

# Notes and gleanings

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time, the neighbouring French divisions, Chabran's on his left and Turreau's on his right, were to render assistance by creating diversions.

Further description will be facilitated by giving a table showing the composition and situation of the various bodies of troops, beginning with the Austrians, and proceeding in order of their positions from west to east. It should be mentioned that an Austrian regiment consisted of three battalions of six companies each, but the battalions (which were of an average strength of 800 men) were often detached and used singly. On the French side, a demi-brigade consisted of three battalions of nine companies each (one of them a grenadier company) and was roughly 1,800 to 2,200 men strong. Here also it often happened that battalions were detached from their demi-brigade and used separately. The battalions were identified by their number followed by that of the demi-brigade to which they belonged. Thus, 1st/38th meant the 1st battalion of the 38th demi-brigade. It was also common for the grenadier companies of several different battalions and demi-brigades to be grouped together.

All the French troops involved (Turreau's, Lecourbe's and Chabran's Divisions) were under the control of Masséna and formed part of the Army of Helvetia. The Austrian troops who took part in these operations, however, belonged to two different Armies. From the Simplon pass to the Grimsel the Austrian units formed part of Hadik's Corps which belonged to the Army of Italy under Suvorof. On the other hand, the units which occupied the Urserental, the Reuss valley and the regions between the lakes of Lucerne and Zürich, together with the remaining Austrian troops in Switzerland, belonged to the Army of the Archduke Charles.

Briefly the French plan was the following. Boivin was to attack on Schwyz from Arth, while the little column from Gersau came along the shore of the lake of Lucerne to Brunnen. Between them they were to drive their opponents of Jellachich's Brigade up the Muotta valley towards the Pragal pass, and so away from the lake of Lucerne and the Reuss. Lecourbe with the reserve on board the flotilla, was to sail to Brunnen, to bombard it from the water and to land some companies to assist in taking Brunnen.

Porson's task was to advance along the western shore of the Urner See past Bauen and Isenthal to attack Seedorf. Daumas was to march from Engelberg over the Surenen pass, descending into the Reuss valley to attack Attinghausen. Lecourbe's Column would by this time have finished its work at Brunnen. After re-embarking it was to sail down the Urner See, put on shore at Sisikon three companies which were to march over the Axenberg to attack Atdorf in rear, and then proceed to bombard Flüelen and land its remaining companies there.

Loison's Column was appointed to cross over the Joch pass from Engelberg into the Gadmmental, then to march up the latter and over the Susten pass into the Meiental to attack Wassen. The combined Columns of Lecourbe, Porson, Daumas, and Loison, were then to push up the Reuss valley and into the Urserental.

Gudin's part, which was the hardest to play of all, was to proceed up the Haslital and to force the Grimsel pass at the head of it, then to descend into the Rhone valley and to cross over the Furka pass into the Urserental, and finally to attack Andermatt in order to turn the position of the Devil's bridge.

Meanwhile, Turreau was directed to assist Gudin by attacking up the Rhone valley from Brig, and by attempting to capture the Simplon pass. Chabran was to attack on Boivin's left, between the lakes of Aegeri and of Zürich.

By means of these very ingeniously laid plans it was hoped to corner Strach's Brigade in the Rhone valley by attacking it from both ends at once, and to cut Simbschen's force into isolated pieces as a result of the four simultaneous attacks on the Reuss valley. All Lecourbe's Columns were timed to start on the 14th of August, and the results may be anticipated so far as to say that everything turned out exactly according to plan, for on the 16th of August there was not a single Austrian soldier left in either of the Reuss or Rhone valleys.

In describing the adventures of the various columns it will be most convenient to start with the left of Lecourbe's Division.

Boivin had arranged the troops of his Column in such a way that while some of them marched direct on Schwyz from Steinen, others followed the north shore of the lake of Löwerz, and others again followed the south shore of that lake. In this way an Austrian observation post which had been enjoying the view from the Rigi was cut off. One battalion (the 2nd/84th under Margotti) was directed to climb over the shoulder of the Mythen and so turn the Austrian position. Meanwhile, the three

companies from Gersau had advanced along the shore of the lake of Lucerne to the bridge over the Muotta near Brunnen, and the reserve column embarked on the flotilla appeared off the shore. This flotilla was composed of two ships each mounting four guns, one ship with one gun and one howitzer, one ship with a 12-pounder gun, two ships capable of carrying 200 men, and several smaller vessels. The flagship was the *Länder Bauc*, and the flotilla was under the nautical directions of Henry and Chapel. A landing of five companies under Montfort was made at Brunnen, and the Austrians were bombarded from the lake with the result that Brunnen fell into the hands of the French after severe fighting. At the same time the Austrians were driven out of Schwyz up the Muotta valley towards the Pragal pass, and the Swiss irregulars (raised with the help of English subsidies) were scattered. Lecourbe had now nothing more to fear from Jellachich's Brigade in his attack on the Reuss valley.

Porson's Column had left Bauen early on the same day (14th of August) and marched along the western shore of the Urner See towards Seedorf. From Isenthal he sent six companies of the 2nd/38th under Juillet up the Kleintal and thence over the slopes of the Gitschen (at the foot of the Urirotstock) and the Honegg Alp to Seedorf, while the remainder of his column proceeded to Seedorf direct. He arrived there about midday and drove the Austrians to the right (eastern) bank of the Reuss, but was checked himself on the left bank owing to the destruction of the bridge.

Daumas' Column had left Engelberg at 3 a.m. that same morning and crossed the Surenen pass (7,562 feet), arriving at Attinghausen at 2 p.m. to find that that bridge over the Reuss had also been destroyed.

Meanwhile, Lecourbe had re-embarked the companies which had landed at Brunnen, and sailed southwards down the Urner See to Sisikon where he landed some of them again, with orders to march over the Axenberg to attack Atdorf in rear and so turn the Austrian position at Flüelen. The flotilla then sailed on to Flüelen which it bombarded, and the remaining companies were landed at about 6 p.m. This combined attack resulted in the abandonment of Flüelen and Atdorf by the Austrians at nightfall. In their retreat, some of them escaped up the Schächental towards the Klausen pass, and the remainder went up the Reuss valley to Amsteg, pursued by the French.

Late that night (14th of August) Porson's and Daumas' Columns were got across to the right bank of the Reuss, partly with the help of the flotilla and partly over the repaired bridges. The 1st and 2nd/38th were left in the Schächental to capture the Klausen pass, while the 3rd/38th and 2nd/76th accompanied Lecourbe with his grenadier companies up the Reuss valley towards Amsteg.

As a result of the first day's operations, therefore, the Austrians had been driven right away from the lake of Lucerne and from the lower portion of the Reuss valley. It is now necessary to turn to the activities of the next Column: Loison's.

This Column had left Engelberg and marched over the Joch pass (7,267 feet), and down to Mühletal. Then, turning to the east up the Gadmmental, it crossed the Susten pass (7,421 feet), arriving at Färnigen in the Meiental on the evening of the 14th of August, after twenty-two hours' marching. On the way it was assailed by a storm, and Zschokke who accompanied the Column gives the following eyewitness account of the crossing of the Susten pass. "The way which leads from the rocky gorge of the wild Gaden into the Meiental is only a narrow shepherd's path, very steep and bordered by a precipice from the depths of which the sound of the roaring torrent rises. If the Austrians had only contemplated the possibility of their being surprised, a handful of their troops could have held the pass against several thousand men. The men climbed up one after another. The guns were dragged up the rocks by means of ropes, or lifted over the dangerous places on men's shoulders. The horses which accompanied the column were freed from their burdens and driven up unled. Some of them lost their balance and crashed to the bottom."

So matters stood at the end of the second day of operations, the 15th of August, with the Austrians cleared completely out of the Reuss valley below the Devil's bridge. For the description of what happened on the following day, it is necessary to go back and to consider the events which took place in the Rhone valley during the previous days.

*Continued on page 2241.*

#### SWISS Y.M.C.A.

We wish to direct the attention of our readers to a lantern slide lecture which will be given by Mr. Wallis B. Elliott, Secretary for England of the Missions to Lepers, on Saturday, January 31st, at 6 p.m., at 15, Upper Bedford Place, W.C., to which everybody is heartily invited.



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**Notes and Gleanings—(Continued)**

It is to be noted that Zschokke mentions the presence of guns with Loison's Column, about which the French accounts are silent. Zschokke himself was there in his capacity as Commissary appointed by the Helvetic Directory.

At the mouth of the Meiental, close to Wassen and on the right bank of the torrent of the Meienreuss, was an old hexagonal fort called the Meienschanze, the ruins of which still stand. It had been built by the engineer Pietro Moretini in 1710, in anticipation of the religious troubles which culminated in the Second Villmerger War in 1712, to protect catholic Uri from an attack over the Susten pass by protestant Bern. This fort was now occupied by the Austrians, who mounted some guns for its defence. That they did not defend the summit of the Susten pass itself is incomprehensible, for, as Zschokke relates, it is impregnable. Moreover, the pass itself is invisible from the lower part of the Meiental, for the valley is curved. Loison's entire Column could cross the Susten pass unseen and unknown to the occupants of the Meienschanze.

Early on the morning of the 15th of August the light company of the Leman battalion escalated the rocks overlooking the fort whence they fired on the defenders, while the grenadier companies attacked it, supported by the two battalions of the 109th. After several attempts they succeeded; the fort was captured and the defeated Austrians retreated to Wassen and up the Reuss valley towards Göschenen and the Schöllenen gorge leading to the Devil's bridge.

As soon as he had gained access to the Reuss valley, Loison detached one battalion of the 109th to march down it to establish contact with Lecourbe. The latter had on that day 15th of August driven the Austrians out of Amsteg and had directed Lozivy with the 2nd/76th to pursue them in their retreat up the Maderanental towards the Krüzli pass (7,710 feet) over which the fugitives reached the Rhine valley. Lecourbe meanwhile advanced up the Reuss valley beyond Amsteg, and at Gurtellen he met the battalion which Loison had sent to establish connection with him. Lecourbe and Loison then joined forces and advanced together up the valley to Göschenen which the Austrians evacuated at about 4 p.m., retreating over the Devil's bridge which they destroyed. The destruction of the latter was unknown to the French as indeed it must have been until they reached it, for it is not visible for more than fifty yards down the path, and the sides of the Schöllenen gorge (which is the name applied to the Reuss valley at this point) are so precipitous that it is impossible to climb up and obtain a view from further away. The pursuing column which had advanced after the Austrians *tambour battant*, in the hope of crossing the bridge on their heels, was therefore unable to get any farther. There is a certain amount of confusion in the accounts of the various authors concerning the destruction of the Devil's bridge, for some relate that it broke as the fight was actually raging over it. The vignette on the title-page of the second volume of Beattie's "Switzerland" is a spirited representation of this episode.

**WHAT OTHER PEOPLE SAY.**

We have much pleasure in reproducing two Press notices which appeared in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* and in the *Bulletin Suisse d'Egypte*, the official organ of the Swiss colony in Egypt, concerning our recent 10th birthday Anniversary number:

**Jubiläum des "Swiss Observer."**

The *Swiss Observer*, das offizielle Organ der Schweizerkolonie in Grossbritannien, konnte kürzlich ein Jubiläum feiern, das sich zwar nicht mit den Jubiläen seiner Kolleginnen, der zum Teil schon recht bemoosten Häupter in der Heimat, vergleichen lässt, für eine Auslandschweizerzeitung dagegen schon einige Bedeutung hat; nämlich das Jubiläum eines zehnjährigen Bestehens. Natürlich darf bei einer derartigen Geburtstagsfeier die Verwandtschaft sowie die engere und weitere Bekanntschaft nicht fehlen: Drei Seiten der Festausgabe sind erforderlich für die Wiedergabe all der Gratulationen, die aus fern und nah eingetroffen — auch das Sprüchlein der *Neuen Zürcher Zeitung* befindet sich darunter — und in den verschiedensten Sprachen und Idiomen verfasst sind. Als "chers et fidèles confédérés," begrüsst Bundesrat Motta die getreuen Eidgenossen im Britenreich, die seinem väterlichen Schutz und Schirm unterstellt sind, "mit väterlichem Gruss," "Yours faithfully," "ad multos annos," schliessen eine Anzahl weiterer hoher Häupter und ehrenwerter Zeitungskolleginnen ihre Glückwünsche schreiben, ein Basler Beppi windet dem *Swiss Observer* im Basler Dialekt ein Kränzlein, ein treuerziger Gelegenheitsdichter schreitet gar auf dem hohen Kothurn der gebundenen Rede einher: so kommt dem Blatt gewissermassen der Rang eines Dokuments zu, das recht anschaulich die Zusammenfassung verschiedener Sprach- und Kulturkreise in einem Staatswesen zum Ausdruck bringt.

Selbstverständlich stehen an der Spitze des Blattes die "home news," die jedoch beileibe keine hochpolitischen Angelegenheiten behandeln, nichts vom Parteizänk zu erzählen wissen, sondern dazu bestimmt sind, im Geist ein Stück Heimat aufleben zu lassen und zugleich ein Tröpfchen Heimweh ins Herz des Lesers zu träufeln. In Brugg unternahm ein junger Mann einen Ueberfall auf eine Gastwirtin, im Wallis wurde das Schloss Vorpillère durch eine Feuersbrunst zerstört, ein Film Mittelholzers fing Feuer und verbrannte, die Rechnung der Pilatusbahn 1930 schloss mit einem Defizit — all das interessiert unsere Landsleute. Die Nachrichten sind für sie nicht, wie für uns, trockene Tatsachenberichte, sie bringen ihnen ein Stück Heimat nahe, und dass der *Swiss Observer* nun schon zehn Jahre lang seine verdienstvolle Vermittlerarbeit ausüben konnte, beweist, wie eng unsere Landsleute im Ausland mit der Heimat verbunden sind.

**Les 10 ans du "Swiss Observer."**

Le *Bulletin Suisse d'Egypte* présente à l'occasion du dixième anniversaire de sa fondation, ses meilleurs vœux et ses félicitations à *The Swiss Observer*, le vaillant organe des Suisses en Angleterre.

Le *Swiss Observer* a connu des heures difficiles. Des Mécènes patriotes et tous les Suisses établis en Grande Bretagne qui savent l'importance d'un lien confraternel entre Suisses à l'étranger et l'intérêt que représente pour des colonies dispersées, l'existence d'un organe de liaison, ont uni leurs efforts pour assurer non seulement son existence mais son avenir. Ils y ont pleinement réussi et nous souhaitons de cœur à notre confrère de continuer à remplir avec le même entrain et la même vigueur, la tâche qu'il a assumée. Puisse un jour, son cadet le *Bulletin Suisse d'Egypte* pouvoir mériter un jour de fête, à son tour, le dixième anniversaire de sa fondation.

**CITY SWISS CLUB**

Tous ceux qui connaissent le "Jardin" — autrement dit "Garden Suite" — du May Fair Hotel et l'aspect enchanteur de cette magnifique salle sauront d'avance que la première soirée dansante qui a donné le City Swiss Club samedi dernier a remporté le plus franc succès. Il n'en pourrait être autrement.

Qui n'est pas descendu des escaliers qui conduisent à ce lieu presque féerique ne peut se faire une idée de la transformation qui s'opère là, sous vos yeux; on croit rêver, car tout à l'heure on était encore dans la rue froide et obscure, où sentait l'hiver, et d'un trait tout est changé. Non pas seulement la salle chaude, bien éclairée; ou l'animation gaie des groupes où l'on salue les amis, fait de nouvelles connaissances et où l'on échange des sourires et des impressions, tout en dégustant un "cocktail"; ou encore le coup d'œil charmant qu'offrent les fraîches et élégantes toilettes!

Descendez plutôt avec moi et c'est soudainement le printemps souriant qui vous accueille; des plates-bandes fleuries du gazon bien ras, plus loin une allée, le plus beau soleil brillant sur toute cette belle nature — le pinceau de l'artiste les a mis là, bien vivants semble-t-il, sur les murs tout autour de la salle! L'illusion est complète, surprenante, agréable; vous êtes transporté et l'enthousiasme tout naturel avec lequel vous avez quitté votre foyer pour venir passer ces quelques heures délicieuses que vous réserve le City Swiss Club est doublé, triplé . . .

Arrêtons-nous encore un instant à la grille du "Jardin" (car c'est bien une grille massive qui vous y donne l'accès) et contemplons ce merveilleux décor! Entre les colonnes à gauche et à droite, et puis au fond, où la perspective trompeuse d'un autre jardin plus magnifique et mystérieux vous invite presque à y pénétrer, les tables rondes, à quatre, six, huit, quatorze même, attrayantes avec leur décoration de magnifiques tulipes et narcisses, vous appellent pour goûter les mets succulents et parfaits d'un menu des plus judicieux.

Est-il surprenant qu'en pareille atmosphère les sons mélodieux et doux de l'orchestre Colombo engagent maints couples à violer le parquet avant l'heure, entre un délicieux Filet de Sole et un excellent Poulet en Casserole, pour rendre hommage à Terpsichore par un Boston, voire même un Fox-Trot?

Jusqu'après minuit le bal bat son plein, chacun s'en donne à cœur-joie. Sur demande spéciale, l'orchestre joue un "Barn"; il semble tout d'abord que notre infatigable et excellent Président, Monsieur Ch. Chapuis, et "partner" doivent rester seuls à le danser, mais timidement un autre couple se joint à eux, puis un troisième, suivi bientôt, comme par enchantement, de presque tout le monde. Et avec quel entrain et quel savoir faire tous le dansent! Il suffit de dire que l'orchestre dort bisser.

Bref, les quatre-vingts participants de samedi ont bien des raisons d'être satisfaits. Quant aux absents, ils auront, pour se consoler, la perspective de la dernière — oui, la dernière! — soirée dansante de la saison, fixée au samedi 21 février, dans la même salle du May Fair. Personne ne voudra la manquer, car — "ck" vous l'a dit — celle de mars n'aura pas lieu. J.Z.

**THE EDITOR'S POST-BAG.**

*The Editor is not responsible for the opinions expressed by Correspondents and cannot publish anonymous articles, unless accompanied by the writer's name and address, as evidence of good faith.*

To the Editor of the *Swiss Observer*.

Dear Sir.—I have read with interest the report of the recent activities of the City Swiss Club, which your correspondent "ck" has given us in the S.O. of 17th January. The City Swiss Club is to be congratulated on having such an able and witty reporter.

It must be said, however, that at the present time such reports on the activities of the most prominent Swiss Club in Great Britain gives food for reflection. It is far from being my wish to criticize the actions of the City Swiss Club or any other Swiss Club in London, and any suggestion which I may put forward is prompted by a genuine feeling of friendship and solidarity.

I am not a "kill-joy" by any means, and I fully share the opinion generally accepted nowadays, that the fight for existence should be brightened up by a certain amount of pleasure and relaxation. I hold, however, that when so much distress prevails owing to the economic upheaval, the expenditure for pleasure should be reduced to a minimum. There is no need for me to enlarge on the present world conditions, but when one is brought face to face with reports from all countries of bad business and the miseries enforced on so many families owing to unemployment, I feel that it would be a mark of sympathy and respect for those less fortunate than we are, if we abstained from indulging in gorgeous entertainments, or, if that could not be practised, from giving them undue publicity.

We will go a step further. I venture to put forward the opinion that it would have been a *beau geste* on the part of the many Swiss Clubs in London, if they had reduced their social activities during the past few months and for the year just ahead of us, and asked their members that, instead of spending their surplus funds on the purchase of tickets for such occasions, they should think of the many Charitable Organisations which are so badly in need of funds to save human beings from destitution and despair.

I fully appreciate the magnificent effort which has been made by the Swiss Colony in Great Britain in response to the appeal recently launched under the auspices of the Swiss Benevolent Society, thanks to the inspiration of the *Unione Ticinese*, in favour of the *Fonds Dimier*. Nor do I forget the wholehearted support which is usually given to Charity by participants of the various Banquets organised by the many Swiss Clubs in London. But I still hold that it would have been nice to see the many social functions replaced by a gentle appeal to Club Members to sacrifice, under the present circumstances, at least part of their enjoyment for the sake of helping unfortunate people (be they English or Swiss), in their distress.

My mind is unbiassed. As a member of the City Swiss Club I have, in recent years, frequently participated in their enjoyable functions. I am not speaking as a Member, or on behalf of, the Swiss Benevolent Society either. Some knowledge of the work of this latter Society and other philanthropic Societies, coupled with the distressing reports on the economic conditions, of which one hears daily, are the cause of putting my reflections into print. I venture to hope that a good many of your readers will agree with me.

H.Sch.

**UP-TO-DATE EPISTLES.**

This letter from a firm in the North was received by a London House, who had pressed for payment of an overdue account.

Dear Sirs,

We acknowledge receipt of your letter of yesterday's date and we are surprised at its tenor.

If you do not yet know our method of dealing with our accounts we will give you a short illustration for your information.

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We would like to point out to you that if we have any more of your impertinence you will not even be put into the shuffle.

**PERSONAL.**

We regret to announce that Madame Paravicini, whose return to London had been expected for New Year, has been ordered by her doctor in Berne to go to the mountains for two months, after a severe attack of influenza. She left for Mürren on January 15th.

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