

# *Baroness de Coubertin is in her hundred and first year*

The widow of the Renovateur of the Olympic Games, for whom a well-deserved celebration was held, in 1960, when she entered into her hundredth year, celebrated in private on December 21st last year, the completion of 100 years of life. We are glad to report to our readers that the Baroness is in the best of health, which, according to what she told us, she attributes largely to the sports she practised in her youth. What struck us most about her was her alertness of mind and her remarkable memory when she related facts in connection with the early days of the renascent Olympic Movement. Baroness de Coubertin, who resided in the country near Lausanne, has decided to move in town and spend the winter in Lausanne itself. We send her our best wishes and trust that she will be able to enjoy her splendid health for many years to come.

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We take the liberty to quote a few lines from the poem (translated from French) written fifteen years ago by her daughter, Mademoiselle Renée de Coubertin and which she entitled: *My mother's daily life at eighty-five*.

From your eyes, which smile at mine, I have wiped away all trace of wistfulness. All my love and tenderness are concentrated on you when I see you responding so sweetly to my voice, my glances and my replies. More and more you let yourself be soothed and lulled by the rhythm of our lives. When you awake, long before dawn, darling Mother, you imagine life smiling at you. The long, sad nights of loneliness you endured for so long have ceased to tax the strength of your courage. Congenial and happy work has wiped out of your memory the past arduous and thankless tasks. You aspired to one thing only; the devotion of your time and your efforts to someone you could love and cherish. You alone could triumph and make a success of this thing called advancing years, the source of such puzzling thoughts, the transient period feared and dreaded by all, its pitfalls of selfishness and excuses for losing pride in

self, the dreaded nightmare of all those who still want to live to the full but feel their strength ebbing away. Like the good fairy for ever spinning with undaunted spirit, although you encountered many obstacles, I can imagine you, my beloved Mother, weaving the beautiful days of your existence on silver threads.

Time alas waits greedily for us and steals these days, scattering them over a period whose length we can not fathom and like a hollow-cheeked old wizard, he turns our peaceful days into fragile bubbles of soap which vanish at eventide. Fine glittering bubbles, as light as a dream and a breath of air, that is all that will remain one day of our vanished joys. Then we will one day realize what we are losing with these vanishing bubbles, and I shall watch my heart breaking in the course of the long solitary hours(...)

Now we welcome the approach of evening's calm and the hours of chats and discussion and laughter, listening sometimes to the radio and reading aloud to soothe your tiredness. A last fond caress on your white hair... When I hold you in my arms so young and frail with your ribbon in your hair, my heart melts with tenderness and gratitude. How I wish that all your days could be filled with peaceful rest when time would pass more slowly and help you support more gently and tenderly your sorrow at passing on down the pathway of your days.

*Renée de Coubertin.*

It was on December 21st...

The ceremony took place in a rest house of Lausanne where the Baroness is spending the winter. The Authorities of the Canton of Vaud desired to take part in this celebration and delegated Mr. Bolens, Prefect of the District to be present. Others present were, Miss Renée de Coubertin, Dr. Fr. M. Messerli, the old friend of the Renovator of the Olympic Games, Messrs, Marcel Henninger, President of the Swiss Olympic Committee, and its Secretary Jean Weymann, the pasteur Roussy representing the Church, a representative of the City of Pully and the chancellor of the International Olympic Committee. Very gay, the Baroness welcomed her guests and readily drank a toast in port to their health. There were many flowers, a magnificent cake decorated with the number '101', showing the entry of the centenarian into her 101st year, and, of course, several speeches.