Impending retirement of the Swiss minister

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70me. FETE SUISSE.

Le jeudi 15 juin prochain, au Central Hall près de Westminster, aura lieu la soirée annuelle de la colonie suisse de Londres. Comme d'habitude, cette réunion est une veritable fête populaire pour jeunes et vieux, car nos artistes de l'Orchestre suisse et du Club d'accordéonistes s'y entendent à merveille pour donner au concert une animation pleine de gaîté. Une artiste très connue nous a promis son concours et viendra spécialement de Suisse pour nous régaler de son inimitable talent.

La popularité toujours plus croissante de cette belle soirée promet de surpasser le succès des années précédentes.

En ces temps troublés par certaines puissances en proie à d'immenses rêves et où l'on voit se déployer au loin la théorie de la force, le culte de la race, et la négation du droit de l'homme — actes qui inspirent autant de pitié que de tristesse — il est tout naturel que nous soyons saisis d'inquietude.

Nous qui sommes à l'abri de cette terrible contagion parceque nous avons la bonne fortune de résider en Grande Bretagne, avons appris à estimer et à aimer le peuple anglais parceque nous partageons son amour de la liberté et son désir de reconciliation européenne. Nous sommes animés par des sentiments identiques pour la défense de tout ce qui nous est cher et nous admirons l'Angleterre pour pratiquer une liberté comparable à notre idéal.

Nous sentons plus que jamais un besoin d'exprimer notre gratitude. de nous rapprocher les uns des autres dans l'amour commun de la patrie et d'entonner nos airs nationaux, chants d'un peuple libre et indépendant. La réunion de jeudi prochain nous en donne la chance.

Rappelons tout spécialement que la fête suisse n'est pas une soirée où la toilette et le smoking sont de rigueur. Les costumes suisses sont toujours les bien-venus, ils donnent à la fête un cachet national du meilleur goût.

Ajoutons encore l'accès de la galerie, il y aura de la place pour tous. Venez nombreux avec vos enfants et amis pour passer une bonne soirée dans l'intimité de la patrie, vous ne le regretterez pas.

SWISS AUTHOR ON LONDON STAGE.

Alfred Gehri's "Sixth Floor."

(The above mentioned play has unfortunately since been taken off, we nevertheless wish to acquaint our readers with the fact that a Swiss author has had a chance to be heard, if even only for a short run. ED.)

With pleasure and great pride we welcome a new Swiss author on the London stage — Mr. Alfred Gehri with his excellent play "Sixth Floor" to be seen at the St. James's Theatre, W.1. Some years ago the Embassy Theatre produced, it is true, a play attributed to a pseudonymous Swiss author, but it turned out to be the product of someone possibly living at Zurich but completely unknown to the Swiss literary world to this day. So, we believe, Mr. Gehri can still claim with perfect justification to be one of the first on the scene. And he certainly does us honour.

Fortunately for him he is not dependent on what the rather erratic London critics say about the play — their notices being preponderantly unfriendly — for it is already well established on the Continent in several countries as a work of considerable merit and box-office drawing power. With over a hundred performances in Paris alone and other presentations in several languages in Switzerland, Germany, etc., he can be relied upon to take the London blows with a stout heart and calm self-assurance. And there are also quite appreciative notices such as in the "Evening Standard," the "Star," the "Daily Sketch" and the "Daily Telegraph." The audience on the first-night also manifested such warm approval that it seems more likely that the success of the play will disprove the disparagements of such papers as the "Times" and the "News Chronicle" in the most satisfactory manner possible.

The story is a very simple and rather sentimental one ,but that can only be accounted, by the best standards of art, a virtue. A lame girl falls to the seductive wiles of a dashing young fellow who is sowing his wild oats in a careless rather than callous manner. When the usual troubles arise she attempts to commit suicide, but is rescued in time and made an honest woman again by her faithful though all too shy admirer, who had been warned off by a stupidly ambitious father in favour of the seducer.

This old old story is also told in a simple and direct way with a subtle tenderness of observation. What makes the play's individuality is its true-to-life setting on the sixth floor of a Montmartre tenement-house in combination with all the humdrum sort of existences jumbled together by the all-uniting force of poverty. This excellent back-ground naturally provides both spice and humour in plenty to garnish and relieve the little human tragedy germinating inevitably in such hot-house surroundings. The loyalty and warmth of heart that animate all places of this description, beneath the sordid and seemingly cruel surface of vital needs inadequately provided for, ensure a happy ending for the sake of the little community as much as the beloved helpless cripple and guardian angel of the sixth floor.

Celia Johnson gives the innocent Jaqueline a tender if sometimes underacted interpretation. Film-actor James Mason brings the right sort of dashing to Henri Jonval's part as the seducer, an eternal student and composer of bad songs. Self-satisfied but good-natured Papa Hochepot, who through his blithe striving after comforts for his daughter so nearly brought her to an untimely death, is admirably played by Ralph Roberts. Amongst the other fourteen characters we would give the honours to Barbara Gott as a harsh and breathless landlady, full of ire about rent-arrears, yet with a golden heart when probed by a calamity that has overtaken one of her brood. That accomplished actor Harold Scott deliciously clowns the ever sponging and ever hopeful artist-failure who is reduced to designing chocolate-box lids. The whole play is presented on one and the same stage-set, a cross-section through the sixth floor with two rooms laid bare, the landing and rickety staircase in the middle. The successful English playwright Rodney Ackland has certainly made a perfect job of it.

The author Alfred Gehri, despite his Bernese name, hails from Morges on the Lake of Geneva. He has spent many years as a journalist in Paris and came into contact with the stage as M. Pitoeff's secretary. He has previously written five one-act pjlays for the Grand Guignol, some of which are still being produced from time to time. But "Sixth Floor" is his first full-length play. He is married to a charming Russian lady, is 44 years of age and has just completed a cours de répétition, not on the Italian front, as the "Evening Standard" surmises, but on the slopes of his native lake.

Dr. E.

IMPENDING RETIREMENT OF THE SWISS MINISTER.

According to the "Daily Telegraph," Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, Envoyé Extraordinaire et Ministre Plénipotentiaire de la Confédération Helvétique près de la Cour de St. James, who has since 1920 represented Switzerland in this country, intends to retire from his post at the end of the current year. —

The "National Zeitung" in Basle writes:—

"Although the statement which had appeared in the "Daily Telegraph" has not yet been confirmed at the Federal Palais in Berne, it is expected that Monsieur Paravicini will in the near future vacate his post for reasons of age.

Monsieur Paravicini was born on the 22nd of August 1873 in Basle, where he received his education. He studied law at the Universities of Basle, Lausanne, Munich, Berlin and Paris. At the age of 26 he took his degree as doctor of law.

In the year 1900 he entered the Diplomatic Service of the Confederation, where he held in turn the posts of Attaché at the Swiss Legations in London and Rome, and Counsellor of Legation in Paris, St. Petersburg, and London.

The Federal Council appointed him in 1917 "Chef de la Division des Affaires Etrangères du Département Politique Fédéral" in Berne, and three years later Monsieur Paravicini was appointed Swiss Minister in London, where he has represented the Swiss Confederation without interruption.

During the tenure of his high office he has paid special attention to the economic interests of the two countries, and a great number of Swiss, either resident or "de passage" have benefitted from his vast experience."

We intend to come back on the long and distinguished services rendered to our country by Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, at an opportune moment.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

This is the last reminder to City Swiss Club members of the treat in store for them next Tuesday, June 6th, at Pagani's.

European Affairs in their far-reaching effects on trade, finance, and personalities, made lucid and vital, by the mind of one who has mastered in an astonishing degree their complications: that will be the mental stimulus offered on this the last of our meetings before the summer recess.

The speaker is Mr. Gilbert Carr, well-known business man who has climbed to the top of his own particular ladder. However successful we ourselves may be, there are always tips we can get to push our way a little higher, and there is every reason to believe that Mr. Carr's talk will act as a real tonic. His work and interest has carried him widely over Europe; his reputation in America is immense, whatever he has to say is fraught with the force of his own personality and the vitality of an essentially successful business activity. He is worthy of an overflowing audience ... what are you going to do about it?

May I once again, too, remind you that our beloved President will be in the Chair. Against most urgent calls to be elsewhere he has sacrificed his own personal interest to be with us on this important occasion, and it is the earnest wish of the Committee and of all loyal members that every single member shall come along on Tuesday. This must be a bumper meeting to send us all on our busy summer season or our holidays, so that we may remember the pleasurable times we have had amongst our compatriots during these past months.

Don't let anything put you off. Pagani's have promised a feast of outstanding excellence, wit should be high, good-fellowship all-embracing, and our compatriots at the best of their national character.

Seating arrangements will be facilitated if you let Mr. Boehringer know how many friends you are bringing, but in any case *COME*. We welcome you most heartily in anticipation.

Bee.

SUCCESS IN THE SWISS ACCORDION CLUB.

By now, every reader of this valuable paper has read something about the Swiss Accordion Club, which has been in existence for just about two years. The majority of these girls and boys knew nothing about the instrument before the foundation of the Club, and although they have played for such a short period the Swiss Accordion Club is proud to think that it has achieved something, viz., correcting the generally existing impression that the "Schwitzer Orgele" is nothing but a producer of a monotonous "Bum-ta-ta Bum-ta-ta."

The Swiss Accordion has now gone a step further! Saturday, May the 6th, was a big day for all accordion players in London. It was the day chosen for the London Individual Championship Contest. The contest started at 10.30 a.m. and lasted until 6 p.m. As each individual was allowed 7 minutes to play, you can realise that there was quite a large number of young people showing their skill.

For the first time, the Swiss Accordion Club decided to send some of their members. Three of the young artists were chosen but two were at the last moment prevented from attending, so that the Club was represented at the Contest by M. Charlie Rossier. Charlie is one of the boys who bought an accordion less than two years ago. He is just about 14 years old, but he took it seriously and never missed the rehearsals. Well, this must lead somewhere!

Young Charlie got out on top at the Contest and was classified *First* of the button accordion. He received the 1939 London Championship *Gold Medal.*

Hearty congratulations to Charlie Rossier, for he is now chosen to represent *London* in the Autumn for the All England Championship.

A. G.

THE STOCK EXCHANGE OF ZURICH.

(By Swiss Bank Corporation, Zurich.)

The international tension having lost some of its impending gravity, our market has slowly but surely recovered during the current month. Business, however, came very often nearly to a standstill. The heavy liquidations, which we have witnessed a month ago, seem to have come to an end. On the other hand there is apparently very little desire on the part of capitalists to take any new important commitments for the present time.

Swiss Government bonds are holding steady at a level which lies approximately in the middle between the highest and lowest prices which have been recorded this year. French bonds have advanced several points, being stimulated by the ever progressing re-establishment of the French monetary and financial situation. A new 3¾% French Loan in conversion of the 4% Grand Réseaux 1937-39 will soon be presented for subscription at the price of 97½%, maturing in 1945. German bonds have improved despite the fact that the Swiss-German trade negociations seem to encounter some difficulties.