

City Swiss Club

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CITY SWISS CLUB Christmas Dinner

The last sounds of Christmas carols have gone, the candles on the Christmas tree have burned out, the bells ringing in the New Year have become silent, and nothing but memories remains. Amongst these is the traditional Christmas dinner of the City Swiss Club, which was held on Wednesday, 4th December, at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1. This dinner has for many years become very popular, not only for its culinary excellence, but also for the gathering together of an appreciable number of members one but seldom sees at the ordinary meetings of the Club. Over one hundred and twenty members and friends attended in order to spend a few happy hours in congenial company.

After a prolonged cocktail party in one of the anterooms, the company adjourned to the Orchid Room, which was suitably decorated for the occasion. There was no Christmas tree, nor was there any mistletoe, as no ladies were present, but there was plenty of holly and each table was adorned with red candles, which shed a softly subdued light, and thus greatly helped to create a real festive "Stimmung". After the Rev. J. Scherrer had said Grace the revellers sat down with pleasant anticipation for the good things to come. The dinner started with fish followed by turkey. Suddenly the lights were dimmed, and in walked the waiters with the Christmas pudding, over which the lighted brandy emitted blue flames; mince pies and other seasonable delicacies followed. Christmas is a time for giving and receiving presents, and so as to keep up this custom, Mr. J. A. Ronus, the manager of the Dorchester Hotel, and a committee member of the Club, presented each member with a cigar. When coffee was served, Mr. X. Speckert, the popular President of the City Swiss Club, proposed the usual Toast to H.M. the Queen and to "La Suisse". In welcoming the numerous company and especially the members of the Embassy, Dr. R. Faessler and Dr. E. M. Bircher, as well as the recently elected Honorary Vice-President of the Club, Mr. A. Stauffer, he expressed his appreciation at seeing amongst the gathering so many old and familiar faces. He reported that a movement had started amongst the younger members of the Club to meet occasionally in order to become better acquainted with each other. This announcement was greeted with much applause. When one hears so much of a steadily diminishing, or even dying Colony, it is refreshing to hear that some of the younger members are trying to stem the process.

The President then declared the official part of the evening closed, and the indefatigable Mr. A. Gandon, with his accordion encouraged the members to sing. The musical interlude started with the rendering of the lovely and appropriate song "Holy Night, Silent Night", followed by many patriotic songs, which brought back many treasured memories. Our French-speaking brethren excelled in songs like "Roulez-tambours", "Ranze des vaches", etc., and not to be left behind, their German-speaking compatriots lustily sang songs like "Lasst hören aus alter Zeit", "O Blüemli mi", "Teure Heimat", etc., whilst our brethren from the sunny Ticino followed with "Addio la Caserma", and "I Ticinese son bravi soldati".

Many a friendship was renewed and bygone memories refreshed. All too soon the time for departure approached, and before leaving the hospitable quarters of The Dorchester, Mr. Speckert wished all the members and their families a very Happy Christmas and a beneficial New Year. He thanked Mr. Ronus for the excellent Christmas Fare provided, and for the hospitality enjoyed throughout the year, he also expressed his and the members' appreciation to Mr. Gandon for his lively entertainment which added so much to a really enjoyable and happy evening.

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