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MESSAGES EXCHANGED ON THE OCCASION OF THE ELECTION OF THE NEW PRESIDENT OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION.

The Federal Assembly held, in its sitting of December 14th, 1950, the customary election of the President and Vice-President of the Confederation for the year 1951. Federal Councillor von Steiger was elected President, and Federal Councillor Kobelt, Vice-President, for the new term of office. The Swiss Minister, M. Henry de Torrenté, sent the following telegrams to:—

“Monsieur Edouard von Steiger,
Président de la Confédération, Berne.

Vous exprime respectueusement, au nom Légation, Consulats et Colonie suisses en Grande-Bretagne et territoires britanniques, félicitations brillante élection magistrature suprême et vœux au seuil année nouvelle pour votre haute mission.”

and

“Monsieur Karl Kobelt,
Vice-Président de la Confédération,
Berne.

Vous exprime respectueusement, au nom Légation, Consulats et Colonie suisses en Grande-Bretagne, félicitations et vœux au seuil de l'année nouvelle.”

The new President and Vice-President of the Swiss Confederation answered as follows:—

“Très touché de votre télégramme de félicitations. Je vous exprime, ainsi qu'à la Légation, aux Consulats et à la Colonie suisse en Grande-Bretagne et territoires britanniques, mes remerciements les plus sincères et mes meilleurs vœux pour la nouvelle année. —
Conseiller fédéral de Steiger.”

“Le télégramme et la carte de félicitation et de vœux que vous avez bien voulu m'adresser à l'occasion de la nouvelle année, au nom de la Légation, des Consulats et de la Colonie suisses en Grande-Bretagne m'ont causé le plus vif des plaisirs.

Je vous en exprime ma sincère gratitude et tout en vous priant, à mon tour, d'accepter mes vœux, tant pour vous-même que pour la Légation, les Consulats et la Colonie, je vous présente, Monsieur le Ministre, l'assurance des mes sentiments les plus distingués.

(sgd.) Kobelt, Conseiller fédéral.”

CELEBRATING THE ESCALADE.

Our compatriots from Geneva have celebrated on the 13th of last month, the Escalade, with a dinner at the Majorca Spanish Restaurant, 66, Brewer Street, W.1.

How many of us have heard of the Escalade of 1602? Even the textbooks of European History mention it only in passing, if at all. To the citizens of Geneva, however, it is as familiar as the happenings of 55 B.C. and A.D. 1066 are to us. It was on the night of December 11th-12th, 1602, that Duke Charles Emmanuel I of Savoy attempted to capture the proud Protestant city-state by sending an armed force to scale the ramparts — and was repulsed with the loss of 200 men.

The Escalade was the last exciting chapter in the three-centuries-long struggle between Geneva and the ambitious rulers of Savoy (ancestors of the royal house of Italy), and the Genevese have never forgotten it.

Mère Royaume, was the heroine of the Escalade. The citizens had been warned in the nick of time of the approach of their enemies, but nevertheless the attack achieved partial surprise and a small party entered one quarter of the town. In the ensuing confusion it was Mère Royaume's resourcefulness which rallied the defenders. She had been making soup for early-morning workers in her upper-storey kitchen, and, finding the Duke of Savoy's soldiers beneath her window, she promptly poured her scalding mixture over them, and hurled the iron cauldron after it thereby killing one of the invaders.

Before the assault, the Savoyards had been blessed by one Father Hume, a Scottish Jesuit, who had assured them that their scaling-ladders were in reality ladders to heaven. But the Duke's men did not seem to have much stomach for the fight. Those who reached the streets were disposed of in hand-to-hand fighting, and the remainder withdrew.

Geneva can pride itself on having given much to the world at large, but, of all the peaceful achievements of their forebears, nothing is dearer to the hearts of the Genevese than the repulse of that minor military operation — the Escalade.

The Escalade has given rise to annual festivities for over three centuries. Happy were the days when invasion or treason could be so speedily countered, and when the ordinary citizen could rejoice so simply and wholeheartedly in the overthrow of his enemies!

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