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HOME NEWS

State Councillor Sigg (Geneva) has attended an unofficial conference in Paris which considered the possibility of apportioning work in the re-building operations of the devastated French regions to unemployed Swiss.

* * *

The Swiss and Swedish Governments have agreed to abolish passport visas between the two countries as from the first of this month, except for subjects of one state seeking employment in the other.

* * *

The Federal Supreme Court of Lausanne has dismissed the action demanding compensation from the Confederation brought by the parents of Albert Zumstag, who, after escaping from a local policeman at Laufenburg, was fatally shot by military frontier guards after repeated calls to halt had been ignored by him.

* * *

1,534 students have matriculated at the Zurich University for the winter term 1921-22.

1,327 are Swiss, 41 Germans, 28 Poles, 21 Russians, 18 Dutch, 13 Austrians, 13 Hungarians, and 12 Rumanians. Of the remaining 61 foreigners, 31 hail from other European states, and 30 from oversea countries. 274 are lady students.

Theology claims 24, Law and Civil Right 405, Medicine 433, Dentistry 119, Veterinary Science 54, and Philosophy 501 disciples.

* * *

The municipal entertainments tax in Berne realised 122,000 francs during the first six months of 1921. Half of this sum was contributed by the four cinemas of the town, which registered 346,600 visitors; the balance by the Municipal Theatre with 45,600, the Kursaal 62,500, the Variety Theatre 48,600, concerts and other entertainments 231,000.

* * *

26,000 francs have been subscribed for the Bider Memorial which will shortly be erected in Berne in commemoration of Switzerland's pioneer airman.

* * *

The rapid spread of the influenza epidemic in Bâle is causing anxiety. During the week of December 25-31 442 cases were registered, five of which terminated fatally.

An Italian dealer residing in Lausanne, who was driving his motor-car at night without lights, ran into a family walking in the road in the same direction as the car was proceeding. The mother and her little daughter whom she was wheeling along in a perambulator were killed, while the father and an elder daughter succeeded in jumping clear of the death-dealing vehicle. The perpetrator of the tragedy was promptly put under arrest.

* * *

Hans Huber, the composer and doyen of Swiss musicians, who died in Locarno at the age of 70, was laid to rest on December 28th in the cemetery of his beloved Vitznau on the shore of the Lake of Lucerne. It was at Vitznau where the master musician created the most famous of his compositions.

The impressive funeral ceremony was attended by a great number of his personal friends and admirers from all over the country, choirs from Vitznau and Lucerne rendering beautiful songs at the graveside.

Concerning the memorial service which was simultaneously held in Bâle in honour of the deceased, the *Journal de Genève* writes:—

"La cérémonie funèbre organisée par Bâle à la mémoire de Hans Huber a été digne du grand compositeur défunt. La foule qui remplissait la cathédrale témoignait par son affluence même combien H. Huber était populaire dans le meilleur sens du mot, comment sa musique a pénétré toutes les couches sociales et combien il s'était attiré de sympathies personnelles pendant les quarante années où, fixé à Bâle, il a été le centre de sa vie musicale.

Nul ne pouvait mieux résumer pour les auditeurs les traits essentiels de la carrière, de la production et de la personne du disparu que M. le prof. K. Nef-Lavater, qui a parlé de lui à la fois en critique savant, en admirateur sincère et en ami personnel.

Après avoir rappelé les débuts du jeune musicien à Soleure, souligné l'influence qu'exerça sur lui l'école de Leipzig, l'orateur a insisté sur sa parenté artistique avec Schumann: comme lui, virtuose du piano, c'est des compositions pour piano qu'il s'élève aux oeuvres de plus large envergure, symphonies oratorios et opéras; comme Schumann encore, il s'inspire des affinités mystérieuses qui relient la musique à la nature et à la poésie. Mais à ce romantisme musical, propre au génie de l'Allemagne du Nord, il unit le goût du méridional pour la sonorité pure. Idéaliste, toujours sincère, dédaignant la réclame et fuyant l'effet, Huber brille par la variété et l'ampleur de ses compositions: nul musicien suisse ne l'égale depuis le XVI^e siècle pour le jaillissement continu de la création, et l'histoire de la musique lui fera sans doute une place plus grande que celle qu'il a occupée de son vivant. Il restera en tous cas un des hauts interprètes de l'âme populaire suisse et de la nature alpestre. Il a exprimé aussi, surtout vers la fin de sa carrière, les émotions religieuses. Et chez lui, l'homme et l'artiste n'ont fait qu'un.

Comment ce virtuose, ce créateur, a cependant consacré la plus grande partie de son temps à l'enseignement dans ce conservatoire de musique qu'il avait fondé, et à la direction de sociétés de musique, c'est ce qu'a dit M. Burckhardt-Socin, au nom des divers cercles musiciens de Bâle.

Les allocutions ont été encadrées par deux oeuvres du maître: la musique funèbre des "Heldenehren," pour chœur

d'hommes (Liedertafel) et orchestre, et le "Sanctus" de la "Symphonie héroïque" pour chœur, solo (Mlle. Adélaïde La Roche), orchestre et orgue (M. Hamm). A travers l'émotion de ses fidèles interprètes, l'esprit de Huber a rempli l'ample vaisseau gothique. Et le plus bel éloge qu'on puisse faire de ces pages détachées, c'est qu'elles n'ont pas été éclipsées par "l'Ave Verum" de Mozart, qui marqua le centre et le point culminant de la cérémonie.

* * *

A bandmaster of a former Bavarian infantry regiment had recently been appointed Director of Music in Herisau (Appenzell), in which town he made the acquaintance of an embroidery manufacturer, who hit on the bright idea that the occasion of the removal of the musician's household furniture from Ulm to Herisau would provide an excellent opportunity for smuggling. Accordingly the manufacturer accompanied the bandmaster to Germany and made purchases on a wholesale scale in Stuttgart and Ulm, which goods were then collected and packed in two furniture removal vans in the hope that all would safely pass the German customs as removal property of the band conductor. But there was a leakage somewhere, and the customs authorities at Friedrichshafen got wind of the manœuvre, promptly arresting the two when they boarded the steamer which was to cross over to the Swiss shore. The two trucks were also stopped and unloaded, and after the property which rightly belonged to the bandmaster had been sorted out there were found new goods to the value of over 400,000 Marks, consisting of brand new dining-room, bedroom and library suites, pianos, violins, cellos, phonographs, hand organs, expensive carpets, several new bicycles, binoculars, travelling cases, china, books, boots, electric chandeliers, etc., etc.

Confiscation of the new goods and heavy fines will be one sure sequence of this escapade, and Herisau will probably need to be on the lookout for another bandmaster!

The Publisher will be pleased to forward free specimen copies of the *Swiss Observer* to likely subscribers whose addresses may be supplied by readers.

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Prof. Dr. A. LATT and "THE SWISS OBSERVER."

To the Editor of *The Swiss Observer*.

Dear Mr. Editor,—On the occasion of the first anniversary of *The Swiss Observer* I come to offer you my heartiest congratulations and good wishes for a prosperous New Year. For you it means a start on new lines, a definite step towards the goal you had in view from the outset. It is indeed most gratifying for all those who have at heart the welfare of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain to see that the more ideal hopes of the founders of *The Swiss Observer* have not been disappointed. Of course, expectations from a business point of view may not all have materialised—it would be too soon. *The Swiss Observer* has not been of a size, hitherto, to do all that he was expected to perform. The increase of space and the new mode of publication will allow him to do twice or four times as well in future. Let advertisers and subscribers think of this!

I am especially conscious of the value of *The Swiss Observer* as a living link between all sorts of subscribers, members of the Colony and, as you see, some who are not. From a glance at your lists of subscribers it would appear that most of your readers are of that happy age and condition of men who do no longer think it absolutely indispensable to take part in all the meetings, dances and dinners, however interesting and successful they may be. They have realized what an economy those 12s. for *The Swiss Observer* really mean. There are still a few hundred like them who ought to make the investment now—*The Swiss Observer* helps to save time and money, time for business or for enjoyment at home. For this latter domestic reason every Swiss housekeeper is advised to take the *Observer* in, if she wants to have Father home for early dinner or even for tea. Should he fail for once to turn up in time—well, there must be a good reason, some meeting of the N.S.H., the C.S.C., the S.M.S. or what not. Mother looks up the latest number of *The Swiss Observer* to know—and she understands. And what a consolation for the man who comes home late to prove in print that he has been in the best of companies! Pater Familias, have *The Swiss Observer* as a friend always with you.

If, however, you are a young member of the Colony and eager to instruct and amuse yourself—let *The Swiss Observer* be your guide. He can offer you something for almost every evening: lectures at the N.S.H., concerts of the Swiss Institute, lessons in book-keeping, shorthand and languages by the Swiss Mercantile Society, a 'souper familier' at the City Swiss Club, a song, a dance or a gym. lesson at 74, Charlotte Street, or 1, Gerrard Place—if to all this you don't prefer the Swiss Y.M.C.A. or some of the special meetings arranged by the Swiss Church. Therefore, young friend, subscribe to *The Swiss Observer*, it stands you cheaper than buying it at the bookstalls—and then you will never miss anything of importance.

The first anniversary is a fit time to recall some of our experiences in connection with the foundation of *The Swiss Observer*. How many meetings had been held to study the great problem with its possible risks and consequences! Invariably the majority would decide that it would be a fine thing to found such a paper, but that it was far beyond the means of the Colony, and that it would certainly die from intellectual starvation a few weeks after its foundation. And then it came all of a sudden, thanks to the courage and initiative of Mr. Boehringer, to whom the Colony owes hearty thanks. I was quite proud, as 'Editor ad interim,' when I held in my hand the first copy,