

"Who's who" at the City Swiss Club banquet

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"WHO'S WHO" AT THE CITY SWISS CLUB BANQUET.

By an Onlooker.

Among the gay throng of about four hundred happy diners, intent upon a jolly evening in an atmosphere of friendliness and goodwill, there were many distinguished guests and members of this club. Some may be described as among the "Crème de la crème" of English Society; some were less important, but *still* important; and finally a certain number may be labelled the "smaller fry," who being just onlookers could console themselves with the fact that they sometimes see most of the game. As a visitor for the first time to this important banquet and ball, and also, let me hasten to add, a humble member of the last mentioned class, I append one or two pen-sketches of certain notabilities who were present and leave my readers to guess "Who's Who!"

Numéro Un! A tallish, well-covered gentleman whose rather heavy weight forbids dancing, and balances a little uncertainly on slender legs. His round, well-fed face beams contentment, and is an undeniable advertisement for his happy English marriage of which he spoke so proudly: let us hope Madame, his better-half, returns the compliment!

Then Monsieur's brown eyes often twinkle with humour, but if he is furious I can imagine these same twinkling eyes can narrow till they become mere slits of angry light, because my victim is not a cold Englishman — yet! On other days, when the world is using him well his eyes roll a little dangerously as they often did doubtless, many years ago. His brown hair (not so thin on the top as in the case of many younger Swiss) is well brushed back in two wings off a wide intelligent forehead, and his quite well-shaped mouth is decorated by a small moustache and beard, the whole appearance reminding one irresistibly of the "Laughing Cavalier." He has the same air of the "bon vivant," out to enjoy himself and fête others, regardless of time or of worries past or present.

After many years' residence in England Monsieur has a good knowledge of the language which he speaks fluently, and this coupled with his really formidable knowledge of Swiss history made him an interesting after-dinner speaker last Friday. He is justly proud of his race and their achievements in our little island, all of which we believe, except perhaps the story about their efforts to make the English a pious people!

Finally, Monsieur has push and energy, likes to hustle and get on, sometimes perhaps even putting "his foot into it" in so doing, but nevertheless, reaching his goal while others perhaps are still making up their minds to start. Good luck to him, and may life long offer him a brimming cup!

Numéro Deux is perhaps best described as regards appearance, voice, and manner as "distingué," which means much (if used sincerely) in this city of teeming millions. With his rather long narrow head, his aristocratic profile with its sensitive nostrils and firm chin, his soigné appearance on all occasions, his finely modulated voice and charming manners, Monsieur presents to most English people an example of what is best in, and what has been rightly and happily conserved from the old aristocracy. Yes, "an aristocrat to his finger-tips," is a good description of this distinguished son of democratic Switzerland!

If you have not already recognised Monsieur, read on! He has almost white hair, worn rather long, and brushed closely to his well-shaped head, hazel eyes that have an upward tilt that helps to express "un regard malin" on certain occasions, and well-marked dark curved eyebrows, that could I fancy, rise in an alarming manner if Monsieur wished to express surprise coupled with displeasure! Another word about his hair. In the centre it grows rather low on the forehead and then sweeps back in two winged arches, that, together with Monsieur's other features and his height, suggest that Mephistopheles would be his rôle "par excellence" at a carnival dance — only I hasten to add, in *physical* resemblance, of course!

Monsieur has a reputation as a charming and witty after-dinner speaker in several languages. His tone is generally kindly, but from time to time, he can indulge in a little malicious or sarcastic wit as a kind of "sauce piquante" to enliven the whole. In English he has an enormous vocabulary, knows the value of "le mot juste," and most I'm sure, please many English people and also encourage many foreigners of only two or three years' residence here, by his charming *wrong* accent on certain words, as well as an occasional false note in the song of the preposition!

Finally, Monsieur impresses me as a lover of the "via media," tolerant, and understanding of most people but impatient of fools! His wide experience among all classes of people has brought to a fine art, his gift of putting people at their

ease. Countless people rich and poor, high-born as well of those of humble origin would deeply regret Monsieur's departure from the land of fogs. Long may he reign in his special Sphere!

Numéro Trois had a seat of honour close to the "mightiest" at the high table, and rightly so, for Mlle. is a lady whose intrepid and remarkable adventures as a traveller in some of the darker and less comfortable spots in Asia have brought honour not only to her own name, but also to that of her native land. Her achievements have been all the more remarkable when one realises that she is still young; and after hearing a little of Mlle.'s fine record, many people cannot but realise how dull most lives are when compared with the experiences, contacts and adventures that our charming explorer has already packed into her own. Who knows, perhaps one day she will return to Switzerland with thrilling news of the discovery of colonies for her mother land, and so make history in an original and unusual way.

Mlle. is of medium height, unburdened with superfluous flesh but possessing quite a delightful "Stromlinie." She is a true daughter of Switzerland with her simple natural appearance, clear fresh skin, soft, simply-dressed brown hair, and clear lively eyes. Her profile has a charming graceful line, the forehead being wide and intelligent and the mouth sensitive and mobile. Mlle.'s whole appearance suggests vivid intelligence, sympathy, and undying interest in mankind and its affairs. Again, in spirit, we raise our glasses to the health, happiness and success of a gallant lady!

Numéro Quatre was a rather short gentleman who, during his eloquent speech, impressed me as having rather more than *one* man's share of charm and tact. I believe these phenomena are occasionally found among the French and Italian Swiss. Monsieur had a rather difficult task to perform in making his speech: he had to introduce the important English guests seated at the high-table to the company at large, and to sketch very briefly their careers and connection with Switzerland. This he did so excellently, that even his worst enemy (if he has such a thing, which I doubt!) could not but admire his speech, its careful phrasing, generous praise, subtle compliments, its light touch and its lack of boredom. Monsieur has a very pleasing well-modulated voice, which is one of his undoubted assets.

He is an intense patriot, but also a lover of England with whom he has a specially tender link in his wife who is a British-born subject. May I suggest that Monsieur's powers as a tactful and charming speechmaker are of no mushroom growth, for they probably started years ago when he told madame the old, old story, and with his usual success, apparently!

He is very dark, with black hair, dark eyes and eyebrows, a roundish well-fed face, a square strong chin and a toothbrush moustache. He has a jolly smile, a nice French-English accent, and likes to make his speeches with his hand in his pocket. His expression is that of a contented happy man whom the world uses pretty well, while he himself has the comfortable feeling that when he opens his mouth he "never puts his foot into it," and never treads on people's corns. May his race multiply!

Numéro cinq spoke like a man inspired by a great cause — the cause of the poor, the sick, and the unfortunate. They are lucky indeed to have Monsieur to plead their cause so eloquently, and in a manner so productive of fine results.

For some time Monsieur was himself one of the company of the maimed and halting, and suffered as some of them do: doubtless a fellow-feeling and his enforced suffering, strengthened (if thus were possible) his sympathy with and desire to help his poor compatriots. On the night of the banquet everyone who heard Monsieur must have caught something of the ardour that inspired his speech; and no one who watched his rather fine Roman head thrown proudly back, and heard his strong vibrant voice appealing for funds, could fail to respond, and to respond *generously* to this appeal. As Monsieur said, actions speak louder than words, and the handsome sum subscribed by those present stands as a solid proof of Swiss and British generosity towards those in need.

E. L. P.


PERSONAL.

Frau Steiger möchte ihren tiefgefühlten, innigen Dank aussprechen für die vielen Beweise aufrichtiger Teilnahme während der Krankheit, und nach dem Tode ihres lieben Gatten, Alphons Steiger, ganz persönlich möchte sie danken für das Mitgefühl und Hilfe, die zahlreichen und schönen Blumenspenden, den Anteil an der Trauerfeier in der Kirche und die vielen Briefe, die sie erst nach und nach zu beantworteten im Stande ist. Sie bittet den lieben verstorbenen in liebevollem Andenken zu behalten.

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