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HOME NEWS

FEDERAL.

RESIGNATION OF A FEDERAL COUNCILLOR?

Persistent rumours are current in Swiss Parliamentary circles of an eventual resignation of Federal Councillor Haeblerlin at the end of this year. The name of Mr. J. Baumann, State Councillor (Auser Rhoden) is freely mentioned as a prospective successor.

INTERNATIONAL TOURIST CONFERENCE.

M. Junod, director of the Swiss Tourist Office, has been designated by the Swiss Government, as a delegate to the International Tourist Conference, which will take place at Budapest on the 28th of this month.

NEW DIRECTORS OF THE SWISS NATIONAL BANK.

M. J. Huber, National Councillor (St. Gall) and M. Dr. R. Loretan, Chief of the Finance Dept. of the canton of Valais, have been nominated directors of the National Bank by the Federal Council.

INTERNATIONAL DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE.

Geneva has been definitely selected by the Council of the League of Nations as the venue for the Disarmament Conference, which is to open in February 1932.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

From Zurich comes the news that Colonel R. Weber, a former army corps commander has died at the age of 82. The deceased enjoyed a great reputation in army circles; he was also a lecturer at the Zurich Technical University.

N.Z.Z.

BERNE.

The General Meeting of the Schweiz. Kaufm. Verein took place at Thun on the 15th and 16th of this month. A great number of delegates, representing over 30,000 members were present, amongst them M. Paschoud and M. Stahelin, delegates from the London section (Swiss Mercantile Society Ltd.).

LUCERNE.

The elections for completing the cantonal government took place last Sunday. M. Frey and M. Ott, both liberals, were elected, the socialist candidate withdrew. The government of the canton consists now of 5 conservatives and two liberals.

N.Z.Z.

BASLE.

M. Walter Zürer, former rector of the secondary school for boys died at Basle at the age of 77.

N.Z.

ST. GALLEN.

State Councillor Geel, has tendered his resignation as a member of Parliament for reasons of health. M. Geel has been a member of the Federal chamber for 35 years.

N.Z.

THURGAU.

The Federal Council has asked the two chambers for a credit of £85,000. For the agrandissement of the military barracks at Frauenfeld.

J.S.

LUGANO.

An explosion took place in the house of M. Gnesa, President of the community of Lugaggia, which caused considerable damage. The cause of this explosion is at present still a mystery, as M. Gnesa assured the authorities that no explosives were kept at his house. The police have opened an investigation.

N.Z.Z.

SWISS SPORTS.

We wish to remind our readers that the Swiss Sports meeting will take place next Saturday week. The programme of events is very attractive and we hope that as many as possible will wend their way to Herne Hill Athletic Grounds on the 30th inst.

CONCERT MISS LINA PUGNI.

The young Swiss pianist, Miss Lina Pugni, who gave a recital at the Wigmore Hall on May 19th, promises to do great credit both to her art and to her country. That she is a finished technician might have been taken for granted, though people have been known to appear before a London audience with an insufficient equipment; what is more important is that she possesses fine musicianship as well as mechanical gifts. That Miss Pugni has a fund of poetic imagination was obvious from her playing of such things as the slow movement of Schumann's G minor Sonata, Debussy's "Clair de lune" and a good many passages in her Chopin group. The poetry does not all come out yet, owing to a certain youthful reticence that can in itself amount to a quality in some types of music, but the hearer is aware of its presence and its possibilities of development.

What is especially attractive in Miss Pugni's playing is a kind of neat fancy that asserts itself in pieces which are all the better for some emotional detachment. The Chopin studies thus had a welcome crispness in her interpretation, and the delicious artificiality of the same composer's "Berceuse" could not have been brought out better. It had tenderness but not a trace of sentimentality, and greater pianists than Miss Pugni, who have been known to overcharge the pretty toying of this piece with feeling, might have learnt something from her reading of it.

What this excellent artist must beware of is the pedal, which she is apt to call too readily to her aid. The fast movements of the Schumann Sonata and the Chopin G minor Ballade were often blurred unnecessarily, for Miss Pugni has certainly no technical uncertainties to cover up. As she has no need to make the pedal her scapegoat, she may devote all her attention to training it to become her helpmate. In the opening group of Scarlatti it was almost her enemy. It is always a tightrope performance to begin a recital with this clear-cut music, which exposes every note and every line mercilessly to the ear. To wrap it up in a pedal haze, an impossible thing to do with the harpsichord for which it was originally written, is like confusing the etcher's art with the painters. But these are small faults to find. All in all Lina Pugni is a capital little artist.

LE VAL DE SAINT-IMIER.

Je suis venu revoir la paisible vallée
Qui, voici soixante ans, abrita mon berceau;
Évoquer, s'il se peut, mon enfance écoulée.
En écoutant le vent et le bruit du ruisseau,
Dans le fond du vallon, j'ai retrouvé l'écluse
Qui, contenant le flot, fait bouillonner la Suze.
J'entends, comme autrefois, sur l'aile de la brise
Passer dans la forêt, l'éternelle chanson,
De l'horloge, là-bas, au clocher de l'église
Lorsque l'heure a vibré, j'ai reconnu le son.
Elle a sonné, jadis, l'aube de mon enfance,
Dont je garde toujours si douce souvenance.
Elle a tinté, plus tard, quand, en un jour de deuil,
Meurtre, le cœur brisé, je suivais un cercueil.
Tout près, j'ai retrouvé, dans le vieux cimetière,
L'endroit où mes aïeux dorment depuis longtemps.
Mais il ne reste plus, sur la dalle de pierre,
Que des noms effacés et rongés par le temps.
Longtemps, j'ai voyagé. J'ai connu l'Italie;
J'ai vogué sur les flots du beau Danube bleu;
Puis, j'ai du spleen anglais, su la mélancolie.
J'ai, des monts du Tyrol, gravi les pics neigeux.
Sous un ciel plus clément, j'ai vu la douce France,
Les plaines de l'Ombrie, les palais de Florence.
Mais tout ce que j'ai vu, jamais n'effacera
Mes souvenirs d'enfant, mon amour du Jura.
J'aime ses frais vallons, ses riantes campagnes,
Ses rochers escarpés couronnant les montagnes
Ses pâturages verts où ruminent les vaches
Broutant le fin gazon si propice à la marche.
J'aime ses vieux sapins, ses torrents écumeux,
La clairière où, l'été, a mûri la framboise,
J'aime des habitants le cœur si généreux.
Leur français émaillé de ces mots savoureux
Où s'affirme si bien l'influence gauloise...
Comme il a fui ce temps! Mais le doux souvenir
Du Jura, mon pays, lui n'a jamais passé.
Mon rêve le plus cher était d'y revenir
Et d'y trouver encore des échos du passé.

J. JAQUET LOEW.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KYBURG.

A very difficult task: The Editor asked me the other day to read and then to comment upon a book entitled

"L'AUTRE HORIZON"

DU CAPT. CHARLES GOS.

which deals psychologically with the question of the desertions from the Swiss Army, during the war, to the Foreign Legion, a question which not only occupied quite a lot of time of some of our Army Chiefs during that period, but which can be discussed from a number of quite different points of view and which is extremely difficult to decide on.

Let me state at once that I have enjoyed reading this book very much, that I have been thrilled and fascinated by the extremely appropriate technique employed by the author—most of the story is in dialogue form—and that the questions raised in its passages have left me, at times, bewildered and feeling very, very uneasy and uncertain.

The story does not deal or contain any actual war horrors, the reader's soul is not harassed, as in "All quiet on the Western Front," etc., by the awful and atrocious scenes depicted. In short, the book may safely be left on the family book-shelf, but—and this is a very large BUT!—the effect on the reader's nervous system is anything but soporifique.

For sheer and acutely sculpted beauty of language, the book is one of the select few to which such description justly applies. This beauty is achieved by great artistry, by which I mean that the author manages his effects with the minimum of words, but that minimum is so extraordinarily well chosen that the reader gets the atmosphere at once, imperceptibly perhaps, but lives and pulsates along with the story. Truly, I think, a remarkable achievement. The story grips, holds, fascinates, wakes wishes and longings in your heart but moves on, inexorably to its logical conclusion. A short story, but a great one.

Pierre, captain in the Swiss Army and son of a Colonel Instructor who is also his superior officer, joins the Foreign Legion, because, as his wife puts it:

"parce que Pierre estime que dans cette guerre où les plus grands principes de la morale sont en jeu, ses devoirs d'homme passent avant ses devoirs de citoyen. C'est pour une croisade que Pierre part et voilà pourquoi je puis accepter son départ."

The Colonel, Pierre's father has tried in vain to impress on his son that the soldier's oath must prime any other consideration, that one's simple duty, to serve one's own country, must come before the dream-vision of Pierre "to serve humanity at large." To this, Pierre replies that "un autre horizon m'appelle" only to be told by his father looking out over the Jura-Hills "this one must suffice!"

Pierre deserts, joins the Foreign Legion, and, after severe fighting, which earns him the Cross of the Legion of Honour and three mentions in despatches, is blinded by shell splinters.

He returns, blind.

During his absence he had been court-martialled and condemned to two years prison and to degradation.

A new court-martial now acquits him and reinstates him into his rank as Lieutenant of the Swiss Army.

Back in his home, Pierre hears a Swiss Regiment pass along, is taken to the window by his father—who till then had forgiven him as father but not as a soldier—and there, when the Flag passes, Pierre salutes it and a great awakening takes place in his soul, so that, he too recognises, at last, that "to serve one's country well, is also to serve humanity at large."

The above gives a very short general idea of the story underlying the great and grave discussions in this remarkable book.

These discussions are worth reading, and will, as I have no doubt whatever, leave you unsettled and uneasy.

Soldiers, like Col. of Army-Corps Wildbolz and Col. of Division Sonderegger who have both written prefaces to this book, are agreed that Desertion is always and in any case wrong and their sympathies are with the Col. father of Pierre.

Col. Sonderegger enounces a very interesting theory of his own, "le rythme de l'Histoire" in