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CASTAGNE.

Rincasavo una sera di dicembre. La nebbia aveva fatto la sua brava ma non gradita comparsa. L'umidità saliva dalla terra, penetrava e nelle persone e nelle cose. La melanconia della natura aveva una ripercussione sul mio animo ed anch'io mi sentivo triste senza un perché. Camminavo così, meccanicamente, per la via percorsa le mille e mille volte, senza badare ai passanti che si urtavano nella fretta di rincasare, di fuggire quella nebbia; senza badare alle vetrine dei negozi di moda, ammirate tante altre volte. Come solito durante il regno della nebbia, i rumori erano affievoliti, sordi. Si sentiva soltanto la campana dei trams e, di quando in quando, un venditore di giornali gridare il nome dei periodici.

Ad un incrocio di vie però m'attendevo una sorpresa che doveva togliermi dalla mia apatia e ridestare in me memorie di giorni "che furon."

Su un fornello ben bruciato e che rompeva un po' l'oscurità e la monotonia con le sue faville che lasciava scappar fuori e che si perdevano su in alto, castagne dorate arrostitavano, emanando quel loro buon odore speciale che sale per le narici e fa venire l'acquolina in bocca. Schioppettavano mentre il loro venditore ambulante, un vecchietto curvo e freddoloso, le faceva saltare allegramente nella padella. Non seppi resistere alla tentazione e ne comperai. L'oscurità assendomi complice, mi misi pacificamente a gustare quel cibo sano se pur frugale, non più badando alla nebbia e rispettativa monotonia...E mentre le castagne scomparivano una dopo l'altra dal sacchetto ben caldo, il mio pensiero, come i gamberi, si mise a camminare in senso inverso... Ricordavo quando, piccina, giulivo tanto nel vedere venir l'inverno perché mi portava due compagni cari: la neve e le castagne. Ma le castagne le volevo soltanto dal "mio vecchietto." Faceva la sua comparsa tutti gli inverni, sempre al solito posto, in piazza, di fronte alla Cattedrale. Veniva accompagnato da sua moglie e, seduti accanto al loro banchetto, aspettavano i clienti. E i clienti non si facevano attendere: erano tutti quanti frugolini, scolarette che ritornando dalla scuola si comperavano il loro bravo pacchetto di castagne brucianti per la merenda. E i due vecchietti accompagnavano le castagne con il bel sorriso che si scorgeva sempre sul loro viso solcato da rughe profonde. Li conoscevano per nome i loro clienti, li attendevano... Se uno per caso, un giorno, non compariva, premurosa quella coppia gentile ne chiedeva ai compagni il motivo. Io curavo i miei vecchietti dalla finestra, schiacciandomi il naso contro i vetri. Passavo così forse delle ore, guardandoli mentre lui faceva arrostitore le castagne, mentre lei le metteva nei cartocci.

Un inverno però, quando la neve cadde più alta del solito, il vecchio compariva solo con le sue castagne, ma senza la compagna fedele. Più curvo, triste. Sorrideva solo quando un timido bimbo gli stendeva la mano per comperare un cartoccio. Ma il sorriso scompariva subito. Si accoccolava accanto al fornello, faceva saltellare le castagne, così metodicamente, mentre gli occhi suoi brillavano di lagrime non causate certo soltanto dal freddo acuto. Passò l'inverno così, solo con le sue castagne. Poi venne ancora accompagnato da una giovinetta, sua nipote mi disse lui stesso una sera dandomi il mio quotidiano pacchetto. Si sentiva così più allegro sebbene di quando in quando una nube passava sul suo viso buono. Poi... l'attesi tanto l'inverno seguente. Ogni giorno, per prima cosa, corrovo alla finestra per vedere se c'era... ma il mio vecchietto non venne più. Soltanto, a inverno già inoltrato, una mattina vidi il banchetto noto e tutta contenta cercai subito il mio amico delle castagne. Ma lui non c'era. La nipote era sola... sola con le castagne che allegramente s'indoravano schioppettando...

ELENA LUNGH.

QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES.

BONDS.	Jan. 11		Jan. 18	
	Frs.	%	Frs.	%
Confederation 3% 1903	80.75	81.50		
" 5% 1917, VIII Mob. Ln.	101.25	101.75		
Federal Railways 5 1/2% A-K	84.02	84.70		
" 1924 IV Elect. Ln.	101.12	102.25		

SHARES.	Nom.	Jan. 11		Jan. 18	
		Frs.	Frs.	Frs.	Frs.
Swiss Bank Corporation	500	798	801		
Crédit Suisse	500	830	832		
Union de Banques Suisses	500	687	690		
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	2595	2597		
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	4045	4070		
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappe	1000	2692	2695		
S.A. Brown Boveri	350	525	534		
C. F. Bally	1000	1255	1220		
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	612	618		
Entreprises Suisses S.A.	1000	1020	1020		
Comp. de Navig. sur le Lac Léman	500	535	535		
Linoleum A.G. Giubiasco	100	99	100		
Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon	500	690	695		

POTTED WISDOM.

Business goes where it is solicited and stays where it is well treated.

* * *

There is a wide difference between seeing through a thing and seeing a thing through.

EIDGENÖSSISCHE GLOSSEN.

Schweizer Autos.

Wenn Deutschland im Automobilbau in einer gewissen Hinsicht versagt hat und erst mit einer bedeutenden Verspätung wieder daran geht, den Platz einzunehmen, der ihm gebührt, so kann man der Schweiz wohl keinen allz grossen Vorwurf machen, dass sie auch nicht gemerkt hat, um was es sich handelte. Leider haben wir uns vom ausländischen Automobil in einer Weise überrumpeln lassen, die in unserer wirtschaftlichen Chronik nicht zu den Ruhmesblättern gezählt werden wird. Die ganze Angelegenheit wäre leichter zu nehmen und hätte eher den Charakter des Unabänderlichen und Unvermeidlichen, wenn wir nicht eine ungewöhnlich grosse Zahl von Maschinenfabriken besässen, ja sogar von Automobilfabriken, ohne dass es bis jetzt gelungen wäre, diese Fabriken zu einer Zusammenarbeit zu bringen. Wenn kürzlich ein Auslandschweizer, der als Ingenieur im Autobau tätig ist, den Vorschlag gemacht hat, man solle die arbeitslose ostschweizerische Stickerindustrie ersetzen durch einen Kleinautobau auf genossenschaftlicher Basis, bestehend aus getrennten Werkstätten für Einzelteile und einer Fabrik für die Fertigmontage, so entwickelt er damit einen Plan, der besser für die schon bestehenden Maschinenfabriken als für die erst zu bauenden Werkstätten in verlassenen Stickereräumlichkeiten passt. Wir bauen in der Schweiz Lastwagen erster Qualität, wir bauen Kleinautos und einen Sechszylinderwagen und doch gelingt es uns nicht, einen massgebenden Einfluss zu gewinnen. Der Zustrom aus dem Auslande geht ungehemmt weiter, nur weil wir es nicht zustande bringen, uns zu einigen. Unsere Fabriken arbeiten sich noch nicht in die Hände, und was eine wirtschaftliche Möglichkeit werden könnte bei entsprechender rationeller Einstellung und Arbeitsteilung, bleibt eine unwirtschaftliche Angelegenheit—zur Freude der ausländischen Fabriken. Es wäre wahrhaftig wichtiger, dass sich das Interesse der Schweiz für das Auto als Steuerobjekt, die feindliche Haltung weiter Volkskreise wandelte in ein Interesse für ein Auto schweizerischer Herkunft. Wir verlieren Zeit und Kraft, um gegen etwas zu sein, statt uns Zeit und Kraft in bewusster Weise zu nutzen zu machen, um für das zu sein, was trotz aller Gegnerschaft doch kommen wird.

Wenn die *Automobil-Revue* in ihrer letzten Nummer von einem vergessenen Schweizerwagen erzählt, so liefert sie damit einen gar nicht unerwarteten Beitrag zur Geschichte unserer verfehlten Gelegenheiten. Anno 1899 berichtete die englische Fachzeitschrift *Autocar* über ein in der Schweiz gebautes Leichtfahrzeug, dem sie die besten Eigenschaften nachrühmt. Nachforschungen haben ergeben, dass dieser verschollene und verschwundene Wagen von einer Maschinenfabrik in Steckborn gebaut worden ist. Sechs Wagen kamen auf den Markt, dann hörte man mit der Produktion wieder auf. Die Fabrik von damals kam zu früh, die Fabriken von heute kommen wahrscheinlich—zu spät!

Schweizer Zündhölzer.

Auch bei den Zündholzfabriken kommt die Einsicht zu spät. Wir hatten einmal als Folge einer Ueberproduktion ein Zündholzsyndikat mit Kontingentierung der einzelnen Fabriken. Dass man dabei im Gefühl seiner Macht die Preise höher ansetzte, als nötig war, ist selbstverständlich. Der gute Gewinn steigerte natürlich die Produktionsucht, die gesteigerte Produktion brauchte neue Abnehmer, und als das Syndikat nach dem Kriege wieder aufgelöst wurde, drückte man gegenseitig auf die Preise, wie das in andern schweizerischen Industrien auch geschehen ist. Man arbeitet schliesslich lieber mit Verlust als gar nicht, und das Ende vom Liede war das, dass der schweizerische Zündholztrud die Gelegenheit als gekommen erachtete, um sich in den Besitz der ihm passenden Fabriken zu setzen. Damit war mehr als die Hälfte der schweizerischen Betriebe in ausländischen Händen, ohne dass wir oder die Leute in Bern es recht gemerkt hatten. Die gereizten Fabrikanten konnten sich freuen, ohne grosse Verluste aus der gar nicht mehr gewinnbringenden Fabrikation herauszukommen zu sein, und die andern mochten sich nun überlegen, wie sie sich den neuen Verhältnissen gegenüber verhalten wollten. Sollte man weiter mit Verlust arbeiten, sollte man aufhören oder sollte man gar eine gütliche Einigung mit den feindlichen Fabriken suchen, die einem dafür, dass man aufhörte, vielleicht etwas bezahlten? Sollten sich die mit Automaten ausgerüsteten schweizerischen und schweidischen Fabriken gemeinsam bereit erklären, die für den Aufkauf der überflüssigen, rückständigen Fabriken notwendige Summe aufzubringen, und danach untereinander durch Abmachung die Produktionsmengen festsetzen? Man wird sehen, was geschieht, jedenfalls ist für den schweizerischen Standpunkt der rechte Moment verpasst worden, und es bewahrheitet sich wieder einmal, dass eine kleine Bevölkerungszahl und ein kleines Areal nicht ohne weiteres eine günstige Vorbedingung schafft für eine geeinte und vernünftige Arbeitsweise.

Felix Moeschlin in "N.Z."

THE FILM FAUST.

By SOPHIE WYSS, the Swiss Soprano.

It was with considerable misgiving that I went to the Albert Hall to see the film version of Goethe's "Faust." One could not help noticing that the Press had not exactly acclaimed it as a masterpiece. It had been, as the English say, "sniffed at." One gathered that nearly every critic (and how they all gave the impression that they were steeped in the great work!) was dismayed by the discrepancies between the poem and the film; in a word, that it was good photography, but bad Goethe!

Thus I came prepared to scoff—but stayed to praise. After an excellent Overture, arranged, as all the world knows, by Sir Landon Ronald, we were shown our old friends "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse," already so well-known to film-goers. This was for me an unfortunate *souvenir*, since Senor Ibanez's novel may have made a good picture-story, crouching as it did in the shadow of the tragedy of the War, but as a film it was heavily handled, ill-balanced and third-rate art. And here, I feared, was just such another film, leaning against the greatness of Goethe.

But the Four Horsemen disappeared, and were no more seen. Instead, the bearded Doctor Faust was shown to us, very much as he is in the First Act of Gounod's opera, which he opens with his air "In Vain." There was all the usual paraphernalia of tones and retorts, and nothing remarkable about it all; I settled down to a boring hour or two.

Gradually I woke up to the fact that this film was different from anything I had seen before. There was less Picture and more Motion. The action was not being held up by those lingering and tiresome "close ups" beloved by the Hollywood mind. One realised that the film was not being levelled at the intelligence of the farm hand, for whom so many American films seem to be made. Also there were no large and useless spaces such as one usually sees in the middle and background of American pictures. There were no blank spaces of hundreds, nay, thousands, of square feet of scenery to distract the eye from the characters and the details significant to them. Innumerable photographs flitted by at such a speed as to give the illusion of perfect stability to the rapidly changing scene, and there was no superfluous detail in any of them. Thus the figures of the actors seemed bigger; they filled the stage—and one's mind.

First came the Prologue, and the picture of the mediaeval town which was Faust's home in the grip of the Plague. One had the impression of processions of the dead, strangely mixed with the heedless revelries of those who knew their turn would come to-morrow. Faust is pouring his elixir through the teeth of a girl already claimed. The remedy is but momentary; she rises only to fall again. His hopes ended, Faust dashes the phial to the ground—a drama, simple yet complete, in about four seconds. Then comes Mephistopheles, a Devil with divinely fashioned wings. Emil Jannings, who took the part, was a jocosely and well-furnished Devil, not very sinister and not very overbearing. For this he has been criticised in the London Press, but on this account one must remember that the London Press knows but two Devils, Milton's and the one in the Christmas pantomime. And Goethe does not seem to have intended his suave and insinuating Devil to be the same as Milton's tragic and commanding figure.

The next part of the film showed Faust's Devil-conducted tour in search of hectic pleasure. Amidst scenes of great luxury he seizes a beautiful woman on the very evening of her marriage. Faust and she had to walk the length of a long corridor towards her apartments. The scene was saved from being banal and embarrassing by Mephistopheles, who set swinging a finely fashioned lamp, which diverted one's attention. (The accumulated result of these decorative touches make all the difference between good and bad production.) Then the Devil, with a wink and a smile, closed the curtains upon Faust and his loves. A very human Devil, this.

Back in his own town, Faust, long of limb and as handsome a lover as any maid could wish, sees Gretchen, or rather Marguerite, playing amongst some children no less innocent than herself, and from then onwards I knew that I was in the presence of a masterpiece. Useless to recount the details so well-known, the conquest of Marguerite, her surrender, her bliss, her shame and punishment. Indeed, my mind retains no very clear memory of details, for I was swept from my feet with wonder at the beauty of it all. Marguerite was lovely. I can see her still, as she flitted to the church and was caught in the shade of the porch by Faust; I can see her fingering the slender chain he gave her (no florid Jewel Song here, thank Heaven!) I can see her still in her clean swept room, striving to close the little lead-rimmed windows against her lover. I have a vision of her face with ecstasy painted for the first time upon it; I have a fleeting view of Valentine's duel in the wind, and his death with a curse upon his lips for Marguerite. Then, a

pitiable glimpse of the young tortured face as Marguerite is released from the stocks, and the heartrending gesture of hands still virginal as some wretch in the crowd hurls at her a name she has not yet realised.

And there I would to God the film had finished. Tragedy indeed is inevitable. But the tragedy of Faust lies not here beside Marguerite. To bring her to the stake was not necessary, an historical error and a dramatic climax unwanted in a story so lovely and heart-touching. As soon as I saw Faust flying past storm-swept coasts to regain his Marguerite, I gathered my things about me and began to leave, partly so that I might avoid seeing Faust dragged to the stake at which they would burn my Marguerite, and partly so that when the lights went up those about me should not see my tears.

A little over-dramatic and sentimental though the end may have been to my taste, the fact seemed obvious to me that the film was a masterpiece. I am not so stupidly proud as to believe that I alone of those who first saw it was capable of appreciating it. Doubtless there were hundreds who wept and yearned as I did over this fine young actress and the marvellously contrived pictures. But these hundreds were not the critics, as their reviews showed. Not that one should be surprised at that, for the professionally critical audience is the last to take light from the spark of genius. Its attention is too damp with the determination to criticise rather than to enjoy. Thus it is that new departures in the arts are not as a rule received with open arms. Putting aside all the classical examples of Wagner and Beethoven, we may turn to this very subject of Faust. The reception of Gounod's Opera at the Theatre Lyrique, of Paris, in 1859, was indeed chilly. The burden of the criticism was just like that of the film, namely the failure to reproduce all of Goethe's philosophy. Berlioz, who himself wrote an opera on the same subject superior, from the classical point of view, to Gounod's work, was the only one present who wrote of its great popular possibilities. It was a new departure, and the critical fraternity with their minds fixed upon the poem could not see the Opera. Afterwards, the people had to discover it for themselves.

Well, the critical public cared not overmuch for the film. But I imagine and hope that the people will discover it for themselves. History must inevitably repeat itself.

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SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

The January Monthly Meeting was held at Swiss House, 34 and 35, Fitzroy Square, W.1., on Wednesday, the 12th January. This marks the first meeting of its kind that has been held there; over forty members attended, and everybody looked quite at home, especially after the nice little supper which was served before the business part of the programme.

The President, Mr. A. C. Stahelin, was in the chair. There were 11 admissions and 9 resignations; also the meeting elected unanimously Mr. J. Geillinger, in consideration of many services rendered to the Swiss Colony, honorary member of the Society. Mr. B. Bretscher and Mr. J. Boos, Chairman and Secretary of the House Committee, presented brief reports on the activities of their Committee, also how much money had been spent so far on furniture, and they were then authorised by the Meeting to purchase a billiard table. A rather lengthy debate followed on "The Swiss House Club Bye-Laws" and the "General Rules of Swiss House Education Dept." which had been drawn up and submitted to the Members by the Committee, and ended by same being duly accepted.

On the recommendation of the President of the Entertainment Committee, the Meeting decided to increase the price of the tickets for the future Cinderella Dances to 8/6, as, since the introduction of supper, these dances have been a loss to the Society. For the Annual Dinner and Dance, which takes place on the 5th of February at the Midland Grand Hotel, a Banquet Committee was elected, and the price of the tickets fixed at 12/6. The meeting concluded at 11 p.m.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

In connection with the scholastic programme the following lectures were given by the students during last week:—

Mr. Erich Hofmann, Zürich: "Do you Be-

lieve in Fate?" Mr. Max Studer, Basle: "The Russian Problem." Mr. E. Hüni, Zürich: "English History." Mr. Traugott Plüss, Olten: "The Game of Football." Mr. Theo. Bögéholz, Chur: "Brazil." Mr. Werner Füllemann, Steckborn: "The Universal History in Films." Mr. Edwin Schlenker, Wetzikon: "Sicily." Mr. Joseph Schmid, Sursee: "The Organisation of Silk-stuff Factories." Mr. Fritz Messerli, Lenk B.O.: "The Swiss Army and its Abolishment." Mr. Paul Etter, Romanshorn: "The Question of our Canton Ticino." Miss Yvonne Baron: "Guy's Hospital." Miss H. Hodel, Lucerne: "Why We Work." Miss Marta Inglin, Altdorf: "Bird Life in Spring." Mr. Fritz Michel, Interlaken: "Modern Jewellery."

The debating classes dealt with the following subjects:—

"Which of the two has the greater influence upon mankind at present, the Cinema or the Theatre?" Cinemas: Miss Marguerite Fischer, Menziken/Aargau; Theatre: Mr. Peter Thomi, Burgdorf.

"Should Switzerland be a Member of the League of Nations?" Proposer: Mr. Jean Jordi, Brugg; Opposer, Mr. Emil Lutz, Rheineck.

"Is Missionary work amongst the uncivilised a good or a bad thing?" 1st Proposer, Mr. Freddy de Segesser, Degersheim (St. Gall.); 2nd Proposer, Mr. F. Rigert, Lucerne; 1st Opposer, Mr. Freddy de Segesser, Degersheim (St. Gall.); 2nd Opposer, Mr. A. Antenen, Thun.

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Pour faciliter les arrangements, le Comité recommande aux participants de s'annoncer au plus tôt à M. P. F. Boehringer, 23, Leonard St. E.C.2. (Téléphone: Clerkenwell 9595).

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Divine Services.

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

Dimanche, 23 Janvier, 11h. et 6.30.—M. R. Hoffmann-de Visme.

Pour tous renseignements concernant actes pastoraux, etc., prière de s'adresser à M. R. Hoffmann-de Visme, 102, Hornsey Lane, N.6 (Téléphone: Mountview 1798). Heure de réception à l'Eglise: Mercredi 10.30 à 12h.

SCHWEIZERKIRCHE

(Deutschschweizerische Gemeinde)

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

Sonntag, den 22 Januar, 11 Uhr vorm: Predigt. 7 Uhr abends: Predigt.

8 Uhr: Chorpöbe. Konfirmandenstunde Mittwoch abends 6.30, im Foyer Suisse.

Sprechstunden: Dienstag 12—1 in der Kirche. Mittwoch 3—5 im 'Foyer Suisse'. Anfragen wegen Amtshandlungen etc. an Pfr. C. Th. Hahn, 8, Chiswick Lane, W.4.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Friday, January 28th, at 8 p.m.—SWISS INSTITUTE: Debate, "Are Science and Inventions Beneficial to Mankind," at 35, Fitzroy Square, W.1.

Tuesday, February 1st, at 7 p.m.—CITY SWISS CLUB: Monthly Meeting at Pagani's Restaurant, 42, Gt. Portland Street, W.1.

Friday, February 4th, at 8 p.m.—SWISS INSTITUTE: Lecture, "English and Swiss Local Government Contrasted," by A. T. Pike, Esq., at 35, Fitzroy Square, W.1.

Saturday, February 5th, at 7 p.m.—SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY: Annual Banquet and Ball at the Midland Grand Hotel, St. Pancras, N.W.1.

Saturday, February 19th, at 6.30 p.m.—CITY SWISS CLUB: Cinderella Dance at Pagani's Restaurant, 42, Gt. Portland Street, W.1.

SWISS CHORAL SOCIETY.—Rehearsals every Friday evening. Every Swiss heartily invited to attend. Particulars from the Hon. Secretary, Swiss Choral Society, 74, Charlotte Street, W.1.

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