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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.

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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