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SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY LTD.

(Lecture by E. Shackleton, Esq.)

(Continued).

Then came the long darkness, for four months without sun and the time was spent in a specially built hut with listening to the wireless and playing poker at which one member of the party was very apt. He was a Canadian Mounty who had perfected himself in the art of this game on his lonely outposts and by the end of the expedition he was £150 up, nominally!

The weather became worse as it grew darker and the wind reached a velocity of 90 miles an hour and Arctic blizzards raged round the hut. The extremely good natural Swiss milk supplied by the Nestlé and Anglo-Swiss Milk Co., proved a welcome variant from vitamine tablets and preserved food. Dough nuts could be kept for months and in fact in the Arctic refrigerator no danger resulted from bad food, the difficulty was only the thawing of it. In some respects the Arctic is an ideal place were it not for the extreme cold. No danger from germs and colds, no interference from tram lines or electric refrigerators in the wireless reception!

A most amusing film was that of a dog team going along under great difficulties. The 35 feet long whip which is an awkward instrument to handle was frequently resorted to. Oswald was the "enfant terrible" of the dogs, always in trouble. The dogs were very unruly and the un-tangling of the lines no sinecure. We saw the only dwelling of Ellesmere Land which was inhabited by a solitary policeman and formed a useful depot to an expedition.

The chief objective of the expedition was the collection of geological specimens, cambrian fossils and the like, and the charting of unmapped regions.

Mountains of 9,000 feet were climbed and one was named Magdalene Peak after the famous Oxford College. The sight beheld by the explorers was a rich reward for their strenuous efforts in crossing the nasty ridges, peak on peak and glacier on glacier.

The Arctic is far from devoid of vegetation and coal is found throughout and goes to prove that the Polar regions were once fertile land. We saw fine specimens of Arctic flora of singular beauty eider ducks by the million, the Polar musk-ox which roamed the world before man came on the scene. The Canadian Government passed a law prohibiting the shooting of these oxen and thus saved them from extinction. The lecturer said they looked longingly at these "potential beef-steaks."

On conclusion of the lecture, Mr. M. Rothlisberger proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Shackleton for his most interesting lecture which was seconded by Mr. W. Meier and spontaneously endorsed by the audience.

This was indeed one of the finest lectures ever held at Swiss House.

W.B.

ILLUMINATED ADDRESS OF CONGRATULATIONS.

The Illuminated Address of Congratulations

to their Majesties which has been prepared on behalf of the Swiss resident in Great Britain will be placed on exhibit at the Swiss Legation by the kind permission of the Minister during the week from the 2nd to the 8th of May (11 a.m. to 1 o'clock and 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.) The document is in the care of Mr. P. Hiliker.

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Annual Banquet and Ball of the SWISS CLUB, (Schweizerbund)

on Friday, April 16th 1937, at 74, Charlotte Street, W.1.

F. HEDIGER,

President of the Swiss Club (Schweizerbund).

"All's well that ends well," may I truly say. The Annual Dinner of the Swiss Club, (Schweizerbund) which took place on Friday, April 16th, at 74, Charlotte Street, is, as far as I know, the last Banquet of the season in the Swiss Colony.

If it was the last, it was certainly not the least of all the many functions which I have attended during the last six months.

I was particularly happy on this evening, firstly, because the company, numbering nearly 150, was very congenial, and secondly, I could look forward to a short respite from my official duties. The thought that my numerous speech making friends have, at least for a few months, "dried up" filled my heart with joy, not because they have unduly bored me, but, with all due respect to their oratorical achievements, they have taught me very few new things. I am, of course, still convinced, that we Swiss are a fine body of men and it was perhaps hardly necessary to stretch this point on every conceivable occasion, yet the memory of man is very fickle and a little bit of "rubbing it in" might do no harm.

Before I mention the proceedings of this happy evening, I would like to congratulate Mr. and Mrs. Rossier, the stewards of the Club, for their culinary achievements, they largely contributed in creating the right "Stimmung."

According to the usual custom various toasts were proposed, amongst them the toasts to H.M. the King and to Switzerland, both these toasts were given by Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, the Swiss Minister, who took the Chair on this, the 50th Anniversary Dinner of the Swiss Club (Schweizerbund).

In the unavoidable absence of the Vice-President of the Club, M. Delaloye extended a hearty welcome to the Swiss Minister saying that the members of the Club greatly appreciate his presence on this conspicuous occasion, he mentioned also that the following Gentlemen represented the various Societies and institutions:

Mr. Kilchenmann, accompanied by Mrs. Kilchenmann (Secours Mutuels).

Mr. Stauffer (City Swiss Club).

Messrs. Gambazzi and Ferrari (Unione Ticinese).

Messrs. Boos and Meier (Swiss Mercantile Society).

Mr. Indermaur (Union Helvetia).

Messrs. Swan and Dorn (Symphonic Social Choir).

Mr. Stauffer (Swiss Observer).

It is a feature of every official function in the Colony, that the Ladies should be present, and it fell to the lot of Mr. G. Koch to tell all the sweet daughters of Eve how much their presence was appreciated, his oration was short, which, however, did not prevent various Ladies blushing at being made, to use a rather vulgar term "a fuss of."

Amongst great applause, the President of the "Schweizerbund" Mr. F. Hediger then rose and expressed his pleasure at being able to preside at the Bi-Centenary Dinner of the Club. He paid a special tribute to the Trustees: Messrs. Joerin, Keller, Scheidegger and Bernard for the continued help they are giving to the Club, mentioning, that if this 50th Anniversary could be celebrated it was largely due to their wise and far seeing policy, an equally warm tribute was paid to the Honorary Members present, for their encouragement and unstinting services.

After a short review of the last 50 years of the existence of the Club, the President proposed the toast to the "Schweizerbund" and I need hardly mention that the company reacted with enthusiasm to this toast.

Fifty years, after all is a very respectable age for a Society, and it is only right that one should drink with a more than usual fervour, to the further prosperity of this, as it has often been called "Home from Home."

When one receives an invitation one usually, amongst polite Society, says "thank you," this task was entrusted to Mr. Swan, of the Symphonic Social Choir, who did it "shortly and sweetly." My friend Mr. Boos, who enjoys a great reputation as a "For they are jolly good

fellows" soloist, performed this act together with his fellow guests to perfection. It is a puzzle to me how he always manages to find the right key (in a musical sense, of course) because I have so often witnessed lamentable performances of this "beautiful song."

The sounds of this "mighty" tune had hardly died down, when it was announced, that the Swiss Minister would like to address the company.

Monsieur Paravicini, who received a great ovation on rising, spoke in that easy witty after-dinner vein of which he is such a past master.

He acquainted the revellers that he came to this Jubilee Dinner simply to enjoy himself; and although the Club celebrated its 50th birthday he was loathe to speak of age, especially as he, by looking round could see the flower of youth assembled.

The Minister then related that in the year of 1900, when a young member of the Legation staff, he was delegated to represent his chief at the Annual Dinner of the "Schweizerbund" he actually delivered his first official speech in the Swiss Colony. "I was met," he said, "on this occasion by our old friend Mr. Wetter, who has ever since, whenever I visited your Club, met me at the entrance, and I am glad to say, he has not changed at all during all these years."

After having shortly alluded to various old members of the Club, who have kept the flag flying in sunny and stormy weather, he invited the gathering to drink with him to the health and prosperity of the "Schweizerbund" expressing the hope that a kind providence will allow him to preside again on the occasion of the centenary Festival, and that Mr. Wetter would again "meet him at the door."

The Minister's friendly and homely oration received a hearty acknowledgement and it is to be hoped that fifty years hence he will wend his way to 74, Charlotte Street, meeting at the door his faithful "reception committee" of 80 years standing. I wish also to mention Mr. Christen, a former President of the Club, who acted throughout the evening as an announcer, he did it with discretion, but the nasty little hammer which he used with such vigour seemed to be too much for some of his neighbours.

Appreciation should also be paid to Mr. F. Zimmermann's Orchestra, who performed during the dinner; they played with discretion and real musical perfection.

A pot-pourri of Swiss Melodies was much applauded and rightly so, but if I am allowed to pass some criticism I should like to point out, that the "Bärnermarsch" is played much slower, we in Berne take things a little more "gmütlich."

Two young Swiss Ladies also performed on their Accordions, and judging from the applause which they earned their playing was greatly appreciated. —

After a short interval dancing started, and everybody looked as happy as sand-boys. During one of the intervals, Mrs. Aebersold and Mrs. Rossier, accompanied by Mrs. Scherrer, gave us some Swiss Yodels, I too hate to talk of age especially where Ladies are concerned, but I have heard the happy trio perform a good many years ago, and they too have not changed, their singing is still as good as ever and I hope we shall all meet again in 1887.

Shortly before 2 a.m. this happy Festival finished and everybody, or almost everybody, went home with the feeling of having spent an enjoyable evening.

ST.

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