

# The peace army

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# Where are you going next Saturday? to the Swiss Sports at Herne Hill, of course!

## THE PEACE ARMY.

SWISS IDEALIST'S WORK FOR THE  
UNEMPLOYED — PICK AND SPADE  
REPLACE THE RIFLE.

By HENRY P. COMPTON.

Pierre Ceresole — there is more than six feet of him — greeted us with a broad smile and a lusty handshake.

We had travelled from Geneva, that city of harassed politicians and earnest idealists, in the hope of finding this most practical of internationalists in his lakeside retreat. For Pierre Ceresole is a man with an ideal.

His father was once President of Switzerland, and his brother is a colonel in the Swiss Army. But these facts give one no idea of the real Pierre Ceresole, for he has kicked over the traces of the upbringing and the tradition into which he was born. And so he comes to be the creator of "Service Civil."

"Service civil" is so named to distinguish it from "Service militaire," the period of compulsory military training which every young man has to undergo in Switzerland and so many other Continental countries.

Pierre Ceresole hopes that one day it will be a legalised alternative to military service. Meanwhile, "The Association for International Civil Service" is an unofficial, voluntary body, which gives help in a spirit of combined brotherly love and citizenship to communities that have fallen by the wayside in the common struggle for existence. It has enrolled volunteers of a dozen different nations and creeds, in the belief that it is at least as good — if not better — to exercise the arts of war.

Perhaps "the arts of peace" is too ambitious an expression to describe the work of Ser-

vice Civil. One's first impression of Pierre Ceresole's athletic figure is that of a man who can wield a pick and a shovel to good purpose. And that is just the kind of work he undertakes, in preference to shouldering a gun. Hewing, carrying, digging, navvying — these are the kind of things in which Pierre and his comrades in Service Civil rejoice.

Nothing very romantic about that, perhaps. But the idea has caught on, not only among distressed peasants, not only among unemployed miners, but among university students as well.

Pierre told us about his schemes over lunch. We had tracked him down to the "progressive" school by the shore of Lake Lemán, where, characteristically, he teaches mathematics according to his own progressive ideas. It was characteristic of the man, too, that two of his pupils, maidens of tender years, should have lunch with us. As Pierre's voice, full of boyish enthusiasm, boomed through the room, they seemed just as interested in Service Civil as we were.

"Most of us in Service Civil," he said, "are pacifists, who believe that war is wrong in all circumstances. But anyone is welcome to join us, whatever his views may be, and we have had many volunteers who did not share our pacifist principles."

"Our 'Peace Army' has undertaken a definite piece of social service every summer for several years past. We have not yet been able to get a law through the Swiss Parliament to make Service Civil a legal alternative to military service, but a few other countries have legislation of this kind. And here the army authorities have supplied us with tents and other equipment for our workers' camps."

One of the most celebrated achievements of Pierre and his comrades was at Safien, an Alpine village. In July, 1932, headquarters of Service Civil received a telegram which read: "Torrent flooding Safien-Platz. Is rapid help possible? Please call No. 9, Commune, Safien, Grisons."

land, and, I venture to say, of the Federal Executive, is admirable; and, happen what may, it will enormously increase the respect which all those feel for the Confederation whose views are not inspired by hatred of Liberal institutions." Meanwhile, England did all that she could in order to prevent the mobilisation in Berlin. On December 24th Clarendon reminded Prussia of the guaranteed inviolability of Swiss territory, and on December 31st of the King's promise, made in the London Protocol of 1852, to renounce the employment of force. On January 2nd he sent to Lord Bloomfield a despatch, the tone of which made Manteuffel's "hair stand straight up on his head."

No one was in greater perplexity than Napoleon III., who really did not wish that matters should come to war, and would gladly have banished the spirits which he had summoned from the deep. He therefore offered his good services again through Barmann to the Federal Executive, and instructed him to make new proposals of whatever kind they might be. The Federal Executive sent an old friend of Napoleon's, Kern of Thurgau, as a special envoy to Paris, which he reached on January 1st, 1857. Kern was instructed to obtain more solid guarantees of the renunciation by Prussia, among them once more the co-operation of England. The new note of January 5th, which Kern concerted with Napoleon, was by no means simply a repetition of the former note; the Imperial Government undertook the solemn obligation to spare no exertions in order, after the release of the captives, to bring about a settlement which should satisfy the desires of Switzerland, and should secure the entire independence of Neuchâtel; at the same time the Emperor declared himself contented with the temporary exile of the accused from Switzerland, and gave the assurance that he would welcome with the most lively pleasure the co-operation of the British Government. The verbal assurances of the Emperor to Kern convinced the Federal Executive that it would attain its object by the release of the captives. The British Ambassador in Paris, Lord Cowley, indeed, simply repeated the earlier declaration

Four hours later six volunteers reached the torrent-devastated village. Soon the working corps numbered over thirty, and included two "sisters." They found large tracts of cultivated land covered with mud and boulders. With pickaxes they uprooted and carried away every trace of rock, and, leaving the mud, they thus made the villager's fields more fertile than they had been before the catastrophe.

The work lasted over three months, and none of the volunteers received any wages. They were fed and housed at the public expense.

In the same way errands of mercy and first-aid have been carried out in villages in Germany and France. Finally, last summer, Pierre Ceresole's organisation co-operated in the construction of a park and a swimming pool in the distressed South Wales town of Brynmawr. The French peasants whom they had helped had some of their fund left over, so they sent it to help the work in South Wales.

We have met with opposition from those who think that we are taking bread out of workmen's mouths," said Pierre; "but we have tried to make it clear that we only want to do work which, but for us, would not be done at all. Already many unemployed have joined us, in order to find a new purpose in life.

"The movement is growing, and this summer there will probably be several kindred undertakings in England."

Certainly, Pierre Ceresole is a practical idealist, if ever there was one. Does he succeed, we wondered, because he has found an outlet in peace for the energy and effort so often aroused only by war?

*Drink delicious "Ovaltine"  
at every meal—for Health!*

## THE HISTORICAL RELATIONS OF ENGLAND AND SWITZERLAND.

(Translation from a Pamphlet which appeared in the *N.Z.Z.* in March, 1919, and published in Oechsli's "History of Switzerland." — Cambridge University Press.

(Continued from Previous Number.)

the complete independence of Neuchâtel. Apart from this mistrust, felt by the Federal Executive, of the conditions contemplated by Prussia, the Federal Council had another ground for its refusal: Switzerland desired, as Stämpfli had said to Gordon, to give no opportunity to Napoleon to assume the title of "Médiateur de la Suisse." She saw in the passing-over of England in this attempt at mediation a danger for her independence.

Napoleon's self-love was wounded. For the second time Switzerland had refused his wishes, expressed in the most formal manner; as a penalty, she must now be terrified by preparations for war. He encouraged Prussia to make a military demonstration, and persuaded the South German Courts to abandon their resistance to the march of Prussian forces through their territories. On December 18th Prussia broke off diplomatic relations with Switzerland; and it was stated that she intended to mobilise on January 2nd. But Switzerland did not allow herself to be intimidated by this threat of war; she regarded it seriously, and prepared herself accordingly. She took all the necessary measures for the defence of the country, placed the whole of her army in readiness for war, under the command of the conqueror of the Sonderbund, Dufour, and threw forward a part of it to the threatened frontier. The warlike spirit of the old Confederation awoke among the people.

Nowhere was that better understood than in England. Clarendon wrote on January 2nd, 1857, to Gordon: "You can assure the President that the interests and honour of Switzerland are close to our heart, and that we will consent to nothing which cannot be well accepted by the Federal Government. The behaviour of Switzer-

of Clarendon, dated November 25th; but Kern telegraphed to Bern that his Legation possessed a note from England, stating that she would unite with the efforts of France, but not mentioning the reservation that she could not guarantee success. The *Bund* newspaper (considered to be the semi-official organ of the Federal Executive) spread the news that the French Emperor was now offering his services in conjunction with England. The committee of the *Nationalrat* for the Neuchâtel question did not ignore the difference between the statements of France and England; but it nevertheless shared with the Federal Executive the conviction that, by releasing the captives, Switzerland would attain its chief object. On January 15th—16th the Federal Parliament accepted its conclusions with a majority which was all but unanimous.

The success of the French intervention caused such confidence in the mind of the King of Prussia that on January 27th he wished to put before Switzerland, at the approaching Conference, certain impertinent demands. Napoleon, too, after he had secured the fulfilment of his own wishes, was in no great hurry to fulfil those of the Swiss. But England kept a tight hold on him, and urged him to execute the promises he had made. On February 3rd the two Western Powers agreed not to admit any conditions laid down by Prussia which were not compatible with the complete independence of Neuchâtel. On February 9th France invited the Powers to the Conference; and on the 12th Clarendon informed the Federal Executive that in the Conference England would support all the requests of Switzerland. She kept her word most honourably. Bismarck wrote from Paris on April 24th that Russia had always upheld the views of Prussia, and that the opposition always came from England, which was supported regularly by Austria. France had sometimes tried to win ground from England, but finally had always subordinated her conduct to the necessity of not compromising her relations with that country. So England, during the Neuchâtel affair, from beginning to end, proved herself the unswerving friend of Switzerland.

THE END.