

Prosit Neujahr!

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Shortly before the coffee was served, Mr. Bertschinger, one of the chief organisers of this happy gathering, welcomed the company, saying that he greatly regretted the absence of the Swiss Minister, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, who, on so many previous occasions presided over this unique function, his not being present was all the more deplored as his absence was due to cause of illness. We are, however, delighted, he said, to greet amongst us to-day, his worthy representative, Monsieur de Jenner, Councillor of Legation, who will be able to make contact with the Foyer Suisse on this occasion. In his very able exposé he referred to the very critical times we are all experiencing, yet, he continued, in spite of all, the present function would be one of the last, the Foyer Suisse would give up. He mentioned that over 120 invitations have been sent out, but unfortunately a great number had to decline, owing to various causes, such as ill health or for reasons of economy. Since the opening of the Foyer Suisse some 8 years ago, the speaker continued, they had extended hospitality to many nations in the domiciliary department of the Trust and at Christmas time one may be permitted to hope that one more brick has been added to the great edifice foretold by Tennyson's Locksley Hall.

When the war-drum throbbed no longer and the battle-flags were furled

In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.

However, as to the Social side of the Foyer Suisse, this gathering of our "Old Folks" forms the happiest of a series of Christmas functions among our own Swiss people and the numbers of compatriots visiting No. 15, Upper Bedford Place during these last 10 days is now over 1,000. This speech was enthusiastically received.

Monsieur de Jenner, then addressed the Luncheon party saying:

First and foremost, I must apologize to you all for the absence of M. Paravicini who, you will be sorry to hear, is confined to his bed with a severe chill. I must admit, however, that I am really very glad to have this opportunity of paying a visit to the Foyer Suisse, and of making the acquaintance of my venerable compatriots.

Whenever my generation addresses your generation we have the feeling that we should apologise to you for being unable to make your old age as comfortable and beautiful as you made the time of our youth for us.

Of course, you will all remember the glorious days, when a pound was a pound; when, in Switzerland, you could get "a wonderful Weggli" for 5 centimes, and a dozen new-laid eggs for 60 centimes, and when a few hundred francs bought one a comfortable home. These times are past now, partly, I am afraid, through our own mishandling.

There is an old Swiss proverb which says: "Wenn's am Esel z'wohl isch, geit er uf ds Isch." (When a donkey feels too comfortable, he goes skating!) And that is perhaps what we have done. Nevertheless, we are doing our best to make people realise where we are going, and then the outlook will be brighter than it is at present.

I think there is nothing left for me to say except that I wish you all the very best of health in the coming year, and that I hope, this time next year, to see you all re-united here, jolly and well. Christmas is the time of hope; let us hope, then, that the coming year will lead us to happier times.

This short and very appropriate address was heartily cheered by the whole company.

Mr. G. Hafner, too, extended a warm welcome to all the guests, it was one of those rare speeches which will be treasured by many who had the privilege to listen to it. It brought a ray of sunshine into many lonely hearts and in many it kindled the flame of hope, who have seen but darkness ahead. It is our duty to be cheerful, he exclaimed, why is there all this unrest, this uncertainty, this anxiety for the future; centuries ago mankind has gone through crisis as great or even greater than the one we are now witnessing. The answer is that the world is seeking its salvation in material things instead of relying on spiritual ones.

These words inspired by a deep religious conviction did not fail to leave their mark on the listeners, and on termination his address the speaker received a hearty and well deserved ovation.

Mr. Ritter then thanked the Committee of the Foyer Suisse on behalf of the guests, and when he concluded his speech with that question, which many will remember, was in vogue during the war, namely: Are we downhearted? a mighty NO, which made me nearly jump, answered him.

Pastor Hoffmann-de Visme also gave an address which was much appreciated. During the Luncheon I had a rather animated conversation with my neighbour, a Gentleman who has reached the respectable age of 86, as to who would be the oldest Lady or Gentleman present, and I felt inclined to attribute this honour to him, when the Chairman announced that the customary medal was now going to be presented to the oldest participant present. The honour was bestowed on

Mlle. Bourquin, who was born on the 28th of January 1844, and will thus reach this month the age of 88 years.

Monsieur de Jenner in presenting this medal, which depicts on one side an eagle perched on a rock, with the following biblical quotation: "They shall mount up on wings like eagles," and bears on the other side the following inscription: F. R. Bourquin née 28 Janvier 1844 surrounded by two Swiss Crosses and Alpenrosen, said that the only embarrassment he felt was that he had to make the age of a Lady public, an act which a diplomat should not be guilty of. In shaking hand with the lucky recipient he wished her, in touching language many years yet of life and health. This incident made a deep impression on all present and not least on Mlle. Bourquin, who could hardly find words to express her thanks for the unexpected honour bestowed on her.

One can hardly imagine a function like this without any music, and in providing for same, the organisers have proved that they left no stone unturned in order to make the party a success, and sincere thanks are due to our prominent compatriot Mr. Franz Walter, who in company with an accompanist, rendered various cello solis with his usual skill. I have always admired the way in which eminent artists have given their services for functions such as this, and I am glad to see that Mr. Walter follows the practice which not only greatly honours the profession from which he hails, but also reflects great credit on him. I need hardly emphasize the fact that everyone present, enjoyed his playing immensely.

The company then adjourned to the drawing room, where old friendships were renewed, and everybody left with the wish to be present at the next Luncheon party.

I feel I cannot conclude my report without telling the organisers of this function how very much I admire their kindness in arranging such a party, they have thus given to many, untold pleasure. How often I have been told by some of our aged compatriots that they have been forgotten, and that nobody anymore cares for them. Well I can now refer them to this event, and point out to them, that there are still Swiss here who remember them and are willing to pay a humble tribute to their venerable age. Perhaps one day, if God wills, I may wend my way to 15, Upper Bedford Place to partake of this love feast. Gentlemen of the Foyer Suisse, you have done well in honouring our aged ones and in their hearts they will give you thanks.

ST.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY LTD.

We wish to direct the attention of our readers to the Fancy Dress Ball which will take place on Saturday, January 2nd, at the Midland Grand Hotel, to which friends are cordially invited. We understand that every endeavour has been made to make this event a success, and we hope that many will be able to attend.

SWISS FOREIGN ECONOMIC POLICY.

In a recent speech, Federal Councillor Schritthies, after reviewing the various factors which have contributed to the depression in Swiss trade and the measures which it is proposed to take in order to safeguard the interests of Swiss industries, gave an outline of the future trend of Swiss international trade relations to the following effect:—

A decade ago, that is to say immediately after the War, Switzerland was forced to introduce special measures to fight unemployment and to improve her financial position by means of higher tariffs and import restrictions. These were emergency measures, which were abolished as soon as the country found itself once more in a period of comparative prosperity.

At the present moment Switzerland's relations with other States are regulated by means of a network of commercial treaties, conventions, and agreements, most of which are based on the "most favoured nation treatment" clause and are practically identical with those which existed in the pre-War period. These agreements smooth away all difficulties regarding import and export restrictions and guarantee minimum tariff rates.

Unfortunately, this unhampered system, which helped to develop international trade relations, has now been shattered to its very foundation. Swiss exports are coming to a standstill, while the home market is swamped with foreign goods. Moreover, Great Britain—Switzerland's best customer—has abandoned her free trade principles for a protectionist tariff policy. This decision will have a tremendous repercussion on Swiss trade; many an important industry will be paralysed, if not ruined, and the consequences are at present incalculable. In such circumstances Switzerland also is forced to adopt a new policy, as she firmly intends to safeguard the interests of her trade, industry, and agriculture, to whom an appeal is made for unity and co-operation.

"1932."

.....Pure si sente un'alito di vita nova, dolce, infinito, e i bronzi squillano in lieto scampanio l'eterna gloria nell'alto.....a Dio.

L'anno 1931 scende nella fossa; si sperde nel numero dei secoli.....o nuovo anno che stai per nascere, o buon fratellino 1932, sii buono, sii dolce, caritatevole e pieno di generosa simpatia per tutti e sarai da tutti benedetto, avrai l'ammirazione di chi ti circonda.

Buon anno a tutti! pace, gioia e sorrisi nei palazzi dei signori come nei più oscuri abituri.

Rifioriscano come pallidi fiori invernali, dolci e fragranti, le nostre credenze; ricordiamo la Fede degli Avi nostri, attingiamo in questa coraggio, perseveranza, riposiamo in essa il nostro spirito agitato.

Non lasciamo che le condizioni economiche disastrose dei tempi presenti, le questioni sociali difficili, rendano difficile la virtù, spengano nel nostro spirito tutto ciò che un giorno fu la poesia della nostra infanzia e pascolo della fanciullezza.

Eleviamo in alto il pensiero e confidiamo.

Soltanto la Fede porterà nel cuore di tutti la pace, la felicità, la calma confortevole nelle avversità.

Le campane suonano a festa...è nato l'anno nuovo! Buon anno a tutti!

T.L.R.

PROSIT NEUJAHR!

Scho längst hei Bäum und Strücher
Verloren ihre Schmuck.
D'Luft ist bedüdtend rücher—
Mir nâh e guete Schluck.

Der Sturm stöhnt wild im Chömi;
Me glaubt bald a Spuck.
Dass emu z'Gnade chöm i
Nimm wieder i e Schluck.

S'Gmüet düre Wy wird g'hobe,
Het gseit scho Habakuk.
Hüt wieder mir's erprobe,
Und "gmüetlig" nâh e Schluck.

Es isch Sylvesterobe.
Uf's Johr mir luege zruck.
Es wird's wohl Niemer lobe.
Glychwohl: En Abschiedsschluck!

Los, d'Glocke fô a lüte!
Es neu's Blatt in "Life's Book!"
Viel Glück Euch liebe Lüte!
Prosit! E Neujahrsschluck!

Mutz.

THE EDITOR'S POST-BAG.

The Editor is not responsible for the opinions expressed by Correspondents and cannot publish anonymous articles, unless accompanied by the writer's name and address, as evidence of good faith.

To the Editor of the Swiss Observer.

Sir,

I was much interested in the article in the Swiss Observer of 19th December, 1931, on Slogans, and it has occurred to me that the subject might easily be made use of to provide a pleasant pastime instead of cross-word puzzles or that even the Swiss Observer might like to open a competition for the best Slogan for different countries. As examples we have, of course, British Best, and I would also suggest, French First, German Greatest, Swiss Supreme and even Cuban Cutest, but Japan and China beat me. Can any other constant Reader offer any bright suggestions? I am, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

Constant Reader.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY LTD.

The members and friends of the Society are reminded that our

Fancy Dress Ball

will take place on

SATURDAY, JANUARY 2nd, 1932,

at the

Midland Grand Hotel, St. Pancras Str., N.W.

from 7.0 to 1.0 a.m.

TICKETS at 8s. 6d. (incl. Supper during the interval) may be obtained at Swiss House, 34-36, Fitzroy Square, W.1 (Tel. Museum 6868) and from Employment Department, 24, Queen Victoria St., E.C.4 (Tel. City 7719). THE GENERAL PURPOSE COMMITTEE.

Drink delicious "Ovaltine"
at every meal—for Health!