanderlust" took hold of the young and energetic man; he wished to see the world; we see him first looking around his own country; he occupied positions at Geneva, Montreux, Lausanne, Zurich and Engelberg. Then the wish to go further afield took him to the sunny south, to Nice and later on to Cannes, Paris and London were next on the programme. In 1893 he decided to invest his savings into a trip to Chicago, where at that time the famous Exhibition was held; those were happy days he spent there, but the moment arrived when the funds began to dwindle, and the young globe trotter had to look out for work. He was not too particular what job he had to accept, as long as it proved to be an honest living. Four years were spent in the States during which time he stayed at Chicago, Philadelphia and New York. Then one day he

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decided to return to London; hitherto he made it a point not to stay very long either in one town nor in one position, as a matter of fact up to that moment he had been in altogether 34 different employments, many of his appointments were with firms which enjoy a world-wide reputation in the confectionery trade. Such splendid experience stood him in good stead, and the door of many a reputed London house was open to him on his return; but he decided to become his own master. In 1903 the young man founded a business under the name of "The West End Fancy Bakery Co.," he had practically no capital at his disposal, but his unbounding energy and will to succeed, his tenacity, no doubt an inheritance from his native land, and his sound business policy to supply but the best, brought soon the well-deserved reward. From a very small beginning, in a small corner shop in Dawes Road, Fulham with one bakehouse boy, it became a large factory with eight branches and tea-rooms in Kensington and Putney, employing over sixty people. There is not one large party given in the Kensington district, without the West End Fancy Bakery Co., supplying some of the delicious cakes and pastries.

When Mr. Speiss started in that insignificant little shop at Dawes Road, he would have hardly thought, that a few years later, he would have amongst his numerous customers half of the nobility of Kensington, and it may interest our readers to know, that the late Mr. Bonar Law was amongst his clientèle for years, and when he became Prime Minister, the delivery van of this now famous firm could often have been seen arriving at 10 Downing Street, and invariably one of the famous Dundee Cakes was included in the delivery, Mr. Bonar Law having been especially fond of this delicacy.

In January 1927, Mr. Speiss took his son-in-law, Mr. W. Bachmann into partnership, as the ever increasing business warranted additional help. M. Bachmann, who hails from Basle, has been in this country for over ten years, and he has become a valuable collaborator, so much so that Mr. Speiss could leave the management entirely in his hands, and judging from the business-like manner in which this Establishment is carried on, we are convinced that a new era, not less successful than the former one, has dawned for this ever growing business undertaking.

M. Speiss spent 43 years of his life in London, having to work hard, often until midnight, he had but little time to mix much in the Colony, he married an English Lady, who was his faithful and untiring collaborator, and no doubt part of his success as a keen business man is also due to her, she was in the real sense of the word an ideal helpmate; some 30 years ago Mr. Speiss became a British subject, but at heart he remained a true and faithful Swiss. His holidays were spent in Switzerland, there he went for rest and to gather fresh energy and new inspirations to carry on his responsible task. We have every reason to be proud to claim him still as one of us, he has brought new lustre to the good name our countrymen enjoy in this hospitable land, and he is a worthy member of many famous Swiss who have made their way, fighting often against heavy odds. When the history is being written of the Swiss, who have attained distinction away from their native land, the name of E. Speiss will be honourably mentioned. He has well deserved his rest, and we tender to him and his wife our heartiest wishes, that the eventide of his life may be blessed and that he may remain amongst us for many more years to come.

ST.

SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

Swiss House, 34, Fitzroy Square, London, W.1.

It is again in our minds to tell our friends and benefactors some of the experiences we encounter in the course of our daily contact with the Poor of our Colony. Advisedly do we write Poor with a capital P, because a certain dignity, even a certain nobility (of mind) must lie in him who humbly asks and gratefully receives the assistance of his wealthy brother. Conscious of his lesser gifts and lesser resistance to adversity, he has to suppress his pride and walk in humility. Can we appraise his mental suffering?

Much of the distress is told us on Monday evenings at our regular interviews at Swiss House, but the worst cases often only come to our knowledge by personal visits to the homes. We may follow up a rumour and have to search for a queer address; there we may come across a family living in such distressful conditions that immediate help is imperative. How can we refuse help?

Let us describe one case! Here is a family with ten children, known to us for many months. Our visits to them are regular, but so far, the visitor has never been beyond the kitchen. This time he is received in another room, a bedroom. There is no living room in the flat, every room must needs be a bedroom. There are beds and divans everywhere, yet these ten children have to sleep in such cramped conditions that they cannot

You look at the things that are - and say Why?
I look at the things that never were - and say Why Not? (Bernard Shaw)

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find their proper rest and sleep. In the morning they rise almost as tired as the night before, so that their health and development suffers. The parents are well aware of the danger of these conditions, but have not found the courage to speak of them before. They have at least a shelter and some beds, they say.

Up to some months ago the father was engaged on night work, but an accident laid him low for which he received insufficient compensation. He lost his job and has not found one since; not because he did not hunt and search for one, but because of the dreadful conditions of the labour market. Inevitably, with the advent of winter, illness finds its way into such a home, and the children are the first to fall its victims. The eldest daughter is also out of work, while the earnings of the younger ones are totally insufficient for the most simple necessities of the family. The receipt of the dole is a constant humiliation to the parents, when the father asks for nothing more than work.

Now, dear Reader, imagine yourself to be the father or mother of this family! Such an effort cannot be beyond the reach of your imagination! Imagine how it feels to see your children ill-fed, ill-clothed, cramped and restless at night. Try to imagine the depression and exhaustion which comes from weeks of shattered hopes; the discontent and ill humour, the gradual loss of fortitude and the fear of final surrender to adverse conditions and squalid surroundings. There may be neighbours jeering at you, despising you for your effort to hold your family together in decency, trying to break your heart in every possible way. Try and imagine the dread of accusation in the eyes of your own children: — Why is it that other children's parents are so well off and we are so poor?

Even as a dream this possibility would make you feel cold all over, but as a reality! — Being spared such misfortune, what is there we all can do to alleviate it where it does exist? HELP, AND HELP GENEROUSLY, those who administer our charity in the Colony, and through them the family whose misfortune we have depicted. This instinct of Charity which is deep down in all of us puts us all on one level; it unites us, it refines our feelings and appreciation. Our gifts to the Fonds de Secours, whatever their size or form, are always the expression of that which is best in our nature; their true value is far beyond their monetary value. He who sent a bed in response to an advertisement in the Swiss Observer for this very family may rest well assured that the consequences of his gift: — increased vigour, renewed health, longer life of the receiver, bear no relation whatsoever to the immediate value of it. They are incomparably greater.

It is, then, clearly our duty to share with our countrymen in want and misery the good things we possess to the best of our ability. We who possess "house-pride" because our well ordered houses satisfy our sense of the artistic should remember that it exists also in those who have never quite got so far. But in their case this virtue, being without its reward, is the greater than in us. It is for us who can give to keep it refreshed and alive.

Let us also have a thought for those of our compatriots who are in Sanatoria and Institutions, unable to provide for their own families. Help us to help them! What we can do is to send them regular parcels of books, fruit and other little things; to visit them at times in their hopeless isolation and to keep in touch with their families. Is it so impossible that such a misfortune might not one day fall on ourselves, in these modern days of hurry and nervous exhaustion?

We relate these experiences to you, dear Countryman, because we must have your help. Whether this recital of the sufferings of other Swiss in our midst will shock you or simply touch your finer feelings is really immaterial; what we DO hope it may do is to stir your compassion, to induce you to become our collaborator and to spare us a little of that of which you have much. For what you have already done, and for what you are going to do in this good cause, we offer you our heartfelt thanks and we say

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