

Bundesfeier in Manchester

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BUNDESFEIER IN MANCHESTER

We have often envied the amenities and resources at the command of our large sister colony in the Metropolis, but in the past months our feelings for our compatriots in London have changed to anxiety and sympathy. Our sleep is undisturbed and our work goes on without the irritating interruptions caused by the doodle-bugs, whose sting, incapable of piercing the armour of tanks and bombers, takes an unheroic vengeance on the innocent and harmless. The devil himself has never invented an instrument more effective to challenge and justify hate. The barbarities of the forgotten ages appear like a dim shadow as compared with this corollary of our refined civilisation. Nevertheless, Faith will again inspire noble souls with a remedy and the forces of good and evil will go on competing, with the perpetual rhythm of the rising and falling tide, by action and reaction. The doodle-bugs have not got it all their own way yet; they have not reached us in the North; we are too far away and also too small for them. While you in London have to scatter, we were able to gather, seventy-seven of us, on Saturday, the 5th August, to celebrate the Swiss National Day in Manchester and we had quite a pleasant afternoon together.

Making the most of our spasmodic gatherings, the Swiss Club combined business with pleasure and called its members to an ordinary business meeting. "Jaas" was the main item on the agenda; so strong is the attraction of our national "sport" that it competed successfully with the lovely sunshine on that afternoon which made us at least aware of the summer. Some of us were happy enough to exchange the back-breaking work with the spade in back-gardens and allotments for a hundred in spades over cool refreshments at the "Midland". The drawback to these combined gatherings is that the Jass time has to be curtailed, when the guests demand attention.

It is always a pleasant half-hour when the friendly faces appear one after another, intermingle to exchange the news and gradually form the old familiar groups. We are few enough for everyone to know all the others; the distinctions of rank and fortune are forgotten and even the shyest usually finds someone to break or share his or her reserve.

The while Miss Caspar was busy decorating collar-ettes and lapels with the National Day emblem, and by the time everybody present was supplied, we had over £15 in hand for the Swiss Red Cross. You readers of the "S.O." in the Manchester area who have not yet got one, please note there is one of these pretty emblems in reserve for each of you. You know how much the splendid work of the Swiss Red Cross needs every help. Think of all the suffering it helps to ease. Mr. Monney will gratefully receive and transmit large and small contributions and send you the emblem in acknowledgement.

The small banquetting room was delightfully bright and cool. The table decorations of red and white carnations arranged by the housekeeper and the Swiss banner which floated in the breeze over the "table d'honneur", made by Mrs. Cottet as a thoughtful First of August gift to her husband, our host, were compliments to an older sister republic from two ladies of Irish birth whose presence graced and honoured our gathering.

Unfortunately a disappointment was in store for

us, as Mr. Kübler was absent from his normal place in the presidential chair, being prevented by ill health from attending the gathering. Mr. Monney took his place and read his brief message saying that he was with us in thought. Mr. Consul Pernet, in a brilliantly delivered address, drew an up-to-date picture—as far as it is possible to be up-to-date these days—of conditions in Switzerland. The most striking thing in this picture is the self-imposed discipline of our people as the price of an orderly and comfortable life for all and of the country's survival in internal peace and fraternal unity. We may have confidence, he concluded, in our people and the authorities to preserve the freedom of our beloved land, though it may well be that the hardest task has yet to come before peace is achieved all round. We all share Mr. Pernet's hope to be able to celebrate the next First of August in Switzerland.

The delicious Tea having been cleaned up—there was little of it left to clear away—we were delighted by Miss Loosli's fine performance on the violin. It was a great pity that she was not allowed to start earlier and give us a few more numbers of her repertoire, as she was obliged to rush away to an appointment. Her early departure was the more felt as another musically gifted compatriot was at the last moment prevented from coming. However, Mr. Steiner called forth hilarity on reading an old amusing account in French of a compatriot learning the intricacies of "Jass" at a mature age, having then to endure the biting gibes of those who had misused their school desks in surreptitious practice of the national game. The re-telling of this story happened to come opportunely, as one of us underwent the experience on the same afternoon, though in a mild form; having a natural flair for cards and a beginner's luck he was spared the sarcastic bouts which normally belong to the new player's initiation. To balance things up he was allowed the enjoyment of his first winning only to the extent of contributing it to Mr. Suter's fund for the relief of war-damaged compatriots in occupied and devastated countries.

In the further progress of our celebrations, attempts were made to sing the old Swiss songs, Mr. Bickel leading on the piano. The performance would have earned no laurels at a federal choral contest; nobody ventured to raise his voice for fear of making a noise, though we timid and unpractised singers, needed just that kind of encouragement. Our ageing Swiss community will have to wait for that until new life comes with the influx of all the young people we hope to see over here for a "stage" when the frontiers open. The realisation of this hope will mean Peace and Freedom; may they come soon.

Having seen Minister Ruegger's message in the last issue of the "S.O.", we sent him a message of

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welcome to this country and patriotic greetings from our gathering. We wish him every success in his new and responsible post and look forward to having the honour of his visit to our Colony.

R.....R.

THE FIRST OF AUGUST IN LIVERPOOL

The fifth Bundesfeier under conditions of war, presented us with a similar problem as last year and we solved it in a similar way.

For the Swiss living in or near Prestatyn the Consulate arranged for afternoon tea in the garden of "Holmesdale", the Consul's Bungalow, and Mrs. L. J. Faivre, the chancellor's wife, received the guests. Amongst these was our senior Swiss lady, Mrs. Steffen from Basle, now 85, who simply longs for the day when Swiss Air will fly her back to her native town. With her daughter, Mrs. Cheetham senior, and her granddaughter-in-law, Mrs. Cheetham junior with her little boy Christopher, four generations were represented. His father, Captain Cheetham is away with the Anti-Aircraft gunners. The day was a perfect summer day and the hills and coastline of North Wales looked their best. We sent a message of good wishes to our new Minister, good wishes for the success of his Mission, but good wishes also for the safety of himself and his collaborators now that London is in danger day and night from flying bombs.

In Liverpool, Mrs. Macquarie and Mrs. Davidson had arranged a pic-nic on Bidston Hill, a ridge on the Wirral peninsula, with an extensive view over the Mersey and Dee, Liverpool Bay and the hills of North Wales. It is a ridge of sandstone with pine trees and heather and on it stands the astronomical and meteorological station of the Mersey Dock and Harbour Board. In that party was included Mlle. Bähler who has succeeded in reaching the age of 87, which makes some of us look quite young by comparison. Friend Troxler of Bold Street sent to the party a real Swiss "Torte" and with the other good things provided, they fared very well and the outing was voted a great success. However, the main thing was to keep in contact and to feel we must stand together however disruptive the war may be, and these two ladies from Schaffhausen and Geneva, the organisers of this little fête deserve our gratitude. The Swiss in London, in danger as they are, were in the mind of the party and a small sum was sent to the Rev. Mr. Pradervand for any one needing help. If that help is needed on a larger scale I feel sure if an appeal was made it would meet with a good response from the Swiss Colonies in the north. We have not forgotten what air raids are like, although our recollection is of night raids only.

E.M.

SWISS NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION AT THE SWISS CHURCH

A joint service in French and German was held at the Swiss Church, Endell Street, W.C. 2, on Sunday morning, the 30th July. It was very well attended by members of the Colony, and the newly arrived Swiss Minister, M. Paul Ruegger, was present.

Rev. M. Pradervand opened the service by reading the well known pact of 1291. Its impressive beginning:

"In the name of God", shows that the founders of the Swiss Confederation framed their laws in the fear of God. Rev. Pradervand then spoke of the danger through which this land is passing, as a result of bombardments by pilotless planes. This does not prevent us from turning our thoughts for a few moments to our homeland which we have not seen for five years. We are thankful to God that it has been spared the horrors of war. We pray that God may protect it in the future and guide its leaders through the difficult periods, both economic and military, that lie ahead. We have also reason to thank God that our land has been able to render help to the suffering nations. As a little island surrounded by countries which have seen the ravages of the war, it sends relief, through the Red Cross in Geneva. This help is given in the spirit of the Cross, and we, as the people of the Cross, realise the divine implication. The Cross reminds us that liberty in its highest form is only found in the spiritual realm, founded on the promise of Jesus Christ that if the Son of God makes us free, then we shall be free indeed.

Rev. Pradervand then spoke on a passage taken from the Apostle Paul's letter to the Colossian 3.16: "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly." Our great reformer, Calvin, was an outstanding man of God's Word. He once said: "It pleased God by a sudden conversion to make me obedient to His Word." There was the secret of his great personality: Obedience to the Word of God. This word gives *Life*, and they that come to Jesus Christ will have life abundant. It is also a Word of *Peace*. In a world without peace the peace of Christ will sustain us. It is further a Word of *Love*, and how necessary it is that it should dwell in us richly, and find expression in our Colony.

With faith in the Word of God, the future will be faced courageously and with confidence. Of inner conviction we can then join in the Swiss Psalm and sing:—

Through the wild and stormy night,
Thou dost shield us with Thy might,
Omnipotent Saviour,
Lord of all.
Humbly in our God confiding,
Conscious of His love abiding.
Yes, we feel and understand
That He dwells in our land.

W.F.

CATHOLIC CHURCH SERVICE IN COMMEMORATION OF THE SWISS NATIONAL DAY.

It is perhaps not generally known that the Swiss Catholics of London's place of worship is their local English Catholic Parish Church, and, not having a Church of their own, special services which unite them like f.i. the one in commemoration of the Swiss National Fete, have to be held where hospitality is obtainable. This of late had been at St. Peter and St. Edward in Palace Street, Victoria, but this Church having lately sustained damage, it was uncertain if repairs would be sufficiently advanced to make it usable by July 30th. Fortunately this turned out to be the case, but only just in time for invitations to be sent out in the last minute. Under these circumstances and