

# Lecture on Major Davel

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"La famine, avec ses conséquences atroces, est à l'œuvre dans l'immense Russie; les épidémies déciment les populations. En Europe centrale, des années de sous-alimentation ont atteint dans sa force vive la génération qui grandit. Les régions dévastées du Nord de la France et de la Belgique témoignent tragiquement des temps terribles que nous avons vécus. Enfin, dans le proche Orient, déjà si éprouvé, les massacres et les incendies ont accumulé à nouveau les ruines. L'Europe, épuisée par la guerre, se débat dans les affres de la misère.

"Et ce n'est pas tout: les pays jusqu'ici épargnés passent maintenant par la crise intense du chômage qui atteint des millions d'ouvriers. C'est la déchéance et la démolition frappant à la porte de milliers de foyers. En face de ces faits, deux voies sont ouvertes: ou bien les peuples, dominés par l'égoïsme, refuseront de s'entraider et poursuivront la satisfaction de rêves orgueilleux de grandeur et de prospérité exclusivement matérielles, ils continueront à nourrir des pensées de vengeance et de haine; ou bien ils entendront l'appel du Sauveur et accueilleront son Message de paix, d'espérance et de vie. N'est-ce pas lui qui a dit: 'Aimez-vous les uns les autres. Aimez vos ennemis. Heureux les miséricordieux.'"

"... Si les hommes et les femmes d'aujourd'hui veulent reconstruire ce que ceux d'hier ont détruit, ils doivent s'inspirer d'un esprit nouveau, celui de l'Evangile.

"Membres de l'Eglise de Jésus-Christ, prenons pleinement conscience de nos responsabilités, de tous les points de la terre faisons monter vers Dieu nos ardentes intercessions pour tous ceux qui souffrent, pour toutes les victimes du péché. Les appels de toutes les œuvres de secours sont pressants, ils ont déjà été entendus, mais les besoins sont immenses. Songeons, en particulier, à l'infinité de millions d'enfants, affamés, abandonnés, orphelins et malades. Ouvrons nos cœurs à la charité du Sauveur, et nous aurons la joie d'entendre le Maître nous dire: 'J'ai eu faim et vous m'avez donné à manger, j'étais nu et vous m'avez vêtu. Ce que vous avez fait à l'un de ces plus petits de mes frères, vous l'avez fait à moi-même.'"

"La Croix du Christ, inspiratrice de la Croix-Rouge, s'est dressée au-dessus de la lutte implacable, elle a inspiré l'amour pour les blessés, les prisonniers et les mourants. Qu'elle soit au milieu des ruines la gage de l'amour de notre Dieu, la promesse de la délivrance. Que les Eglises du Christ deviennent de plus en plus les fermes soutiens de la Justice et de la Paix.

"Et nous tous, qui nous réclamons du beau nom de chrétien, travaillons à préparer un monde nouveau et à rapprocher les cœurs. Abstenons-nous de tout sentiment de haine, de toute parole mauvaise vis-à-vis des autres peuples. En face des résultats maudits du matérialisme et du culte de la force brutale, montrons à la jeunesse la voie meilleure qui mène à l'apaisement universel si ardemment désiré. Le temps presse, l'humanité souffrante crie à l'aide... Refusons-nous d'entendre sa voix?"

"Que Dieu nous accorde le secours de son Esprit, qu'il inspire nos décisions, et que gloire soit rendue à Son Saint Nom en Jésus-Christ!"

## PROF. ZSCHOKKE ON THE SWISS NATIONAL PARK.

It was a very representative Swiss audience which listened to Professor Zschokke's lecture on March 29th which the Nouvelle Société Helvétique had arranged at King George's Hall. Not a few English people were noticed, too, amongst the some 120 listeners, taking down plenty of notes and cheering the wonderful slides presented by the illustrious scholar. The Swiss Minister, who had graciously consented to take the Chair, told the audience that he was glad to welcome Professor Zschokke, for three reasons, because he was a great man in the world of science, because he came from Basle University, and, thirdly, because he happened to be an old friend of his, he (the Minister) having had the privilege of taking part, when a student, in some of the zoological excursions arranged by Professor Zschokke.

In the beginning of his exposé, Professor Zschokke dealt with the sad story of how, under the influence of growing industrialism and also owing to the improvement of firearms, game, birds and fish had decreased in our country at an alarming pace. Whereas in the 16th century the bear was frequent in the Alps and the Jura, the last specimen was killed in Basle in 1803 and in the Grisons in 1910. The last Lammergeier was shot in 1896. Towards the end of the last century, humanity became aware that the extinguishing of whole species of animals could not continue as it had done, and a movement to preserve what could be preserved was started. The outcome of this was the foundation of the Yellowstone Park in America in 1872 and of the National Park in Switzerland in 1910. This park, which is situated in the lower Engadine, extends east and south of the line Scans, Zernez, Schuls as far as the Italian frontier. In its area no shot is ever heard, nor is an axe allowed to be used. It is a closed field for scientific investigation. Tourists are permitted to pass through it and enjoy the spectacle of its fascinating wilderness.

It would be too long to write in full detail about the marvellous slides of Alpine plants and animals which Prof. Zschokke showed his delighted audience. It may, however, be mentioned that the bear has reappeared and that two years ago a colony of ibex (Steinböcke) was introduced into the park which has already increased to 50 specimens. Whereas in 1910 there were only a few chamois in the area, about 2,000 can be found there now. The red deer, moreover, which had disappeared from the region, came back from Austria, and the roe, the white hare, the white grouse and the golden eagle can all be watched there

now. A number of scientific treatises have already been written on different subjects connected with the park, and the next generation will have every opportunity to feel, when making excursions in this region, the real scent of an aboriginal wilderness.

But the maintenance of this institution is naturally a costly matter, as a number of keepers have to be paid. It is, therefore, natural that the "Ligue Suisse pour la Protection de la Nature", which, together with the Swiss Society for Natural Science, has started the movement and wants to develop its work, must increase its members more and more. Prof. Zschokke made a special appeal to the audience to join it, and this was very heartily endorsed by the President, Mr. J. Baer. Unfortunately, very few applications have so far been received, but the Secretary of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, 28, Red Lion Square, W.C. 1., will be glad to pass on to the League any more applications which may be sent to him. The minimum subscription being only 2 frs., it should not be impossible to get at least a dozen new subscribers out of the London Colony, after we have witnessed in such a splendid way what great work is done by the organisation. P. L.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

The Editor is not responsible for the opinions expressed by his Correspondents

### PROFESSOR EINSTEIN.

To the Editor of "The Swiss Observer." Sir,—Many of the Swiss Colony may not be aware that Einstein is a Swiss citizen. As a matter of fact, he acquired Swiss nationality in 1901, after living in Switzerland for about five years. Although he is German by birth, he came from Italy, where his parents were residing at that time, and tried to be admitted as a student at Zurich University. Admission was refused because he had not yet passed any matriculation examination, so he went to Aarau to make up this deficiency.

Einstein is not the only one who became famous as a student of the Aarauer Kantonschule. We might mention a great many well-known scientists and writers, such as Frank Wedekind. Even to-day Einstein admits that the education he received at the said school was an excellent one, and he says that the Aarauer Kantonschule was a *Musterschule* in every respect.

One of his biographers says that, should anyone assert that Einstein as a scientist was made at Aarau, he would not be far wrong. He then only expected to become a school teacher, and we find him as a private teacher afterwards in Schaffhausen and Berne. He was helped in his studies by his fellow student, a Czech lady, whom he married in 1903 and to whom he owes much of his success, although some years afterwards he divorced her and married his cousin, Elsie Einstein, of Berlin.

His friend at Zurich University, Marcel Grossmann, recommended Einstein to Mr. Haller, then Director of the Swiss Federal Patent Office, where Einstein got a position as a technical expert. Here he found time to devote to his studies, and sought to become a Professor at Berne University. Finally, after long waiting, he succeeded, but did not hold the chair very long, as he became "Professor extraordinarius" at Zurich University (Subject: Theoretical Physics) in 1909. Two years later he was called as a Professor to Prague University, and in 1912 he came back again as a Professor to the Swiss Polytechnic School.

Since 1914 he has been a member of the Berlin Academy and Professor of the University. His works on Relativity were commenced in 1907 and finished in Berlin. Henri Poincaré, the well-known French scientist, and Mme. Curie recommended Einstein to Zurich University, and Henri Poincaré even went so far as to say that any University might well be proud of such a young, but highly promising scientist as Einstein.

Einstein still regards himself as a Swiss citizen, and if he has not complied with the regulations regarding Swiss leaving their country, this does not, *eo ipso*, deprive him of his rights as a Swiss citizen. Unless he expressly renounces these rights, he remains Swiss.

Einstein was at first not wanted by Germany, and only after his success was evident, and when he had reached the top of the ladder, was he called to Berlin. These facts should prove interesting to the many admirers of Einstein among us. Yours truly, London, April 3rd, 1923. A. G. PLUSS.

## GEX-COLLET FUND.

"The Geneva Section of the Swiss Alpine Club are raising a fund for the assistance of the widow and two children of the guide Henri Gex-Collet, of Champéry, who was killed last winter by an avalanche while leading a ski tour of the Geneva Section."

"This is the first occasion on which a guide has been killed while accompanying a Section tour. Gex-Collet was not insured against accident on winter tours, and consequently his widow and two children, one aged 2 years and the other 6 months, are left unprotected for. The ambition of the Geneva Section is to raise sufficient funds to ensure the education of the two children. It was felt that members of this Association, many of whom knew Gex-Collet personally, would like to have an opportunity of subscribing to this most worthy cause."

"The Hon. Treasurer, J. A. B. Bruce, Selborne Lodge, Guildford, will be pleased to receive donations, however small, for transmission to Geneva."

The above is a copy of the circular which has been issued by the Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club.

We are very pleased to see the interest which has been taken by our British friends towards the widow and the two children left by this Swiss guide. It is a very nice and charitable action on the part of the British Association, and we take this opportunity to thank them for it. At the same time, should this announcement come under the notice of some of our Swiss members of the Swiss Alpine Club in England, may we ask them to copy the example of our British friends and send a small donation to the Treasurer of the British Association, Mr. J. A. B. Bruce, of Selborne Lodge, Guildford.

## LECTURE ON MAJOR DAVEL.

As was to be expected, the Rev. Hoffmann-de Visme made the first lecture, for which the Nouvelle Société Helvétique returned to their old home at 28, Red Lion Square, a real treat for those who attended it on April 13th. He very happily presented the affair of Major Davel first from the contemporary London point of view. In 1723, when this singular venture of a political mystic, as was Davel, took place, there were between 700 and 800 Vaudois living in London, and they could follow the events in Lausanne closely by reading the accurate reports which the English dailies of the period published. Mr. Hoffmann had taken the trouble to look them up in the British Museum. (We shall publish a few of them before long in the literary page of "The Swiss Observer.")

After having reconstructed the outward events, the speaker dissected Major Davel's motives and psychology very cleverly. This political revolutionary is remarkable for his great kindness and unselfishness. It was these qualities which made him shun disclosing his plans for the overthrow of the Bernese domination of the Canton de Vaud to a single living soul, so that he would not endanger anybody. He thought it sufficient to have ruminated the idea for years and years in his own mind. When on March 31st he marched with his battalion to Lausanne, which was deluded by his tale of an exceptional and secret mobilisation, he could naturally not convince his fellow-citizens at a moment's notice of the necessity of a revolution. He was cruelly let down by the councillors, who, pretending to fall in with his views, hastily despatched a messenger to Berne, asking for orders in this emergency. Davel was afterwards condemned by his fellow-citizens to have his hands and head cut off, but the Bernese Government, more generous, was satisfied with his being beheaded only.

It is characteristic of the man that he said to his torturers: "Ceci est douloureux assurément, mais je suis persuadé que vous souffrez autant que moi," and, when dying, feeling deeply convinced that God had bidden him do what he had done and that it would benefit his country ultimately, if not immediately, he exclaimed: "C'est ici le plus beau jour de ma vie."

Davel was a revolutionary who did not shun personal sacrifice; that is why he has been revenged by history and why his people now glorify him.

The Rev. Hoffmann was warmly thanked by the President for his extremely lucid, apt and very vividly delivered lectures. P. L.

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