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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

M. HENRI CORREVON †.

M. Henri Correvon, the Geneva botanist, has died at the age of 84, at Herisau, where he was undergoing an operation. He was the *doyen* of cultivators of mountain plants and a prolific writer on horticultural subjects.

Correvon was keenly interested in the flora of the alps of Western Europe, which he knew intimately, and published his first book on the subject in 1884. Before that he had written articles for the *Gardeners' Chronicle*. Correvon had the love of flowers in his blood, for his maternal grandfather established a nursery garden at Yverdon (Vaud) in 1828, and while still a lad he began the cultivation of alpine plants there, and issued a small trade catalogue. A move to a larger place at Plainpalais, Geneva, followed soon after the old Vaud nursery garden had been destroyed by a terrific hailstorm in 1887, and there Correvon acquired the old horticultural establishment of Paris Frères. He remained there till the spread of the town compelled a move to more suitable quarters, which he found at Chêne-Bourg, where in 1902 he established the garden that has since become famous as Floraire.

Almost from his boyhood Correvon had toyed with the idea of making a garden in the mountains for the growing of plants among their natural surroundings, and in 1885 he and his sons made a small rock garden near the Weisshorn Hotel, in the Val d'Anniviers, at an elevation of about 6,000ft. Four years afterwards, with the help of Sir John Lubbock, afterwards the first Lord Avebury, Professor G. J. Romanes, and other English friends, and the active co-operation of the association at Geneva for the protection of wild flowers, Correvon and his friend Dr. Goudet acquired a hill above the hamlet of Bourg-Saint-Pierre, on the road to the Great St. Bernard Pass, where, in spite of opposition from botanists and the local peasantry, he established a garden for the cultivation of plants from the mountains of the world. This garden, which he named Linnaea in compliment to the Linnaean Society, was carried on successfully till the outbreak of the War compelled its transferrence to the University of Geneva, the authorities of which use it as a summer laboratory for botanical students. The success of this garden led to the establishment of others, like La Rambertia, which commemorates Eugène Rambert, the poet botanist, and is on the top of the Rochers-de-Naye above Montreux, and several more in Switzerland, as well as in Austria, Germany, and France, on the Italian alps, and at Disko, in Greenland.

In founding these mountain gardens Correvon had the spread of interest in alpine flowers at heart and the protection of the rarer species. Protection was needed against despoilers of the native flowers who systematically uprooted them for subsequent sale, and in an endeavour to control the traffic in plants Correvon and Goudet long ago formed a committee of the Swiss Alpine Club. Gradually this developed into an international association for the suppression of the traffic in wild mountain plants, and over 30 years ago the association gave place to the organization known at Naturschutz. Correvon realized that the spoliation of the Swiss alpine flora might also be checked by the wholesale propagation of the plants for distribution among nurserymen, and he made this a prominent part of the business that he carried on at Floraire.

To anyone interested in mountain plants Correvon, with the experience of a lifetime behind him, made a delightful companion, and a day's clamber with him among the flowers he knew so well was an exhilarating and memorable experience. He specialized in mountain plants and had many hints about the cultivation of such things for his friends, among whom were most of the keen amateurs of the last generation in this country. Numerous British visitors were his guests at his alpine garden of Floraire at Geneva and of La Chevrerie on the Jura, where, among others, Sir Austen Chamberlain used to go every year and make a choice of alpine plants for his rock garden. Correvon was also a well-known alpinist and was one of the founders of the association of British members of the Swiss Alpine Club. He was always an ardent admirer of Great Britain and zealously supported its policy and ideals in Switzerland.

PICCARD PLANS DEEPEST DIVE.

The Swiss professor, Auguste Piccard, of stratosphere fame, is planning to break all records for deep-sea diving.

Recently, in Brussels, he told of his plan to go down to a possible depth of five miles to study life at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean. He may use, he said, a spherical gondola made of glass.

The professor has been carrying out tests in his laboratory throughout the winter.

SWISS NATIONAL BANK.

On May 6th, the gold reserves of the Swiss National Bank amounted to 2.472 million Swiss francs; discounts and advances on securities reached 214.8 millions. The notes in circulation (1.747 millions) and the other liabilities at sight (1.236 millions) were covered by 82.8%.

SWISS EXPEDITION TO HIMALAYAS.

Under the patronage and with the financial help of the Swiss Alpine Club a Swiss Himalayan Expedition has been organized, and has now left Zürich for India.

The expedition includes M. André Roch, of Geneva, as leader; M. Ernest Huber, a Zürich engineer, who will do the mapping; and two well-known Swiss guides, M. David Zogg, of Arosa, and M. Fritz Steuri, jun., of Grindelwald. M. Roch was a member of the Dyrenfurth Himalayan expedition and has made several visits to the Rocky Mountains. The expedition will proceed to the Garhwal Himalaya (on the north border of the United Provinces), and when on the spot will select the mountains to be explored and possibly climbed.

EXTENSION OF MILITARY TRAINING.

As no referendum had been asked for by the electorate, the Federal law providing for the extension of the period of military training came into force in Switzerland on the 15th of this month. Recruits called up after June will remain an extra month under training, making a total of four months.

SWISS INTERNATIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL.

Lucerne.

Preparations for the International Festival weeks are proceeding apace. The following dates are settled: August 3, Toscanini concert; 4, Gigli recital; 5, Paderewski recital; 7, symphony concert, Sir Adrian Boult and Casals; 9, chamber music, Busch Quartet and Reginald Kell (clarinet); 11, symphony concert, Ansermet and Rachmaninov; 12, concert by the Strasburg Cathedral chorus, with J. Bonnet (organ); 14, Kipnis recital; 16 and 17, Verdi's 'Requiem,' conducted by Toscanini; 21, symphony concert, Bruno Walter; 23, song recital by Ria Ginster and Hermann Schey, with Othmar Schoeck at the piano; 25, symphony concert, Fritz Busch; 27 and 28, concerts by the Sistina Chapel choir, conducted by Lorenzo Perosi; 29, symphony concert, Toscanini and Horowitz.

There will be religious plays at Einsiedeln from July 1st to August 30, and Tell plays at Altdorf from July 9 to September 10. All information from the Secretary of the International Music Festival, Offizial Verkehrsbureau, Lucerne.

Geneva.

The international competition for performers, which will take place at the Conservatoire from June 26th to July 8th, is open to pianists, singers, violinists, flutists, oboists, clarinettists and bassoonists of both sexes, aged not less than fifteen and not more than thirty by June 30th. An orchestral concert will be given on July 8th to introduce the prize-winners; this will be broadcast by the Société Suisse de Diffusion and the New York National Broadcasting Company. The honorary committee is presided over by Ph. Etter, the President of the Swiss Confederation, and Paderewski.

This committee of patronage consists of Ansermet, S. Baud-Bovy, Madame Cheridjian-Charrey, André Marescotti, Frank Martin and Alexandre Mottu, with Henri Gagnebin, the Director of the Conservatoire, as president.

SWISS STUDY RHONE PLAN.

A plan has been placed before both the Swiss and French Governments for opening the Rhone River to navigation as far as Geneva.

The cost of the work is estimated at about £5,000,000 and it is claimed that harnessing the Rhone for trade would be of considerable benefit to both countries.

At present all Switzerland's water-imported goods come by the Rhine, via Rotterdam and Germany. Much of this commerce comes from the Mediterranean, and to route it through Marseilles to Switzerland would obviously be a great saving in cost and time.

From Switzerland's point of view the greatest advantage of widening the Rhone would be to ensure what is called "economic neutrality." That is, Switzerland would have two routes to the sea and so would not be dependent on any one country.

The importance of this consideration lies in the fact that 30 per cent. of all Switzerland's imports are water-borne, including a larger proportion of grain imports.

The prospect of the Rhone as a trade river is particularly important to many Swiss eyes just now on account of the tense international situations. For Switzerland remembers all too well the days during the World War when the Rhine was closed in defiance of treaty obligations and for a while it looked as if the country might starve.

After the war there was a grandiose plan for linking the Rhine and the Rhone and making it possible for ships to cross Europe from Marseilles to Rotterdam and Antwerp. The plan has been put forward again and again in the past 20 years but has so far made little progress owing to the immense cost.

Opening up the Rhone to navigation as far as Geneva is, however, a much simpler proposition. There are, it is claimed, very few engineering difficulties.

At present the Rhone is navigable as far as Seyssel, France, for boats of shallow draft. Seyssel is 25 miles from Geneva. Between the two towns there is only one serious obstacle to be overcome, the gorge known as the "Perte du Rhone." Here the river is completely blocked at periods of low water by huge boulders.

Engineers declare that it would not take overmuch ingenuity to take the boulders away and widen the gorge. Then by the construction of a series of locks between Lyon and Geneva, canal boats would be able to sail into the south of Switzerland.

SWISS LOAN TO GERMANY REFUSED.

After the return of Dr. Funk, Minister of Economic Affairs and President of the Reichsbank, from Berne, the negotiations about German-Swiss trade were resumed in Berlin on Monday.

The Federal Government, it is stated, have given new instructions to the Swiss delegation, headed by Herr Hötz, of the Federal Department of Public Economy. The instructions will probably deal with the question of German tourists and imports. In 1938 Swiss imports from Germany dropped by about £1,200,000, and on the other

CITY SWISS CLUB

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Le Comité.