

Helen—"He's a Swiss officer I met at Chateau-d'Oex."

Uncle Ned—"Smart-looking chap. German-Swiss?"

Helen—"No. French-Swiss."

3. (In a tea-room.)

Helen (reflectively)—"I can't place that woman over there with the gray hair—the one sitting alone. There! Now she's getting up. Oh, now I know. She was at Lenk. She's Dutch. Used to be a good deal with two elderly German men there. Some people thought she was a spy."

4. (At a cinema.)—Two ladies are ushered into the seats next us just after the lights are lowered. Pause. Lights go up. Mutual astonishment. New arrivals turn out to be two charming Armenian ladies from Constantinople whom we knew quite well in Lugano.

Berne is so crowded just now, and prices so high, it is difficult to get satisfactory accommodation at average rates. Everything is soaring—except incomes. One elderly American gentleman who has been obliged to economize since the war, told me that he had tramped Berne from one end to the other and "looked at" twenty-seven places before he finally found a room that suited both his taste and his purse. There seem to be people in Berne from every quarter of the globe. It is said to be full of spies and deserters and intriguers. If the lid could be lifted off the city there would doubtless be some startling revelations; and if all the people were suddenly compelled to wear labels stating who and what they were, and why they were here—there would probably be some sensational exposures.

The street life of Berne has taken on quite a different aspect since we were here two years ago. The military element is, of course, very prominent, Berne being the headquarters of the Swiss army, but the appearance of the soldiers has changed. This is due partly to their new uniforms, which are gray-green in color and very smart. In sad contrast to these vigorous sons of the Republic striding along with such a "preparedness" air, one sees also on the streets many of the human wrecks of this terrible war—the wounded internes—hobbling along with bandaged heads. The gray-red uniforms of the French soldiers are the most numerous, but there are also many English and Belgian in khaki. They are all in Berne for special medical treatment.

Another change in the street life is the amusement of the small boys. Two years ago they were all playing soldiers. The fad for drilling and marching seems to have passed. Now they are practicing first-aid to the injured. Perfectly healthy boys suddenly collapse and have to be carried away to temporary hospitals the sidewalk or in doorways. Boy surgeons perform remarkable operations, sometimes cutting off a leg or arm with a wooden club, after which the patient makes a sudden recovery and is able to walk away and be wounded over again.

This year we are stopping at a downtown hotel just opposite the *Bundeshaus* (Government Building). Twice a week a market is held on the *Bundesplatz*, and as our rooms overlook this square we have an excellent view of the market. On a bright, sunny day it is a very lively and interesting scene; but when the skies weep as copiously as they did yesterday, there is nothing to be seen but a wabbling roof of black umbrellas.

Tuesday is the big market day, the day they bring the pigs and chickens and things in. There is considerable wasted energy in the live-stock section on that day, and the air is full of grunts and squeaks, expressive of supreme discontent with existing conditions. I like to go down there and look at the little, white piglets in boxes. Sometimes there are as many as ten in one small box, packed in like sardines, and all in a state of active mutiny and grunting expostulation.

The mushroom corner of the market is also very interesting. Every mushroom sold has to be examined by an expert. If the mushroom is edible the vendor is given a green ticket which is displayed for the benefit of buyers; if the mushrooms are not edible the person to whom they belong is given an illustrated lecture by means of colored cards kept there for that purpose. Most of these mushrooms are gathered in the woods, and the sellers are of all ages from seven to seventy. I saw one bent, old woman come up with a bunch of mushrooms tied up in a bit of cotton. The examiner ran his fingers through them, shook his head, and threw them in the waste heap. The poor, old

dame hobbled off with such a disappointed look on her wrinkled face. I suppose the gathering of those mushrooms had cost her hours of toil—and all for naught.

All around the market there is a fringe of baby carriages and small carts, which come empty and go away full. Sometimes, of course, they come partly full, and go away fuller, as, for instance, one I passed yesterday. Just as I was passing what I supposed was a baby carriage full of cabbages, a human leg was thrust up through the leaves, and, at the same time, wailing sounds of distress arose in agitated crescendo from somewhere underneath. A woman with a proprietary air and a net bag full of apples arrived in breathless

There is also another reason why potatoes are so hard to get; the Swiss Government has set the market price, and in order to get any, one must arise at daybreak and stand in line. Rich and poor have the same chance. It is a case of first come first served. The arrival of a bag of potatoes in the market is an event. It is immediately surrounded by a struggling mob, and a policeman stands guard to see that there is no overcharge.

"And after Christmas," said our hotel manager, when we questioned him on the subject, "we won't be able to get any at all." Sugar, he said, was also scarce, and lump sugar not obtainable. Butter costs 45 cents a pound, and eggs five cents apiece.

I wanted to ask him what the coffee we got was made from but I didn't dare. My private opinion is that it is sawdust and burnt bread.

By eleven o'clock the market is over and the cleaning-up process begins. The first step in the performance is the arrival of a little, withered-up old man, carrying on his bent back a huge tank of water, to which is attached a rubber hose. This hose he wiggles from side to side as he walks, and having apparently, in spite of his humble calling, a love for decorative art, he varies the monotony of his job, and, at the same time gives vent to his artistic sense, by spraying the pavement in fantastic designs, finishing off by putting a wet border of figure eights all around the square.

After the dust has been laid in this way—which must surely be a survival of primitive times—a squad of muscular and energetic women with brooms arrive and in an incredibly short time the debris has vanished.

But this is not the end. The centipede has yet to come. It comes about noon, crawling into the square on its 24 legs—wheels, I mean,—hissing like a dragon, and spouting such volumes of water that in a few minutes the place looks like a veritable lake. It takes six or eight stalwart men to manage the centipede.

After this marine visitation the market place of the morning becomes the aristocratic *Bundesplatz* of the afternoon.

When the Swiss universities opened last month there were a great many internes enrolled in the lists of students. At the University of Geneva there are nearly three hundred. Most of them are French, some of them Belgian, and one is English.



An Onion Vendor in the Berne Market.

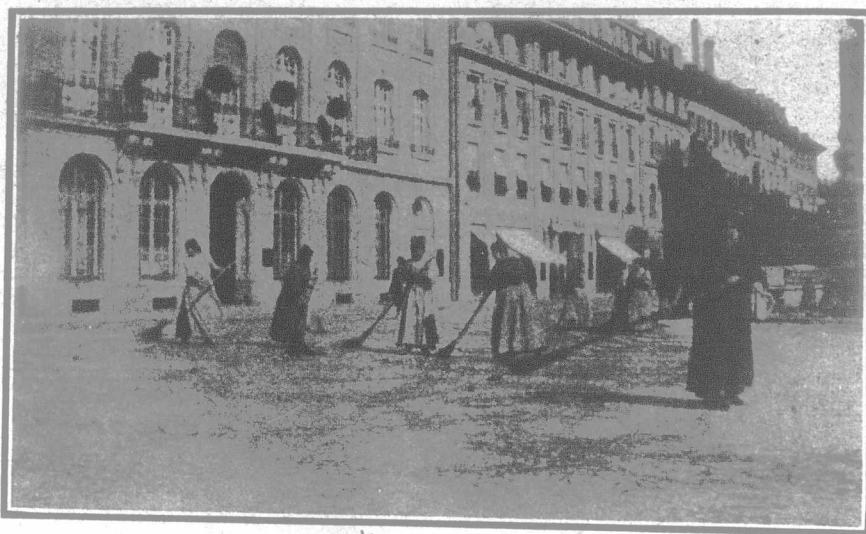
haste, tucked in the leg, cooed soothingly at the vocalist, deposited the apples on top of the cabbages, and wheeled the carriage away.

If I were a vegetable this season, in Switzerland, I would be a potato, and if I were a potato, even a poor, little, shrivelled-up degenerate, I would smile disdainfully at the carrots and the turnips and the beets and the rest of them, and I would look at them scornfully out of my seven or eight black eyes, and I would say

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Women Sweeping the Market-place, Berne, Switzerland.

in biting accents: "I really cannot associate any longer with such an ordinary common-place lot." Yes; this I would do if I were a potato, for the potato this year is the most desired, the most longed-for, and the hardest-to-get vegetable in the Helvetic Republic. This is because, owing to the wet season, the Swiss crop is a failure, and potatoes from the surrounding belligerent countries have been obliged for various reasons to stay at home.

They were given a most enthusiastic welcome by the university authorities and the students. They are allowed to wear their uniforms. In Berne there are a number of English internes working in the various English departments connected with war-prisoners' work. But these men are obliged to wear civilian clothes. This is a Berne law. War prisoners living permanently in Berne cannot wear their uniforms.

Employment agencies have now been

established for the benefit of the internes. There are three centres—one at Lausanne, one at Zurich, and one at Lucerne. Employees who wish to engage an interne must apply to one of these three committees. No interne can be sent to an employer of a nationality which is an enemy, and they are not allowed to be sent to make munitions. There are 2,500 internes looking for work. Employers are advised to treat them with tact and patience and kindness.

## Hope's Quiet Hour.

### A New Year's Thought.

When the Old Year lies sleeping, weary with toil and sin,  
The young New Year comes peeping,  
waiting to be let in,  
His face is bright with gladness, straight from the Hand of God;  
His eyes have seen no sadness; no mire his feet have trod.  
O let us rise, my brethren! to greet the fair New Year,  
Resolved that words of evil from us he shall not hear.  
That he shall see no sorrow, which we can help to cure,  
Nor anything defiled which Christians can keep pure,  
So when this year, too, passes, and our own days grow few,  
We may in hope await Him, Who "maketh all things new."  
M. K. W.

### The King's Business.

I rose up, and did the king's business.  
—Dan. 8:27.  
Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?—S. Luke 2:49.

"The year is closed, the record made, The last deed done, the last word said: The memory alone remains Of all its joys, its griefs, its gains: And now with purpose full and clear I turn to meet another year."

There was astonishment in the question of the Son of Mary. Even at twelve years old His Father's business was the one thing that demanded His full attention as a matter of course. Why should the mother's heart be anxious and depressed over her missing Son? He was doing His Father's business and was therefore safe under the Father's protecting care—though out of her sight. What a comfort to the many troubled mothers to-day! If their absent sons are doing the business of the Great King, they are in safety under His ceaseless care. If their lives are consecrated to His service, even the mysterious change which we call "death" can only be "great promotion" into His own Body-guard.

We are living in a time of tremendous solemnity, and a trivial aim in life seems impossible. Death stands so near to the young and strong that the ordinary carelessness of youth is crowded out. The last two years have made the most thoughtless thoughtful.

What will the next year bring? The usual greeting, "A Happy New Year!" is no longer an easy wish but rather an earnest prayer. Suddenly we have realised that life here is not to go on indefinitely. The trust committed to us, as stewards of our King, may be recalled any day. Have we been faithful stewards? We look back at the sins, failures and wasted time of the past, and acknowledge that we are unprofitable servants. It is not our own but our Master's time and property that we have recklessly squandered. We know how ready He is to forgive those who are really penitent, we know that He has provided a Fountain for sin and for uncleanness; but we also know that words of penitence are false unless they are backed by an earnest purpose of amendment. Will next year show any real progress in holiness?

What was our business—our great object in life—in the past? If it was to secure money, pleasure, admiration or comfort for ourselves, then we cannot say that the work of our King has been our real business in life. The coming year will be eventful—the war settles that—will it mean progress in the real life, or shall we jog along as if this life were all? The soldier's heroic deeds,

which have proved the saying: "the abundance he possesses himself, is awful waste." Plans counts not if only he and we see understood for he shall lose for My sake with rever less heroes two and a faced death "last enemy."

All of us die splendidly not always His servant Our business for ourselves seems vital our duty in is pleased what dutiful future. T amazed us hurriedly and office. were made material. This war h with mank love of Go from the fa ing hero be manhood.

St. Paul soldiers on a race, and with unne don't prese soldier frie asking for necessities, calling the and danger

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The Kin whether we washing clo or sweeping This has o making age have dropp and cheerl when their urgent and Many men great missio "I have no

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