

# Family of Fifteen, All Living, Oldest Seventeen

## French Father Wins Prize for His Record-Breaking Brood—All Born Healthy and Have Been So Ever Since

WHILE thousands of his fellow-countrymen are winning war medals, another Frenchman has won a distinction of another kind, one that is well-nigh unique. He is Francois Gannaz of Sallanches, in Savoy, and he has just received one-half of a prize awarded by the Institute of France because he is the father of a family of fifteen children, every one of whom is living and the oldest of whom is still under eighteen, having been born in March, 1899. The other half of the prize was awarded to Firmin Verjat of Buffières, in the Department of Haut-Saône, France, who has a family of sixteen children, all alive. This, at first sight, would seem to be more remarkable than the record of Gannaz, but the latter's fellow-villagers, who are inordinately proud of him, point out that the sixteen children of his rival range in age from 34 to 8, whereas Gannaz's oldest is a few months over seventeen, and his youngest only fifteen months old. Not only do they consider this aspect of the case more wonderful than the record of the chief of the Verjat family, but they call attention to the fact that it is quite likely that, within the next few years, there will be more little Gannazes than there are Verjats.

Henri Bordeaux, the well-known French novelist, now an officer in the French Army, was on furlough a few months back when he heard of Gannaz and his remarkable brood, and decided to pay the Savoyard a visit in his little village, which is not far from snow-covered Mont Blanc. He describes his experi-

ences in an article entitled "The House of the Fifteen Children," published in a recent issue of L'Illustration of Paris.



Gannaz's House Before He Had to Add to It.



Gannaz, His Wife, and His Fifteen Children, Ranged According to Age.

Gannaz lined up his wife and their fifteen children before his house, which looks just like a Swiss chalet, and eyed them with paternal pride while the novelist inspected the troop. He also showed pride when he brought out the documents from the Institute telling him that he had been awarded one-half of the Etienne Lamy Prize. This prize, by the way, is no empty honor. In addition to the distinction involved, it bears with it a cash donation of 10,000 francs (\$2,000)—no insignificant item for the father of a family of fifteen, all of whom, as Mme.

Gannaz feelingly informed Henri Bordeaux, had excellent appetites.

"Why, we have to get three thousand kilograms of bread alone in a year," she said. "It is quite a baker's bill, I assure you!"

Gannaz and his wife were married on April 12, 1898. Both of them were 25 years old at that time. It was not long before he found that his three-story chalet was too small for his growing family. So he set about putting on the fourth story shown in the illustration. In addition to providing space for the numerous brood it also accommodates boarders—for Gannaz soon found that he must raise money for the upbringing of his big family.



The House of the Fifteen Children As It Is Now.

Here are the names of the fifteen children of Gannaz and his wife—there

are ten boys and five girls—together with their dates of birth:

Pierre Alexandre—March 5, 1895.  
Clovis Alfred—June 9, 1900.  
Alcide Leonard—Oct. 4, 1901.  
Lucien Hubert—Nov. 1, 1902.  
Fernand Auguste—Jan. 19, 1904.  
Louis Zacharie—Feb. 12, 1905.  
Lucie Caroline—June 8, 1906.  
Léonie Olympe—June 28, 1907.  
Marie Josephine—June 30, 1908.  
Alice Dorothee—Aug. 6, 1909.  
Francois Marcel—Nov. 3, 1910.  
Marie Louise—Dec. 8, 1911.  
Luc Xavier—Feb. 16, 1913.  
Gabriel André—Nov. 5, 1914.  
Jean Baptiste—Aug. 10, 1916.

Every one of them, M. Bordeaux learned, had been born healthy, and had continued ever since birth in the enjoyment of good health. The parents are doing their best to keep the whole family together as long as possible. Gannaz proudly informed M. Bordeaux that he provided all the children with a good home, despite the sacrifices which this made necessary.

"None of them has to go wandering about away from home," he declared.

In spite of the worries incident to raising such a sizable family on the meagre resources of a humble agriculturist Gannaz is robust and happy, and never loses a wink of sleep. But

his wife is not quite so philosophical about it.

"I sometimes wake up along about 2 o'clock in the morning," she confided to M. Bordeaux, "and begin to worry. I get thinking of the number of slates that are needed for the children at school, of the number of pairs of wooden shoes. And with the prices of everything going up, too! But I console myself by remembering that every one of the children is in good health."

Before M. Bordeaux left the Gannaz household the father told him that the family had added to its evening prayer an extra paternoster—the Gannazes are Roman Catholics—for "Monsieur Lamy of Paris," donor of the prize, including the welcome sum of 10,000 francs, which went to Gannaz.