

A reunion of the Swiss in Liverpool and neighbourhood

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A REUNION OF THE SWISS IN LIVERPOOL AND NEIGHBOURHOOD.

Both the Swiss Minister and "Marie-Louise" were expected in Liverpool on the 10th November and both did not come. The Minister, Dr. Ruegger, much to his regret and ours, was delayed in Switzerland, and "Marie-Louise" has so many admirers in London that she can not accept any more at present, but Dr. de Rham, of the Legation, said "later, peut-être." And so they came from the suburbs of Liverpool, Blackpool, Southport, Prestatyn by car, by train, by bus, and as the clans gathered Dr. Escher, the Chargé d'Affaires, with the First Secretary of the Legation, Dr. de Rham and his charming wife, were racing at express speed from the Thames to the Mersey. The first meeting place was the David Lewis Theatre at Liverpool, where Dr. de Rham had provided two films, one "Il neige sur le Haut Pays," commentary by the writer Zermatten, and the other "L'année Vigneronne," commentary by the writer C. F. Ramuz. The Swiss Club Liverpool had combined with the Société Littéraire Française de Liverpool, which was easy, since the lady President was our distinguished countrywoman, Mme. Davidson, a staunch upholder of the French language in this commercial town. She addressed a warm welcome to the Chargé d'Affaires, Dr. Escher, and to Dr. and Mme. de Rham. Dr. Escher designated Dr. de Rham to reply and the audience, possibly some 400 strong, a good many actually learning scholars, were delighted to hear excellent French discourses. As an Englishman said to me: "How well the Swiss speak the French language!" Mme. Davidson then spoke about the works of Zermatten and Ramuz and put us wise as to what these writers had really attempted.

The films showed the hard work the people of the Valais had to endure in the winter but also what beautiful scenery rewarded them in their hours of rest. They also showed the indoor work women were doing with the spinning wheel while King Frost painted fairy scenes on their windows. The next film showed what an unremitting art is the cultivation of the vine from spring to autumn, from the flowering season to the fruit, the bunches of grapes which looked so luscious but which disappeared in presses from the containers of which flowed the juice, the new wine to be. We also got a glimpse of the severe slopes on which hillcreep is at work and presents often a difficult engineering problem of how to keep the earth where it is. Even this toil is hard, but the eye rests on a scene of placid lake and lofty mountain and man is content.

After the film show the audience faded away, the Swiss disappeared in small parties of friends only to reassemble at 7 p.m. at the Adelphi Hotel, where our friend Neuschwand devoted his art as chef de cuisine to provide a satisfactory dinner, not so easy in these days. We were a party of 68. At the head of the table presided Dr. Escher, who presently proposed the King's health. The Consul followed with a short speech of welcome to our guests — the distinguished party from the Legation where the Minister and his collaborators had the noble mission of strengthening and extending the good relationship of H.M. Government with the "Bundesrat." To the "Bundesrat" he expressed the indebtedness of us all by saying: "Er hat sich auch dieses mal gut gehütet am Morgarten.

Alle Ehre dem Bundesrat." He welcomed very cordially the presence of Vice-Consul and Mme. Pernet from Manchester and the presence of the forceful personality of Mr. C. Kuenzle, representative of the Birmingham Swiss Club, well known for the quality of his chocolate and the quality of his philanthropy. He charged him to convey a message to the Club about its President, Mr. Brun, who is seriously ill and for whom our wishes were that he may experience the miracle of recovery.

Mr. Louis Comte spoke on behalf of the Swiss Club, Liverpool, to our guests and mentioned that we had in our midst the oldest lady of the Colony, Miss Bähler, 88 years young. He welcomed the presence of the representative of our fraternal club in Manchester, the Treasurer, Mr. Monney, here in spite of the fact that the Manchester Club also had a Dinner of its own that evening. He spoke also of the possibility that the Consulate might return to Liverpool this year.

Mme. Davidson's theme was "la Cinquième Suisse," which included the ladies once Swiss but now through marriage of British nationality but nevertheless attached to their country of origin, a fact they proved by befriending the young Swiss girls coming to the Liverpool district. The authorities in Switzerland should take note of this position and make an entry visum a mere formality easily discharged for these ladies. The Cinquième Suisse has suffered terribly in many countries during the war and many a Swiss abroad must say to himself "wäres du diheime blibe."

She delivered her speech in French with an easy grace and charm which we shall long remember.

Then followed the speeches of the guests. Dr. Escher expressed the appreciation of himself and his party of the cordial welcome, and thought the Minister might be able to come early in the New Year. He then mentioned the work necessary for European restoration and thought, if I understand him correctly, the British Government realised that Germany cannot be left in her present prostrate condition and people must be got back to work again. He also pointed to a number of serious problems facing Switzerland, for instance the problem of joining the United Nations, which must be carefully studied since it may involve a demand of giving up our traditional policy of neutrality, which most Swiss hesitate to do. Behind the Diplomat we saw arising the figure of the statesman.

Vice Consul Pernet and his wife were our guests the first time since they came to Manchester. He put in a plea that our lively "Jass" contests with the Manchester Club should be revived, but Liverpool is a bit stale. He was glad to acknowledge the kindness of our reception of his wife and himself.

Then followed the representative of Birmingham, Mr. C. Kuenzle, an old and valued friend. He brought the best wishes of the Birmingham Club and a few anecdotes of his recent stay in Switzerland. For instance, the Grison farmers cannot sell their cattle but badly want to and Italy wants to buy but has no money. Switzerland must lend the money to Italy and does, and the cows are eagerly bought. That is trade. Everybody profits. Davos wants to get taxes on his English property, he tells them a few tales and says not a penny of double taxation, uselessly arguing, Montag is behind me. He gave us all a good laugh.

The Consul had mentioned that Mr. L. J. Faivre had been Chancellor of the Consulate of Liverpool for 20 years. Dr. de Rham carried the proposal that he be congratulated by acclamation and Mr. Faivre delivered his maiden speech of thanks.

There was time left for enjoying each others company and Dr. Escher and Dr. de Rham had to answer many questions, which they did with bonhomie. The meeting was a success. Old friendships were renewed and new ones made, not the least those with the delegation from the Legation. "A bientôt" was the message of farewell.

E.M.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

The Monthly Meeting of the Society, held at Swiss House on Wednesday, November 14th, was attended by about 50 members and friends. They were welcomed by the Vice-President, Mr. W. Meier, who was in the Chair. He informed the meeting that the President had gone to Switzerland to make final arrangements regarding the re-opening of the College. As a result of notices in the Swiss Press and an announcement on the Radio, some 200 enquiries had already been received from prospective students. These were being dealt with according to their merits, as numbers would have to be restricted on account of the limited accommodation available.

Mr. L. W. Krucker reported on the latest developments regarding the renewal of the lease and repairs and renovations to be effected at Swiss House. Subject to unforeseen delays, it now appears fairly certain that the College will restart its activities in March or April next.

After some welcome refreshments kindly provided by the Ladies' Group, which is taking an ever more active part in the Society's affairs, the remainder of the evening was spent in playing cards. Competitions were arranged both for "Jass" and Whist, and the lucky winners were awarded handsome prizes, generously donated by Mr. L. W. Krucker, Vice-President.

The next Meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 12th, and will be followed by a Film Show, the projection being as usual in the efficient hands of our member, Mr. Charles Fer. It is hoped to show some of the latest Swiss films, full particulars to be announced in due course.

W.B.

Rutli Ladies' Club

BAZAAR & TEA

AT

SWISS HOUSE, FITZROY SQUARE, W.1
on SATURDAY, 8 DECEMBER, 1945,
from 2 to 9 p.m.

All Swiss and their friends cordially invited

ADMISSION FREE

SWISS CLUB DUNFERMLINE.

On the evening of Friday, October 5th, the members of our colony came together for an exceptional ceremony. It was a gathering of our compatriots to mark the occasion of our club becoming a section of the "Neue Helvetische Gesellschaft," our first meeting as members of the great family of Swiss, the N.S.H.

Our President, Mr. F. Gualeni, gave a hearty welcome to everyone present and particularly to our honoured guests, Mr. F. A. Suter, President of the N.S.H. in London, and our honorary member, Mr. E. Hofstetter, Consular Agent in Balloch. Mr. Gualeni explained that after eight years' existence as a Swiss Club we had recently decided to join the N.S.H., and he was happy to announce that we had been admitted as a group of this great Society. Even although we in Dunfermline were only a very small section, we would endeavour to be a wholehearted member of the great family.

Following our President's remarks, Mr. Suter took the chair and gave us a most interesting lecture about the Neue Helvetische Gesellschaft in general, its institutions and its great work for the benefit of us Swiss living abroad. It was also a treat for us listeners to hear from Mr. Suter in his humorous way about the varied activities of the London Section of the N.S.H. Furthermore, eager ears listened to his details of the recent performances in London of the magnificent Swiss Film "Marie Louise."

Mr. Hofstetter, who next spoke to us, gave us an interesting resumé of his recent visit to Switzerland. Naturally, we were all extremely keen to learn as much as possible of the conditions prevailing in our mother country. Mr. Hofstetter vividly described his visit to the "Rutli" and without any doubt, he made many of us listeners secretly vow that we would set foot on that historic place too when our luck would come to visit our homeland again.

As a really enjoyable interval in the proceedings we adjourned to a delicious "Güggeli Bankett" which some of our members had prepared. Refreshed, we plunged heroically into a "Witz- and Anektoten" competition which was arranged to follow the supper. It is needless to say that the jokes and anecdotes created a happy and elated atmosphere for the rest of the evening.

ALBERT FERBER WITH THE LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA.

Our compatriot, Albert Ferber, played the solo part in Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto, No. 2 in C minor, with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, on Friday, November 16th, at the Town Hall, Wembley, under the conductorship of Karl Rankl.

The exquisite playing of the artiste in this concerto, which is one of Rachmaninoff's most popular works, was greeted by a large attendance with prolonged applause, and Mr. Ferber was repeatedly recalled to make his bow to an enthusiastic audience.

LETTER BOX.

E.A.N. — Thanks for forwarding to us a cutting received from your son in India, concerning the Swiss Film "Marie-Louise." It is gratifying to learn, that this really fine film, is applauded in such far away quarters.