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HOME NEWS

The 450th anniversary of the Battle of Murten (Morat) is being celebrated this week on the historic battle ground, both Federal and Cantonal authorities being present at the festivities. (Vide special article in another column.)

On account of the high-water level of the Rhine the lower parts of Schaffhausen are suffering from inundation, traffic on some of the streets having to be diverted.

The last chapter in a long-drawn-out controversy has just been closed by the decision of the Federal Tribunal in Lausanne, which upheld as just and fair an offer of Frs. 50,000 made by the Federal Council to the relatives of Private Ernst Oswald, of Sommeri (Thurgau), who, whilst guarding the frontier, was shot and seriously wounded by an Italian sentry in November, 1918. After protracted negotiations the Confederation obtained compensation from the Italian Government to the amount of Frs. 133,000, but unfortunately, before the amount was actually paid, the supposed beneficiary—and his mother who was depending on him—had already died. The relatives, i.e., eight brothers and sisters, put in a claim for the whole amount.

The Hôtel Montana in Montana (Valais) is to be acquired by the Confederation for the purpose of a military sanatorium in place of those recently closed at Leysin and Davos; the price is said to be just over half-a-million francs.

The cantonal hospital of Olten has benefitted to the amount of Frs. 50,000 under the will of the late Mr. Emile Kaiser, of Grellingen, who died recently at Dornach (Solothurn).

Five people were seriously injured last Sunday at Basle when the local motor-cycle club held a race meeting. One of the competitors, Walter Widmer, of Liestal, was having a trial spin when all of a sudden the steering gear refused to act. Before he could stop the engine, he was thrown off his machine, which raced along for a short distance, knocking down four spectators, who, together with the cyclist, are now in the cantonal hospital.

Two cyclists, Messrs. Favre (50) and Hubler (46), who were walking at the side of their machines on the road from St. Blaise to Neuchâtel, were knocked down by a motorist, Mr. Reinhold, the son of a La Chaux-de-Fonds manufacturer. The former was killed on the spot, whilst the latter was taken in a precarious condition to the hospital. Pourtalès at Neuchâtel; the motorist has been placed under arrest.

THE GENEVA FRACAS.

(From the Daily Telegraph, June 24th.)

At Tuesday's session of the Swiss Parliament M. Motta, Minister of Foreign Affairs, delivered a long statement as to the incidents which occurred recently in Geneva, particularly the Fascist fight with Genevese Socialists which took place on June 12th. The Italian Government's protest to the Swiss Government was confirmed by M. Motta, who told the House that he had received a visit from the Italian Minister at Berne, Signor Garbasso, who informed him that the Italian Government had decided that unless they could have the assurance of the Swiss Government that similar incidents would not be repeated, no further Italian delegations would be sent to Geneva to attend any of the League of Nations meetings, as it was impossible for them to fulfil their duties except in a peaceful atmosphere.

M. Motta, on his part, had explained to the Italian Minister that the Swiss Federal Council had no power to forbid Socialist meetings being held in Geneva, and that, in fact, the regrettable disturbance in question had been caused by Fascists, most of them Italians residing in Geneva, who had gone to a meeting of Genevese Socialists. M. Motta further informed Parliament that he had had a consultation with the Genevese authorities, who, according to the Swiss Cantonal law,

have home-rule regarding local bye-laws, and had impressed upon the President of the Republic and the Canton of Geneva that it would be necessary in future to be more vigilant and to take adequate measures to prevent such incidents, forbidding, if necessary, any public meetings during the League of Nations sessions at Geneva. Above all, added the Swiss Foreign Minister, it was incumbent upon officials of the League of Nations and the I.L.O. to abstain from taking part in public gatherings, especially in view of the fact that they enjoy diplomatic immunity. Moreover, such incidents not only affected the situation at Geneva as the seat of the League, but also Switzerland's relations with other countries.

These declarations of the Swiss Foreign Minister came as a bombshell to the Genevese population, who declare that they are no longer masters in their own canton, if public meetings are to be denied them during all the gatherings of the League or the I.L.O. held in Geneva, which are of almost constant occurrence. Public meetings are, indeed, the very life of the Genevese people, and to prohibit them would be to render their lives dull and dreary.

A NEW ALPINE HUT.

The neighbourhood of the Kistenpass, on the border between Claris and the Grisons, is the proposed site of a new Alpine hut. The exceptional beauty of the surrounding glaciers and rock formations should prove to tourists irresistible, all the more so as the spot is the centre for a number of fascinating climbs in the summer and exhilarating ski tours in the winter. The hut, which will accommodate about 16 people, is being constructed by the Akademischer Alpenklub in Basle, in the name of which Prof. Fritz Zschokke, of the Basle University, is circulating a pressing appeal for financial contributions. Any remittances should be addressed to Herr Caspar Schmid, cand. med., care of Basle University.

"RIMEMBRANZE."

La meta della nostra gita, in quella splendida mattina di settembre, fu il castello Unterwalden; vollen rivedere, rivisitare quelle anguste mura, che s'ergono su quel poggio tutto verde, tanto pittoresco!

E così tutto solo lassù, quel vecchio castello, che un fascino ignoto lo circonda e lo fa prezioso e caro a noi bellinzonesi.

Salivamo lentamente, fra vigneti in piena maturanza ed i prati del paesello d'Artore, coi fieni di fresco recisi, riposanti in grandi mucchi, nell'attesa d'esser raccolti.

Una nebbietta bianca come una nuvola velava ancora ai nostri sguardi il bel panorama; ma la brezza montanina, che sorse poi col levar del sole, soffiò via quell'incomoda cortina che velava il paesaggio; l'arietta dolce, fresca, profumata dall'odor dei fieni, che sembra ringiovanire la natura, giocava nell'erba, bagnata ancora dalla rugiada... quanta pace lassù ai piedi di quel bruno colosso addormentato!

Sedute su quel tappeto naturale, color smeraldo, così in alto, si gode la poesia della montagna....

Il castello del Sasso Corbaro, a cui fanno ombra altri monti più alti, è maestoso ed austero; ha qualcosa di fantastico che richiama alla mente dominazioni, signorie, vittorie di indipendenza che s'intrecciano a ricordi più recenti e gloriosi....

Esso sorvive agli uragani e ai venti gelati; ai fulmini che saettano le sue mura vetuste....

La vista che si gode di lassù è incantevole; ai suoi piedi s'adagia la cittadina caratteristica, abbellita d'altri due castelli non meno vetusti, chiusa fra le loro storiche mura... baciata dal sole in un purissimo cielo d'autunno, fra la maestà severa delle montagne e lo scintillio iridescente delle acque del Ticino che si dilungano a perdita d'occhio fino al lago Maggiore....

L'isolamento dell'ora, la calma della natura in quella placida mattina soliva e pur fresca, mi faceva fantasticare... e perchè in quel momento, tutto poesia e pace, mi sovvenni di una giornata lontana, ma spiccatamente viva, della mia prima età giovanile?...

Gli ingegneri addetti ai lavori per il traforo del Gottardo, avevano organizzato uno sontuoso picnic appunto lassù al castello d'Unterwalden; forse per festeggiare il successo finale della colossale impresa, prima di abbandonare la nostra Turrita, prima di dire "ai dolci amici addio"....

Ero una dei piccoli invitati... ricordo che, noi del "mondo piccolo" portavamo sul dorso, nella salita, un gerletto di proporzioni minuscole, contenenti la frutta ed i dolci per il dessert.... V'erano

poi, dopo il pranzo, ogni genere di divertimenti per i grandi e per i piccoli, sul piazzale davanti alle vecchie rovine.

Ricordo, fra altro, una gara di corsa con premi; ed io li avevo ammirati quest'ultimi... avevo carcerati con occhio avido e pieno di speranza una bambola, un parasolino rosso... rammento ancora quella infantile, profonda sensazione di umiliazione, quando, avendo vinto un premio, mi presentarono invece, proprio come ad un "Tom-boy" una scatola contenente cento belle biglie di vetro a vari colori...

E sempre, pensando a te, o castello romito e tutto solo lassù, castello severo, testimone perenne ed impassibile delle vicende umane e del passaggio dei secoli, tu che domini la terra che mi vide nascere, provo l'amarezza dell'esilio... ed è con naturale accoramento che vi rivedo oggi, o monti, che pare sfidate con le vostre cime il cielo, o poggi ridenti, che intravedo nelle mie rapide corse traverso sogni belli d'anni che furono....

T. LUNGH-REZZONICO.

MORAT.

Depuis un certain temps, dans tous les cantons de la Suisse, on se réjouit pour assister à la manifestation patriotique du 450ème anniversaire de la victoire de Morat. Tous les journaux ont annoncé déjà une nombreuse participation.

Avant les nombreux participants de cette fête du 22 juin, nous voulons visiter cette jolie ville, pour en redire les origines, et nous les précéderons à la manifestation du neuvième centenaire de la glorieuse victoire du 22 juin 1476.

Cependant, pas plus que les savants, nous ne saurions déterminer exactement l'époque de la fondation de cette antique cité. Il paraît que Dame Histoire ne connaît point cette date. Il n'y a rien d'étonnant... si ce n'est qu'ici du moins, la science confesse humblement son ignorance. Elle s'en console pourtant en s'accordant l'innocent plaisir de faire remonter cette date à la nuit des temps. La nuit des temps règne souvent pour certaines sciences. Cependant la situation de Morat, la fertilité de son terrain, la beauté de son climat, nous autorisent à croire que, bien longtemps avant l'ère chrétienne, les rives de son lac étaient habitées. D'ailleurs, il est certain qu'une voie romaine franchissait son territoire; mais cette voie qui reliait Aventicum (Avenches) à Solodurum (Soleure), fut plus d'une fois fatale à la gracieuse cité de Mur-altum, car, à plusieurs reprises, elle fraya un passage aux hordes barbares qui ravagèrent l'Empire romain au 4ème siècle et plus tard, aux flots destructeurs des Sarazins qui envahirent Morat et Avenches. De là, nous viennent vraisemblablement les quelques traditions qui subsistent encore de nos jours à l'endroit de ces terribles conquérants. Les quelques monuments qui ont échappé aux dévastations des barbares, témoignent de la haute antiquité de Morat. Il nous reste entre autres, un certain nombre de vases, de monnaies, de médailles et autres objets de l'époque romaine; puis la mention de cette ville dans les actes du Concile d'Epogne au 6ème siècle.

La ville de Morat venait de passer un demi siècle sous la houlette des Evêques de Lausanne (1079—1128) lorsqu'elle vit s'élever, dans son voisinage, une nouvelle cité qui devait l'éclipser bien vite pour la dominer plus tard; cette soeur cadette était Fribourg. Elle eut pour fondateur ce même Duc Berthold IV auquel est attribué la restauration de Morat. Depuis cette date reculée, l'histoire nous montre ces deux villes presque toujours associées dans la bonne et la mauvaise fortune. Nous les voyons partager des destinées communes et subir ensemble la domination successive des Ducs de Zœhringen, des Comtes de Savoie, des Empereurs d'Allemagne, etc. et conquérir leur indépendance et leur autonomie en recevant le baptême du sang au même champ d'honneur.

Dans des circonstances diverses, Morat éprouva bien des vicissitudes. Au XIIème siècle, c'est le roi de Germanie, Conrad le Sabique qui l'assiège et la détruit de fond en comble; en 1416, c'est un incendie qui la consume; à peine relevée des ruines, elle vit ses murailles s'ébrécher et se trouver sous le feu de l'artillerie du Comte de Romont. Mais des retours de fortune viennent chaque fois réparer et compenser ces malheurs; la victoire du lendemain fait bien vite oublier les dangers et la frayeur de la veille. Le Duc Berthold IV ne se contenta point de reconstruire la ville que Conrad avait détruite et de la munir de puissants remparts, il lui octroya de plus grandes franchises et de nombreux privilèges. Il lui accorda le droit de se choisir son premier magistrat; il étendit sa juridiction sur tout le lac et sur plusieurs localités environnantes et dégrava de toute redevance certains établissements. Après l'incendie de 1416, la ville obtint de son