



THE GEORGIAN MESSENGER

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The Truth regarding the Tiflis Municipal Elections.

In the Transcaucasus the most important elements in the population are three in number—Georgians, Armenians and Tartars. In the territory where each of these nationalities are centred, there have been formed at the present time three independent republics: Georgia, Armenia and Aderbeijan. These peoples have dwelt side by side from the most ancient times: they are bound together by unity of interest, and the fundamental requirement for the prosperity of each one of them is that close friendship and solidarity should exist between them and their neighbors. The utmost efforts of all the political leaders and the best people of these nationalities should be directed towards putting this friendship on a firm basis. Such is our view of the matter: our contemporary, apparently, thinks otherwise. We refer to the „Trans-Caucasian Post“, which also appears in English. This paper permits itself such utterances against the Georgian Republic and its government as can merely tend to make worse, and by no means to better, mutual relations between the two neighboring and brother peoples—between the Georgians and the Armenians. Regarding the above, excellent testimony is afforded by an article in the „Trans-Caucasian Post“ (No. 2), entitled „The Tiflis Municipal Elections“.

Taking advantage of the fact that the English readers are but slightly acquainted with local conditions, and are unable to check the data utilized in the article, the author of the same gives entirely incorrect facts, and draws deductions from these same in a prejudiced manner. Upon this er-

roneous basis, he endeavors to discredit Georgia and her government in the eyes of the English readers.

On the one hand he quotes the Tiflis Municipal Duma in 1917, when the number of voters reached 150,000 persons, on the other, the data for the same elections in 1919, when the number of voters was somewhat over 70,000. The author calls attention to this striking difference in figures, and explains it by the fact that the Georgian Government, after the declaration of independence (May 26, 1918), „wishing from the very first to „nationalize“ Tiflis, the „socialistic“ Government of the newly-formed Georgian Republic issued a fresh antidemocratic electoral law, which made void the electoral franchise of almost every citizen of this town, who was not a Georgian“.

In 1917, however, the paper states: „Georgia was then still dependent of Russia and elections were conducted under the... democratic law, issued by the Russian Provisional Government“.

This is the manner in which the writer explains the sharp falling off in the number of voters between 1917 and 1919, but this explanation is prejudiced and inaccurate, as the reader can see for himself from the following exposition of the true state of affairs.

In 1917 Georgia was a Russian province, while Tiflis was the center of the Caucasian front. There was a very large Russian garrison in our city. All military persons, soldiers as well as officers, were registered as voters. About 30,000 of them voted at that time together with the actual citizens of Tiflis. After this, under the influence of the bolshevik propaganda, the Russian Army left the Turkish front, and together with it they

abandoned Tiflis. In view of this one single fact, the number of voters dropped off by thirty thousand.

Further, as we pointed out above, Tiflis, as the base of the Caucasian army, was crammed with various organizations for supplying the army and the like. In them were employed thousands of Russian soldiers and officials, who were likewise registered and gave their votes. When these institutions were liquidated, these people left Tiflis, and this in its turn contributed to lowering the number of voters.

As the „Trans-Caucasian Post“ correctly remarks, when the first elections (in 1917) were going on, Georgia was a Russian province, and, for that reason, all citizens of Russia took part in the elections, no matter what part of the country he came from. When the present elections took place, Georgia was an independent state, and as always, the franchise is enjoyed by the citizens of that state, and by them only.

It would never enter the minds of the Englishmen who are at present in Tiflis to demand that they be registered here as voters: they cast their votes at home in England, of which country they are citizens.

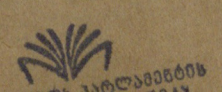
In Tiflis, however, in 1917, there lived a very large number of inhabitants of other parts of Russia—above all Armenian refugees from the districts of Turkish Armenia which had been devastated by the war. All these persons who are not citizens of our Republic, voted in the 1917 elections, but naturally could not be registered in 1919.

These, then, are the reasons which brought about the diminution of the number of voters between 1917 and 1919. Had the author of the article in the Trans-Caucasian Post been guided by

the sole desire of giving his English readers a dispassionate view of political events here, in Georgia, he would have given them the true facts in the case, as we have set them forth above. His aim, however, was not to give a true statement of the facts, but to lessen the prestige of the Republic of Georgia, and for this purpose he did not hesitate to deviate from the truth.

The „Trans-Caucasian Post“ alleges the Georgian Government promulgated an antidemocratic franchise law. This is likewise untrue: in Georgia, both for general and for local elections, the full electoral franchise is enjoyed by all citizens of Georgia, without regard to nationality, religious belief, sex, or property qualifications. The elections are direct, secret and proportional. The reader can easily see for himself that the law is as democratic as any in the world.

The paper gives the make-up of the Municipal Duma in 1917 according to nationalities: at that time there were elected 47 Armenians and 39 Georgians. These figures are then compared with those of the recent elections: in 1919 there are 4 Armenians and 84 Georgians. This fact is explained by the author as being the result of the policy of nationalization pursued by the Georgian Government. In this case as well the „Trans-Caucasian Post“ intentionally keeps silent about the fact that almost half the Armenian members elected in 1917 were *not candidates of the Armenian parties*. More than ten of them were on the Social-Democratic ticket, whose adherents even then were primarily Georgians. Our contemporary says nothing about the fact that this year the Armenian political parties refused in general to participate in the elections, which naturally led to the reduction of the number of the Armenian members.





But if the facts which our contemporary is graciously pleased to quote are one-sided and incorrectly presented, the figures regarding the make-up of the local population are purely fabulous.

The paper alleges that in the capital of the Republic of Georgia, in the ancient Georgian city of Tiflis, there are four times as many Armenians as Georgians—149,000 against 37,500. In this connection the honored author is so carried away by his desire to transmute Tiflis into an Armenian town that he does not observe that these same fabulous figures stand in shouting contradiction with the statistical data on the nationalities of the members of the Municipal Duma for 1917, previously quoted by himself.

The Author himself just above says that the elections in 1917 were held on the basis of a democratic law. That is to say, the result of these elections accurately reflected the national make-up of the urban population. If this be the case, the Armenians, who, according to the author, are four times as numerous as the Georgians, should have received four times the number of seats. How, then, did it happen that at elections which were undoubtedly fair, the Armenians received but 49 seats for 149,000 souls, while the Georgians, with their 37,500, received 39? This is what the "Language of Ciphers" tells us, gentlemen of of the "Trans-Caucasian Post!"

Of course, figures have nothing to do with the affair here. The whole matter simply turns on the desire of the author to convince his English readers at any cost that the predominant element in the population of Tiflis are the Armenians.

The "Trans-Caucasian Post" is perfectly well aware that the only more or less accurate data regarding the make-up of the population of Tiflis are to be found in the lists of voters, which were compiled by the municipality of Tiflis in 1917.

At that time a careful and impartial census was made, under the control of all the political parties who had an interest in the matter, of all the voters. As a result of the registration, it was established that the preponderant element in the city were the Georgians, who exceeded the Armenians by several thousand. At that time, as was stated, there were entered on the lists not only the permanent inhabitants of Tiflis, but also those numerous persons who were temporarily visiting the city, who came from other (non-Georgian) provinces, especially from Armenia.

This is the truth concerning the recent Tiflis municipal elections and the relative proportion of Armenians and Georgians in the city. As the reader can see, the "Trans-Caucasian Post" passed over one part of it in silence, and incorrectly represented the other. We did not have any intention of devoting the pages of our paper to polemical articles. We have said nothing about the attack of our contemporary (see № 1: "The Trans-Caucasian Post") upon our republic; but when in the capital of Georgia an attempt is made to undermine the prestige of the republic by means of partisan and avowedly incorrect information to turn the English readers against us, we cannot leave such an attempt unanswered and unrefuted.

We firmly believe that Georgia and Armenia can make progress upon the path of civilization and prosperity only if they support each other, and work in close unity and accord. To confirm the solidarity between the neighbouring states should be the aim of each and everyone who wishes to see his country prosper; while he who thinks that the interests of his country are best and must needs be served by insuring the interests of her neighbours in every possible way, will do a very ill turn, not only to the neighbouring state, but to his own country as well.

The Conference opened*).

There is no parallel in history to the Conference which held its opening session in Paris on Saturday. In the number of the peoples whose representatives have gathered together, in the population, the armed power, the accumulated wealth, the natural resources, the developed civilization, the ripe political experience of the chief among them, it transcends all former assemblies of the kind. There have been many Conferences and Congresses in the past between the leading Powers of Europe. To this Conference there come with equal rights delegates from Asia and from Africa as well. Most striking and momentous change of all—the New World sends its statesmen and diplomatists to sit in council side by side with those of the Old. But a difference yet deeper exists between this august assembly and all that have gone before. It is animated by a spirit which they did not know. The longing for perpetual peace has, indeed, haunted the World for centuries. It found expression at more than one great conference, and probably some of those who guided the proceedings of those bodies sincerely desired to promote it. But their faith was weak. They were not blind

to the beauty and the moral grandeur of the ideal, but they looked upon it as a fair vision, too noble and too pure for a hard workaday world. The weakness of their faith made even the most sincere of them easily accessible to views and ambitions quite incompatible with a lasting peace. As they doubted in the then state of the world whether such a peace was possible, they themselves made it impossible by devoting their attention mainly to preparations for the next war. The Conference of Paris meets with other thoughts and other aims. A League of Nations, which will prevent or punish war as effectually as individual States prevent or punish murder, fills the first place in the minds of the peoples who have sent their spokesmen to it, and stands first in its official programme. The Conference is not itself such a League, but it is the one germ from which it is possible to hope that such a League may spring. For the present Germany and her former confederates are not the only nations shut out from it. It is still a Conference of the Allied and Associated Powers only, which has decided to admit to its proceedings neutrals whose interests are involved in its debates. It has decided, as *M. Poincaré* tells us, that the terms of peace should be settled among its members before they are communicated to the enemy. Whenever it has established the League, it will not deliberately shut the door to any, but the statutes and fundamental rules must be laid down exclusively by those who have fought for the Right. The great distinctive feature of the Conference which places a gulf between it and all its predecessors is that, for the first time, the peoples have commissioned their representatives to put this ideal in the forefront of their programme and to spare no efforts to attain it, and that for the first time statesmen with a long and wide experience of international politics no longer look upon it as altogether visionary.

We must refer our readers to our Paris messages for a full description of the gathering at the Quai d'Orsay and for the text of the speeches made by the *President of the French Republic*, by *President Wilson*, *M. Clemenceau*, and *Mr. Lloyd George*. They were worthy of the men and of the occasion—the political passages firm, dignified, sober, instinct with a great yet chastened hope, and the personal tributes graceful but earnest. *M. Poincaré*, as the host of the delegates from so many lands, felt it his duty to touch upon the services of each to the common cause. We cannot here say more than that we join in his tribute to them. He went to the heart of the matter when he insisted, as we have often insisted in these columns, upon the real nature of the struggle as a conflict between two incompatible doctrines of international morality, the doctrine that sovereign force can do no wrong, and the doctrine

that law and justice should govern the strong and the weak with even hand. The policy of Prussia has been based upon the former creed since the middle of the seventeenth century. It was cynically preached and cynically practised by the greatest of the Hogenzollerns, and the material success with which Prussia pursued all Germany into accepting it. But Prussia was not the only State in which the cult of the *Raison d'Etat* trampled upon the most elementary of moral principles. It corrupted all Europe, and was not unknown beyond the Atlantic. For it, the Conference proposes to substitute in the affairs of men the reign of law. That cannot be achieved except in one way. The peoples now represented in Paris must stand firmly together in peace as they have stood firmly together in war. Their intimacy of yesterday, as *M. Poincaré* said, must assure the peace of to-morrow. They must remain a *bloc* which no efforts to disintegrate it will assuredly be made. *M. Clemenceau*, who was unanimously chosen permanent *Président* of the Conference on the motion of *President Wilson*, seconded by *Mr. Lloyd George*, and supported by *Baron Sonnino*, urged this necessity of union with the earnestness and the obvious sincerity which are proper to "the Grand Young Man of France". "We have come here as friends", he pleaded; "and we must go" through the gate of peace as brothers". Every other consideration must be subordinated to the closer union of the Allies and Associates, whom he somewhat rhetorically greeted as a League of Nations already in being. It is not yet in being, but if any man of the Old World can help *Mr. Wilson* to bring it to the birth, he will be *M. Clemenceau*.

IN EUROPE.

GREAT BRITAIN.

The most interesting piece of news regarding internal events in the United Kingdom received during the last few days, is the announcement that a congress of employers and working men from all parts of the British Isles is to meet February 27-th. The question of labor conditions will be taken up; so also those of the minimum wage and of profits. Great Britain, as always, is the first country to open a new epoch of social legislation by the establishment of a collective agreement between employers and workingmen on a nation-wide scale.

The British Government is much concerned about the army. In this regard the declaration of Lord Churchill is very characteristic: "We are recruiting a new army for a term of two or three years. Recruits are coming in at the rate of 100 a day. This is essential for the disarmament of

* From "The Times".



Germany and in order to receive the indemnity which we are firmly determined to receive, and likewise so as to have a well-disciplined army on the Rhine. There is no intention of sending English troops to Russia on a large scale: Russia must save herself with her own resources".

FRANCE.

French public opinion has been greatly agitated by the life of Clemenceau, and the same is true throughout the whole world. In addition to those manifestations of sympathy which we have previously reported, similar expressions have been made by the American Congress, the Government of Rumania, the King of Italy, the British Socialist party, and by many other persons representing various governments and public organizations. The population in Alsace and Lorraine is seriously concerned over the attempt on Clemenceau's life, and a series of meetings have been held which passed resolutions expressive of sympathy to the "organizer of victory" and to "one of the chief workers for the cause of the reunion of Alsace and Lorraine with France".

No further news regarding internal affairs in France has been received. It is evident that all attention is centred on international affairs. Thus in Paris an international legal alliance is being formed, the founders of which are the leading jurists of France. The aim of the alliance is to codify the principles of international law in a form that will meet the requirements of the present international conditions. So, too, exceptionally great interest has been aroused by the conditions of the armistice with Germany. The French press expresses great satisfaction with the reduction of the armed forces of Germany to 250,000 men, the control of the production of factories of military supplies, and the destruction of the German submarine fleet. The question is being eagerly discussed as to what is to be done with the rest of the German Navy. Two plans have been suggested: according to the first, the fleet is to be destroyed; the other proposes to divide it up among the powers of the entente.

Governmental spheres in France are much concerned with the development of the productive power of the country's industry. For this purpose the Ministry of Supply has been transformed into the Ministry for the Development of Industry.

GERMANY.

The most important news from Germany is that of the assassination of the Bavarian Premier, the independent Social-Democrat Kurt Eisner by the student Count Arco-Valley. The circumstances of the affair are as follows. On the 21-st of February, as Eisner was walking down to the building of

the Landtag, Count Arco-Valley came up to him, and fired two bullets into his head from a revolver, killing him on the spot. Reports as yet unconfirmed have it that the Ministers Untermüller and Auer are also killed.

The assassination of Kurt Eisner has caused a series of disturbances throughout the whole of Germany. In Munich a revolt broke out, and the editorial offices of the conservative papers were seized. The independent Social-Democrats organized a general strike throughout Bavaria, which spread to the other German states. As a result of these disorders, the power in Bavaria is actually in the hands of the workmen and soldier's councils. As a result of an agreement between the independent Social-Democrats, the Social-Democratic majority, the trade-unions and the workmen and soldier's committees, the following temporary constitution has been worked out for the country. The councils of workmen and soldier deputies have been recognized as organs of government: their members enjoy immunity. To the council of ministers there will be added one representative from each of the councils. The Landtag is to be summoned as soon as possible. A revolutionary militia is being organized composed of workmen, peasants and farm-laborers.

THE UNITED STATES.

According to the reports of the English and French press, American governmental circles have been undertaking a series of steps towards increasing the army and the navy. Thus, enlistment of volunteers for the navy is going on at the rate of 1500 men a day. The new recruits are taught ship-construction, seamanship, gunnery and in general all the knowledge which forms part of a modern sailor's training.

Congress has passed a bill appropriating a billion dollars for military needs.

President Wilson has declared that, if the plan of general disarmament is not feasible, America will be forced to increase her fleet to a point hitherto undreamed-of.

President Wilson, just as formerly, enjoys tremendous popularity among the population of the great transatlantic republic. Upon his arrival in New-York, the steamer on which the president was travelling was met by all the vessels of the city; all business in the city was suspended a gorgeous parade was organized, while the municipal authorities and the public men of the United States congratulated the president at the moment of his disembarkation in New York harbor by means of the wireless telegraph.

In spite of this, certain circles in America evidence considerable discontent with the activities of the president. This is particularly the case among the leading circles of the Republican party, who disapprove of the president's "pacific tendencies".

RUSSIA.

In Russia during the last week two events of great importance have taken place. On the one hand the bolshevik forces have captured almost all the territory of the Ukraine (they have reached the boundaries of Bessarabia, the Crimea and the Black Sea; on the other, the Volunteer Army has got a firm foothold in the northern part of the Caucasus. The advance of the Bolshevik forces in the Ukraine met with practically no resistance. The Directory had at its disposal only those forces which the western republic of Galicia supply them with. These forces were quite insignificant—one corps of about 20000 bayonets: all the forces of the Directory which were raised in the Russian Ukraine went over on to the side of the Russian bolsheviks.

In the northern Caucasus the advance of the Volunteer Army was accompanied by bloody fighting, which was especially severe in the neighborhood of Grozny and of Vladikavkaz. Among the forces who opposed them there was no unity of action. The mountain tribes all operated separately and the bolshevik troops did not act in concert with them.

After their victory in the Ukraine the bolsheviks first of all restored the power of the councils, and imposed a contribution on the bourgeoisie, which in Kiev alone amounted to 20,000,000 rubles. The victory of the Volunteer Army was also marked by a series of reprisals.

In northwestern Russia the bolsheviks are pressing forward in all directions. It is characteristic that the newly-formed republics have proclaimed their independence (Lithuania, Esthonia, White Russia, Livonia) and this independence has been recognized by the Moscow bolsheviks.

The Peace Conference.

During the last few days a very large number of questions were brought up and discussed at the Peace Conference which concern the rights and boundaries of the newly-formed states, as well as other questions of current politics. Thus, for example, the questions came up regarding the zone not liable to occupation in Transylvania, concerning the recognition of the Polish Government, about the Schleswig question, the fate of Albania and the like.

The abundance of questions of current politics naturally increases the work of the Conference. In addition to this, the difficulty of the questions of principle which confront the various commissions still further complicates matters. Only one commission has so far worked out the basic points in its program that on the League of Peoples. In all the other fundamental commissions, the work is either under preliminary consideration, or else in the stage of elaboration.

This delay in the labors of the Conference has engendered a thoroughly natural endeavour to hasten them somewhat. This point is being actively discussed in the leading circles of the Conference. According to the latest reports, there is a strong tendency among the representatives of the great powers to put down first on the list questions of practical politics—first and foremost,—the actual provisions of the peace terms. "The time for words has gone by: it is necessary to get down to facts".—so reads the official announcement of the Allied press. From the news concerning the work of the different commissions are to be noted: the decision of the Labor Commission to summon an international congress of employers and employees to settle questions of labor legislation. Noteworthy likewise is the decision of the Financial Commission that the Allies should see to it as a body that Germany fulfils the terms of her obligations, to determine the guarantees for the payments, and to afford each other financial help and assistance—in a word, to establish a financial alliance.

In view of the fact that as a result of his wound, Clemenceau cannot take as active a part in the labors of the Commission as was previously the case, Lloyd George has been hastily summoned to Paris. Presumably the management of matters will be entrusted to him.

IN GEORGIA.

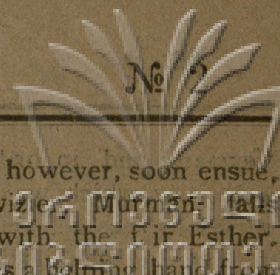
Georgia thanks Great Britain.

We published in the preceding number the official communication of the British Government concerning the order which was given to the Russian Volunteer Army to withdraw its troops from the district of Sochi, which it had forcibly seized.

After being informed regarding the content of this telegram, the Georgian Parliament at a special session resolved to elect a special delegation, which should be entrusted with the mission of expressing the gratitude of Parliament to the representatives of Great Britain. The delegation called upon the head of the British Mission, General Forester-Walker, and requested him to transmit to the British Government the thanks of the Georgian Parliament.

The Georgian delegation to the Peace Conference.

The first number of our paper contained the announcement that the Georgian delegation to the Peace Conference, headed by N. Chkheidze and I. Tsereteli, had gone to Constantinople via Batum. Some days since the English Mission informed the Georgian Minister of Foreign Affairs that Chkheidze and Tsereteli had left Constantinople to go to France.



Events in Akhaltsikhe.

In the preceding number we informed our readers that Great Britain had intervened in the conflict between the Volunteer Army and Georgia. General Denikin received the order to withdraw his troops, which put a stop to bloodshed on our northern boundary. In the southern edge of the territory of our Republic—in the district of Akhaltsikh, however, fighting is still going on. Here Turkish officers and agents are working against Georgia in the hope of severing a whole series of provinces from the body of our country.

The district of Akhaltsikh (in Georgian Akhal-Tsikhe means New-Castle) has from ancient times formed part of the Georgian State. In the early middle ages it was the cradle of Georgian culture. The greatest of the Georgian poets (in the 12-th century), Shota Rustaveli, whose poem, „The man in the Panther's Skin“, has been translated into almost all the European languages, was a native of these parts. In the 16-th century, Turkey forcibly appropriated this province together with the neighboring one of Akhalkalak, and during the 17-th century forced the Georgian population of these parts by violent means to come over to Mahometanism. But even Mahometan fanaticism was unable to sever the national connections of the population of Akhaltsikh with Georgia. The overwhelming majority of the population in this district are of Georgian origin. They profess Islam, but their language is Georgian, and they have preserved the characteristic traits of their nationality. In the 19-th century these two districts were united to the Russian Empire at a somewhat later period than Georgia was. Together with the eastern part of Georgia proper, they made up the government (province) of Tiflis.

A year and a half ago, when the disorganized Russian army quitted the Caucasus, Turkish agents began to work on the population of Akhaltsikh to bring them over on the side of Turkey. Not long afterwards the Turks began their advance on the Caucasus. The only people who made any resistance were the Georgians and the Armenians. Cut off, however, from the whole world as they were, they were in no condition to make any effective defence. The Turks forced their way into the boundaries of Georgia, and left away from her by force the district of Batum, and also those of Akhalkalaki and Akhaltsikh. The local population in the last-named districts had to endure the oppression of the Turkish régime for almost a whole year. The soldiers and their commanders plundered and outraged the population right and left, but it was clear that Turkish rule would not last very long. No sooner had the Allies compelled Turkey to capitulate than they evacuated the districts of Akhalkalak and

Akhaltsikh, and these districts came back into Georgian hands.

The Turks, though, could not reconcile themselves to the idea of losing their influence in the Caucasus. When they withdrew from the Caucasus, they left a portion of their soldiers among the local population, especially in the parts of the districts of Ardagan and Kars which adjoin Akhaltsikh. Along with them were many Turkish officers and Turkish agents, who were ready to make use of the first favorable opportunity.

The population of Akhaltsikh was delighted to be rid of the Turks, and gave a joyful reception to the Georgian officials when they arrived.

The Turkish imperialists, however, could not put up with the return of the Akhaltsikh district to Georgia. Utilizing their temporary success in 1918, the Turks seized hold of the southern portion of the Caucasus, with the hope of obtaining permanent possession of the districts of Kars, Batum, Ardagan, Akhalkalak and Akhaltsikh. In this wise they hoped to compensate themselves for the loss of their eastern and southern provinces. Once, however, Turkey had surrendered to the Allies, this plan of course collapsed. None the less the Turkish pashas did not abandon hope that they would be able to get hold of these districts in one way or another. On the initiative of Turkish agents, a comic-opera government was formed in Kars, which issued a proclamation regarding the formation of a new state under the name of the „Southwestern Caucasus“. Under the sway of this government the Turkish pashas hoped to unite all the above-mentioned provinces. In actuality it would be merely a province of Turkey, and thus her influence in the Caucasus would be reestablished. To put this intention into effect, the agents of Turkey assembled robber-bands in the portions of the Ardagan district contiguous with that of Akhaltsikh. The Turkish officers and soldiers who had remained behind in the country assumed the lead of them, and marched into the boundaries of the Akhaltsikh district. Among the population of this latter there is a small group of people who are seeking to cut the district out of Georgia, and to bring the country once more under the despotic régime of Turkey. These were primarily the begs (the big landholders), who were able to maintain their power and their hold over the population under the despotic rule of Turkey alone. They are perfectly well aware that under the democratic government of Georgia, where all are equal before the law, that in our Republic they will not be able to keep their feudal privileges. These are the people who are supporting the invading forces in the district—that is, the Turkish agents.

The Georgian Government is taking the necessary measures to free the province from the Turkish strong arm, and to restore quiet and order

to it. These measures should be taken in such a way, that the population, who are not to blame for the inroads of these bands should not suffer from them.

THE THEATRES!

The English pantomime.

It was last Monday night that I was invited to the pantomime given by the English soldiers. The performance was extraordinarily original and amusing. All the parts were very well played, and I must say I was quite astonished at the way in which they did it. We all of us know the British soldier as a gallant fighter; as an athlete and a sportsman, but most of us, and I among the number, never imagined that he could transform himself into a pretty girl, elegant, graceful and nicely dressed. The performance had plenty of life and go in it, and sincere praise is due to the stage-manager, who succeeded in giving us the illusion that we were looking at fresh young girls, who had just come out from England. The make-up and costumes were splendid, the music lovely, and I spent a most novel and enjoyable evening.

The Georgian opera.

It would probably be not unwelcome to our English guests if we devoted a few words to the Georgian opera composed by Zachary Paliashvili „Absalom da Eteri“ (Absalom and Esther), which is now running with great success at the State theatre. (Opera House).

The plot is very simple. It is one of those quaint old legends which survive among the country-folk of every race, whose antique turns of thought and phrase seem to spring from the bosom of nature, instinct with the glamour of poetry and romance. King Abio has one son, Absalom. One day the young prince, while out hunting in the forest, meets a lovely shepherdess. So fair is she that he falls in love with her on the spot, and, in token of his fidelity, presents her with his dagger. Overcome, however, with maidenly timidity, she flees before him, but he pursues, and at length we see the nuptials celebrated with great pomp in his father's palace.

Complications, however, soon ensue, for Absalom's vizier, Murman, falls equally in love with the fair Esther. The rival receives a helping hand from no less an individual than the Prince of Darkness, Beliar. The Evil One gives his oath to Murman that Esther shall be his, but in return for this favor, the vizier has to sell him the soul of his mother. After much hesitation and many misgivings on Murman's part, the bargain is sealed.

Beliar then smites Esther with a dreadful illness, and persuades Absalom that if he wanted her to recover, he must give her away to someone else. At the psychological moment Murman appears, and takes her away with him. None the less love still remains supreme in the young prince's heart. Sick and despairing, he is borne on a litter to the forest, and there chances upon his lost bride, once more restored to health, and as beautiful as ever. She, too, has been waiting and pining for him.

The joy at the reunion, however, is too great for the sick prince and he dies. Esther, not wishing to survive him, stabs herself with the dagger he had once given her.

So much for the legend; now for a few words regarding the performance itself. Paliashvili's music is magnificent, thoroughly and truly Georgian, and perfectly fitted to the story itself. Episodes in European style are inserted, but in their appropriate places, so that the impression of the *tout ensemble* is quite harmonious. From the technical point of view, the opera is splendidly composed and well orchestrated, betraying the hand of a master-musician. The chief parts the orchestra and the chorus are faultless in their form and in their execution. The work of the chief players is excellent.

The house was packed. Mr. Paliashvili was loaded with compliments and gifts, the most important of the latter being the Georgian coat of arms made up as a decoration and 10000 rubles from the Georgian Government.

Let us hope that Mr. Paliashvili will keep on giving us similar tokens of his talent.

Elisabeth Orbelliani.

AMUSEMENTS.

OPERA HOUSE:

Monday, 3 March—no performance.

Tuesday, 4 March „TRAVIATA“ (an opera by Verdi).

Wednesday, 5 March „THE DEMON“ (in Georgian).

Thursday, 6 March „THE HUGUENOTS“ (an opera by Mayerbaer).

Performances commence at 7:00 P. M.

MOVING PICTURE SHOWS:

„MIGNON“—Bariatinsky str.

„KINO-PALACE“—Michailovsky str.

„APOLLO“—Michailovsky str.

MUSIC HALLS:

„MINIATURE-THEATER“ Golovinsky ave.

„ERITSIAN'S THEATER“—Michailovsky str.

Evening performances at 7.00 and 9:30 P. M.