

Soirée de l'Escalade

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Having told us that he had been instructed in the Other World to visit the City Swiss Club, Father Bossard proceeded with his angels to sing a composition of his in which half the members of the City Swiss Club were portrayed individually. We joined in the singing, and participated in a second of Father Bossard's chansonnier-compositions.

The singing died down, Santa-Claus and the angels left the room, we applauded and Mr. Kuhn congratulated Father Bossard for having helped make the evening so successful.

(PMB)

SOIREE DE L'ESCALADE

The "Cercle Genevois" is probably the most floating and changing Swiss society of London. Members come and go, attendances at "Escalade" evenings change by leaps and bounds. Last year, the Park Suite at the Dorchester was hardly large enough to contain the big crowd Madame Heisch-Dominicé, the Cercle's former president, had managed to gather. This year, the thirty-odd faithfuls and sympathisers who turned up were given the humble Stanhope Suite. But small numbers make for intimate and very friendly evenings.

The Ambassador and Madame René Keller honoured us by their presence, and when the president, Mr. Michael Metford-Sewell, had welcomed

us and wished us a happy evening, Monsieur Keller (a remarkable after-dinner speaker) said a few words off the cuff and mentioned his ties with Geneva and the advantages he had reaped from his Geneva citizenship.

"Escalade" entertainment consisted in listening to a record of the Escalade produced by the *Compagnie 1602*. We sang the Escalade song and stood up to hear the names of the Escalade's 18 victims in respectful silence. The breaking of the *marmite* was entrusted to the writer. Unfortunately the *marmite*, fabricated by the Dorchester's confectioners, was one of massive chocolate, and instead of smashing it to smithereens, he managed to leave it fit for second-use and got himself badly bruised on the hands and arms in the process.

The vice-president, Mrs. Metford-Sewell, asked us all to decline our age and origin. It turned out that we were only five real Genevese. But we were all Genevese at heart, and that was what counted.

(PMB)

SCHWEIZERBUND

The "Nouvelle Société Helvétique" is an intellectual and highly-cultured assembly, the City Swiss Club is an exclusively masculine, and the Rifle Association, virile, institution. The Schweizerbund, on the other hand, is open to all, illiterate and non-male alike, and genuinely Swiss.

Its Annual Dinner, last December, was highly successful and colourful. We sang and sang till our hoarse voices were like dying rasps. Mr. Charles Abegglen, with indomitable energy, conducted the Sing-Song and the whole repertoire of Swiss folklore was surely exhausted.

Mr. Virgil Berti, the president, welcomed us all to an enjoyable evening, expressed his satisfaction at seeing the presence of some old-time friends, among them Adolph Gandon, Adolph Schmid, Ernest Nüssli, Renata and Albert Meyer. He regretted the absence of Mr. Leu, who had to stay at home because of the illness of his wife.

A particularly friendly and agreeable evening.

(PMB)

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY

The Society's December meeting was highlighted by the very interesting colour-slide talk by Mr. Walter Stettbacher on the Engadines. Mr. Stettbacher had recently spent a holiday in the beautiful resort of Sils and recorded the splendours of the Bernina, the Corvatsch, the Silser- and Silvaplannersee and the Maloja on film for our benefit. A highly entertaining evening which doubtless gave to everyone present an ardent desire to be on the snowy slopes of the Alps right away.

(PMB)

The following is a résumé of the news that appeared in the December issues of the Swiss Observer in 1939.

On December 9th, the Swiss Mercantile Society held its monthly meeting, presided by Mr. J. J. Boos. There had been no further progress to report over the eventual subletting of the Swiss Mercantile Society's premises in Fitzroy Square. The School had been shut down because of the war. The meeting recalled the arrangements already made for the Swiss Minister's departure and voted a £50 donation to the funds of the Swiss Benevolent Society, as well as a £20 gift to the annual Christmas collection of the S.K.V. To the pleasant surprise of all present, trays full of Neuchatel wine were brought in and everybody drank to the health of Mr. Boos, the president, and his newly-wed wife. Messrs. Oertli and Senn, who had recently returned from military service in Switzerland, were called upon to give their impressions. Mr. Oertli related his experiences as an officer in charge of sentry posts at Bergün, Filisur and Tiefencastel. Mr. Senn related his experiences with his regiment, stationed in the wooded valleys of the Jura and busy working at defence works with spades, pickaxes and saws. He had had a number of adventures on his way back to England. Mr. Max Schneider, Hon. Secretary of the S.M.S. was still in the ranks and the meeting decided to send him a Christmas parcel.

The Civil Swiss Club's December meeting had been held on the 5th. The after-dinner speaker had been Mr. Maurice Thiéry, and the theme of his talk: the French Revolution, and some parallels with current events. The dinner was honoured by a strong representation from the Legation, including Dr. A. Kock, Colonel Zürcher and Mr. Preiswerk, head of the German affairs division.

The Minister, Monsieur Paravicini, was to leave the post that he had held for almost twenty years. He was exceedingly well known and loved in the Colony and, on the 15th, it honoured him with a farewell dinner at Pagani's restaurant; on the 18th, it was for personnel of the Legation to invite him and Madame Paravicini to a farewell dinner at the Dorchester. Monsieur Paravicini's renown extended beyond the Colony and on the 20th, he and the Ambassadors were offered luncheon at Buckingham Palace by the King, and on the 21st, a reception was given in his honour by the Belgian Ambassador, acting doyen of the Diplomatic Corps.

Most of the balls and annual dinners that usually take place in December were cancelled that year (although the Cercle Genevois held its exclusively male Escalade-dinner).

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