

La crise financière du Secrétariat des Suisses a l'étranger

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I was on duty at the time on the Passport Control at the Gare des Voyageurs. "B" made no sign to me, nor I to him, but I knew that he had succeeded, for as I formally bent over his passport, with others waiting behind him in the queue, he softly whistled a simple army bugle call which was a sign of success known to most British spies who had served in the Army.

Now for his story, told to me for the first time after a lapse of nearly fifteen years, and to my way of thinking, one of the finest jobs of real Secret Service I have ever heard of.

The information he got safely through was thought by the Allies to be incredible, but it turned out to be absolutely correct to the very detail, in the light of subsequent events.

The German Army in East Africa had been scattered, the "Koningsburg" had been sunk trying to bring relief in the back reaches and swamps of the Irrefugi River by the British Navy.

Gallant Commander.

Yet, despite this fact, the gallant commander, Lutnow, still carried on with his fighting against the English, and this without any kind of ammunition, stores, water or any form of field force equipment of any kind.

What supplies he got from time to time was by raiding and capture — and Berlin realised that help was essential to him at all costs. For this purpose, Germany constructed a super-Zeppelin, undoubtedly one of the most wonderful triumphs of rapid engineering ever achieved in the history of the world, and the plan was to send this airship on a "secret service mission" — that of carrying supplies to the beleaguered German African forces.

"It can't be done!" said the Allied Secret Service chiefs.

"I tell you it will," insisted "B."

"We need more proof," said his chiefs.

"I'll get it!" promised "B."

(TO BE CONTINUED).

MID SNOW AND ICE

(Continued).

The blizzard still raged. It continued for hour after hour. One of my companions said that he believed there was a Concordia Hut in the vicinity where lay food and warmth, and we wandered about desperately trying to find it, but without success. The snowstorm lasted sixteen hours, an eternity I never wish to live again, and night found us huddling together for warmth. We had not found the hut, we had no food, no shelter. Yet when dawn broke there was the hut some five hundred yards away. We had been as near as that to it all the time without once finding the shelter.

Terror-Stricken Tourist.

So much for my early days. Since I became a fully qualified guide I have had few such unpleasant experiences. Those I have had have been due to the negligence of other people rather than to any fault of mine. Of late Switzerland has been inundated with American tourists who go mountaineering because they consider it the thing to do — and this despite their lack of knowledge of rocklore. And so when one scales the rocky peaks in these days it is not so easy to rely on the discretion of the individual members of the party as it was in the past.

Only last year I was conducting a party of five along a certain well-known and well-marked track when we had to round a ticklish corner. Imagine a pathway two feet wide, a rocky wall on one side, and a sheer drop of several thousand feet on the other. It sounds difficult, but to the experienced climber such a path would present no terrors. One member of the party, however, although he posed as an expert, really knew nothing of mountaineering, and he was half-way round the bend when fear overcame him and he sank to his knees, declaring that he could go neither forward nor back. As he was roped in the centre of the line, with myself and two members of the party in front of him and two other behind, this was a really difficult situation. I tried to coax him forward, but without avail, and since we could not move unless the man conjured up his courage, I directed the two climbers nearest to him to pick him up. He struggled and fell — over the brink.

The rope saved him. We braced ourselves to support his weight and gradually hauled him back. Fortunately the cowardly climber had fainted, and we were able to carry him forward until we came to a point where we could all turn. By this time the man had recovered, but we were able to reach Interlaken without any further trouble. Still, that happening on the corner was a ticklish moment.

Retrieving Alpine Axe.

On another occasion we were crossing a snow slope when a member of the party slipped, fell, and rolled headlong down the slope. Here again the rope saved him, but, in the struggle to pull the unlucky climber back, I lost my ice axe, and it tumbled down the slope until it caught and held itself in the snow some hundred yards down. Now it is a point of Alpine etiquette that an ice axe must not be lost, and it is a point that I have

always rigorously observed. Consequently there was nothing for it but to descend the slope and retrieve it — a hazardous business. It was obviously unfair to imperil the other climbers by descending with the aid of the rope, and so, despite their protests, I untied myself and went down the slope alone, digging my way down with climbing irons. And then — I slipped.

I thought that it was certain death, and so it would have been had not the lucky chance of a lifetime pulled me up. Something sticking out of the snow stayed my course, and I was able to regain my balance. My life had been saved by my ice axe. Had I missed it by an inch either way, this article would never have seen the light. But I climbed back to safety.

LA CRISE FINANCIERE DU SECRETARIAT DES SUISSES A L'ETRANGER.

Le secrétariat des Suisses à l'étranger, bien qu'ayant réalisé depuis deux ans de sérieuses compressions budgétaires, traverse une crise financière assez sérieuse et fait appel de nouveau à la générosité du public. La haute utilité de cette institution ressort notamment du fait que, en dépit du régime d'économies auquel elle est soumise, son activité ne cesse de s'accroître.

Rappelons que cette œuvre est dirigée par une commission des Suisses à l'étranger (par abréviation S. E.) présidée par M. E. Koch, de Soleure, un des dirigeants de la Semaine suisse, qui est en même temps membre du comité central de la Nouvelle Société helvétique. Ces deux associations ont créé une Union des Suisses à l'étranger, qui, par des cotisations régulières, assure au secrétariat des ressources fixes: Il est à souhaiter que toutes les personnes soucieuses des intérêts des S. E. auxquelles leur situation matérielle le permet, adhèrent sans tarder à l'Union.

Rappelons que le secrétariat des S. E. a pour objet d'établir une liaison régulière entre les Suisses de la mère-patrie et les communautés helvétiques dispersées dans le monde. Vu la crise économique actuelle, cette liaison paraît être d'une nécessité plus urgente que jamais. Nos confédérés du vingt troisième canton sont en effet les meilleurs agents de notre commerce d'exportation, qui est actuellement exposé à de graves dangers. Il importe de renouer des liens économiques qui se détendent et de renforcer le rayonnement de la Suisse à l'étranger.

A cette fin, le secrétariat des S. E. a créé au dehors deux cents groupes de la N. S. H., et leur nombre s'accroît constamment. Il serait trop long de rappeler ici toutes les œuvres issues de cette collaboration, des conférences, du service des films cinématographiques et des bibliothèques à la Maison suisse de vacances de Rhazüns, pour n'en citer que quelques-unes.

Les résultats de cette activité sont acquis, et ils se consolident toujours davantage. Il serait douloureux de voir compromettre les fruits de douze ans de labeur, au moment même où ils mûrissent d'une façon réjouissante. A l'étranger, les tâches qu'ont assumées ces citoyens désintéressés sont considérées partout comme étant du ressort des pouvoirs publics, et non de l'activité privée. Le zèle dont témoignent les amis des S. E. n'en est que plus méritoire et digne d'intérêt.

R. B.-G.

DER NEUE PESTALOZZI-KALENDER JAHRGANG 1933.

(Zwei Teile und Ausgaben für Schüler und
Schülerinnen) Preis Fr. 2.90
(Verlag Kaiser & Co., A.-G., Bern).

Was schenken wir unsern Buben und Mädchen zu Weihnachten? Die beste Antwort auf diese Frage lautet immer noch: Pestalozzikalender. Die gefällige Gediegenheit der äusseren Ausstattung schon ist ein Sinnbild für die Liebe und Sorgfalt, welche die Herausgeber dem vielseitigen Inhalt zuteil werden liessen. Ausser den Tabellen, geschichtlichen und statistischen Angaben, dem Rüstzeug also, das der Schüler immer zur Verfügung haben muss, ist alles übrige, Bilder und Texte, durchwegs erneuert worden. Aus allen Gebieten menschlicher Arbeit, aus dem Wundergarten der Natur, wird dem Leser Wichtiges, Fesselndes, und Neues dargeboten und zwar in einer Form, welche Bildung und Lernen zu einer Lieblingsbeschäftigung gestalten müssen. Ueberall ist Anregung die Fülle ausgestreut, selbständige Arbeit und eigenes Nachdenken zu fördern. Dies ist ja gerade das hohe, erzieherische Ziel, welches sich das verdienstliche, dabei so billige Jugend- und Volksbuch gesteckt hat.

Für das Auslandschweizerkind gewinnt der Pestalozzikalender aber noch eine besondere Bedeutung, schlägt er doch geistige Brücken zur Heimat und legt Zeugnis ab von Schweizer Art und Sinn. Uebrigens gibt es von diesem Jugendbuch auch eine französische schweizerische (Almanach Pestalozzi, Preis Fr. 2.50) und ein italienisch — schweizerische Ausgabe (Almanacco Pestalozzi, Preis Fr. 2.60) in je einem Bande.

SUZANNE HOFFMANN-DE VISME †

We deeply regret to inform our readers, of the passing away of Mme. Suzanne Hoffmann-de Visme, wife of M. Hoffmann-de Visme, Pasteur of the l'Eglise Suisse in London. The funeral service will be held at the Swiss Church, 79, Endell Street, W.C.2, on Monday, October 31st, at 12.30.

Suzanne de Visme, was born on the 29th of September, 1885 in Paris, the daughter of Prof. Dr. Jean de Visme, Doctor of Divinity and Directeur de l'Ecole préparative de théologie de Paris, who was also grand-uncle of her future husband; she was therefore born into a milieu of great pedagogical principles. At an early age she already took a great interest in the Maison Verte at Montmartre and at Bagnolet in the suburbs of Paris, a home for young boys, where her cousin and future fiancée was an active worker.

After the death of her mother — she was then only nine years of age — she changed her abode to Geneva. In the summer of 1909 she was married, and the young couple installed themselves in London, where they kept an open house for all young people who came within their range of activity. It was in the real sense of the word an open house, Mme. Hoffmann-de Visme was an ideal hostess, for everyone she had a smile, nobody left her home without taking away some comfort, some good advice; her calm, her infinite understanding was indeed a blessing to all those young people who looked at life through rose coloured glasses, her house was a home from home.

Soon the small family of two received some additions, and the 5 daughters and one son were a great joy and comfort to her; she was proud of her children, and on them she bestowed all her motherly love. Although her time was now taken up with looking after her own children, she never neglected to take an active interest in the welfare of the little ones in the colony, of those who needed her assistance, her help and her love. She was an enthusiastic collaborator of the "Fêtes de Noël," and for 18 years, since the foundation of the Sunday School, she was the heart and soul of this institution. The children adored her, her gentle and yet firm authority created a discipline which was really lovable, on them she bestowed her love, to them she became a real mother, and their hearts went out to her, because they knew that she had a real understanding of their little troubles.

Her collaborators during these long years of unselfish work will be a great testimonial of high achievements.

Who, amongst our readers, does not remember the various performances at Caxton and Central Hall, on the occasion of the Fête Suisse, where between 30 and 50 little ones gladdened the hearts of a large audience, it need hardly be mentioned here, that Mme. Hoffmann-de Visme, together with her faithful co-workers was responsible for these most interesting performances.

But her love for the children did not make her forget her duty towards the older girls. Every Thursday, Saturday and Sunday was devoted to them, at Social reunions or at sewing classes, etc., — where she was assisted by the late Mme. Aguet, who was an untiring collaborator.

The poor too, had in her a great friend, innumerable visits she paid to them, consoled them, fortified them in their faith, encouraged them to make a brave fight, and many a heart which had almost lost courage, started to beat with new hope, many a tear shed in despair was thus dried.

Yet during all these labours of love, there lurked the danger of a terrible disease, which when it first was detected in 1929 had already advanced in an alarming manner. Cancer of the breast laid this noble life low. Dr. Rast, our eminent countryman and an experienced surgeon, fought tooth and nail to curb the spread of this ravaging disease. In 1931 the patient, after an operation, seemed to take a turn for the better, hopes ran high, and the writer remembers with what joy he greeted Mme. Hoffmann-de Visme that year on the occasion of the City Swiss Banquet which she attended together with her husband. Once again in the autumn of 1931, she took up her activities, with new hopes and new energy, and the most successful Children's Bazaar of last