

A beautiful book on rare China

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A BEAUTIFUL BOOK ON RARE CHINA

On the occasion of the centenary of Dr. Wander A.G. in Berne it was decided to mark the event in a special way. Most of the firm's friends are aware of the important dates in the history of the famous makers of "Ovaltine", and there is plenty of documentation available for anyone interested. The gift which was decided on is in the form of a contribution towards the publication of an illustrated book on the exquisite Porcelain Collection of the late Dr. Albert Kocher, son and collaborator of the world-famous Prof. Theodor Kocher. This China collection, bequeathed by Dr. Kocher to the History Museum in Berne, is one of the less well-known art treasures of the Swiss capital.

It is a beautifully presented book with the text in German and French. There is an interesting biography of the collector and an instructive description of what porcelain is and how it is worked. This is followed by a historic survey of the development of porcelain in Europe, especially in Germany, and how the world-famous manufacturers were fostered in art mostly by the protection of princely houses.

We then learn something about such illustrious names as Meissen, the porcelain of Vienna and Hoechst, Nymphenburg, Frankenthal and Fulda. The text is followed by excellent photographs, mainly in black and white, of a cross section of the unique collection pieces.

Looking through the beautiful photographs of the China figures of animals and people, of vases and pots, jars and plates, one is struck by the great art involved in the creation of these treasures, most of them of the eighteenth century. The wish to go and see the whole Collection makes itself felt after the first few pages.

One cannot but be grateful to the firm of Dr. Wander for the unusual way of marking their centenary by paying tribute to the worthy and unassuming citizen of Berne who had built up his remarkable collection with quiet perseverance over many years.

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In his report to the meeting of the delegates on the occasion of the Assembly of the Swiss Abroad in Solothurn last August, the President, Mr. E. R. Froelich, declared that the process of decolonisation had plunged a whole continent into ferment. It had created difficulties for many Swiss living abroad, problems which tend to multiply as more and more countries, especially in Africa, developed on an unprecedented scale. Nationalisation, expropriation, requisition, all are reasons for making our compatriots lose their means of earning a living. How fortunate are those of our fellow-countrymen and women who joined the Solidarity Fund in good time, for to them it may mean the chance of a new start. It helps them to solve the problem of having to begin again, often at an age when it is difficult. This is a risk which no other insurance company will cover. And in addition, to those who are fortunate enough not to have to face upheaval and loss of livelihood, the annual premiums are paid back wholly or partly on retirement according to the age at which a member has joined.

Since its inception, about 8,800 compatriots have taken up membership of the Fund, but at present there are only 7,400 members. This decline is due to the exodus of Europeans from Africa. This is also the continent from which most claims have been met. In one year, Frs.455,000.— have been paid out to forty-five members who have lost their means of livelihood in circumstances described in the Fund's constitution. Altogether, 2.2 million francs have already been paid out to well over 200 members. This could not have been done without the guarantee by the Confederation.

The new year is approaching. We take stock of our lives in the old one. We are aware of omissions which we hope to make good in the near future. The Solidarity Fund presents a chance to show our willingness to share with our fellow countrymen in any possible loss due to political unrest. We may be a long way from the world's trouble spots of today, but we have the same interests as our compatriots there who, at any moment, are faced with hardship and loss. So why not show our affinity, all the more as it is in our own interest and at no sacrifice to ourselves. We save — we insure — we help others, all in one.

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