

# A retrospect

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## A RETROSPECT.

The present week has seen the finish of the social functions in our Colony and it is perhaps an appropriate moment to make a few comments.

I am not going to dwell on the current topic of world wide trade and industrial depression, as I am heartily sick of hearing about it. It has been drummed into our ears for the last twelve months, we have been told about it day after day, hour by hour, and worst of all, we have all, more or less, felt the pinch.

It is, however, a curious fact, that by reading and hearing about the many brilliant functions which have taken place during the last six months amongst the various Societies and Institutions one might easily have jumped to the conclusion that we were still living in the boom period of a few years ago.

The numerous, perhaps all too numerous festivities of recent months, have created an atmosphere of prosperity, which I dare to call bluntly superfluous. Not a week has passed without either a Banquet and Dance, Fancy-dress Ball, Cinderella Dance, Smoking and other concerts, Cinema Shows, Lectures, Displays, Tea-parties, etc., etc., and those, who, by virtue of their office have to put in an appearance for appearance's sake must be well-nigh exhausted, and I feel sure that the signal "cease firing" has come as a welcome relief to them.

Glancing back at the various splendid functions, and splendid they were, I cannot withstand the temptation of dwelling at some length on the overwhelming oratorical displays, and I feel sure that the season 1930-31 has, in this respect reached an even greater activity than in previous years. I am not in the least opposed to the delightful art of oration, and I gladly admit that some of the speeches reached the high water mark of perfection, and I for one thoroughly enjoyed listening to them, whilst others were less accomplished, less interesting and a few were distinctly boring. Last year, if I remember rightly, a discussion between some of the readers took place in the columns of our paper, regarding the advisability and sagacity of making long after dinner speeches, and our worthy friend ek, a fervent and courageous opposer of oratorical outbursts, got rather into hot water, and remarks such as "lack of good taste," "lowering the tone of the paper" were hurled at this "bold" head, and even our lovable "Kyburg" received a few nasty kicks for having dared to make a few harmless remarks about ladies dresses. Before I write another line, I wish to make it quite clear that I am an ardent supporter of ek in advocating a drastic cut in all after-dinner speeches. I am fully aware of the serious consequences this confession may have for me, I can see myself shunned and ignored by my nearest and dearest friends, I can imagine with what icy coldness I shall be received, what black looks, full of hate will be sent across the table and perhaps not one single invitation will come my way again. Letters of invitations to the Editor, will bear the crushing sentence: "Please do not send your reporter 'ST.'" as he is not "persona grata." And when this comes to pass, I shall then turn in my great loneliness with an aching and torn heart to all those ladies who have asked me to champion their cause, and if one friendly "thank you" and one kind smile comes my way I shall consider myself recompensed a thousand times, and I shall go down to my doom with joy in my heart. Now having professed myself an opposer to lengthy speeches, I feel I ought, in fairness to those who are of a different opinion, to give a few reasons and make a few suggestions.

My principal and foremost contention is, that the great majority of Ladies, who are embellishing these Banquets by their radiant beauty do not care a tinkers toss about those never ending speeches. They are fully informed about the merits of that particular Society by their husbands or their friends, they have come to amuse themselves and to be amused, and last but not least, to dance.

As it happened so often at recent functions, dancing never started before about 10.30 p.m. and thus most of the participants who are not lucky owners of a limousine (and there are still a few left) will have to leave at midnight in order to catch their train. Is it to be wondered at, that you hear people say, they will not come any more as it is hardly worth while to have so much expense for barely two hours amusement.

What a different tale there would be told if say, dancing could be started at 9 o'clock, and I can see no earthly reason why this could not be done, if the dinner starts at 7 o'clock. Two hours seems to me ample time for eating and speech-making. Mrs. A. could then see Mrs. B. at leisure and have one of those delightful little chats about Mrs. C. who, apparently, has now worn that awful looking green dress for the third time, or how perfectly ridiculous it was that Mr. Y. should reply to the toast of the "Ladies" considering that he is not and never has been a Lady, and why it was, that he was not married to one of these "delightful creatures" of whom

he spoke in such glowing terms. Mrs. D. could then acquaint Mrs. E. of the fact, that when last she saw Mrs. F. she had fair hair, and that, owing to some mysterious process it had now changed its colour to ginger. Mrs. G. stopping Mrs. H. could whisper in her dainty ears (if she can get at them) that Mrs. I has aged tremendously of late and her good looks were a thing of the past, and so on ad infinitum. Mr. K. could show Mr. L. all the last photographs of his son and heir assuring him that there has never been born a child like his. Mr. M. could then take Mr. N. to the refreshment dept. standing him a lemonade whilst pumping him at the same time for the latest tips on Stock Exchange certainties. or Mr. O. could enlighten Mr. P. on the general business outlook, condemning the lazy way in which business is conducted in this country, telling him at the same time, that he has taken a house at the seaside and has therefore to leave the office at 4 p.m. in order to squeeze in a round of golf. Mr. Q. would then ask Mr. R. whether he has heard the latest one, and the latter answering in the negative would be taken to a quiet corner where one could see them giggling for the next twenty minutes. Whilst the rest of the company could dance the Valeta, Tango, Fox-Trot, etc., and what an enjoyable time everyone would have. There would be no more incessant hammering, so distressing to one's tender nerves, to announce the innumerable speakers and even the roaring of the Toast Master would cease. The anxious glances at clocks and watches would disappear and make room for that happy feeling that midnight was yet far off.

Now in order to bring about such a happy state of affairs I should suggest that all lengthy speeches should be made at Meetings, where no Ladies are present, in order to give them the publicity intended, they could then be reproduced in the S. O. either in extenso or in abbreviated form, reports about the activities of the Society should also be banned from these social functions and could be dealt with in the S.O. which is the official paper of the Swiss Colony.

If I were President of a Society I would work out a time table and would f.i. allow for the customary loyal toasts about five minutes. After the toast-master who has by now driven nearly every lady into hysterics through knocking his hammer on the table, with a force which puts every village blacksmith in the shade, announced that "Your President" would now address the company, I would rise and wait approximately one minute until the tumultuous applause, which no doubt would greet me was subdued. After a short laugh and attempt to ascertain whether my tie was still in the allotted place, I would say:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed, not only a privilege but a great honour to greet you to-night, allow me to say, how very proud I am to see you in such numbers, I intend to address you very briefly (thunderous applause) as I consider it futile to tell you again what smart fellows we are and what a wonderful Society ours is (hear, hear) I also wish to welcome our distinguished guests and tell them how pleased we are to see them amongst us. I need hardly announce their names, as their familiar and good-looking faces are known to all of us. And last, but by no means least, I extend an enthusiastic greeting to the sweetest of the sweet, from the Swisses of the Swiss. I take my glass and drink to "Our Ladies" God bless them!

I should then allow one minute for either booing or cheering. This speech would settle the Presidential address and the address to the guests and ladies in approximately thirteen minutes. I should then expect a reply from one of the guests and from a "real" lady (I can not see why on earth they have to be substituted by a mere man for this task) and putting myself for a moment in their place I would say, on behalf of the guests:

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of my fellow guests I thank you with a throbbing heart, full of emotion for your great generosity in bidding us to your table. We are mingling our thanks with our most fervent wishes for the future prosperity of your great Society.

Here again I should allow two minutes for the singing: For he is a jolly good fellow, altogether seven minutes.

Then the Lady would be announced, and a further two minutes would be granted for the riotous applause at seeing a veritable Lady making the response to the toast of the Ladies and an extra half a minute for her blushing and glance into her hand-bag to see whether the fringe has not come down; she would then say in a very sweet and melodious voice:

Dear Boys,

I am so very delighted to thank you one and all for the cordial reception you have accorded to us. We know that you are glad to see us present to-night, otherwise you would not have brought us along to grace your happy gathering. I wish to thank you most particularly for not having talked too long and too much, for as you know we are listening to you

throughout the whole week and we are thoroughly enjoying the rest. Once again, thank you, so very, very much.

(Two minutes would be allowed for the speaker to be congratulated by her sisters, all in all eight minutes). This would conclude the oratorical part; I might allot another five minutes to anyone who thinks he ought to say something although he has not been asked to do so. The speeches should therefore take about 40 minutes and would leave about 80 minutes for enjoying the dainty dishes and quenching one's thirst, I consider this ample and thus dancing could begin latest at 9 o'clock.

Therefore I venture to make a most earnest appeal to all those who will be in charge of the arrangements for the Season 1931-1932, I understand that at least one prominent Society in our Colony will celebrate an outstanding Anniversary this Autumn, and I am looking forward with awe to this event, as I quite expect an oratorical flood which will entirely swamp the participants.

At one of the recent Banquets a speaker excused the brevity of his address by saying, that speech-making was out of his line: Whilst others spent their time in acquiring the rudiments of this delightful art his youth had been spent with companions which could not talk to him or offer him any instructions, his time had been spent in brushing and milking them twice a day." One could only wish that some of our would-be orators could have enjoyed the same congenial company. So often it has happened that speakers trespassed on each others pitch, thus repeating themselves in slightly different words, then again, twice if not three times, the same, and by now unavoidable after dinner jokes were dished up. Arrangements should be made, in future, that each speaker strictly adheres to his allotted sphere.

Now before I terminate this, what my adversaries will no doubt rightly or wrongly call, a feeble minded attempt to interfere with our individual liberty (so dear to all Swiss!) I send to all and sundry, who are concerned in the talking department for the next festive season, a most ardent and sincere request to have

MERCY ON US POOR MORTALS. ST.

## "FUNNY CUTS."

It was the young barrister's first case, and he was bubbling over with pride and enthusiasm as he stood in court.

"Now," said he, addressing the defendant, "you say you came from Liverpool to London merely to look for work? I put it to you there was another, a stronger, motive that brought you all this distance?"

"Well," hesitated the defendant, "there was—"

"Ah!" cried the barrister, triumphantly "And what was it?"

"A locomotive!"

"I cannot understand," said the vicar, "Why so many of our congregation go straight from church to the public-house?"

"Oh, sir," explained his curate, "that's what is known as the thirst after righteousness!"

Some of the wealthy families of Switzerland possess cheeses more than a century old. Doubtless, at a fashionable Swiss wedding, the family cheese walks up to the aisle as an honored attendant of the bride.

Judge.

A man having crossed the English channel telegraphed back to his wife as follows: "Very rough passage—gave berth to old lady."

The Flat Agent: "Of course you have no children?"

Prospective Tenant: "No."

"Dogs or Cats?"

"No."

"Piano or gramophone?"

"No, but I'll tell you what. I've got a fountain-pen that squeaks rather every time I use it. Hope you won't object to that?"

London Humorist.

The old lady had just used the telephone for the first time, and had given any amount of trouble to the Exchange girl before she got the number.

After she had finished her conversation she called the Exchange girl again.

"I know, miss," she said, "I have given you a lot of trouble in getting me the right number, but never mind, dear, I'm putting another penny in the slot for you."

Advertisement in Florida paper. "Thursday I lost a gold watch which I valued very highly. Immediately I inserted an ad. in your lost-and-found column and waited.

Yesterday I went home and found the watch in the pocket of another suit. God bless your paper!"

Boston Transcript.

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