

# 31st Swiss childrens' annual Christmas Tree Party

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### 31st SWISS CHILDRENS' ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TREE PARTY.

The second party since the war was again a great success when 168 children came to the Victoria Halls on January 7th.

The party began with a welcome from Mr. Campart followed by carol singing led by Miss Alice Hoffmann de Visme. The Rev. C. Reverdin then read the account of the Nativity and told the children a Christmas story — the story of the grey thistle that turned blue, the colour of heaven. This little grey thistle (there were no blue ones in those days) was proud and boastful because it had actually seen the Holy Child and the kings and shepherds who came to worship Him. However when it was nearly eaten by the ass, just like any ordinary thistle, it understood that honour and glory were due only to the King that was in the manger. Thus when it had learnt humility and taught it also to the youngest shepherd who was proud because the Babe had smiled at him, it suddenly turned into the lovely blue thistle that we often see in Switzerland. Mr. Reverdin concluded with a prayer that we also might be simple and humble and so carry the joy of heaven in our hearts all through the year.

Swiss tunes played by three accordionists, Mr. Gandon and two friends all in splendid national costume, then delighted the children. They applauded loudly and, led by Mr. C. Chapuis, clapped hands in time with the music.

Suddenly a funny face looked through the curtains and said "Hello"! and the children roared their welcome to Risto the Clown. Like last year, he needed several boys and girls on the stage to help him with his tricks and they, as well as the laughing and cheering ones in the audience, had a wonderful time. Risto's final trick was to turn someone's bowler hat into Rastus the golliwog who then entertained us and even sang Good King Wenceslas!

Tea was the next item on the programme with a visit from Father Christmas, who told us the names he is known by in the countries he visited on his way here. We know that whether he is called Father Christmas or Le Père Noël or any other name, the

children always love him and listen attentively when he tells them to be good and kind, especially to the younger members of their families. Like last year, he brought a present for "César", the big boy whose birthday is on January 1st and to whose efforts much of the success of the party is due.

Each child then received a carrier bag containing a toy or book, an apple, a mince pie and half a pound of chocolates.

Everyone was very pleased indeed to see His Excellency the Swiss Minister and Madame de Torrenté and we thank them for coming and having tea with the children. It was very kind of them to come, especially as they could not bring their little girl who was only returning from Switzerland the following week. We do hope she will be able to come next year.

We were very happy that the Rev. H. Blum, Father Lanfranchi and the Rev. C. Reverdin were all able to be present. It is never quite such a happy family party if they are not all there.

Sincere thanks are due to the many friends in the Colony who gave money, toys and sweets, and to the members of the committee who gave their time to make the party a success.

ALB.

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