

36th Swiss Children's annual Christmas Party

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36th SWISS CHILDREN'S ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY.

"Away in a manger, no crib for a bed," — the singing of this carol started the Christmas Party held on January 8th at the Victoria Halls, where 177 children were welcomed by Rev. C. Reverdin and Rev. H. Spörri.

It was the turn of the children of the Sunday School of the German-speaking community to open the programme. Under the direction of Mrs. W. Meier who played the piano, her daughters Erika and Pauline led the singing of carols in German and Swiss-German. Each child held a candle, the hall lights were dimmed, and they sang in the candlelight; it was a lovely scene. Peter Meier played a clarinet solo very well. A Nativity play had been prepared but could not be performed owing to the illness of some of the little actors.

"Uncle Horace" then started the entertainment, first with "Charlie" who made us laugh with his smart answers to silly questions and then with conjuring tricks. These were great fun and even a clever girl like Vanda Joss who helped Uncle Horace with one of the tricks could not see how they were done!

Next, we were glad to welcome 8-year-old Gay, a graceful little dancer in Toggenburg costume. The older ones amongst us remember with affection her grandfather, Mr. Pfaendler who, with his gifted family, often played to the Colony.

Swiss music, as an item on the programme and during tea, helps to make the party more lively and more Swiss and is very much appreciated. For several years Mr. Gandon and his accordionist have provided this and we thank them most heartily for their kindness. We are especially glad when his children perform too, and we enjoyed hearing Jean Michel singing jodels.

The film this year was "Winter holidays in Switzerland". There were children skiing and skating, and many a British born child must have wondered, on that cold grey afternoon, how Mummy or Daddy could have left such a beautiful country where they had such lovely sunny playgrounds. We are very grateful to the Swiss National Tourist Office for shewing us this film. During tea our very own Father Christmas arrived, and as always, received a great welcome. Father Christmas is jolly; he tells a funny story and makes children laugh. But he

is also serious and always gives them some good advice. This year he said he would assume that they had all been good at home and at school, and that they were all going to Sunday School. They were preparing themselves for a useful life and had to learn the biggest lesson in life which is, how to live. For this they needed the help of their parents, teachers and ministers, and must listen to them carefully. Before going home each child was given a carrier bag containing an apple, a tangerine, a calendar, and a toy.

The party could not be held without the co-operation of a great many members of the Colony who give money, time and services. The committee, and also the children thank every one of them for a happy afternoon. *A.B.*

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