

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: - (1931)
Heft: 486

Rubrik: Swiss Mercantile Society

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Now to the *plat de résistance*: the Day School, or rather as we now call it, the College. Before giving you more statistics, I wish to recall the visit which our Federal Councillor, Signor Giuseppe Motta paid to the College in February last year. Here is another proof of the interest our Authorities take in us, and a further proof is, that Signor Motta, shortly

after, sent us his son as a student.

The average attendance at the College increased from 250 in 1929 to 276 in 1930. An increase of over 10%, and the monthly averages varied from 191 in January, to 384 in June, to drop again to 192 in December. The total of monthly students for the year was 3316, as against 2996. During June and July the influx of new students was such that Swiss House nearly burst its walls. All provisions were exceeded. Fortunately the Education Committee possesses an excellent Secretary, Mr. Schneider, and together with our Principal Mr. Levy, they soon organised things to cope with the increase. The low attendance in January and December, with the high figure for June, show that it is entirely seasonal. If it were possible to leave it to chance, and to trust to luck that we would find the right sort of lecturers when we needed them, we could regulate the expenses according to the attendances, but in practice it is not possible to do so, and we must keep a large staff of lecturers—9 at present—throughout the year. The result is excellent for the students, but the same cannot be said of the finances. The Committee is endeavouring to regulate things, though until we are able to move into larger premises, more suited to our purpose, the main difficulty will always remain. That is why we intend shortly to go to Berne and ask for a considerable sum of money, in order to build according to our requirements, and it may well be that we shall also have to appeal to our friends and supporters here.

Besides teaching English at our College, we also give special Commerce courses. Until the London Chamber of Commerce debarred all foreigners from sitting for their quarterly examinations on Elements of Commerce, our students took advantage of the opportunity of securing these valuable certificates.

In the winter 1929 examination, 11 sat, all passed, 6 with distinction. In the spring, 15 sat, 14 passed, 3 with distinction. In the summer, 51 sat, of which 25 secured passes with distinction, and 15 ordinary passes. It must not be forgotten that our Day students generally stop, on an average, only about 4–5 months, and have to compete in a tongue which is foreign to them, on equal terms with English candidates, who do so in their own language, and the result is highly pleasing.

You may say—we have heard a lot about the evening classes, the College, etc., but what about the Society itself? The Society has also been active, or at least, its Committees have. Last year, when I addressed you here, it was expected that within a few months, we should have attained Legal Status, by converting the Society into a Registered Company. After an enormous amount of work had been expended on preparing everything, and the Members had decided what was to be done, difficulties of a legal as well as a financial character made it necessary to alter the plans at the last minute, and to-day, we have not yet reached our goal, though it will only be a matter of a few weeks now before everything is definitely settled.

Once the Society is registered, the whole internal organization will be different, but our aims will still be the same, that is, to do something useful for our beloved country—Switzerland.

Before I sit down, I would like to thank all the members of the various Committees, including Mr. Deutsch, who through ill health has had to give up Committee work, and whose place was taken by my dear friend Mr. Stahelin, in answer to my S.O.S. Thanks also to the Trustees, as well as to the lecturing and office staff for their untiring work during the year. I would like also to be able to thank the Members of our Society for their regular attendance at the meetings. But how can I? Out of 385 Members of all denominations, I have never seen more than about 30–40 present at the monthly meetings, and just over 60 at the general meetings. This makes an average of not quite 45 members, that is 12% of the total membership. If you Members are of opinion that we are doing something useful, is it too much to ask you to come to the Meetings, once a month, or is it that your good ladies think that we may lead you away from the path of righteousness?

In future, under the new Constitution, we may be able to make the Meetings more attractive, and as we intend also to provide attractions for our Members' wives, this, very likely, will bring about a radical change.

Ladies and Gentlemen—I apologize for having inflicted on you such a long speech, and I thank you for the exemplary patience with which you have listened to it.

The address, so ably delivered, was much applauded and the cheers had hardly faded away, when our Minister rose to deliver his oration, which was awaited with great interest. He said:

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, We have heard from the President—if we look very closely into the matter we find that

after all there is very little to be said on my part except that since I had the last time the pleasure of speaking at this table, another year plunged into the past and added a fruitful period of twelve months to the annals of the Swiss Mercantile Society.

To-day we find again the old valiant guard at the head of your institution and it is thanks to their untiring energy and love of the cause that the position of the Swiss Mercantile Society is such, as we just had the satisfaction of learning by the clear and highly instructive revue given by your President. In certain respects the President has given us the impression of a record year as far as your Society is concerned; but if we speak of a record with regard to the general position during that year of markets, production, industry and economic results, that term would have to be applied in a sense which could but cause us serious anxiety. Indeed, the twelve months of the year 1930 have in this country and in all parts of the world without exception been the worst since 1918 and the trade slump, which so far has hardly shown yet any tangible signs of improvement, is again and again, by representatives of the commercial world as well as by statesmen and economists, declared to be without precedent within living memory. In saying this I am really only repeating what I said ten weeks ago at the City Swiss Club Dinner and I am afraid the state of things to-day is hardly such as to make me take a more optimistic view, although on the other hand I see no reason to persist in too much pessimism. Perhaps those who say that the worst is over and that things are getting decidedly better are right, and we should only be too glad to believe it.

In these circumstances the efforts made by the Swiss Mercantile Society to work all the harder and to impress upon our young commercial generation all the more the necessity of doing their very best is for us a source of comfort. The development of the educational side has again followed that traditional line of progress which has made the S.M.S. in 1930 more than ever a light spot in otherwise dark surroundings. The number of students is increasing and with it increases the number of classes and the number of teachers. Our Colony follows this development with the greatest interest and the name of your school has reached a reputation here and in Switzerland, for which I have every reason to congratulate you. Needless to say that I myself take a great interest in this educational work, and although my occupations unfortunately prevent me from paying as many visits to the school as I would like to pay in the course of a year, I keep in touch with your President and, through my secretaries, with the headmaster, masters and pupils. I am happy to state that the changes which have been brought about recently have proved quite successful, that the teaching staff is first class, that the programme is as interesting as it is resourceful and fittingly worked out for each particular object. It strikes me that your students, to judge by the examination papers, must on leaving the school possess quite an imposing knowledge not only of the English language but also of English commercial methods and economics in general. If the classes are too full and the room at your disposal insufficient, this may be a drawback, but it is after all the most obvious sign of success. I think I am not mistaken if I foresee that in this respect, as in many others, the energy and resourcefulness of your President and his colleagues will find in the near future means for improvement. To procure to the Swiss Mercantile Society a building worthy of its activity and merits would indeed be a crowning success to any President and Committee of that institution. Your present leaders as we know them are just the men to do it, but to dwell on this issue, which is yet a thing of the future, may be left for another year. For the present we are content to appreciate and to thank them for what they have done and so well accomplished.

The Minister on resuming his seat received a hearty ovation from the whole assembly.

Mr. Stahelin then extended a hearty welcome and greetings to the official guests, saying:

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, I have the pleasure of welcoming, on behalf of the Swiss Mercantile Society, our guests: the representatives of the Legation, the Swiss Churches and the Swiss Societies. To you all a hearty welcome!

Monsieur le Ministre, I cannot do better than echo the sentiments already so ably expressed to you by our President. You know, Sir, how happy we are to have you with us again, and I do hope that you will be with us at very many annual dinners to come. Our pleasure is naturally tinged with regret over the absence of Madame Paravicini. May we ask you, Sir, to be good enough to convey to Madame our sincere wishes for a speedy and complete recovery.

To your collaborators: Mr. Rezzonico, Mr. de Bourg, Mr. Micheli and Mr. Hilfiker, may I say how glad we are to have you with us at our festive board. This is a very nice change, as usually when we meet we are either bothering you—or you have a spot of bother for us.

Mr. Schupbach is here representing the Trustees. To Mr. Schupbach who, as the members of our Society know very well, is a staunch friend, I wish to say that, although we may not be very demonstrative in our thanks, we value his services and his help very highly. He is not only a Trustee but also, in the truest sense of the word, a trusty friend!

The Swiss Churches are represented by the Rev. Hoffmann-de Visme, the Rev. Pradervand and the Rev. and Mrs. Hahn. The City Swiss Club is represented by Mr. and Mrs. Carlo Chapuis, the Société de Secours Mutuels by Mr. Campart and Miss Campart. The Fonds de Secours is represented by Mr. and Mrs. Dupraz, the Union Helvetia by Mr. Keyser and friend, the Swiss Choral Society by Mr. Ritzmann, Treasurer, and Miss Clark. The Nouvelle Société Helvétique is represented by Mr. and Mrs. Suter, the Swiss Rifle Association by Mr. H. Senn and Mr. Rhy, the Swiss Institute Orchestral Society by Mr. Dick and Mr. Pellet, and last but by no means least the *Swiss Observer* is represented by Mr. and Mrs. Stauffer.

To you all who are our guests let me say that we value your presence not only because you are our guests, but because you are also our friends. May you enjoy this evening to the full, so that when it comes to an end you will leave us—not with a heavy heart—but still a little heavier than when you came.

Members of the Swiss Mercantile Society, please rise and drink the health of our Guests! Now, Mr. Chairman, I come to the second and more difficult part of my task, the toast to the Ladies.

Ladies, what can I say to you, I who am not a ladies' man? When I look around me and see the bevy of beauties, I wish I were a Bobby Howes. He at least would know just what to say.

It is indeed difficult to know in which way to praise you, Ladies. You are pre-eminent in all walks of life, and I think the time will soon come when, instead of a mere Man proposing a toast to the Ladies, a Lady will propose a toast to us, perhaps somewhat on the following lines: To our wee lambkins whom we relieve of their burdens—every Friday evening! Ladies, you know your own power very well. We, the so-called strong sex, are following your lead and have done so ever since the Garden of Eden. And so blindly are we following you that some time ago, during one of the dark evenings, one young representative of the strong sex followed what he thought to be a girl in a very smart sports-suit and with quite a good pair of legs. Well, it took him some time to realize that the Girl was in reality a Gordon Highlander! Gentlemen, please be upstanding and drink to "Our Gordon Highlanders!"

Mr. Stahelin's speech was much applauded, in particular his reply on behalf of the ladies; his assertion however, "that although I am not a ladies' man," met with some dissenting murmurs, which it is hoped will not lead him into troubled waters.

The President's hammer sounded again, and Mr. Ch. Chapuis, President of the City Swiss Club, rose to reply on behalf of the official guests:

Monsieur le Ministre, Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I greatly appreciate the honour of having been called upon to respond to the toast of "The Guests and the Ladies," but you have by your welcome made my task very difficult.

Owing to my limited vocabulary, I can command no words or expressions, eulogistic enough to do the smallest measure of justice to your so very hearty hospitality, which we are always happy to enjoy.

You need no new assurances of the very staunch friendship which exists between the Societies and Organisations we represent and the Swiss Mercantile Society, this friendship is not only of long standing but it is indissoluble.

May I express the very great admiration we all have for your society, for the men who so worthily conduct its destinies and for the wonderful achievements recalled here to-night: achievements with tradition behind them and with further success assured in the future: achievements which make one proud of being a member of the S.M.S.

These cryptic letters S.M.S. could well be applied to your President, some people have nearly half the alphabet after their names to denote their degrees, honours and other qualifications, I, therefore, suggest he should be known as M. Paschoud, S.M.S., meaning,

STRIKINGLY

MERITORIOUS

SKIPPER.

Mr. President, Gentlemen. In my tender youth I understand it was the custom for very little boys to wear garments resembling feminine attire, presumably I suffered like all my contemporaries, is this the reason why I have been requested to acknowledge the toast to "The Ladies"?

Surely you do not suppose that I ever wore my hair long or bobbed? Further, I have never been "Sweet Seventeen" or a "Blushing Bride," and I have never been called "Mummy." You will, therefore, agree that I am not in a position to give true expressions to the thoughts of these charming members of the unfathomable sex. However, it does not need a thought reader to ascertain their feelings. A look at their radiant faces is sufficient proof of their appreciation, of their pleasure at being here to-night, their sentiments can rightly be expressed by quoting the words of that old ballad,

"With all your faults we love you still."

I thank Mr. A. C. Stahelin for the splendid manner in which he proposed this toast, and on behalf of all the guests I thank you for your overwhelming hospitality.

I raise my glass and will ask my fellow guests to drink to the continued prosperity and further successes of the Swiss Mercantile Society.

This speaker, who, by the way, is a very old friend of the Swiss Mercantile Society, was heartily cheered on resuming his seat.

Then Mr. Paschoud rose for the last time, to announce that Mr. J. Pfendler would make the appeal for "Charity." In moving terms the speaker referred to the very valuable work done by the Swiss Benevolent Society for those of our less fortunate compatriots and his ardent appeal met with a ready response, some £30 having been collected.

The official programme having been concluded, everyone rushed to hear the cabaret show, which had been thoughtfully provided, whilst the banquet hall was cleared for dancing. Dancing started soon after ten and lasted until the hour of one. Amongst the many jolly dancers one could spot the stately publisher of the S.O. solemnly waltzing to the tune of an alluring Viennese song with a charming partner.

The Swiss Mercantile Society deserves to be heartily congratulated for the way in which this banquet was arranged and managed, it was a thoroughly successful and enjoyable evening.

SWISS CLUB, BIRMINGHAM.

On account of lack of space the report of the Annual Banquet, which took place on Saturday, February 7th, is unavoidably held over until next week.

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.

(The figure in parentheses denotes the number of the issue in which the subscription expires.)

F. Schubeler (535), F. R. Lier (506), W. Eichenberger (532), John Voglio (534), J. Stettler (534), C. Isler (536), P. Caprez (496), E. Schweizer (494), Jocat-Guillarmod (517), P. G. Oberhansle (537), J. Danmeyer (535), Miss A. L. Achermann (506), A. Andres (537), C. Ferrière (538), C. Pernsch (536), E. J. Krebser (537), E. Neuschwander (537), A. C. Baume (533), F. H. Rohr (538), J. W. Schefer (535), E. Ulmann (522), E. Spleiss (521), Mrs. J. Stewart (511), J. Jenny (514), P. Brun (545).

BUCHBESPRECHUNG.

Gedichte. Marie Bretscher, Verlag Rascher & Cie, Zurich.

In der lyrischen Sprache gehen in den letzten Jahren Wandlungen zum Schönen und zum Unschönen vor. Wir erleben feiner abgeschattete Farben und Klänge, reicheren Wortschatz, hin und wieder auch neue Strophenformen und Versuche mit neuen Rhythmen im reinlosen Vers. Zum Gedichte gehört auch die modisch tiefsinnige Betitelung von Gedichtssammlungen. Eine der seltensten Ausnahmen wird von jetzt ab ein Band: "Gedichte von," selbst die wirklichen Dichter lassen sich verleiten ihre Verse zu nennen: Stürme—Ich und die Welt—Ein Sommer—Melancholie, und so weiter.

In Marie Bretscher's Band, "Gedichte", ganz einfache Gedichte, stehen fast durchwegs reife Stücke. Sie gebietet über alle Töne aus der lyrischen Mittellage, hat etwas rechtes zu sagen und sagt es in ihrer eigenen und meist sehr melodischen Sprache. In der Sammlung stehen allerliebste kleine Gedichte die eine stark lyrische Wirkung hervorrufen, wie z. B.

Abendklänge.

Abendwolken hangen unterm Himmel,
Schweben leis mit lichtverklärten Schwingen.
Von den Türmen steigen Glockentöne
Hoch hinauf, sie liebend zu umschlingen.
In den Lüften seliges Vermählen,
Klang und Farbe einen sich zum Chore,
Und des Abends reinen Harmonien
Öffnen sich des Himmels goldne Tore.



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SWISS Y.M.C.A.

Mr. W. Elliott, Secretary for England of the Mission to Lepers, addressed the members and friends of the Swiss Y.M.C.A. on January 31st. An interesting and touching account was given of this most necessary and successful work among millions of lepers in various lands. Thousands, suffering from this terrible illness, are found by the mission in utter misery and desolation. A total cure is almost certain in cases where the disease is discovered at an early stage; to those unfortunate ones, who come under the category of incurables, the mission provides for treatment and tries to make their poor lives as comfortable as possible. Mr. Elliott informed the gathering that the respectable sum of 300—400 pounds is annually subscribed for in Switzerland, which announcement was received with great satisfaction by all those who were present. Our readers will no doubt be interested to hear that the small sum of 1/6 per week will keep one of those poor wretched children entirely. To those who are interested in this noble rescue work, the Secretary of the mission, 7 Bloomsbury Square, W.C.1, will gladly give any information.

SWISS INSTITUTE ORCHESTRAL SOCIETY.

The above Society is giving a concert on Thursday, February 19th, at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C., and the programme promises a great treat. The Society has been able to engage two prominent artists of wide repute, Miss Olivia Hilder and Mr. George Owen. The orchestral part contains such popular composers as Gounod, Boildieu and Schubert, and we hope that many of our readers will patronise the Swiss Institute Orchestral Society, as we can assure them of an enjoyable evening.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

An ordinary meeting was held on February 3rd at Pagani, thirty-eight members and guests being present.

The visitors included Mr. Sermier, President of the Swiss Gymnastic Society and Mr. Kung, Assistant Manager of the Mayfair Hotel. In welcoming these gentlemen, the President said that he wished to thank Mr. Kung on behalf of the members for all he had done to make the meetings of the Club at the Mayfair Hotel so successful.

The evening was exceptionally quiet and for once I have practically nothing to report. This may fill the Secretary's heart with joy when he comes to write the minutes, but does not make copy for me.

The President announced that the Concert of the Swiss Institute Orchestral Society would take place on Thursday, February 19th, at 8 p.m. in the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1, and it was decided to invest in a number of tickets which will be distributed among the old people who would otherwise be unable to be present. Mr. Paul Dick gave us a few details about the programme, and I have no hesitation in recommending members to do everything in their power to make this concert a great success. ck.

PERSONAL.

We wish to express to M. René Marchand of 100, Hatton Garden, E.C.1, our sympathy, his father, M. Oswald Marchand, having died at Geneva, at the age of 73.

We regret to announce the death of Mr. Billeter's father, which has taken place at Männedorf at the age of 76, and wish him to accept our sincere sympathy.

Manch kleines empfundenes Lebenslied, wie z. B. "Den Toten" und "Meinem Vater" mit der ans Herz greifenden Schluss Strophe:

Und wie zum Grusse legt ich meine Hand—
Ins letzte Glühn, das noch dein Bild umwand.
Da bist du leise, leise mir entwichen.

zeugen von tiefem und echten empfinden.

Es erklingen bei Marie Bretscher Töne gold-echter Lyrik, so in dem schönen kleinen Liede, "Fülle."

Es schäumt allüberall von Blumenwogen . . .
oder in dem reizenden Gedichtchen:

Die Halme stehen hoch und ährenscher.

Lyrik von echter Art und tiefster religiöser Eingebung sind die "Marienlieder":

Durch feuchte Wolken glänzt ein Sonnenstrahl . . .

und

Maria wandelt über Schnee.

Ihr Kindlein starb in Kreuzesweh . . .

aus allen diesen Liedern erklingt echter Ton stiller Musik.

Man findet hier und da, in vereinzelt Fällen, etwas Gesuchtes mehr buntes Farbenspiel und klingende Wortmusik, und die Dichterin kann sich vielleicht entschliessen, bei einer Neuauflage diese auszuschiessen, das sonst allerliebste Bändchen, würde dadurch nur an Wert gewinnen.

Für seinen ganz eigenen Ton zeugt dieses schöne Gedicht, "Gott":

Der du mit leichter Hand die Berge schüttelst
Und Felsen aus dem Grund der Meere hebst . .

Es sind wahrhaft prophetische Verse darin.

Zu ihren lieblichsten Gedichten gehört "Die Einsame":

Sie wandelt wie auf einer langen Strasse,
Die einst vom grünen Grund emporgestiegen,
Nun endlos sich durch öde Lande zieht,
Endlos und doch begrenzt. Gleich einer Mauer,

Steht vorn des Todes dunkle Machtgestalt,
Nicht sichtbar, fühlbar nur in jähem Schauer . . .

Mit den tröstenden Schlussversen:

Und abends starrt sie in die kleine Glut,
Auf der sie ihr frugales Mahl bereitet,
Fühlt, wie ein Schluchzen ihre Seele weitet,
und sucht sich bei den Sternen neuen Mut.

Marie Bretscher ist zweifellos eine unserer klang- und gedankenreichsten jüngeren Lyrikerinnen und wir können unsern Lesern dieses Bändchen, welches zahllose Stellen mit vollendeter Tonmalerei enthält wärmstens empfehlen, es wird damit viel Genuss und Freude bereitet.

St.

