

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1925)

Heft: 187

Rubrik: Swiss Mercantile Society

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 14.04.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

This is, in fact, a vicious circle, which is really tragic.

Any social policy, worthy of the name, must strive to reduce the discrepancy between the needs of individuals and the means to satisfy these needs. It should not try to satisfy all the demands of the members of society, for that would be utopian.

This conclusion brings us into the moral sphere. There is no opposition between religion and social progress; far from it. It is a strange aberration and a profound misconception of the Christian verities, which lead some people to consider religion and social progress as an antinomy. The very contrary is true. To cultivate one's soul, one must enjoy at least a minimum of comfort. Civilization raises us morally, although there are to be found in many large cities social conditions which foster immorality and hinder the development of all ideals.

It has often been the mistake of the Church not to understand this truth. Conversely, Socialism does not always realise that mere material satisfactions are not enough to secure happiness. Whatever they may be, they invariably leave room for disappointment, for new wishes. The richest and most powerful individuals are not happy. If it were possible to conceive a society in which everyone were wealthy and powerful, that society would not be a happy one, for it would not know resignation and justice.

The truth lies, no doubt, in a combination of both these formulas. Churches must take more heed of social needs; Socialism must devote more attention to moral realities. Besides, material prosperity can no more support the existence of civilization, than it can secure happiness for the individuals. A purely material civilization would, indeed, be a very poor thing. First of all, it would never survive. A civilization must live; and he who says "live" says "develop," and he who says "develop" says "progress." A civilization which can no longer progress is dead. Science has to maintain the *status quo* as well as to try to improve it. A striking and often cited example is that of petroleum. The world's petroleum reserves are far from being illimitable. If the present daily consumption of petroleum were to continue, if, e.g., the ratio of the United States were to extend to the rest of the world, our petroleum reserves would disappear within a comparatively short and quite calculable time. If, then, science had not succeeded in finding means of supplying the deficiency, or if it had not discovered another substance which would render the same services, a serious decline in our civilization would ensue.

But, purely scientific progress alone is not sufficient; civilization does not rest solely on technical perfection, but also on moral forces. I happened to be in Berlin, a few years ago, during a general strike of the municipal workmen. No water, no gas, no electricity, no trains were available. And I witnessed the poignant spectacle of a population of 3 millions of people forced to go to bed in the dark for want of light, forced to walk for hours for lack of means of conveyance, unable to drink and unable to wash. This tragic state of affairs went far to prove the instability of the comforts of which we are so proud. Without the sense of duty, without solidarity, life in common is not possible. Technical progress has but made individuals more dependent than ever upon one another. Berlin during the strike was in many respects worse off than a medieval town: for in the Middle Ages everyone was able to furnish his own lighting; distances were small and means of conveyance were unnecessary; each individual was able to provide for himself. Nowadays each individual depends on all the others. Our society, which seems to us so materialistic, is really solidarity in action. If we do not realize this, it is just because solidarity plays its part; but the moment the working of solidarity gets out of order, we feel the necessity of it.

Unfortunately, every prosperous civilization has a tendency to misunderstand its moral necessities. It finds its own destruction in its tendency to self-adoration. Little by little, the profound realities of life disappear behind the apparitions of mechanism.

A great pessimistic historian of contemporary Italy, Signor Guglielmo Ferrero, has compared our century with the 4th century of the Christian era, at the moment when the Roman Empire, having reached the acme of its glory and of its power, was on the eve of crumbling into barbarism. Philosophy had become materialistic, all faith had deserted the pagan temples. Comfort, prosperity and pleasure gave everyone the illusion of security, and this was the real reason of the collapse of paganism, of the overthrow of an empire which had been upborne for several centuries by a magnificent civilization.

Furthermore, the greatest French poet of the day, M. Paul Valéry, has said: "Nous autres civilisations, nous savons maintenant que nous sommes mortelles... Un frisson extraordinaire a couru dans la moelle de l'Europe. Elle a senti, par tous ses noyaux pensants qu'elle ne se reconnaissait plus, qu'elle cessait de se ressembler, qu'elle allait perdre conscience."

Why does not Europe recognize herself? Why does she not *resemble* herself any longer? And why does she know that she is mortal and that the fate of the Roman Empire at the dawn of the 4th century is perhaps awaiting her to-morrow?

It is because the civilization of Europe, which was entirely built up on a Christian foundation, has now turned purely materialistic. We condemn materialism, but only theoretically; practically we live in it, and if we do not take care, we shall die of it!

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

The usual Monthly Meeting was held on the 21st inst., at 8.30 p.m., at the Union Helvetia.

About 25 members were present when the President, Mr. Cornu, opened the meeting. There were 16 admissions and 11 resignations, and these were duly dealt with as usual. Two of the resignations were due to the death of the respective members, and the President asked the meeting to rise in memory of the deceased.

The Chef de Cours afterwards called the attention of the members to the new session of the Education Department which had just started, inviting prospective pupils to communicate with him. It was further decided to assist the Swiss Institute by mentioning the excellent lectures in the circulars. It was thought that it would be much to the advantage of the members, especially those of the younger generation, if they would attend these lectures with a view to improving their knowledge of the English language.

It was stated that the Debating Society had made a successful start, and it is hoped that the attendance will steadily increase.

The next Cinderella Dance will be held on 7th February at the Midland Grand Hotel, St. Pancras, while the Annual General Meeting of the Society will take place on the 18th February at the Union Helvetia, and members were reminded by the President that, according to the Rules, there must be a minimum attendance of 40 members.

The decision with regard to a proposed contribution out of the proceeds of the Cinderella Dances towards the Fonds de Secours was left in abeyance, pending further consideration by the Committee.

It was decided, however, to re-introduce a book of addresses of holiday resorts in England, as well as seaside places, etc., which had been in existence before the war, and the Committee expects that members will enter the names and addresses of establishments which can be thoroughly recommended.

Telephone: Museum 2982. Telegrams: Foyssuisse, London.

Foyer Suisse 12 to 14, Upper Bedford Place, W.C. 1.
(Nearest Tube Station: Russell Square.)

Moderate Prices. 55 Beds. Central Heating.

Public Restaurant. Swiss Cuisine.

Private Parties, Dinners, etc., specially catered for.

Terms on application.

WILLY MEYER, Manager.

UNION HELVETIA CLUB,
1, Gerrard Place, Shaftesbury Avenue, W.1.
Telephone: REGENT 3392.

30 Bedrooms. 45 Beds.

SUISSE CUISINE, CIGARS AND WINES.
Lunches and Suppers à prix fixe or à la carte at Moderate Prices.
Every Wednesday from 7 o'clock.

SOIREE HASENPFEFFER combined with a Dance.
Dances also every Saturday & Sunday Evening. The Dansant combined with Concert each Sunday Afternoon.

BILLIARDS. SKITTLES.
Large and small Halls with Stage, available for Concerts, Dinners, Wedding Parties, etc.

Membership Fee: One Guinea per annum.
New Members welcome. The Clubhouse Committee.

Seasonable Gifts

that will instruct and educate you all the Year round.

SWISS POCKET ATLAS.
34 p.p. Demy 8vo., in colours, just issued by the Swiss Tourist Office ... post free 2/8

PESTALOZZI KALENDER.
(Illustrated)
French Edition ... post free 2/9
German Edition, with "Schatzkästlein" ... post free 2/10

To be obtained against remittance from
Swiss Observer, 21, GARLICK HILL, E.C.4

SWISS BANK CORPORATION,

43, LOTHBURY, E.C.2.
and 11c, REGENT STREET, S.W. 1.

By arrangement with the Swiss Postal Authorities, **TRAVELLERS' CHEQUES**, which can be cashed at any Post Office in Switzerland, are obtainable at the Offices of the Bank.

The **WEST END BRANCH** open Savings Bank Accounts on terms which can be ascertained on application.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

Messieurs les membres sont avisés que la prochaine

Assemblée Mensuelle

aura lieu le **MARDI, 3 FEVRIER** au Restaurant **GATTI** et sera précédée d'un souper familial à 6.45 h (5/- par couvert).

Pour faciliter les arrangements, le Comité recommande aux participants de s'annoncer au plus tôt à M. P. F. Boehringer, 21, Garlick Hill, E.C. 4. (Telephone: City 4603).

Ordre du Jour.

Procès-verbal. Admissions. Démonstrations. Divers.

Swiss Mercantile Society

LONDON

The members and friends of the Swiss Mercantile Society are reminded of the third

CINDERELLA DANCE

of the Season 1924-25, which takes place on **SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7th**, from 6.30 to 11.45 p.m. at the **MIDLAND HOTEL, ST. PANCRAS STATION, N.W.**

The Entertainment Committee trusts that a large attendance will contribute to the success of the evening.
Tickets may be obtained from any Committee Member, or at 21, Queen Victoria Street (Telephone: Bank 8150). Evening Dress is optional.

Divine Services.

EGLISE SUISSE (1762), 79, Endell St., W.C.2
(Langue française.)

Dimanche, 1 Février, 11h.—M. R. Hoffmann-de Visme. (Service de Ste. Cène.)
6.30.—M. R. Hoffmann-de Visme. (Ste. Cène.)
7.30.—Répétition du Choeur.

SCHWEIZERKIRCHE

(Deutsch-schweizerische Gemeinde)

St. Anne's Church, 9, Gresham Street, E.C.2.

Sonntag, 1. Februar, 11 Uhr vorm.—Gottesdienst.
Pfr. W. Dietsche.
6.30 p.m. (im 'Foyer Suisse')—Abendgottesdienst.
Pfr. W. Dietsche.

Voranzzeige. Sonntag, 8. Februar. **Probepredigt** von Herrn Pfarrer Theodor Hahn (Livorno).

Requests for Pastor's visits, Baptisms, Weddings, etc., can be made on Sunday morning after the service, or to the Treasurer, C. Bertschinger, 114, Fore St., London, E.C.2.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Tuesday, Feb. 3rd, at 6.45.—**CITY SWISS CLUB:** Monthly Meeting, preceded by a Supper, at Gatti's Restaurant, Strand, W.C.

Friday, Feb. 6, at 7.30.—**SWISS CHORAL SOCIETY:** Annual Dinner and Ball at 1, Gerrard Place, W.1.

Saturday, Feb. 7th, at 6.30.—**SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY:** Cinderella Dance at the Midland Hotel, St. Pancras, N.W.

Friday, Feb. 13th, at 8.30.—**SWISS INSTITUTE:** Lecture by J. Bulman Smith, Esq., M.A., on "The Significance of Little Things."
Wednesday, Feb. 18th, at 8.30.—**SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY:** Annual General Meeting at 1, Gerrard Place, W.1.

Saturday, Feb. 21st, at 6.30.—**CITY SWISS CLUB:** Cinderella Dance at Gatti's Restaurant, 436, Strand, W.C.

Friday, Feb. 27th, at 8.30.—**SWISS INSTITUTE:** Lecture by Mr. Emile Cammaerts on "Life in the Belgian Devastated Areas."

Printed and Published for the Proprietor, P. F. BOHRINGER, by THE FRIDBRIK PRINTING CO. LTD., at 21, GARLICK HILL, LONDON, E.C.