

Zurich - Fribourg - Geneva

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ZURICH — FRIBOURG — GENEVA.

Consternation reigned in the Swiss Colony when the first news published in the English Press about the serious riots in Geneva, reached London, in the middle of last week. I have been asked by some of my friends to at once write a vigorous article in the S.O. protesting against the brutal attack of peace loving citizens by the military forces. I was shown some of the cuttings from London and Provincial papers headed: "Crowd Fired on without Warning;" "Massacre at Geneva;" "A City of Peace;" "Peace Haven," etc. After having perused these articles I felt just as indignant as my friends, and I nearly succumbed to their entreaties to write at once a very strong article under the heading: "Armistice tactics at Geneva." I was glad I did not act on my first impulse, and for once I was thankful that I hail from a canton where slowness has become proverbial. My answer to my friends was, that we should first await the arrival of the Swiss papers in order to get a clearer view about the deplorable happenings.

Having perused by now a score of Swiss papers of all shades and opinions, one is able to form a more adequate judgment of what really happened. Unfortunately, the frightful events turn out to be even more shocking than was at first expected, although the real facts are somehow at variance with those stated in the big English Dailies.—

To those who follow the events in Switzerland week by week, these happenings have not really come as a surprise; only last June serious Communistic troubles broke out at Zurich, where an attack on the military barracks was made, and more recently ugly scenes were witnessed at Fribourg involving some soldiers. In all these cases, and Geneva is a glaring example, the police force proved totally inadequate to handle the situation. It was proved time after time that they were outnumbered and ridiculed by a turbulent crowd; in Zurich f.i., the town and the county police were badly at variance, each side blaming the other for their blunders. In viewing the recent events impartially one must condemn the whole Police system; most of the large town administrations are under the direct supervision of Socialist administrations, as for instance, Zurich, Berne, etc. Schaffhausen, f.i., has only recently appointed a Communist at the head of the town administration, this must, and has had a deplorable effect on the spirit of a force which is at the mercy of a public who is often adverse to an orderly execution of its duties. One is apt over here to look at things through purely English eyes, comparisons have at once been made between the handling of unruly elements by the London Police Force; (Hunger Marchers, etc.) forgetting that even proportionally, the force in question is a much larger one than can be commanded in any town in Switzerland. Then again, the training and efficiency is largely superior than at home.

Geneva, f.i., can muster a force of only 200 policemen, a totally inadequate number to grapple with any serious disorders, and the authorities have to rely in cases of emergency on the available military forces. Here again, comparison between a conscript and standing army is ridiculous. London, f.i., can at any time, at short notice, assemble sufficient military forces to quell any attempt to interfere with public order and safety. — I agree with some of my friends that very likely an equal number of London policemen would have been able to master the situation, but this is beside the point, we must deal with relevant facts.

It is, of course, a debatable point whether the Geneva Government was wise in allowing the protest Meeting of the Union Nationale to take place, in view of the exciting state which was prevalent at the time, but once they had decided not to be dictated to by extremists circles they had to shoulder the responsibility of assuring their citizens of adequate protection, and this is the reason why they asked for the drafting of military forces into the town.

It is to be deplored that the Government of Geneva did not previously put a stop to the machinations of National Councillor Nicole, editor of the "Travail;" for months and months this Gentleman, through the columns of his paper openly agitated for a revolution, aided no doubt by the facts of serious mismanagement in the cantonal administration such as the Banque de Genève scandal and many others. I am a fervent adherent of the liberty of the Press but there must be limits: to criticize or disclose misdemeanours in the administration and to openly carry on Bolshevistic propaganda are two entirely different things. Even some prominent members of the Swiss Socialist party, such as Nat. Councillor Graber (Neuchâtel) had to confess that Nicole's game was a dangerous one, and would sooner or later lead to serious troubles. The writing on the wall was overlooked. On the day of the disaster, he published in the "Travail" a manifest headed "Nous ne leur permettrons pas," from that moment he assumed the rôle of a dictator and it became a question of who was master.

It is useless to criticize the authorities for having drafted recruits to insure the safety of the population, these troops were the only available

ones at the moment and it was estimated that the mere presence of an adequate military force would act as a warning to the unruly elements.— Some of the English Papers, amongst them the usually most reliable "Manchester Guardian" reported that the crowds were fired on without the slightest warning, this has been disproved; due warning was given, and the troops in spite of great provocation kept calm, the command to fire was only given after some of the troops were interfered with, their rifles were taken from them, pepper was thrown in their faces with the result that some officers and men had to be taken to hospital. Nicole, who assumed the rôle of ring leader, was heard to shout "Tenez la rue, tenez la bien." The first shots fired came from the crowd as it is now proved.

The loss of life is deeply to be deplored especially as the majority of the victims were spectators and peaceful citizens.

The responsibility, however, rests principally with the agitators, and I hope that the inquiry which has been ordered by the Federal authorities will shed a full light on these unfortunate happenings.

It is to be hoped that the Government of the canton of Geneva will show a firm hand in cleaning its capital from all undesirables, mostly of foreign origin. For years Geneva has been a hot bed of foreign emigrants, who under the cover of hospitality have plotted against the safety of the state; it is also to be hoped that the naturalization laws should be handled more stringently, it is nothing short of a scandal how these laws have been dealt with in the past. The taking out of naturalization papers should be done under the supervision of the Federal Authorities and not left to the individual cantons or communities; it is an absolute farce how easily some undesirable foreign elements have in the past acquired Swiss citizenship.— If our people at home will learn the alas bitter lesson of this tragedy the loss of so many innocent lives will not have been in vain.

In these dark hours through which our kinsmen are passing, we trust a gleam of that light will come, which will end the bitterness which is in so many hearts. To our Geneva Confederates and friends here, and at home I send the message: Be steadfast! we are with you in this hour of sorrow and distress, your anxieties are shared by your fellow countrymen, our hearts go out to you in sympathy and we unite with you in prayers, that God may grant peace to your beloved native town. *ST*

NEWS FROM THE COLONY.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

Il est rappelé aux intéressés que le Banquet Annuel et Bal aura lieu vendredi prochain 25 novembre au May Fair Hôtel, sous la Présidence d'Honneur de notre Ministre, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini.

Le Comité a fait un sérieux effort cette année en vue d'abrégier les discours autant que possible et cette soirée s'annonce des plus agréables. Un menu étudié avec beaucoup de soin, l'orchestre Colombo et, par dessus tout, l'instinct patriotique lui assureront le succès qu'elle mérite.

A vous, chers lecteurs, d'en profiter en vous inscrivant jusqu'au mardi 22 novembre auprès d'un membre du Comité ou de Monsieur P. F. Boelhringer, 23, Leonard Street, London, E.C.2.

SWISS GYMNASTIC SOCIETY.

The Combined Display & Dance which took place on Sunday, November 6th, afternoon, at the Union Helvetia Club and which marked the first appearance in public of the Team, since their return from Switzerland, was a very worthy performance. As a matter of fact, it was unquestionably the best show the Society has ever given, and it is to be congratulated on possessing such a magnificent team. The programme opened with individual work on the Horizontal Bar and some very fine work was shown; the old motto, simple but cleanly executed work, is better than the most difficult movements indifferently done, was the keynote, although this item proved to be the weakest link in the chain. It was followed by an excellent acrobatic turn by Mr. Pieters & his little daughter Maria (12 years old) whose work can only be described as admirable, and worthy of any music hall. Next came individual work on the pommel horse and here we saw one of the topnotchers in the Swiss ranks whose quadruple Stock (not Stoeckli!) was a feast for anyone's eyes. The work on the horse was really first class. The next item showed us the ladies team in corn flower blue Swiss dress in "Kooperschule;" not an item specially chosen for display work, but general everyday work beautifully done; rhythm and positions left nothing to be desired and would have done credit to any Swiss team at home. The second part of the programme opened with the Aarau Free Exercises which were well done to music and clearly showed relaxation and contraction, such as one sees it in Switzerland everywhere

now. The best item was the individual work on the Parallel Bars, where 14 men showed us a really excellent exhibition of Bar work. From the youngsters (17 years and upwards) whose exercises included Eingraetschen, Kippe, Schulterstand und Flanke as exit to the magnificent combinations executed by the Laurellholders with beautiful Kreiskehren, Kreischochwenden und an almost faultless "Hollaender" as exits, one really could not wish for better, and rich applause denoted the appreciation of the audience. The special item of the programme, where pyramids, well conceived and beautifully executed ended the show, were two "Kunstturnerfreibewegungen" which deserve the highest praise and would on a Kunstturntag be taxed with about 9½ to 9¾. One of the men is probably amongst the best dozen specialists for this class of work in Switzerland, and his exercise was magnificent in every way.

It is a pity, however, that the audience was so small; surely Members of the Colony are not as disinterested in Gymnastics as their absence would let anybody believe. Support for such a fine show should have been twice or three times as numerous as it was, and reflects very poorly on the colony. Your reporter only hopes that the Gymnasts will not be discouraged, and continue their good work in spite of this lamentable lack of support on the part of the Swiss in London. Let them make up for it on the next occasion at the end of this month, at 74, Charlotte Street, W.1, when they will have another opportunity of seeing the Gymnasts in action. *XYZ.*

ALFRED HUGGENBERGER.

Wer aus der Schweiz nach England kommt, um seinen Freunden etwas zu bieten, der hat, wenn er in der Metropole gefeiert worden ist, in den seltensten Fällen noch etwas übrig für seine Landsleute in der Provinz.

Der seltene Fall ist aber eingetreten. Unser Dichter Huggenberger hat es sich nicht nehmen lassen, auch nach seinem London Triumph, die kleine Schweizer Gemeinde in Manchester mit seinem Besuche zu beehren und uns in einer vom Swiss Club am 6. November veranstalteten Zusammenkunft aus seinen Werken vorzutragen. Er hat uns einen ausserordentlich genussreichen Abend bereitet, der noch lang in unserer Erinnerung bleiben wird und für den wir ihm herzlich dankbar sind.

In bunter Abwechslung, in Dialekt und Schriftsprache, in Poesie und Prosa, erzählte er uns von seinen Bauern, vom "alten, unverborgnen Geschlecht" und führte uns in die Geheimnisse der Natur ein, wie sie sich nur dem Offenbaren, der "traumverwandt mit Baum und Flur." Es ist schwer zu sagen, wo wir Huggenberger mehr bewundern müssen, in seinen Romanen, in denen er in einfacher, schlichter Weise die ländlichen Helden und ihre Geschicke beschreibt oder in seinen Gedichten, in denen er in vollendeter, geradezu klassischer Form die Tiefe seines zarten Gemütes enthüllt.

Der Bauern-Dichter, für den die heimatliche Scholle allein die unerschöpfliche Fundgrube für sein dichterisches Schaffen ist und der "rätselhaft aus schweisedüngter Erde" eine Inspiration schöpft, verdient mehr als irgend einer seiner zeitgenössischen Kollegen den Titel "Dichter der Auslandschweizer." Wem es nicht möglich ist, wegen Pfundsturzes oder anderer Umstände, die Heimat zu besuchen, dem seien als bester Ersatz Huggenberger's Werke, die für wenig Geld erhältlich sind, empfohlen. Nichts kann ihm näher zur Heimat bringen. *A. Schedler.*

PERSONAL.

We deeply regret to inform our readers of the sudden death on the 11th inst., caused through heart failure, of Mrs. A. Duruz, née Renaud, the wife of Mr. A. Duruz, Manager of the Swiss Federal Railways, London Office. Owing to this sudden collapse from an unsuspected malady, an inquest was unavoidable and the Coroner returned a verdict of death from natural causes. The Funeral Service was held at Bandon Hill Cemetery on November 15th. We express to Mr. Duruz and his son our heartfelt sympathy in their great bereavement.

The friends of M. and Mme. Henri Bingguely of Sunnyside, Monahan Avenue, Purley, will be delighted to hear that following Madame Bingguely's success as a Sculptor, she has been elected a member of the Paris Winter Salon.

For the past two years, Madame Bingguely's sculpture has been accepted and greatly admired at various Exhibitions both in Paris and London.

One of her works, "Portrait de Ninette," a charming bust of the artist's Sister, was given a prominent position in May and June at the Grand Salon in Paris and recognized as a work of outstanding merit.

The Swiss Colony will join us in conveying to Madame Henri Bingguely our warmest congratulations.