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CK. CORNER.

As it is near Christmas, I am going to tell you about some Legends, and I am writing this corner more especially for the younger readers of the S.O., though I do not mean to say that it may not prove of interest to others. Once more Sir James Barrie's fairy story Peter Pan is being played, and I want those of you who go to it, when they see Peter Pan upset at the loss of his shadow not to think of this as a mere phantasy on the part of the Author but as a modern rendering of an old, old belief which is very wide spread and of which the origin is lost. I am therefore going to tell you about some of these Legends so that you may realize that underlying many of the details which appear ridiculous to us, there is often a substratum of fact which shows that even the most fantastic stories are based on some idea which may have originated in long forgotten days and that after all there is not such a gulf between the ideas of the two ages as would appear at first sight to exist.

Thus, the shadow is a very important thing and the belief that it retains the soul or vital force is very wide spread. In numerous African tribes it is thought that harm can be done to a man by stabbing his shadow and it is considered unlucky to even stand on a man's shadow. In India in certain castes should a man be preparing food and the shadow of a European or an undesirable fall upon it, he will immediately throw away the food as it has been rendered unclean. In China, at a funeral when the lid is about to be placed on a coffin, the bystanders retire a few steps, for it is believed that a person's health would be endangered by allowing his shadow to be enclosed in a coffin. And when the coffin is about to be lowered into the grave most of the spectators recoil to a short distance lest their shadows should fall into the grave and harm should thus be done to their persons.

These Legends are therefore the origin of that well-known greeting "may your shadow never grow less" and in one of the stories of the South Pacific, we are told of a mighty warrior whose strength waxed and waned with the length of his shadow. In the morning, when his shadow fell longest, his strength was greatest but as the shadow shortened towards noon his strength ebbed with it but returned as the shadow stretched out in the afternoon. A certain hero discovered the secret of this warrior's strength and slew him at noon. Elsewhere it is believed that by doing damage to the shadow, harm can be done to its owner and in Bulgaria it was the custom to measure the shadow of a man with a piece of string, the string then being placed in a box and buried, preferably beneath the foundation stone of a new building. It was thought that the victim would die within forty days and that his spirit would be attached to the string and remain in the box.

You will now see how important a shadow may be and why Peter Pan was so upset at his loss.

From shadow to reflection is but a small step and so we have the reason why it is considered unlucky to break a mirror.

In other parts of the world the vital force is considered to reside in the lower jaw and in Uganda when the King died his lower jaw was buried in a temple and was carefully guarded because the ghost of the King was supposed to attach itself to the jaw bone. It was also believed that his strength remained attached to it and could be transmitted so that in other tribes it was customary to bury the lower jaw in secret because they feared that if anyone could get possession of it he would gain strength and the heir would lose strength.

Indeed, the belief is widespread that strength may go from one body to another and this is the reason for human sacrifices in many parts of the world because it was thought that by them the King might be invigorated. And if you go to the British Museum, in a case containing objects from the Ivory coast of Africa you will see a war horn with a human lower jaw attached to it. May we not have here the explanation of this horn; for would it not be employed to excite the warriors to battle and to invoke strength and force.

And did not Samson perform deeds of valour armed only with the jaw bone of an animal.

Now Legend holds a very important place in the history of Medicine and even to-day may not be ignored as any one can see by reading those advertisements which extol the virtues of numerous wonderful and mysterious remedies and thus healing springs in ancient days were considered to be sacred to Hercules for they were said to have been first produced for the refreshment of the hero after his labours. On the strength of this connection with medicinal springs he posed as a patron of the healing art. In heaven if we can trust Lucian, he even refused to give place to Aesculapius himself, and the difference between the two led to an unseemly brawl. "Do you mean to say," demanded the irate Hercules of his father Zeus, "that this apothecary is to sit down to table before me?" To this the aforesaid apothecary replied with much acrimony, recalling several

painful episodes in the private life of the burly hero when on earth. Finally, the dispute was settled by the father of the Gods, who decided in favour of Aesculapius on the ground that he died before Hercules and was therefore entitled to rank as senior God.

Another matter of great importance is the influence of the moon. Everyone knows that it is very bad to allow the moon to shine upon a person's face when asleep, and it would appear that great attention should be paid to the waxing and the waning of this luminary. For instance if it is desired to have a vigorous growth of hair, care should be taken to have the hair cut when the moon is waxing. I will not guarantee the efficacy of this procedure but at any rate it is simple and less expensive than most of the much vaunted lotions which are advertised for this purpose.

Again, if you wish to cure warts, you should treat them when the moon is on the decrease. And a German cure for toothache or earache is to look towards the waning moon and say "as the moon decreases, so may my pains decrease also."

In many parts of the world attention is paid to the moon when sowing or planting. Thus the Highlanders of Scotland used to expect better crops of grain by sowing their seed during the moon's increase. Elsewhere, plants which bear fruit above ground are sown when the moon is waxing, but plants which are cultivated for the sake of their roots such as potatoes and turnips, are sown when the moon is waning. The reason for this distinction seems to be a vague idea that as the waxing moon is coming up and the waning moon going down, accordingly the fruits which grow upwards should be sown in the former period, and fruits which grow downwards in the latter.

Of course, during the lapse of time legends have become distorted and very often explanations are given which have nothing to do with the original idea. Let me give one example of this change. I have said that human sacrifices were made in order to transfer strength and power to a King. They were also made in connection with the foundation of a building so as to ensure stability to the edifice or to ward off evil influences. It was thought that the more important the victim was the more powerful he would become as guardian of the building but as time went on and man became more civilized substitutes were employed and the use of actual victims was replaced by effigies in the form of coins of seals bearing the effigy of the King and we have here perhaps the origin of the custom which exists even to-day of placing coins beneath a foundation stone rather than the usual explanation of depositing coins with the date of the foundation thereon for the benefit of prosperity.

There are many quaint Legends in different parts of the world. Thus when you are loading a gun to go out shooting, you should always put the bullet in your mouth before you insert it into the gun; for by so doing you practically eat the game that is to be hit by the bullet and it therefore cannot possibly miss the mark. And there are many beliefs regarding methods for curing wounds. Thus, if a person cuts himself with a knife he will be well advised to take care to keep the blade bright and so to prevent the wound from festering, and in Suffolk, should a horse wound itself by treading on a nail it was customary to preserve the nail, clean it and grease it every day to prevent the wound from becoming poisoned. Elsewhere if you cut yourself with a knife you ought to smear the knife with fat and put it away in a dry place. As the knife dries, the wound heals.

Should you desire to do anyone harm you should collect the parings of nails, hair, eyebrows of your intended victim and make them up into his likeness with wax from a deserted bees comb. Scorch the figure slowly by holding it over a lamp for seven nights, and say:—

On second thoughts I do not think I will tell you what you should say lest you should attempt the spell and if it succeeded I might get into trouble with the Editor and I have had quite enough trouble in days past. So as it is Christmas time I will conclude with a few remarks about Mistletoe.

Amongst Swiss peasants special virtue was ascribed to mistletoe which grows on an oak. It may not be cut in the usual way; it must be caught as it falls to the ground; and it was esteemed a panacea for all diseases at least of children. It was used as a remedy in many diseases such as epilepsy and an oil made from it known as the oil as St. John was supposed to heal all wounds made with cutting instruments. However, after having been held in high repute, the opinion of the medical profession as to the curative virtues of mistletoe has undergone a radical change. Whereas the Druids thought that it cured everything, modern doctors appear to think that it cures nothing although in the last few years it has once more been used, and forms the principle drug in some preparations now on the market. Mistletoe is said to be able to extinguish fire, and Swedish peasants hang up bunches in

their rooms as a protection against harm in general and fire in particular. Perhaps the most precious of all its virtues, is that it affords efficient protection against witchcraft.

There are many other legends of which I should like to tell you, but as I do not wish to disturb your slumbers, I think I had better bring this corner to an end and wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy New Year, in the hope that the coming year will be more peaceful and less nerve racking than the one which is now fast drawing to a close.

NEWS FROM THE COLONY.



ALBERT CH. NUSSBAUMER

MANAGER SWISS BANK CORPORATION.

M. A. Ch. Nussbaumer has been appointed Manager of the London office of the Swiss Bank Corporation in succession to M. M. Golay, who has been appointed General Manager at the Head Office in Basle.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY LTD.

STUDENTS CHRISTMAS DINNER AND BALL.

The Students of the College of the Swiss Mercantile Society Ltd., celebrated their Christmas Dinner and Ball at the Imperial Hotel, Russell Square, W.C.1 on Friday December 18th.

The Dinner was preceded by a Reception held by M. C. Stähelin, Chairman of the Education Committee.

Rara Avis! The Dinner started punctually at 7.30, and many of the Societies in the Colony should try to copy this recommendable innovation, as lately delays from half an hour to an hour have been quite a usual occurrence.

M. A. C. Stähelin was in the Chair; the Legation was represented by Dr. Rüfenacht, 1st Secretary of Legation. Amongst the other guests were Mr. G. E. DeBrunner, ex President of the S.M.S. and a Trustee of the Society, Dr. Kessler, Correspondent of the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung," Dr. Egli, correspondent of the "Bund," Mr. Stauffer, ex President of the S.M.S., representing the "Swiss Observer," members of the Education Committee and the Teaching staff of the College. The gathering numbered about 220 people.

During the Dinner the customary loyal toast to H. M. the King was proposed by the Chairman. The toast to "La Patrie" was proposed by M. Paschoud, President of the London section of the S.M.S. and was responded to with enthusiasm.

Youth predominated; it was indeed a unique gathering which one seldom encounters in the colony and the happy laughter and chattering of the company created an atmosphere of mirth and merriment, which was a welcome antidote in these days, when worries are not an unknown factor. It was therefore only right and proper that the first speech should be given by one of the disciples of youth. Miss Dora Fritz, a student of the College, proposed the Toast to the S.M.S. in saying:

This is the first speech which I have made in English and I know you will excuse me if I prove unworthy of what I regard as a great honour in being asked to propose the toast of the S.M.S. If, however, I succeed only in voicing with sincerity the debt of gratitude which every student here owes to the London Section of the S.M.S. and in particular its Education Committee, including Mr. Levy and the other tutors, I shall be satisfied.

It is with great pleasure that we welcome in our midst to-night Mr. Rüfenacht, First Secretary of the Swiss Legation in London, Mr. Paschoud, President of the S.M.S., London, and Mr. Stähelin, Chairman of the Education Committee.

We students, at Swiss House recognise that we are favoured among our generation in enjoying, as we do, the privilege of spending a period of training in the greatest city in the world. We have been given an opportunity of getting to know the English people with whom our country has always enjoyed such a lasting bond of friendship, a friendship which grows stronger as years go by.

Among other things, we are here to learn a great language and to acquaint ourselves with the customs of the people, and as every day passes, we grow to understand and to admire the English people more and more. I have always felt that the English language should apply ourselves to the English language with as much, if not more, enthusiasm than the men. A "woman's tongue" is an expression which has become a classic. But my sex prefers to realise it in the sense that we possess a natural gift of speech and as such, a valuable talent is ours; it would be a pity if we did not use it in the best possible way. To us girls is given the opportunity, when we go back to Switzerland, to talk no longer of the faults of our neighbours, but of the commercial problems and their solution; our training at Swiss House will have effected this.

In England we witness the best example in the world of the emancipation of our sex and in Switzerland we know, that several women have raised themselves during the last few years to posts of responsibility and high honour. I do not know whether these women passed through Swiss House, but I am certain that they would be the first to recognise the great work which is being performed here and to advise others who would follow in their footsteps, to avail themselves of the valuable tuition which the college provides.

Whilst we are working here, our labour is not only for ourselves, but for Switzerland, and it is the S.M.S. that gives us the opportunity of adding greatly to our power when we return to take up our duties.

Banking, is to-day, one of our major industries, and the comparatively small proportion of purely national business to the total turnover makes our finance very sensitive to disturbances in other countries. Our Export trade has recently been seriously injured by the English crisis, but even now a great deal of our goods are taken by Great Britain and one third of our holiday visitors are English people. The S.M.S. through its College at Swiss House is, day by day, laying the foundations of our knowledge of the English people and their requirements and enabling us to cement a deep friendship which will stand our nation in good stead. To trade effectively with England it will be necessary for a much larger ratio of our people to speak her language. Already English is understood and spoken in our principal shops, in many post offices and railway stations and in all but the smallest hotels and pensions. The enormous scope for advancement in this direction cannot fail to make ever growing demands upon those responsible for the activities at Swiss House.

The population of Switzerland is an educated population. The education provided by the school and technical institutions has been carried into every corner of the land. The principal cause of Switzerland's advance is the ever increasing attention which it has given to the expansion of education in the field of commerce, a policy towards the success of which the S.K.V. and also the S.M.S. at Swiss House have played no small part. Our Principal and tutor must have long realised that they are performing a work of great importance to our nation. Before we complete our work here and go back home, they ensure that we possess a superior capacity for business and a more extensive knowledge of affairs, by which means only we can hope to aspire to success. I would say also, that if prospective students who are still at home, desire to progress more rapidly and to advance to a substantial degree, they should come to the College of the S.M.S. and our Principal and his staff will do the rest.

Love of country and homesickness is strong with us Swiss. It has been written that we are so remarkable for this passion that it often turns to a disease among us for which there is a particular name in the German language and which the French call "the distemper of the country."

Man is said to be a sociable animal and we students of Swiss House are no exception to the rule. The S.M.S. assist us to combine sociability with instruction and at our weekly meetings we endeavour, after having heard a lecture on some subject of general interest, to entertain one another with music and whatever semblance of humour and wit we may possess. We meet to enjoy one another's company for our own pleasure and improvement.

Moreover some especially busy and serious students have formed a league, all the members of which are compelled, by infliction of a fine, to converse in English at all times. And it is very likely that they may be more successful in knowing the language well, which we all hope to speak fluently one day, than those who like to release themselves from the exertions of school by a talk in their homely mother language.

As a memorial of our pleasant time spent at the College of the S.M.S. in London, why not let us lay the foundations now of what Mr.

Schneider has suggested so wisely? When we return home, let those who happen to belong to the same Town or village, form locally in each such centre, a society of girls and boys who have been given the benefit of the training here. Let us meet periodically and retain by converse and interchange of views the knowledge which we have gained in the English language and the broader aspect of affairs. This, to me, is a suggestion worthy of every consideration and each one of us should resolve to-night to further the proposal and so have an everlasting souvenir of what the S.M.S. did for us.

None of us know what experiences lie before us when we return to our native land, but we are convinced that these days spent in London will rank high when we come to number the happiest and most eventful years of our lives. We all feel that we owe a debt to the S.M.S., to Mr. Paschoud, its President, to Mr. Stähelin, in the Chairman of the Education Committee, to Mr. Krucker, the Chairman of the House Committee, and last, but not least, to Mrs. Lunghi, who frequently visits Swiss House and the way in which we can endeavour to repay our gratitude, is to work as we have never worked before, now, and when we go back to Switzerland or to whatever part of the world duty calls us. If we can do that, we shall have proved our gratitude to the S.M.S. in the very best possible way.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I propose the toast of the Swiss Mercantile Society, Ltd., coupled with the name of Mr. Paschoud and ask you to drink the health of the London section of the K.V.

Great applause greeted this youthful speaker, and I congratulate her on her oratorical achievements, as a maiden speech it was a creditable performance.

M. Paschoud, President of the London Section, replied to the Toast in a few words. He mentioned that the College, which has attained such an important position could not have been founded on such a basis, were it not for the hard work and incessant efforts of former and present members of the Society, and last, but not least, of the patriotic help which our country has ungrudgingly given. He concluded by thanking the Students for their invitation and asked them to make propaganda for the College in Switzerland, as the School needs continuous support.

M. Rüfenacht, First Secretary of Legation, who was previously introduced by the Chairman, then addressed the gathering, expressing his appreciation to Mr. Stähelin for the kind invitation extended to him. Although, I am relatively a newcomer, he said, I feel already very much at home, I have heard of your famous school not only in Switzerland, but also at Washington and in Poland, during my previous appointments, and my predecessor Monsieur Rezzonico, whose departure I deplore just as much as you, has acquainted me with your splendid achievements.

In concluding, he expressed the wish to be able to pay a visit to the College in the near future, in order to strengthen the contact he had established to-night, and to see them at work at their headquarters.

Mr. G. E. DeBrunner, in proposing the Toast to The College and Teaching Staff said:

When Youth meets Beauty on convivial ground, as is the case to-night, one cannot reasonably expect to become persona grata by any speechifying, but I consider it nevertheless, a highly suitable occasion to make a few brief comments on the scholastic activities of our Society, with particular reference to the admirable and most commendable work performed by all and sundry of our Teaching Staff.

In times of stress, such as the whole civilized world passes through, it seems to me especially appropriate to ponder over existing facts and to take stock of one's own sentiments, outlook on life and conduct towards others. Are we in sympathy with our neighbours? and those we come in daily contact with? Is our nature tuned to produce harmony in our surroundings? are questions which we must put to ourselves, for if civilization generally is to be saved, a far larger measure of goodwill, real understanding and especially forbearance and tolerance must once again manifest itself to rekindle the light of confidence, which alone will lead us back to ultimate and lasting prosperity.

You may possibly wonder: why these high-brow utterances? My dear young compatriots: those of the older brigade, who have planted the sapling of the S.M.S. Day School and have had the pleasure and satisfaction of seeing it grow into a sturdy tree worthy of the new name of "College," remain mindful—notwithstanding the success which has attended the labours of the gardeners, past and present—that there are yet heavy storms to be weathered, and which are likely to strain the roots of our Institution to a considerable extent. Hence, I appeal to all those directly interested in our College, its aims and objects and its activities, to bring all the "nourishment" they individually can to

our Oak of teaching and learning, so that its benevolent shadow may never grow less and offer shelter for generations to come to all in quest of educational and linguistic advancement.

To our Teachers, I desire to express the cordial thanks of the Council of the S.M.S. Ltd. for their painstaking and conscientious work and their whole-hearted co-operation in a, may I say, "national" enterprise of which we London Swiss are proud and which we believe renders most excellent service to our young compatriots in search of knowledge of the language, as well as the people, of Great Britain's hospitable shores.

We are fully aware that in various respects our Teachers are asked to perform their allotted task under conditions which we would like to see altered and improved, but our well meaning intentions must be curbed and guided by facts and circumstances. We therefore trust that they will continue to give us of their very best, notwithstanding any difficulties or shortcomings that may exist or arise in the future.

To the students I would appeal in particular to try and take a reasonable view on all points which in their estimation may fall short of what they expect from our College; very likely those who are prone to "grousing" contribute themselves to their grievances. Assist your Teachers in their efforts to enhance your knowledge and put you on the road to a fruitful career: Remember also that many of your compatriots in London give their services, time and energy freely and without reward of any kind, to make your limited stay in London as happy, instructive and beneficial as conditions and circumstances permit, and above all be mindful of the real purpose of your visit, namely, to learn English as quickly and as thoroughly as possible. By paying earnest regard to the lessons and following the advice of those who help to mould your destiny, you will give tangible proof of your appreciation of what is being done for you and your future good. Your application to work and study will prove a tremendous encouragement to those upon whom the welfare of our institution depends and your return to our beautiful native land with a sound knowledge of English and an appreciative undertaking of things British will assuredly help to pour the much needed delicate oil on the badly and sadly clogged wheels of international fellowship, goodwill and mutual esteem!

Those of you who will shortly return to the sun-licked snow fields of our dearly beloved country, I would ask to convey to our compatriots at home our heartiest good wishes for a brighter and happier future, coupled with the message that their brothers and sisters on foreign soil will do their best to maintain unsoiled the proud and fair name of Switzerland. And will you please make propaganda for the College of the S.M.S. and send us those students who will be a credit to our institution, as well as to themselves.

Ladies, and Gentlemen, may I invite you to drink right heartily to the uninterrupted and constantly growing prosperity of the S.M.S. College and to the health and welfare of our Teaching and Administrative Staffs.

Mr. Köllner, a Student, also expressed his thanks to all the Teachers. M. Levy, Principal of the College then rose amongst tumultuous applause. He paid a glowing tribute to the work of the Council; there is, he said, no other nation in the world which devotes so much attention and makes such efforts for educational purposes. We of the Teaching Staff are willing to help you as much as lies in our power, but you must help us, and foremost you must help yourselves.—each of you, he continued,—are a kind of ambassador of your country, by your behaviour, by your manners and achievements, your country is judged, therefore, each of you bears an equal share of responsibility, and we of the Teaching Staff are anxious that you should fulfill your obligations in such a way, so as to be a credit to the country, which is doing so much for its children.—This short but very impressive oration was received with great applause.

The Chairman announced that a telegram of congratulation from tonight's gathering has just been sent to M. G. Motta, the newly elected President of the Swiss Confederation. M. Motta, as will be remembered, paid a visit to the College of the S.M.S. on the occasion of his stay in London, two years ago.

After the Dinner, dancing started and a "Schnitzelbank" created much hilarity. The various sketches were executed by M. Amado, and the verses came from the pen of Mr. Dietler. Later on, the pictures were auctioned, the proceeds of which will be handed over to the Swiss Benevolent Society.

This Dinner and Ball was a most enjoyable affair, and the organisers deserve the thanks of all those present.