

News from the colony

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PARLONS DE TOUT.

La jeunesse radicale veut reviser la constitution fédérale. Je l'en approuve. Pourquoi les constitutions ne deviendraient-elles pas désuètes avec le temps? Est-il raisonnable de les vouloir immuables, ou presque, alors que de grands bouleversements économiques se produisent sous nos yeux, qui appellent des formes nouvelles de la vie politique? Mais je me permets de trouver assez singulière la prétention qu'a cette jeunesse révisionniste de fendre l'oreille à tout homme âgé de soixante-cinq ans. Si la disposition qu'elle prévoit afin de refuser l'éligibilité au Conseil national à un citoyen parvenu à cet âge avait existé en France, par exemple, il y a vingt ans, la guerre eût été perdue pour nos voisins — et j'ose ajouter pour nous aussi, qui, non plus que les Français, ne tenions guère à devenir Allemands. C'est, en effet, un vieillard — et de plus de soixante-dix ans — qui galvanisa les énergies défaillantes de son pays et, en lui insufflant son indéfectible espérance, lui donna le moyen moral de vaincre. Et Foch était-il beaucoup plus jeune que Clemenceau? Il n'appartenait pas au parlement, c'est vrai, mais il appartenait à l'armée où la résistance physique importe bien plus que dans un conseil politique. Et aujourd'hui même, est-ce à un des jeunes du parlement (il n'en manque pourtant pas en un temps où l'on est élu député au sortir du lycée, comme si l'art de gouverner les hommes n'était pas essentiellement fait d'expérience et de sagesse), qu'on a demandé, chez nos voisins, toujours, d'être l'artisan de la restauration de l'ordre national? M. Doumergue, qui a répondu avec tant de vaillance heureuse à l'appel de son pays, aurait donc ses invalides, supposé qu'il fût citoyen suisse demain?

Au demeurant, sans sortir de notre pays, n'avons-nous pas vu, en pleine guerre, alors que le Conseil fédéral ne savait plus à quels saints se vouer après l'incartade d'un des siens dont le geste menaçait de nous couper les vivres, un nom s'imposer tout de suite, qui apparaissait tel que la situation en dût être immédiatement redressée, celui de Gustav Ador?

J'entends bien que c'est du Conseil national qu'il s'agit de bannir la gérontocratie, mais il y a des jeunes dans les conseils politiques de tous les pays, et que voyons-nous qu'ils font — à l'exception d'un Mussolini ou d'un Hitler? Ils sont surtout emplis de présomption et de superbe. Ce qui les entrave dans leur envolée, ce sont bien moins, quoi qu'ils se plaisent à dire, les jalousies de la coalition des vieux, que la faiblesse de leurs aînés. William Pitt n'avait pas vingt-cinq ans lorsqu'il foudroya le ministre Walpole de son éloquence. La vérité est que si les vieux de notre temps ne sont pas des aigles, les jeunes qui entendent se pousser à leur place auraient, pour la

plupart, la plus grande difficulté à voler plus haut que les canards.

Il est bon qu'un corps représentatif de la nation compte de jeunes membres; l'impétuosité et même la légèreté de la jeunesse sont utiles à secouer le conservatisme dans lequel ont tendance à se complaire les vieux. Mais prétendre chasser la vieillesse du temple des lois, c'est, outre une marque de singulière reconnaissance à ceux qui ont tracé le chemin où avancent les générations nouvelles, la preuve d'une ignorance ou d'une méconnaissance de l'histoire, laquelle n'est pas sans gravité dans la jeunesse qui a l'ambition de nous régenter. Il ne serait pas inutile que ces jeunes gens, qui ne se doutent de rien, relussent attentivement quelques pages de leur histoire grecque et romaine. . .

M. X.,
(Tribune de Genève.)

NEWS FROM THE COLONY.

LONDON SWISS RIFLE TEAM.

The country and the ranges looked lovely at Bisley Camp when the members arrived for their practice early last Sunday morning. Shooting, however, was very erratic, none of the participants getting anywhere near their former performance. Several of them looked forward to spending the afternoon at the seaside, which is only an hour's run, whilst others had visions of the festive luncheon which seemed to be in store for them when a carload of Swiss delicacies from somewhere in Charlotte Street came into sight.

Firing in Bisley was very brisk, and the Swiss did not spare their ammunition neither, some of them shooting off as many as seven series. The best series were fired by J. C. Wetter (53), J. Deubelbeiss, M. Fischer and J. M. Hess (51 each). The first prize in the handicap competition went to J. C. Fenner, who scored the lowest average of the day, i.e., 37.5, and the fact that second and third prizes went to J. Deubelbeiss and J. C. Wetter with an average of 48 and 50.5 respectively, illustrates how the handicapping favours the "freshman."

The following is the new handicap list, J. M. Hess being scratch: J. C. Wetter 0.8, W. Fischer 1.1, Alfred Schmid 3.6, P. Hilfiker 3.8, J. Deubelbeiss 5.1, O. Brullhard 5.1, F. Notter 5.8, W. Krucker 5.9, H. Senn 7.6, Arn. Schmid 10.1, J. C. Fenner 16.6, and E. Fuchs 18.9.

The next shooting practice will take place on Thursday afternoon, the 7th of June, from 2 to 7 p.m.

May 8th in London a Protocol, which settled the question of the succession to the throne of Denmark, together with the Schleswig Holstein question, and on May 24th a second document which recognised the rights of Prussia over Neuchâtel, and hinted at joint negotiations with Switzerland; but it was left to the Powers to fix the moment, opportunity, and place for these negotiations, and Prussia had to bind herself not to assert her rights in any other fashion. The document was therefore a Platonic recognition of the rights of the King, which bound him not to use any force. An attempt of Frederick William IV in December, 1853, to make his neutrality in the Crimean war depend (*inter alia*) on the return of Neuchâtel did not find acceptance with the new British Foreign Secretary Lord Clarendon. Further, the representatives of France and England firmly opposed the attempt of Prussia, at the Congress of Paris (April 8th, 1856), to bring the Neuchâtel question on the tapis.

The revolt of the Neuchâtel royalists in the night of September 23rd, 1856, brought the latent crisis to a head. Hitherto every attempt of Switzerland to come to a friendly understanding with the king of Prussia had failed owing to his obstinacy. Now it had at last, in the shape of the captured royalists, a handle with which to bring about the decision of the question. It was known in Bern that the king could not possibly leave in the lurch the men who, with his foreknowledge, had organised this rising. It was not through disputatiousness or from democratic insolence (so Sybel explains the matter), but because it was inspired by the firm resolve to use this occasion for definitively ending the Neuchâtel question, that the Federal Executive allowed the trial of the royalists to drag on, and declined to be moved by the Prussian or French threats to give up its security—the captured royalists—until it thought that it was sure of success.

It was a consideration of great importance that the Federal Executive felt that at least one

A FAMOUS SWISS DANCER.



Madame Marcelle Valerie, who is seen above practising her natural rhythmic and expressive dances in the Swiss mountains, has now established a school of dancing in London.

Marcelle Valerie is the daughter of the famous Swiss gynecologist Alcide Jentzer, who founded the Maternity Hospital at Geneva, and is the sister of Albert Jentzer, the eminent brain specialist who has recently been appointed chief surgeon of the general hospital at Geneva.

Marcelle Valerie expresses in her creative work a sense of radiant health of mind, body and spirit, which she claims was largely inspired by the life-giving atmosphere of the Swiss Alps.

PERSONAL.

We extend our heartiest congratulations to Mr. Albert Widmer on his appointment as Manager of the Royal Hotel, at Great Yarmouth. Mr. Widmer was formerly Assistant-Manager at the Carlton Hotel in London.

THE HISTORICAL RELATIONS OF ENGLAND AND SWITZERLAND.

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

(Continued from Previous Number.)

ENGLAND AND THE NEUCHÂTEL AFFAIR.

In the Neuchâtel affair also, which from 1848 onwards hung as a threatening storm cloud on the horizon of the newly-founded Confederation, England showed herself consistently as the friend of Switzerland. So early as November, 1849, the Prussian minister in London had pressed for the recognition of the rights of his king over Neuchâtel in virtue of the treaties of 1815. But it was only when that minister, Bunsen, promised that the king would refrain for the time being from the practical exercise of his rights, that Palmerston gave him a note recognising these rights, and hinted at the aid of England if a friendly solution of this question could be reached with Switzerland. When the three eastern Powers proposed in August, 1851, to erect Neuchâtel into a State separated from Switzerland and merely allied with her, and that under the suzerainty of the king of Prussia, Palmerston resisted this plan most firmly.

In January, 1852, Bunsen presented to Lord Granville, the successor of Palmerston, a memorandum about Neuchâtel. In order to put an end to the ceaseless insistence of the king of Prussia on this question, and to hold him back from taking dangerous steps, it seemed best to tie him down by a formal diplomatic document. It was the time when the Powers sought somehow to get Louis Napoleon (who by the *coup d'état* of December 2nd had made himself master of France) to acknowledge himself bound by the treaties of 1815, while on his side he was trying to gain the favour of the Courts with a view to the restoration of the French Empire. So the representatives of the Five Powers signed on

of the Five Powers—England—was unreservedly on its side. So early as September 15th Clarendon instructed the British envoy in Bern, Gordon, to recommend the Federal Executive to use its victory with moderation, and "to seize the opportunity of settling the dispute with Prussia as to Neuchâtel." This advice exactly met the intentions of the Federal Executive, which in its first message to the Federal Assembly (September 23rd) declared it would refuse most decidedly to open any diplomatic negotiations which did not rest on the principle of the complete independence of Neuchâtel.

There is no doubt that Frederick William IV could have been induced without great difficulty to renounce his rights over Neuchâtel if France had joined England in persuading him to take this step. On September 22nd the President of the Prussian Council of Ministers, Mantuffel, told the British envoy in Berlin, Lord Bloomfield, that the king was disposed to make this renunciation if he could be assured that certain religious and charitable institutions should continue to exist, that the privileges of certain classes should not be touched, and that he should be allowed to continue the use of the title "Prince of Neuchâtel." But the oscillations of the policy pursued by Napoleon III did not allow him to adopt such a clear-cut policy, for, without breaking with England, he courted also the friendship of Russia and Prussia, and in general desired to play the part of arbitrator in Europe. The autograph letters of Frederick William IV, in which, "with a bleeding heart and with tears in his eyes," he called for the help of Napoleon against "Republican impertinences flattered Napoleon's self love. They also moved him on September 30th to press verbally through his envoy in Bern, Fénélon, for the release of the captives; if this wish could be met, he thought he could contribute to the happy solution of the question; otherwise Switzerland might be entangled in very serious complications—in short she might be threatened by an army of 100,000 men.

(To be continued.)