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THE GOOD-FRIDAY OUTING OF THE MANCHESTER SWISS.

Ever since our Swiss Club came into being in the middle of last century, Good-Friday of each year brought about a rally of members for an outing, be the weather fair or foul. It used to be a bachelors' party in the good old days when the Swiss Colony consisted largely of gay young birds of passage, who stayed for a year or two to learn the language and the ways of life in our busy prosperous Cotonopolis. The few "settlers" who then already formed the nucleus of the Swiss community in the district made it their pleasant duty to show these young people something of the nearby lovely country which contrasts so strikingly with the grey skies and sooty streets of the City. Good-Friday, marking winter's death and opening the doors into spring, was for this purpose an ideal holiday. The ladies stayed at home; between the exuberant spirit of those adolescent males and the vagaries of the reputedly unreliable Good-Friday weather their comfort might have been in jeopardy and crinolines were an unsuitable attire for the exploration of the stormy hills of Derbyshire.

Meanwhile the march of time has changed not only the fashion in ladies outlook and dresses but also the constitution and fortunes of our Colony. Those migrants of our species ceased to frequent these overcrowded shores when wars, droughts and erosions lowered the fertility of the economic soil even to the peril of the native flocks. The few who had securely nested themselves in saw their ranks gradually thinning as a result of assimilation, the debilities of age and inevitable decay. Few breaches were refilled, admission being restricted to selected specimen of distinctive economic merit and practically all our progenies being lost by assimilation with the local breed.

Yes, we are a very different Swiss Colony to-day and yet we manage somehow to preserve at least some of the old traditions. The Good-Friday outing got a new lease of life through the admission of the gentle sex. Emancipation has taught women to wear actual, as well as the proverbial, trousers and in their modern garb, none the less graceful for being more practical, they are prepared to brave any storm and won't be robbed of a bit of fun by selfish man. In fact, it would not be half the fun to go without them as the gaiety of our parties is chiefly provided by them. Their admixture — and the price of beer — have imparted to our traditional Good-Friday outing a character of sobriety without any loss of jollity.

Many of our members, and some of the ladies too, being engaged on war-work or in the digging campaign, were unable to come with us this year. They have the satisfaction of helping to forge the weapons whereby peace will be brought nearer. But to the timorous souls who shrank from an early rise to catch the 8.43 or from the threat of a drop of rain, we propose the example of our friends from Stoke who rose at 5 a.m. double summer-time, which is 3 o'clock by the sun — or was it by the moon? — and who in the darkness of the night trusted to good luck for fine weather, just as one does by a time-honoured homeland custom on Ascension day to get to the top of a mountain and watch the glory of the sun-rise over snow-clad peaks. And well were we all rewarded, for a finer day could not have been desired. The sun was mild and the air so light that the ascent from Chinley, by way of "Peep-o'-day Farm" — so-called on account of a peep hole

in the eastern wall which catches the first rays of the rising sun — and over grassy slopes was accomplished with delightful ease.

But long before the top was reached, we were bidden to descend into a lovely hidden glen, a very haven of peace, where in a grove of trees bathed by the murmuring rush of a mountain stream we took our seats on boulders and tree stumps. It was a happy pic-nic luncheon of home-provided war time diet the quality of which, as testified by the people's health and energy, merits an unaustere feather in the cap of the new regime of living by scientific direction. We could not help thinking of the valient and happily successful efforts made in our beloved homeland to keep the wolf from the door and of the many poor countries on the Continent where starvation is the pitiful common lot and the ruin of the rising generation. We were also regaled by stories reminiscent of the good old days by a remnant of those "gay young birds of forty years ago;" of how Swiss Club ramblers halted in the self same spot and fished in the stream for bottles of wine which has been carried up in anticipation to cool for a few days in it's bubbling freshness. Believe it or not, we weren't envious, though a drop of those old vintages would have found appreciative palates, had we been lucky enough to rediscover the bottles then missing. However, the want of it prevented any stumbling on our further progress up the rocky path and over the flagged Roman Road and kept our vision clear for the beautiful panorama which gradually unfolded itself below the rising mist.

A short rest on "Lord's Seat," in warm sunshine served for our instruction on the lay of the land by knowing heads. The view extended far beyond the lovely Hope Valley at our feet, over the hills of Derbyshire down into the Cheshire plain and in the dim distance towards the sea and the mountains of Wales. Kinder Scout opposite looks hunch-backed from the East, in contrast to it's table-top aspect from the Western side.

The day had by now turned out so glorious and our party so harmonious that not the frailest among us chose the short and easy descent to Edale. We had plenty of time for the completion of our itinerary to Hope. A good half of the party had still sufficient energy left for climbing up "Mam Tor," whilst the remainder followed the easy descent through Winnats gap and Castleton, in the shadow of the ruins of historic Peveril Castle. Reunited at Hope, we invaded and disturbed the afternoon slumber of a country inn where in due course our stinging appetites were appeased by a generous tea. The locals were left in no doubt by our strange and multi-lingual talk that they were confronted by foreigners more foreign than the dwellers of the village in the valley over the hills. However, the invasion signal was not sounded, but even the most cosmopolitan of them were nonplussed by our unfathomable 'dialects,' and that was before we called "d'Stöck und füzg vom Chrütz Chüng" in the game which was to be rudely interrupted by the shout "All change" on arrival of our train at Chinley. One of the party with a long head had remembered to bring a pack of cards which however produced no hand long or strong enough to make "Matsch." After Chinley the crush thickened at every station until the suburbs of Manchester were reached where one after another took leave, well pleased with one of our most successful gatherings of recent years. r — r.