

What other people think of us

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CITY SWISS CLUB

ANNUAL BANQUET & BALL

AT THE

GROSVENOR HOUSE, PARK LANE, W.1.

on FRIDAY, NOVEMBER, 25th 1938.

The City Swiss Club is holding its Annual Dinner and Ball on the 25th inst. at the Grosvenor House, Park Lane, W.1.

For the last two years the Club has gone back to its former and much appreciated tradition to bid to their table a number of influential people both here and in Switzerland.

Nobody will forget the splendid array of famous Diplomats, Soldiers and Authors who have graced this important annual function in recent times.

Whilst the Committee would have liked to continue again this year, a tradition which has been for many years a feature of the City Swiss Club Banquet, circumstances have arisen which have prevented them from doing so.

The serious political crisis, which has threatened a whole world, made it quite impossible to make adequate arrangements for entertaining again a large number of our English friends.

A further disappointment for the Committee is the fact, that the Honorary President of the City Swiss Club, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, is unable to take the Chair at this function. Owing to the recent events, the Swiss Minister was prevented from leaving his post, and he has only just recently been able to take a much needed rest.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

November 1st, 1938.

As I wended my way home on Tuesday night, the legend of the Phoenix came to my mind and I could not help reflecting that, with the inspiration of an active Committee and the action of an energetic Secretary, the City Swiss Club, after showing signs of slow but progressive deterioration, could rise, from the ashes of its sloth, to burn again with renewed brilliance and rise triumphant from its torpor.

Having thus successfully mixed my metaphors, I would explain that the energy of our new Secretary, Mr. H. Bingueley, supported, of course, by the Committee, has had the immediate effect of raising the attendance at the monthly meetings.

Last night fifty members and guests were present, and this is a distinct improvement on some of our previous attendances.

This result is all the more laudable, as we are indeed passing through a difficult period. On all sides, I hear stories of hard times, bad business, difficulties to make both ends meet, so that, as one of my friends so aptly put it, one may be hard up one minute and completely down and out the next.

However, the morale of the members of the City Swiss Club is always good and I heard numerous stories of the crisis. It is extraordinary how these stories come to be invented. It is reputed that they originate on the Stock Exchange, but why members of the Stock Exchange should have a monopoly, I do not know.

One of the stories I heard was as follows:

During the recent crisis a questionnaire was sent round to all the employees at one of the big stores. Among the questions was "Are you subject to claustrophobia?" Nearly all the female employees replied, "Yes."

The authorities, astonished at this answer, asked some of the young ladies why they were all subject to claustrophobia.

"Oh," they replied, "we did not know the meaning of the word, so we looked it up in the dictionary and discovered that it meant "fear of sequestration." Neat — is it not?"

To return to the business of the evening, I felt it my duty to interview Mr. H. Bingueley

which will keep him away from this country for a few weeks. His place will be taken by Monsieur Charles de Jenner, Chargé d'Affaires.

Disappointing as all this may sound, the Committee has nevertheless made adequate arrangements that the evening should be an enjoyable one. There will still be a representative gathering of guests, amongst them old and trusted friends and can one ask for anything better than to spend an evening in such congenial company? It will be really and truly a happy family party.

Owing to the circumstances explained above, the Committee has decided to make drastic cuts in the oratorical line, so that more time should be available for the social part of the evening, and it is expected that dancing should start at a respectively early hour.

The City Swiss Club is anxious that this year's Banquet should be in the real sense of the word a "Swiss Evening," heralding in a new and more secure era, and they extend their invitation not only to their members, but to all the members of the Swiss Colony in the British Isles, and it is sincerely hoped that a large number of members and friends will attend this function, which, although shorn to a certain extent of its recent glamour, should prove to be a jolly and happy affair.

as to his intentions with regard to the future entertainment of the Club.

Mr. Bingueley, with the modesty which characterises him, or on account of his innate gift of showmanship, was difficult to interview, but I soon got over that little difficulty and in a short time, I found out all about his plans.

I have, however, decided not to reveal this information at the present time, as I feel that it will be so much more pleasant for the members of the Club to have pleasant surprises in store for them, than to know all about everything now. Anticipation is one of the joys of existence.

Mr. Louis Chapuis presided over the Meeting with his usual skill, after having welcomed the guests, among whom was our old friend M. Paschoud, Mr. Chapuis paid an eloquent and affectionate compliment to Pastor Hahn who is leaving us shortly and returning to Switzerland. Pastor Hahn replied, and it was evident from the way in which his remarks were received, how deeply his departure is regretted, and the affection and esteem with which he is regarded among the Swiss Colony.

The business of the evening was quickly despatched and the voices of the critics were stilled as we were all anxious to enjoy the surprise of the evening, the visit of Mademoiselle Marguerite de Siebenthal.

Mademoiselle de Siebenthal, accompagnée par sa tante Madame Pracci nous a charmés par son art prodigieux et c'est presque une impertinence pour moi profane d'en parler.

Il est tellement rare de rencontrer à la fois une maîtrise incontestable et une virtuosité surprenante au violon et au piano chez la même personne.

Mademoiselle de Siebenthal qui a la rare distinction d'être double premier prix de piano et de violon du Conservatoire National de Paris, est remarquable par la souplesse de son style, la précision de sa technique et sa compréhension de l'âme de la musique. Elle joue avec son cœur en même temps qu'avec son cerveau, et ce don est rare.

Mademoiselle de Siebenthal est pleine de charme et touchante par sa simplicité, car elle ne s'est pas épargnée hier soir.

Elle a joué l'adagio de Haydn, l'allegro de Porporce, et le largo de Veracini au violon, et ensuite deux valse de Chopin, l'improvisé de

Schubert, et la Chanson d'Amour de St. Saëns au piano. Après un court intervalle, elle a bien voulu jouer encore plusieurs morceaux.

Inutile d'insister sur l'enthousiasme qui a été soulevé par son art, et c'est, accompagnée d'acclamations réitérées, que Monsieur Chapuis a présenté à notre charmante invitée un bouquet d'eilletts.

ck.

WHAT OTHER PEOPLE THINK OF US.

Switzerland Rallies Again for Freedom.

By T. R. YBARRA.

(The New York Times Magazine.)

The Italians are building an electrical air ferry to the top of Theodul Pass on the Swiss frontier. It is to be a big ferry, capable of carrying thousands of persons from the valley to the top of the pass in a few hours. The Italians say it is to develop Alpine skiing and Italian resorts. But four miles away in Switzerland, at the terminal of the cog railway from Zermatt, there is a good deal of anxiety. The Swiss know something about skiing and about passes. They know that from Theodul an army on skis could swoop down on the unfortified Zermatt Valley, cut off the Simplon forts and pour into the Rhone Valley, the classic road of invasion from Italy to France.

Another worry thus comes over the horizon for the people of the purest democracy in Europe, if not in the world. Switzerland, an island of liberty and harmony in a sea of dictatorship and discord, has been a citadel of peace through stormy centuries. But it has not been a wholly passive peace. The Swiss are ready to fight, if need be. They demonstrated that last Spring when the Nazis seized Austria. Grimly the Swiss waited for the next move, in their calm, undramatic way — with loaded rifles and fixed bayonets.

It turned out that the next move did not concern their borders, and the Swiss, in relief, grounded rifles and sheathed bayonets. They also set about obtaining something which they felt might protect their cherished democracy: they sought to restore the 100 per cent. neutrality that had been the cornerstone of Swiss foreign policy until the advent of the League of Nations.

For now, instead of having the Austrian republic as one of their neighbours, they suddenly found themselves ringed around with great powers (the tiny principality of Liechtenstein, on their eastern border, being too insignificant to count). And of the three great powers surrounding Switzerland, only one, France, was a democracy. The others, Nazi Germany and fascist Italy, were openly undemocratic, pronouncedly aggressive, potentially predatory.

The Swiss did not approve of them at all; but they decided that, on no account must disapproval on the part of a weak little republic like theirs become a provocation to violent leaders like Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini with 120,000,000 people under their command. Therefore, while retaining membership in the League, Switzerland asked — and obtained — exemption from Article XVI of the League Covenant requiring members to join in the imposition of economic "sanctions" against an aggressor.

Having thus shaken off the last obstacle to their absolute neutrality — and, in pleading for its removal, eloquently reminding the world of what a splendid service they had done democracy in the past and of how important it was that they should continue doing it in the future — the Swiss reverted to their favourite pastime of keeping their mouths shut and minding their own business, in the hope that now not quite so many foreigners would say vaguely, when they were mentioned: "The Swiss? Oh yes. They run hotels — and yodel — and punch holes in cheese!"

Switzerland has an area of only 16,000 square miles, or less than one-third that of New York State, and just over 4,000,000 inhabitants, a few more than Missouri. Its metropolis, Zurich, with about 300,000 people, is in the same class with Columbus, Ohio. Yet the merits of the Swiss Confederation among the world's democracies are far out of proportion to its size and population or the ranking of its cities.

It is a land of hard work and frugal habits, of justice and cleanliness and tolerance, of the very essence of live-and-let-live. There one finds no extremes of wealth or poverty, no billionaires, no paupers. On every side one encounters evidence of enlightened social legislation.

The majority of the Swiss nowadays, like the hardy ancestors who first asserted the national love of liberty centuries ago, are tillers of the soil; many others are engaged in manufacture, especially in making watches and textiles and machinery, while a considerable number (though

by no means as many as is popularly supposed in other countries) earn their living by playing the great national game of feeding and transporting and housing and entertaining the armies of foreign tourists who pour in every year to revel in the country's mountain and lake scenery.

The Swiss do not merely preach democracy; they practice it twenty-four hours every day. They abhor everything savoring of class rule, of inequality or subservience. Out of their basic qualities of common sense and simplicity and ruggedness and independence of character — an enormous help to them in their stubborn upholding of democratic traditions — grow an abruptness, a dislike for conversational frills, an absence of grace and elegance and tact which, to many a foreigner in their midst, often seem like plain rudeness.

In the middle of a talk with you, a Swiss will suddenly poke his hand out, grasp yours, shake it, bark "Good-bye" and disappear around the corner. He does not mean to be impolite, but, having said what he had to say, he cannot see why he should waste more time on you.

Even Swiss hotel keepers, in whose business code politeness to foreign guests is Article I, often give their courtesy an artificial tinge, as if it were something they knew to be necessary but despised in their hearts. And one of the most prominent citizens in a certain Swiss city not only avoids, in business letters, such ornamental phraseology as "My dear sir" and "your esteemed favour received" and "with best wishes, I beg to remain" but curtly requests those to whom he writes to do likewise when they answer him.

The firm belief of the Swiss that all men are equal is plainly shown in the way they refuse to make a fuss over their big officials. The President of the Swiss Confederation is merely one of the members of its Federal Council, with very little power and still less prestige of office, who, like his colleagues, occupies the Presidency for a year at a time.

An American who was in Switzerland recently asked half a dozen natives the name of their President. Four of them frankly answered, "I don't know." The other two, after a moment of uneasy reflection, replied: "Dr. Motta." They were wrong. Motta had been President, but he was no longer. The President at that time was Dr. Baumann. But none of those fellow-citizens of his knew that he was — or cared!

The attitude of the Swiss toward their country's army also proclaims their essential democracy of soul. They take that army very seriously indeed and their military experts have brought it to a high pitch of efficiency. Every able-bodied Swiss must serve in its ranks and afterward belong to its reserve — and tales of adventures in barracks and frontier forts and at manoeuvres crop up constantly in Swiss conversations. But the people of Switzerland have no use for soldiering in itself. To them it is merely a means to an end — the best way of safeguarding their beloved liberties. Viewed from any other angle, it seems to them abhorrent. They are military without being militaristic.*

(To be continued.)

EDITOR'S POST-BAG.

Halbchor Luzern

Lucerne, 30th October, 1938.

The Swiss Observer,

London.

Dear Compatriots,

May I call your attention to a short programme of typical Swiss Folk Songs to be broadcast on Sunday evening, November 6th, from 6.55 to 7.15 (Swiss Time) from the B.B.C. London transmitted from Zurich Studio.

The Halbchor Luzern is an elite male voice choir of specially selected talent and their aim is to study and specialise in pure Swiss Folk Songs and render them in the highest possible standard. The choir can claim to be ranked among the foremost of this type in Switzerland.

We should esteem it an honour if you could make this Concert known to as many compatriots as possible, as we feel confident they will not regret this twenty minutes. I enclose the programme which perhaps you could circularize amongst your members.

Thanking you and assuring you of our heartfelt greetings shortly to be voiced across the sea to all our fellow-countrymen and wellwishers.

Yours respectfully,

on behalf of the Halbchor Luzern,

A. REICH.

Halbchor Luzern.

PROGRAMME.

Switzerland calling!

B. B. C. Concert.

To be transmitted from Switzerland.

Sunday evening, 6th November, 6.55 to 7.15
(Swiss time.)

- 1) O mein Heimatland.
- 2) Waldandacht.
- 3) Das weisse Kreuz im roten Feld.
- 4) Luegt vo Bär und Tal.
- 5) Schweizer Zapfenstreich.

JAHRBUCH DER SCHWEIZERFRAUEN.

Das "Jahrbuch der Schweizerfrauen" bringt diesmal auf 15 Seiten eine reichhaltige Artikelsammlung über Leben und Probleme der Auslandschweizerin. Ein warm gehaltener Aufsatz würdigt Persönlichkeit und Arbeit von Dr. Alice Briod, Sekretärin des Auslandschweizerwerkes in Bern. Mme Kessler-Merz, Bruxelles, schreibt aus ihrer sichern Erfahrung als Mutter einer zahlreichen Kinderschar über die Frage "Wie erwecke und pflege ich in meinen Kindern die Heimatliebe?". Durch vereinzelte Briefstellen hören wir von den erfolgreichen Anstrengungen einer westschweizerischen Erzieherin, die, seit 35 Jahren in Hamburg ansässig, unentwegt im Gastland für ihre Heimat wirbt. Marcelle Béguelin, die Gattin eines Ingenieurs, der zur Zeit des Weltkrieges in Siam wirkte, gibt eine spannende Schilderung ihrer Erlebnisse im Dschungel. Bertha Kunz, die Gattin unseres Mannheimer Konsuls, steuert einen gehaltvollen Aufsatz bei über die "Pflege schweizerischer Wesensart in den Auslandschweizerkolonien." Ein anderes, ungenannt bleibendes Mitglied der Mannheimer Kolonie gibt den Gefühlen der Schweizer, die nach langen Jahren ihr Heimatland wiedersahen, schlichten, ergreifenden Ausdruck. Aus Batavia berichtet uns Dora Weidmann über das Tagewerk einer Schweizerin auf der javanischen Plantage. Nach Japan führt uns ein lebendiger Beitrag von Frau Champoud, der Gattin des Direktors der Nestlé-Gesellschaft in Japan.

Erzählungen und Artikel der verschiedensten Art — darunter eine reizvolle, reich illustrierte Reportage aus einem modernen Säuglings- und Mütterheim —, sorgfältig ausgewählte Bilder und einige Gedichte runden den Band zu einem richtigen Schweizerbuch, einem Weihnachtsgeschenk, das wir besonders auch der Auslandschweizerin in Europa und Uebersee empfehlen möchten. Das "Jahrbuch der Schweizerfrauen" wird vom Verlag K. J. Wyss Erben A.G. in Bern herausgegeben und von Alice von Arx redigiert. Es kann zum Frankopreis von Schweizerfranken 1.80 bezogen werden durch das Auslandschweizerwerk, Sekretariat, Bundesgasse 40, Bern.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Wednesday, November 9th, at 8 p.m. — Swiss Mercantile Society — Monthly Meeting — at Swiss House, 34/35, Fitzroy Square, W.1.

Saturday, November 12th, at 3 o'clock (only one performance) — Nouvelle Société Helvétique — Film Show, at Kingsway Hall, Kingsway, W.C.2.

Thursday, November 17th, at 7 p.m. — Farewell Dinner to Pasteur and Mrs. C. Th. Hahn, at Pagani's Restaurant, Great Portland Street, W.1.

Friday, November 18th — Nouvelle Société Helvétique — Monthly Meeting — at Foyer Suisse, 15, Bedford Way, W.C.1. Supper at 6.30 p.m. to be followed by a causerie by Dr. phil. A. W. Bettex, of Cambridge, on Contemporary literature in Allemanic Switzerland.

Friday, November 25th — City Swiss Club — Annual Banquet and Ball at the Grosvenor House, Park Lane, W.1.

Tuesday, November 29th — Unione Ticinese — Concert and Ball in aid of the Fonds de Secours, at Pagani's Restaurant, Great Portland Street, W.1.

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Dante. Inferno. C. xxvii.

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Dimanche 6 Novembre 1938 : Fête de la Reformation.

11h. — Culte et Cène. — M. M. Pradervand.
11h. — Ecole du dimanche. — M. M. Pradervand.

6h.30 — Culte et Cène. — M. M. Pradervand.
7h.30 — Répétition du Chœur.

Mardi 8 novembre, à 3h. Réunion de couture au Foyer Suisse.

Pour l'instruction religieuse et les actes pastoraux, prière de s'adresser au pasteur, M. M. Pradervand, 65, Mount View Road, N.4. (Téléphone Mountview 5003) Heure de réception à l'église le mercredi de 11-12h.30.

SCHWEIZERKIRCHE

(Deutschsprachige Gemeinde).

St. Anne's Church, 9, Gresham Street, E.C.2.

(near General Post Office.)

Sonntag, den 6. November 1938. Reformationfest.

11 Uhr morgens, Gottesdienst u. Feier des Heilig. Abendmahls.

Sonntagsschule.

7 Uhr abends, Gottesdienst u. Feier des Heilig. Abendmahls.

BESTATTUNG.

Am 27. Oktober wurde bestattet :

Jakob Friedrich Sterchi von Schalmern (Canton Bern) ; geb. am 1.2.1879 — gest. am 21.10.—

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