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I shall certainly never forget a day when five of us, out on one rope behind the driver, were returning from Andermatt. The horse was going at a good pace, and our energies were concentrated on directing our skis along the polished surface of the road, when—suddenly, a shout! the rope had broken, and the last two skiers on it had tumbled over into the snow. The driver pulled the horse up with a sudden jerk, and away went the rest of us into the snow, even the driver himself. By the time we had picked ourselves up, quite unhurt, the horse had plunged into deep snow. Having dragged, and coaxed, till he got him out, the driver handed the reins to me while he fixed up the rope again.

I passed a horrible moment imagining a sudden start, and myself as sole ski-jörer! However, the horse stood perfectly until, at the sound of his master's voice, he set off once more and pulled us up to Hospenthal without further mishap.

Ski-ing over the St. Gotthard Pass.

My most memorable day was when, with several others, I went over the St. Gotthard Pass on skis.

We left Hospenthal at 9.30 a.m., and after a stiff climb of about thirteen kilometres in the blazing sun, we reached the Hospice at 1.30 p.m. We were hindered several times on the way up by meeting companies of soldiers ski-ing round the most awkward corners at lightning speed!

At the Hospice we renewed our strength by eating our packed lunches (we had carried these in our rucksacks), and drinking the steaming hot chocolate one can get there.

After a short rest we decided to go down to Airolo, a village at the entrance of the St. Gotthard tunnel. Having been told we should reach Airolo in less than two hours, we hoped to get the 4.30 train through the tunnel to Göschenen, and, from there, the mountain train back to Andermatt. The descent, however, proved most difficult owing to weather conditions affecting the path, so that it was 6.30 before we reached the barracks above Airolo, where, after much persuasion, we were permitted to phone through to Hospenthal to tell our party we could not get back that night.

Italy is reached.

By this time a silvery moon had risen and lighted us on our winding way down to the village. About half an hour later, as we were going through its main street, one of our party slipped on its icy surface, and a small native onlooker exclaimed sarcastically: "*Ecco bene!*"—which reminded us that we had left the German-speaking Canton on the other side of the pass. I therefore, as interpreter, had to readjust my tired brain to *la lingua Italiana* as we set out in quest of a resting-place for the night.

It was a long search, for most of the hotels were closed, but we finally found shelter at a small hotel opposite the station. After an excellent dinner we felt somewhat revived, and were extremely proud of our achievement, especially as one of our number had only put on skis for the first time five days before! He was a man, and young, and exceptional! I would not advise other novices to emulate his exploits.

Having slept the sleep of the healthily weary for over eleven hours, we spent next morning exploring the village shops; our train to Göschenen did not leave till 11 a.m.

Our first visit was to the watch makers, where we bought ski badges to commemorate the occasion. The watchmaker addressed us in Italian, but on learning that we were English, and had crossed the St. Gotthard the day before, he aired his few English phrases in expressing his great surprise and admiration. When we left he accompanied us outside his shop door, rang a bell till his good wife popped her head out of an upper window, and with much gesticulation he shouted to her—also, in fact to the whole village—to look at "*gli Inglesi*" who had come over the pass from Hospenthal.

After journeying by train through the tunnel we reached our hotel in time for lunch, after an enjoyable and never-to-be-forgotten adventure.

One day I made friends with the local priest, who was an accomplished organist, and he generously invited one of our party, also a talented musician, to play in the church.

Some of us joined in the beautiful German carol, "*Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!*" and another day at the request of one of the Kloster sisters, we brought our English hymn-book with us, and sang a few well-known English hymns. She joined in our singing, and on parting we wished each other God's ever-present blessing.

In the evening the village children came to the hotel to yodel, and each day there seemed to be some new joy awaiting us. It might be the rosy morning glow on snow-capped peaks, or silvery moonlight behind the pines as we re-

turned from Andermatt at evening. It might be a letter from home that awaited us when we got in, or the enjoyment of new friendships formed—the sunshine on the snow, the tinkling of sleigh-bells and the cheery "*Ski-Heil!*" of the passer-by. All these things combined, send us home so absolutely fit that having had our playtime, we return with abundant energy to our different tasks.

For the rest of this week's GLEANINGS, there is nothing of importance, or appeal to me, or of a nature to interest many. There is a letter, for instance, in the *Western Morning News & Mercury*, January 12th, signed "Schoolboy," which deals with the question of Swiss Silk Stockings competing with British Stockings. That "schoolboy" is for taxing the Swiss stockings, because:

To compare the value of these two articles is grossly unfair. The English manufacturer before he makes a single pair of stockings has to pay employer's liability, sick and unemployment insurance, to pay his employes a minimum trade union rate, in addition to rent, rates and taxes.

The Swiss manufacturer has none of these liabilities and obviously he can produce identically the same article as an English manufacturer at a much lower price. SCHOOLBOY.

I have made a note of this because I am going to ask some friends of mine who are Swiss manufacturers to let me join them in their business. I have often longed to have a business which would be free from employer's liability, sick and unemployment insurance, minimum trade union rates, rent, rates and taxes! No wonder people here often think that our Swiss brethren have a lovely time to spend in a lovely country in lovely pursuits! A pity only that that article in the said paper was signed by "schoolboy."

NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE. LONDON GROUP.

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1930 READ AT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON FEB. 28TH, 1931.

The short survey of the life and activity of the London Group of the N.S.H. during 1930 which I propose laying before you to-night will, I hope, give us food for thought and point the way in more than one direction. On the whole, it is certainly a pleasant story that may be unfolded of the calm but active period behind us. There have been few decisive changes; we have at no time been called upon to step outside our accustomed path of intention or profession, but it is not without a certain pride that I can speak of an increased activity, of a greater determination and of a keener interest which have characterized this past year in our Group. You may remember that a few years ago I was frank enough to advise the London Group to "lie low" for a while, to collect and re-organize the remnants of its forces and to re-build its financial strength. We have quietly done all this with the result that 1930 is likely to have seen the end of this quiescent period, permitting us to re-emerge strong and healthy from the reaction of our boom years of 1919-1922.

But before I speak of the increased activity of the Group, I would once more refer to the curious mental attitude of the major portion of our membership. They appear to regard themselves evidently as honorary members since they do not in the least wish to participate in the active life of the Society, but pay their subscription with commendable regularity. Some may stick to us in memory of greater times; others may regard it as good taste to be a member; others again may do so out of regard for a friend, or because they have been recommended to belong to the movement. Yet this abstention from active participation, needless to say, is a serious point of weakness and produces a curiously anomalous state of affairs in our Group. We are almost like a Mexican army, all generals and no privates; for it is the Council and the Council alone who takes an active interest in the affairs of the Society.

The Council according to the Statutes consists of a maximum number of 14 members, but for the above stated reason I would wish to see this number doubled and shall revert to the matter at a later stage. There have been nine meetings during the past year at this address. These monthly meetings are advertised in the *Swiss Observer*; no direct invitations are sent to the members, but since the meetings have been held with unflinching regularity on the third Wednesday in each month for many years past, we are not conscious of committing a breach in the omission of direct invitations. The administrative part of the Council has experienced a serious loss during the period under review. Miss Crawford who has been our able Secretary since the abolition of the standing Secretariat has been obliged to retire during last May on account of health. She left England, joining her mother in Canada. Her work has been taken over and very conscientiously carried on by Mrs. Clara Muller who, as you all know, is also re-

sponsible for the clearness and correctness of our accounts as well as for the promptness with which members' subscriptions are remitted.

The activities, other than administrative, of the Council may suitably be described under four headings, viz.

- (a) Causeries
- (b) Film Shows
- (c) Official participations
- (d) General activity.

(a) Five causeries were presented to the Group in the course of the year, all by members. They proved to be of great educational value, being given by distinguished experts in most cases, and were followed by prolonged discussions. It is more than refreshing to know that we may rely upon such valuable co-operation and performances among our own members.

March 19th Experiences in Japan, by Mr. Paul Liechti.

May 21st The influence of the League of Nations, the International Labour Bureau and the International Bank on Switzerland, by Mr. Th. de Sonnenberg and Mr. L. H. Micheli, of the Legation.

Oct. 15th Report of the Eleventh Journée des Suisses à l'Étranger à Bâle, August 30/31, by the President.

Nov. 19th The history of the Swiss Church in London, by the Rev. Hoffmann de Visme.

Jan. 21st Psychological influences on Cancer, by Dr. Walter Mons.

(b) As has now become our custom, we have given the Colony two Film shows during the year. They were held, with free admission, at King George's Hall, and drew a large audience in each case. The performances have again been attended either by the Minister himself or his Representative who addressed the meetings and added greatly to the patriotic significance of the movement. I am of opinion that we have every reason to be pleased with our activity in this direction; the N.S.H. film shows have now become an institution in our Colony and are fulfilling their purpose admirably. The two films were

May 3rd. A Travers La Suisse, four separate films of South Western Switzerland and the Bernese Oberland.

Nov. 8th. With the Swiss Mountain Troops in the Alps, a military film of great beauty and patriotic appeal. This film was obtained from the Central Secretariat in Berne through the good offices of the Legation.

(c) We have further participated officially in the following events and entertainments.

Aug. 28th. With the co-operation of the S.M.S. we organized the famous lecture of Prof. Schroeter on the National Park in Switzerland, at King George's Hall.

May 31st. At the Jubilee on the 10th. anniversary of Minister Paravicini's work in London, held at the Rest. Monico, when your President was entrusted with the official speech on behalf of the London Swiss Societies.

Aug. 30/31 Your President officially represented the Group at the 11th Journée des Suisses à l'Étranger in Basle, where he took an active part in the deliberations. Mr. and Mme. Campart were also present, en route from Germany.

We further participated, as per long standing custom, in the Swiss Sports at Herne Hill and the First of August Festivity at Hendon, discharging our usual obligations in the organization and management. At the latter function we carried out the First of August Collection in favour of Swiss Schools abroad and remitted to the authorities in Switzerland the sum of £46-5-0.

(d) Our general activity during the year followed much the usual course of events. It would lead us too far to mention in detail the various interests and occupations, but I can assure you that a good deal of time and work is involved in these matters, month by month. It should be noted, however, that the intercourse between our Group and the various Groups abroad is steadily becoming more active and this is due to a large extent to our initiation of sending Christmas greetings to all overseas Groups. We have also remained in closer touch than ever before with the Central Secretariat in Berne, as well as with our very staunch old friends Mr. Jean Baer and Prof. A. Latt, both of whom were visited by your President, when in Switzerland.

(4) It is a most pleasing reflection that our relations with the Swiss Legation and the sister Societies in London continue to be of the most friendly character. The encouragement and co-operation which we have received during the past year from the Minister and Mr. Th. de Sonnenberg in particular are treasured by us with sincere gratitude and will not fail, I am sure, to evoke in us a greater enthusiasm for our cause and a deeper patriotism. If a further proof of the esteem we enjoy at the Legation were needed, it is easily found in the ready agreement of Mr.

L. H. Micheli to join us in the capacity of an Honorary Vice-President.

You know already how much we have admired and approved of the scheme of the Unione Ticinese to collect in the Colony several thousand Pounds Sterling in favour of the Dimier Fund for an "Asile des vieillards". In order to worthily contribute to this Fund we handed the sum of £100 to the Fonds de Secours which was at the time about one third of our financial resources. The conception of this scheme was as bold as it was magnanimous, and the fact that all the required conditions have now been fulfilled with a total collection of well over £3,000 is worthy of the highest praise.

(5) I would like to remind members that, although part of our Library was incorporated with that of the S.M.S., we still have many interesting books which are available on loan to members. But in the absence of an actual reading room belonging to ourselves, we have not thought it worth while to subscribe to any papers and reviews, as we used to do some years ago. In this connection I would not, however, omit to express our grateful thanks to the following Associations for various publications and printed matter sent to us:

- Secretariat des Suisses à l'Etranger
- Groups of the N.S.H.
- Schweiz. Mustermesse, Basel.
- Zofingue.
- Information Office, Lugano
- North American Schweizerbund
- Chambre de Commerce Suisse en France.
- Swiss Bank Corporation
- Chemins de fer Fédéraux
- Office central universitaire Suisse.
- Office suisse de l'expansion commerciale
- Pro Juventute
- Davoser Revue
- Der Völkerbund
- Société suisse d'utilité publique
- Swiss Mercantile Society
- Swiss Y.M.C.A.
- Swiss Legation in London
- London and Swiss Universities.

(6) From the foregoing you will perceive that we have just cause to be satisfied with the work achieved during 1930. There is only this one puzzling exception of the infrequent attendance of members at the monthly meetings. I would urge all the members to reconsider this matter of more frequent attendances seriously. I can say with full conviction that, in staying away, they are certainly the greater losers than we, the Council, who, while taking the trouble to arrange these Causeries, also obtain great enjoyment and benefit from them.

We may look forward to the future of the London Group of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique with calm assurance. We need have no regrets about the past: our aim has lost none of its purity and our patriotic endeavour none of its conviction during the lean and meagre years.

Therefore, let us stick to our guns: let us try to do better this year what we have done well last year, and let us proudly stand by our motto **HELVETICA DIGNITATE AC SECURITATE.**

SWISS INSTITUTE ORCHESTRAL SOCIETY.

This Society, under the able conductorship of Mr. Paul Dick, gave a most enjoyable concert, on Thursday evening, February 19th at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1.

The orchestra opened the programme with a vigorous march, "Lausanne qui rit" by E. Dal Monte, followed by Kéler Béla's "Lustspiel Ouverture"; both renderings were received with much applause.

Mr. George Owen then sang "Dan Cupid hath a Garden" (from Merry England) by Edward German, with a rich and very pleasant voice, which induced the audience to clamour for an "encore" which was acceded to. The Ballet—music from Gounod's "Faust" was indeed a fine performance, the tempi half through the first part were rather too slow for my liking and sounded somehow stiff, but the players soon warmed up and the second part with finale were rendered in a masterly manner and received an applause which was well merited. Both conductor and orchestra have given a striking proof of their earnest and sincere work.

Miss Olivia Hilder, who we hear, has sung at various Continental Opera Houses, gave an exquisite rendering of the Aria "Caro Nome" from Verdi's opera "Rigoletto". Miss O. Hilder is the possessor of a rich and imposing voice and a spare column would be necessary to do justice to this extraordinary vivid singer's presentation of this so popular Aria. The artiste graciously consented to an "encore" which was again enthusiastically received.

After the interval, the orchestra played the Overture of "The Calif of Baghdad" by Boieldieu. This seems to be a favourite with amateur orchestra's, and well do I remember it, having taken part in its performance during three consecutive years, a long time ago, when mem-

ber of a school orchestra in my native town. This performance by the Swiss Institute Orchestral Society has awakened in me a host of happy memories for which I am grateful to them, and let me say, that they played it to perfection.

An alteration on the programme was made, and Mr. George Owen, sang, instead of the Aria from "Cavalleria Rusticana", Schubert's all-ways charming "Serenade". I for one would have preferred to hear it sung in German, in its English version it somehow loses some of its charms, but Mr. Owen sang it with much feeling; needless to say that the artist was recalled again and treated us with a fine rendering of a song called "Stars Above" which "brought the house down."

Again the conductor tapped the desk with his baton, this time to give the signal to Schubert's Symphony in B minor, with the following movements: "Allegro Moderato", "Andante con Moto"; this was no doubt the "pièce de résistance" of the orchestra, and the understanding between the conductor and his players was a remarkable feature. There is evidently some really good material amongst the performers, and thanks to their prevailing efficiency they produced a great effect. The conductor and his players moved remarkably well in the same mental orbit, and it was a fine and brilliant performance for which they are highly to be congratulated.

By the rendering of Miss O. Hilder's songs: "Prelude" by Landon Ronald, "Twilight" by John Wightman, "A Birthday" by Frederic Cowen,

the artiste proved that she is not only at home in the "Bel canto" but that she is as well, an accomplished "Liedersinger". Every song represented a degree of experience to her which she was able to pass on. Miss Dorothy Treseder was an able collaborator at the piano, and the beautiful flowers, which were presented to the two ladies were richly deserved. The Swiss Institute Orchestral Society has no doubt scored with the engagements of their soloists.

As the last number on the programme figured a selection out of Lehar's ever young "Merry Widow" and although the Lady is now already of a matured age, she still makes our hearts beat quicker, and long after I left the Conway Hall, those familiar tunes "Dann geh ich zu Maxim" and the "Vilia Waltzer" were haunting me. Altogether a most creditable performance and a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

The Swiss Colony is very lucky indeed to include in their many activities a band of such ardent music lovers, and they ought to be supported by everyone who loves good music. I would have liked to see a notice posted outside the Hall, "standing room only" the Society would have richly deserved such an audience. Although the attendance was fairly good there were still a good many seats vacant. Amongst the audience one could see Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, the Swiss Minister, the Presidents of the City Swiss Club, Swiss Mercantile Society, Nouvelle Société Helvétique and many well-known personalities in the Colony.

To the orchestra and its sympathetic conductor I wish to say "well done", it was an unforgettable evening and those who have wended their way to Red Lion Square have no reason to regret it. St.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

Le City Swiss Club a continué son programme officiel d'hiver par une seconde soirée dansante fort bien réussie qui, comme la première, a eu lieu au May Fair Hotel, samedi dernier 21 février, et a réuni une centaine de participants entre membres, les dames et amis.

On a décrit plus d'une fois ici même le charme particulier de la salle du May Fair, si justement désignée "Garden suite scène", de ce nouveau succès. Et point n'est besoin de redire la perfection du dîner très soigné, ni la compétence des excellents musiciens de l'orchestre Colombo: tout cela est chose entendue. Ce qui toutfois ne peut être dit trop souvent, ce qui, cette fois aussi, a surtout frappé votre rapporteur, ce qui enfin était l'essence merveilleuse de cette phalange de compatriotes parsemée d'amis anglais, c'était cette parfaite harmonie, cet air de famille, cette gaieté de coeur du premier au dernier moment, témoignages incontestables et éloquentes du plaisir de chacun.

N'est-il pas superflu d'ajouter qu'après maintes valse délicieuses, des fox-trots lents ou vigoureux, une polka, deux "Paul-Jones" et quelques "spot dances", l'heure de se séparer vint bien trop vite? Minuit! La complaisance de l'infatigable et sympathique Président, M. Ch. Chapuis, et des musiciens accorda encore ce quart d'heure supplémentaire tant désiré et la soirée se termina joyeusement par le traditionnel "Auld lang syne". J.Z.



SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY. EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

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

Mr. H. Scharpf, Zurich: "The Modern Lady." Mr. H. Schlegel, Buchs: "Methods of Instruction." Mr. A. Gander, Schiers: "May we criticize Customs in a Foreign Country?" Mr. M. Oberli, Lenzburg: "Horse-Racing." Mr. H. Merz, Basle: "English Characteristics." Mr. H. Frey, Zurich, "Holland." Mr. H. Kubly, Zurich: "Scottish Humour." Mr. L. Thomasin, St. Gall: "Criticism of Foreign Customs." Mr. H. Bosshard, Zurich: "Artificial and Real Silk." Mr. E. Favre, Geneva: "Actual State of Europe."

The debating classes dealt with the following subject:—

"Are you in Favour of a United States of Europe?" Proposer: Mr. E. Staub. Opposer: Mr. M. Bourquin.

"Is Lying ever Justifiable?" Proposer: Mr. P. Oswald. Opposer: Miss C. Lux.

On Saturday, February 21st the students, under the leadership of Mr. J. W. Klein, B.A., visited St. Albans. The beautiful Cathedral (one of the oldest and largest in England) awakened great interest. The High Altar Screen is probably the finest of its kind in England, the only rival being in Winchester Cathedral. Later on a visit was paid to St. Michael's Church, where Lord Bacon is buried.

SOME OLD FRESCO PAINTINGS.

Many old churches in Switzerland have such very interesting fresco-paintings. Some of the finest are to be found in Saanen, a beautiful big village and one of the chief places situated on the line of the Montreux Oberland railway.

This well-known village has an old church which can be traced back as far as 1228. In the year 1444 or 1447 it was enlarged. The massive tower and choir were built at that time and are still very well preserved. The frescoes which were uncovered some time ago, must have their origin most probably towards the end of the 15th century. About 1602 or 1604, the time when reformation had taken root in this part of the country, the paintings had been covered and remained forgotten for centuries until a few years ago they reappeared at some places where the whitewash was off. They have been uncovered entirely and restored to their former beauty.

On account of their completion and remarkable preservation they can be looked upon as one of the most valuable historical discoveries in the line of fresco-painting of the middle ages in Switzerland.

The three walls of the choir are divided into 40 panels on which scenes of the Old and New Testament and of the Mauritius legend are represented. On the arch of the choir are paintings of Christ's disciples and other saints.

In another part of the church remains of old frescoes could be traced, but unfortunately time and weather have wrought such destruction as to make restoration quite impossible.

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