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ANNIVERSARIES

There are considerable disadvantages in receiving news from Switzerland rather late and in having to collect certain items, condense and often publish them with much delay. On the other hand, occasionally it is of benefit, and certain facts stand out much more impressively. In this way I have been struck by the fact that the reports of Diamond Wedding Anniversaries (60 years of married life) have been pouring in at the rate of six or seven a month. Over the last few months no fewer than five "Iron" Wedding Anniversaries have been in the news — this means in each case married life for 65 years. An outstanding Wedding Anniversary is that of Mr. and Mrs. Emil Werder-Troyon from Solothurn, who were able to celebrate their "Stone" Wedding — seventy years — both husband and wife being 93 years of age. This Anniversary is often known as the "Wedding of Grace". The next Anniversary — that of 75 years — has no special name, for it occurs too rarely to classify it. Yet the oldest couple in Switzerland who, last July, celebrated their 99th and 98th birthday respectively, were able to commemorate their 75th Wedding Anniversary early this year. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Burgat-Maccabéz of St. Aubin (Neuchâtel) were congratulated by the whole community and a concert was given in their honour.

Again, very impressive reading makes the pile of reports of birthdays. Scores of well-known Swiss have recently celebrated their seventieth birthday. Amongst those who have three-quarters of a century behind them are the famous architect, Le Corbusier, and the author and poet from Glarus, Kaspar Freuler. Over two dozen fellow-countrymen have joined the octogenarians, amongst them two distinguished women from Basle — the author, Ida Frohnmeyer, and Prof. Elsa Mahler, lecturer on Slav philology. The famous writers Jakob Buehrer and Robert Faesi, the sculptor Belloni and the painter Hans Berger, Dr. Paul Niehans, the discoverer of cellular therapy, and Prof. Karl Jasper, the famous philosopher at Basle University, can all look back on four score.

Amongst those who have reached the venerable age of 85 are the former Municipal President of Zurich, Dr. Emil Kloeti, and the painter Walter Helbig. The writer Margarete Susman, the painter Paul Perrelet, and one of the pioneers in kindergarten teaching, Marie von Geyrerz, have all become nonagenarians.

La Chaux-de-Fonds has a special reputation: 78 of its inhabitants are ninety and over, 11 men and 67 women.

What is really astounding is the number of centenarians whose birthdays have been reported: Eight men, amongst them the former well-known lawyer in Basle, Dr. W. Burckhardt-Vischer, and twenty women within a few months. One of the women is "only" 100, whereas her mother died at 104. On 1st January it was a hundred years since the founder of the modern Olympic Games, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, was born. A few days previously, his widow, who lives at Pully, entered her 102nd year.

Two women reached 104, and the oldest Swiss is a woman of 105 who lives at Amriswil, Mr. Maria Grob-Sutter. It has been reported that she is still willing to play a game of "Jass".

[A.T.S.]

MUSIC: CLARA HASKILL COMPETITION

In memory of the pianist CLARA HASKIL the CLARA HASKIL COMPETITION will be held in Lucerne, probably every three years, as part of the International Festival of Music. The emphasis of the competition will be — in addition to technical accomplishment — upon interpretation of the works specified for performance.

The first interpretation competition will take place from 2nd to 11th August 1963. The competition is open to pianists of either sex, from any country, who are between 18 and 35 years old on 1st August 1963.

The winner will receive the sum of Sfr. 10,000.— and will be invited to play as soloist at a symphony concert during the 1963 International Festival of Music, and will furthermore be engaged to give a piano recital "in memoriam Clara Haskil" at Vevey, former residence of Clara Haskil.

After the competition Philips will make a 12-inch long-play recording with the winner.

Clara Haskil was a citizen of Vevey and a street there has been named after her. She died in Brussels whilst on a concert tour in December 1960. On another page in this issue there will be found a description of the concert which was given at Vevey two years ago to pay homage to the great artist.

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