

New-Year near Chernex

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THE SWISS CLUB, MANCHESTER.

Christmas Party, December 21st, 1946.

Whilst in years gone by the main event of the Club was possibly a dinner-dance or a Grütli Feier, the war years have so clearly indicated that the generation to come ought to have first call upon the Manchester Colony. This endeavour has obtained increasing support, and all praises must be sung to the unstinted help offered by many of our members. Not only was the response to the Committee's appeal most liberal, but members and friends, even quite recent arrivals from Switzerland, sent us sweet coupons, donations and gifts, surely a sign of a good Christmas spirit.

Under these pleasant circumstances and most encouraging results, happiness prevailed in preparing for the event, and when we arrived at the Midland Hotel and saw the admirable arrangements made by our very good friend Mr. E. R. Cottet, we knew that the party would be most enjoyable both to young and old.

About 180 people, some travelling a long way, eventually collected, and after the introduction of many new faces to members of longer standing, tea was served. It was a pleasure to see well over 50 children, some sitting amongst themselves at separate tables, looked after so ably and helpfully by Miss Jacqueline Huber.

Our Mr. F. Heinrich, who presided in the absence of Dr. J. A. Schedler, welcomed the children, Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Huber, members and friends, and in wishing them a pleasant afternoon and a Very Happy Christmas, he struck the right note in asking the boys and girls to accept this time Uncle Fred instead of Uncle Jack, he also hinted that Father Christmas might be coming very shortly, an announcement of considerable importance.

Meanwhile, in the small ballroom, busy hands lit candles, so kindly supplied by a very helpful member, a recent visitor to Switzerland, whilst young and old settled round the tree in ever-widening circles. The lights were lowered, Father Christmas entered, and the ever lovely old hymn "O du Fröhliche, O du Selige" was rendered by this vast family of people.

Followed a few recitations, rather more popular with girls than boys, who, as usual, maintained, with exceptions, a stony silence which even the promise of an immediate reward could not soften. We were, however, treated to an excellent recital on the grand piano of Debussy's "Clair de Lune," but unfortunately, Father Christmas, growing older, has forgotten the boy's name.

Sweets of all kinds in a colourful variety of cellophane bags, were then handed to one and all of the younger end, followed by gifts of books, toys, paint-boxes and many kinds of things delightful to the children. One little boy whose name had not come to Father Christmas's notice, cried bitterly when he appeared to go empty-handed. This discrepancy soon

discovered, was righted, and the eyes of the little boy, but not his mouth, spoke his innermost feelings. Many coloured ribbons, kindly presented to the Club, were distributed, proving extremely acceptable to all the ladies.

Father Christmas, having proved useful, then departed, and a conjuror engaged attention. Not only did he puzzle our children, but even the grown-ups were amused and intrigued by his versatility. Musical Chairs caused great delight, and Potato races showed surprising agility of both girls and boys, and the many small additional prizes won gave additional pleasure to us all.

The party came slowly to an end, the very little ones having already departed, and the remaining children well laden, bade us farewell and gave us thanks for a lovely afternoon.

We should also record here how sorry we were that some of our friends from far and near were unable to join us for many reasons, and that the wishes addressed to the party for a Happy New Year will reach them in this manner.

HELM.

NEW-YEAR NEAR CHERNEX.

Chernex lies well above Montreux, about 2,000 feet above sea-level, and is very much in the centre of life at present. The road that runs up to Sonzier, and then by gradations, to Les Avants, is well covered with snow, hard at night, slightly melting during the day, added to at times by a fresh fall, and beaten down again by the many ingenious forms of alpine traffic.

Tourists and natives alike, have taken full advantage of an exceptionally cold spell and the road has a lively air. For many who go higher by train, come down on ski or on luge, and tiny children don ski-dress and take their chance on its surface.

The skier presents a peculiarly natural appearance, as if skis and batons were part of his inherited equipment, and he was born for the purpose of rapid locomotion. If in Mufti, one comes to a sudden halt, at his approach, and stares ingenuously till the last sign of movement has vanished. There is magic in his dress, and no costume in the world to equal its simple effectiveness.

The road from Chernex to Sonzier mounts high above Lake Léman, with the Dents du Midi in a southeasterly direction, commanding the valley of the Rhone, and the dim range of Jura to the west. The passing of luge and of ski down this historic way is an arresting sight, and a dispeller of less profitable doubts and fears.

E.F.I.

OUR NEXT ISSUE.

Our next issue will be published on Friday, January 31st, 1947. We take this opportunity of thanking the following subscribers for their donations: F. Conrad, S. Spargnapani, P. H. Conrad, M. Lienhard, W. Lehmann, P. Walser, E. H. Hess, Mrs. C. Rougemont, M. E. Lichtensteiger, F. Egger, E. Schefer, E. Steiner, A. Renou, E. Montag, A. B. C. Chivers.

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