

whom?”. “I had become very interested in observing the behaviour of the master race which had produced so many geniuses... What had gone wrong?”

The “normal” camp population was an international medley of some 60,000 overcrowded, underfed prisoners—Poles, Yugoslavs, British, Americans, Russians, Czechs and other undesirables. But as the tide turns and the victorious thud of the Allied armies is heard in the distance, the seniors of the stalag meet secretly and decide on action. “Our decisions were brief and to the point. We decided to liberate ourselves”, and liberate they did, overnight. And for those of us in international service an instructive *a parte* is added: “Rarely can action have followed an international decision so rapidly”... Soon, with other “liberated” arrivals, the camp population swells up to over 300,000. Food, more than anything else, becomes the most urgent and crucial need. And here again the efficient and humane ICRC delegate De B. is magically at hand producing 500,000 parcels and a convoy of 50 trucks, Heaven knows how, which are rushed to the hungry inmates just in time to build the minimum energy to produce a victory smile on emaciated faces.

The following day Burton climbs into the dark belly of a Liberator transport and finds the green meadows of his free England. “Captivity in Germany”, he concludes in characteristic understatement, “was an unique experience which one could have no other way”. It makes uniquely sobering reading.

S. William Gunn

CES LIEUX OÙ HENRY DUNANT...

Story in stone...

The Henry Dunant Society of Geneva, whose purpose is to encourage and co-ordinate historical studies of the life, thought and activities of Henry Dunant and thereby spread his message, has just published an illustrated volume entitled *Ces lieux où Henry Dunant...*¹. The idea is an original one: to discover or rediscover Henry Dunant, the members of his family and the “founding fathers” of the Red Cross through their family circumstances and their geographical, cultural and social environment. The author, Roger Durand, President of the Henry Dunant Society, therefore invites us to stroll through the streets of Geneva and the surrounding

¹ Roger Durand, Michel Rouèche, *Ces lieux où Henry Dunant...*, Henry Dunant Society, Geneva, 1986, 60 p., 24 illustrations. (French text, English abstracts).

countryside and to discover the places reminiscent of Henry Dunant and the birth of the Red Cross.

With the help of Michel Rouèche, a talented illustrator who has succeeded in reproducing with skill and precision an array of stately mansions, urban residences, villas, public buildings, churches and chapels, Roger Durand points out and discusses knowledgeably the house where Dunant was born, at 12 Rue Verdaine in Geneva, the church in Petit-Saconnex where he was baptized on 8 July 1828, the Colladon family estate where he spent his childhood and the *Collège Calvin* where he attended secondary school. The *Chapelle de l'Oratoire*, rallying point and training ground for Protestants of the *Réveil*, the Genevese revival movement, recalls Dunant's youth and the foundation of the Christian Union of Geneva. The *Maison Diodati* was Dunant's place of work where he probably wrote *A Memory of Solferino*.

We then come to the *Palais de l'Athénée*, where the Red Cross movement was founded in October 1863, the *Villa Plantamour*, housing the headquarters of the Henry Dunant Institute, the Town Hall of Geneva containing the room in which the "Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field" was signed on 22 August 1864, the *Ancien Casino*, birth place of the "Permanent International Committee for the Relief of the Wounded in Time of War", the future ICRC. Contemplation of these edifices steeped in history gives us a measure of the extent to which the five founders of the International Committee moved and acted within the same circles, in close proximity. Henry Dunant and Gustave Moynier met as adolescents at a ball at the "Elysée" in Celigny; Dunant and Louis Appia belonged to the Evangelical Society; Dunant and General Dufour belonged to the Board of Directors of the Mons-Djémila Mills Company; Dunant, Moynier, Dufour and Appia were members of the Geographical Society; Moynier, Dufour and Appia belonged to the Public Welfare Society of Geneva; Moynier and Maunoir both lived in the Rue Neuve-du-Manège; and so on.

By helping us to appreciate the elegant lines of these historic buildings and to rediscover the rich architectural heritage of the birthplace of the Red Cross, this volume produced by the Henry Dunant Society gives keen aesthetic pleasure. It also fulfils a useful purpose in providing a clearer view of the process by which Geneva became the "capital of the Red Cross" and a better understanding of the extent to which the shared environment and common interests of the promoters of the emerging Red Cross served to strengthen their inner convictions.

This illustrated volume has all the charm of a family photo album. It presents Henry Dunant more vividly, makes him seem closer, more familiar. A book to enjoy!

Jacques Meurant