

The Geneva University Club

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THE MANCHESTER SWISS CLUB'S CHRISTMAS TREE.

Saturday, the 21st of December, 1935.

In spite of one of the worst spells of cold, fog and slush, the kind and generous efforts of the Manchester Swiss Club's President and Committee were crowned with a well-deserved success: a goodly company of nearly one hundred members and guests gathered round a fine Christmas Tree in one of the loftiest rooms of the "Grand Hotel."

The many lights of the traditional "Tannenbaum," an ever new delight to children, spread brightness in the hearts of everyone. Thanks to its atmosphere of goodwill and cheerfulness, Christmas makes children of us all.

The tree, a well-grown sapling, fully sixteen foot high, was tastefully lighted and adorned, tastefully in both senses of the word; from its branches hung many gifts for the children as well as numerous bags of sweetmeats which proved later on that our practical Swiss Ladies, who provided those tit-bits, are first-class confectioners, in every way equal to the good wives of the "Auld Land o'-Cakes."

Our untiring President, Mr. Kübler, then addressed the assembly, welcoming all those present in the name of the club. He also spoke specially to the children for a few moments.

Nothing sweeter could encourage better a truly Christmas-like "Gemütlichkeit" than the singing of the dear old tune "Heilige Nacht" (Voici Noël). How many of us, old folks, far away in years and miles from the dear old Swiss home, revived the fading memories of their youth! A short reading of the nativity followed, and we all sang the favourite hymn "O du fröhliche, o du selige."

A young accordion soloist played some Christmas carols. Two little singers treated us to the well-known "O Tannebaum." Unfortunately, their notes did not quite reach the highest branches of the Christmas tree; however, they most gallantly piped it through. The piano having condescended to lower its pitch by a good major quint, they gave a fine rendering of their second song.

About that time a panic spread among the smokers: pipes, cigars, cigarettes seemed to disappear by magic; it was rumoured that a dinner was to be served in the room the same evening. This proved nothing worse than a false alarm, it soon became very noticeable that Lady Nicotine was again among us.

The children having stormed the tree and carried their booty away, the other guests received each a neat paper-bag full of most delicious "Güezi."

A "Tombola" had been arranged, a most generous one; it seemed as if every ticketholder received a prize.

Saying "Good-Bye" to our "Tannebaum," we adjourned to another hall where a most recherche little supper was awaiting us. Judging by the happy faces at the various tables, full justice was done to the delicious fare.

To the accompaniment of the accordion, the celebration of the first "Christmas-Tree Gathering of the Swiss Club Manchester" closed with the singing of "Rufst Du mein Vaterland."

The heartiest thanks for a well organised and very pleasant evening are due to our enthusiastic President and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Kübler, to our Swiss Consul and his wife, Dr. and Mrs. Schedler, and to all the Committee and Members of the Swiss Club (of Manchester), as well as to the Ladies. Prompted by their generosity and kindness of heart, they invited "en personne" the most humble members of our colony, a practical example of true Swiss Solidarity.

"UN POUR TOUS, TOUS POUR UN."
S.E.B.

THE GENEVA UNIVERSITY CLUB.

The Geneva University Club held its annual dinner on Friday, December 13th, at the Cumberland Hotel. The President, Pastor Hoffmann-de Visme was in the chair. Proposing the toast of our Alma Mater, he spoke of Geneva and of the Societies to unite its old students which were springing up in Warsaw, Bucharest and Belgrade. Societies such as these helped to bridge the immense walls that nations had built round themselves. He read from the Journal de Genève an account of the Dies Academicus held last summer and concluded his speech by dropping his knife on to the marmite de l'Escalade and repeating the well-known phrase "Ainsi périssent les ennemis de Genève."

Sir St. Clair Thomson when proposing the health of the Geneva University Club suffered from a slight grievance. It appears he had expected to answer for the guests, and had prepared himself accordingly. He felt like the Scottish Minister who had left his sermon behind and said to his congregation that under these circumstances he must depend entirely upon Divine Guidance, but hoped to do better for them in the

afternoon. Anyone listening to Sir St. Clair Thomson would wish nothing better than Divine Guidance for him. After telling us several amusing stories, he told us that he held the Swiss Federal Degree in medicine and was a graduate of the University of Lausanne. He looked back upon his student days there with great pleasure and many of his contemporaries had since shed lustre on their university. He congratulated the Geneva University Club on being just over 4 years old and enjoying its 5th Annual Dinner.

Sir John Stavridi in proposing the health of the guests made special reference to his personal indebtedness to Sir St. Clair Thomson who operated upon him when in great misery and fighting for breath on account of a Quinsy. He said that we were fortunate in having Sir William Goscombe John, R.A., as a guest that evening. His sculptures were to be seen in many of the streets of London, which had been beautified by his work. Sir John said that the senior members of the Society had chosen Geneva as a place of study solely because of its Academic attractions. But now a new city had arisen that was a centre of world political thought. To that city and what it stood for the world he was looking in our present international difficulties.

Sir William Goscombe John, replying for the guests denied that his influence upon the London streets was on the scale suggested by Sir John Stavridi, but he was glad to be a guest of the Club and thanked it for its hospitality and wished it well.

In addition to members and guests we were glad to welcome two young Doctors from Geneva University who are staying temporarily in London. It was a surprise meeting for them, as even one did not know that the other was in London. We particularly appreciate these contacts and invite any old student of Geneva University to send their name and address to the Hon. Secretary, Geneva University Club, 31, Highbury Place, N.5.

A short report of the societies activities during the past year was circulated to members during the dinner.

SWISS CULINARY SOCIETY.

Our readers might be undoubtedly interested to hear, that the nett proceeds of the very successful Charity Ball, arranged by the above mentioned Society, and which took place on Monday, November 25th, at the Union Helvetia Club, 1, Gerrard Place, W., amounted to 290 5s. 0d.

This amount was handed over to the French Hospital in London, through the intermediary of the Honorary President of the Swiss Culinary Society, Mr. G. E. De Brunner, and we wish to congratulate the Society on their splendid achievement. The French Hospital has always opened their doors wide for our compatriots, and this fine contribution from one of our Swiss Societies is a befitting thanks offering which honours both the Society and the Swiss Colony.

SWISS GYMNASTIC SOCIETY LONDON.

Eidgenössisches Turnfest 1936.
17th to 20th July in Winterthur.

The forthcoming year will in addition to the Olympic Games be distinguished by the Holding of the Federal Gymnastic Festival in Winterthur shortly before the Games.

The Swiss Gymnastic Society London — always provided circumstances and finance permitting — has provisionally decided to take part so that the Swiss Colony in London should not be without a representation on this auspicious occasion. Training has already commenced, but there are still vacancies for young Swiss Gymnasts — either Swiss born or born in England of Swiss parents — to compete for places in the team. They are cordially invited to appear at training any Wednesday evening at 8.45 p.m., at 74, Charlotte Street, W.1. After the festive season training will be commenced on Sunday mornings at 11 a.m., at Finsbury Park running track for the athletic side of the compulsory programme viz.: Relay race and long jump. It is probable that a team of 12 men will be selected in the early spring.

Juniors and Ladies teams will continue as usual, the former on Wednesdays at 7 p.m. and the latter at 8.45 p.m. on Fridays, both at 74, Charlotte Street, W.1. New members are always welcome.

XYZ.

SWISS TENOR FLIES TO RESCUE B.B.C.

Hughes Cuénod, the Swiss tenor, received a telephone message from Mr. Edward Clarke, impresario for new music to the B.B.C. on the Wednesday before Christmas, asking him to sing the tenor part in the oratorio "Paradise Lost" by the young Russian composer Igor Markievitch, forty-eight hours later.

He accepted, and never having seen the score before, began to study it in the aeroplane to Croydon. If he had not been able to accept the invitation, or had not been able to learn his part in time, the B.B.C. would have had to cancel the

whole performance, for which orchestra and chorus had worked for days. Mr. Clarke personally thanked M. Cuénod for the effort he had made.

M. Cuénod studied at the *Conservatoire* in Basle and afterwards in Vienna. He now divides his time between Paris and Geneva.

FOUR HOURS OVER THE HIGH ALPS.

By Mr. DOUGLAS FAWCETT.

Half past eight on an autumn morning. The *bise* (north wind) is blowing mildly. A light mist floats above the lake of Thun, but east and south-east the Eiger, Monch, Jungfrau and other great peaks of the Oberland pierce a clear sapphire sky. Surely a promising day for one's last mountain flight of the season.

Ah! a telephone call *Alpar Bern* aerodrome reports fog over the Aar valley and various lakes, but adds that it seems low and local only. Excellent! Soon our car is purring up the hill and we are leaving Oberhofen for Belp, near Berne, best of all centres for those visitors who may desire to sample real mountaineering by aeroplane. Here we meet Herr Direktor Pili-chody, the veteran pilot, take our seats in the Leopard Moth which has never once faltered during our many wanderings, nose into the wind and, taking off, swing eastward.

Prominent Landmarks.

We are bound for Innsbruck, using valleys and low passes only as landmarks — flying among and over the mountains. So from the outset we climb continuously. We soon have the fog areas and mist zone below us, and climb through a cloudless sky with visibility of scores of miles in every direction, sunshine flooding mountains on which newly fallen snow marks the onset of winter. Navigation here, even in November, is easy — one steers by eye with only occasional glances at the map. In England it is tiresome to have to steer so often on a compass course while tied to that monotonous 2,000ft. level in order not to falsify wind calculations. Here we go as we please; already we are over 9,000ft. up when leaving the Emmenthal. We skirt the Brienzer Rothorn in view of the green Lake of Brienz, and indescribably superb are the mountain spectacles to right and left. We pass next between the Lake of Lungern and Meiringen in the Haslithal. This latter valley leads towards the famous Grimsel and Furka passes, Gletsch and the Rhône glacier, but this time we are not bound for Gletsch and, crossing anon the Dammastock, find ourselves at 12,000 ft. or so looking down on Hospenthal, near the beginning of the St. Gotthard Pass, hard by which is a prohibited area which has to be avoided. We continue for some way in the direction of the Val Leventina, in which the Ticino river and St. Gotthard railway run towards Bellinzona and Italy. We then turn to the left, crossing the Lukmanier Pass, the sight of which recalls motor rambles. All the while the Leopard climbs.

It is cold—outside. Ice formation? None. The dry north wind is blowing; there is a slight haze showing in the originally clear sky, but no clouds are seen at our altitude at any point of the compass. Joy-fliers in the High Alps like the *bise*, as do mountaineers. We think twice about going up if the southerly *foehn* is threatening; we may be blown into valleys, apart from the risk of the deposits of ice. When the *bise* rules, *altocumulus* and peak-streamers can ordinarily be dodged, and I have not noticed any icing trouble due to such manoeuvres as circling for photographs round the top of the Matterhorn through cloud. On another machine we had the A.S.I. ventured iced up when the *foehn* began to blow at 16,000ft., over Mt. Blanc. The wind was not strong, but it later caused a downward drop of the order of 650ft.

Bumps? None troubled us during the present flight, as fog below and the absence of cumulus clouds would suggest. The entire journey was as smooth as any round I can recall over Heston or Hatfield. But don't let any reader suppose that the High Alps are always thus amiable. His dream will pass! A day such as this is rare.

The Lukmanier Pass (I can sight its Swiss starting point, Disentis, very far away in the valley of the Vorder Rhine), the St. Bernardino and the Splügen are left behind and now we swing to the right and follow roughly the line of the Julier Pass to Silvaplana, at which point the Engadine is crossed and a course is steered to the left of two giants down over by us last year—the Piz Palu and the Bernina (13,304ft.). The mountains between the upper Engadine and Austria seem without number, but who cares at a feast of beauty like this? As Lubbock says in his *Scenery of Switzerland*, it is "impossible to give any idea in words of the beauty of high snow-fields" — and if as mountaineers we can say this, how much more enthusiastic shall we become as pilots! There is risk incurred in our wanderings, of course, but are not the best things often enjoyed only at their price?

Though the Leopard is moving at more than 100 m.p.h. it seems sometimes that progress is extremely slow. High speed high up is the most
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