

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: - (1932)
Heft: 532

Artikel: News from the colony : L'Escalade de la colonie genevoise de Londres
Autor: H.A.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-686191>

Nutzungsbedingungen

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

Conditions d'utilisation

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

Terms of use

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

Download PDF: 13.08.2025

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

get an entirely wrong idea of most of the important events which, after all, are the very events which affect our daily life and are likely to affect our future.

At this Season of Goodwill, it is up to us, I think, to make an effort to think straight, to banish all thoughts of hatred, of prejudice, of ill-feeling for past wrongs and to look forward to a time when we shall all be brethren of one great human family.

As in the past, when the Continent was subdivided into a very great number of little states, little so-called free towns and republics and when each of them had its own little army, its own customs barriers, its own ambassadors even, and when, as a result of this subdivision and absurdum they fought each other like tigers until they were all ruined, so to-day, when distances have been shortened tremendously and it takes less time to get from Sidney Australia to London than it took in the Middle Ages to travel from Zurich to Hamburg, we find that the World is cut up in a tremendous number of small nations, Kingdoms, Republics, Free States, etc., all with their own army, etc. see above!

We are very near the same end which befell those little States in the Middle Ages. We are very nearly on the point of falling into the bottomless pit out of which no Gold-Standard and no League of Nations would save us.

Is it hoping too much that the Nations of the Earth shall see the danger, ere it's too late and that they shall act in harmony, ere their disunion cripple them beyond repair, beyond hope?

Is it not time that the harrower form of Nationalism, such as exists in England, France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, etc., shall be modified? Are we not *Europeans* and *Human Beings*? Why should we Swiss, for instance, think that we are better than any others? If, in some respect we are better, is it not because we had better opportunities than others, or, perhaps, because we underwent our schooling centuries earlier than others? Should we not, therefore, *Help* others, rather than sit on the laurels won for us by our Ancestors. Should it not be Switzerland's foremost task to *Lead*, morally? And yet, what do they prate about at our Federal Festivals? The song of the Fathers, of William Tell, Winkelried and others, but not the Song of Future, when the Sons of the present-day Fathers shall be proud to be not only Swiss, but Europeans. Switzerland's Neutrality and Sovereignty must be modified sooner or later if the world is to progress. Why not le beau geste now? Why not risk it?

When I was at school, we were told that old Latin tag according to which it is glorious to die for one's country.

It is, of course, much sweeter, to Live for it, but if there is anything at all in the idea that when a country is attacked it behoves its men to defend it, surely then it would be much better to risk a *Death* by trying to show the world a lofty leadership in progress, Disarmament, for instance, than to wait until the chaotic conditions into which we are drifting make it necessary for us or our children to perish by the sword and by the fire!

I believe Switzerland could light a beacon of hope in declaring for Disarmament on a vast scale, on a scale that would be unequivocal to all, and acting on such a declaration, whether others would follow at once or not.

The present-day jealousy of the armed Nations surrounding Switzerland would anyhow prevent any of them seizing us at once.

And what, if they did, what if our Country became the battle-ground for foreign armies, as it was before?

If the World is really morally bankrupt, then, to my mind, it would be much better to bring matters to an issue at once.

There is no hope in procrastination, in shirking vital issues, in shutting one's eye to the so obvious and inevitable dangers that await us, unless *We Disarm*.

If there is any sound reasoning in my thoughts, as given above, then it follows that Gymnastics and Sports must take the place of military training of Switzerland's youth. Discipline must be taught, because a young man not having learnt discipline is like a rudderless ship in a storm. But the army is not necessary to achieve this. The army is an obsolete weapon, the weapon of the frightened, the weapon of defence and attack, and, unless it is used for police duties only and limited in size and equipment for that duty, it is an anachronism and a real danger to Peace. We must get rid of the idea that we feel pride in our army. I know we do. I do, but, we must steel ourselves to change our feelings and our views, otherwise, we shall never be good citizens of the greater unit, whatever that may be. Let's be proud, as the Londoner is proud, of our *Police*, but let's abolish the *Army*, i.e., change it to a Police force pure and simple.

Let no one think that I am not proud of our Army. But then, I am proud of some pranks I played at school!

Goodwill Among Men of all Nations is being preached all over the world during these few days

of Christmas and New-Year, but, at heart we pay lip-service only to the noble sentiment first spoken by the Christian Saviour.

I remember the day when War was declared by England. In 1914. An English friend of mine and I were walking down Victoria Street that evening when we were accosted by a young German who was hurrying to the Station to see whether he could still get away. He told us, with tears in his eyes, that he had lived here for years, that he had no wish at all to do any harm to England or the English, but that he was hurrying home to Germany, because war had been declared and because, therefore, *He Had to Join Up*.

No doubt, later on, under the influence of sufficient doses of war-lies he developed sufficient war-psychology to be able to shoot, bayonet or otherwise kill, burn or poison-gas a few or as many as he could, of his former pals. *That Is War*. But, that man, if he killed a great number of his former pals, was not a criminal murderer, oh no, he was a hero. *That Is Insanity*.

If all men of all nations, in that fateful August 1914 had refused to go to war, *That would have been Goodwill towards Mankind*.

They would have been put into prison and branded as criminal or idiotic lunatics, or as cowards.

My dear Readers, you may be surprised at my article at this time of the year. But, let me tell you this, as a parting shot:

Be Honest with Yourself, Think it out, Don't Repeat Simply What Others Say or What You Read, But THINK for Yourself.

The process is very inconvenient, it leads you to very unorthodox thoughts, you may go wrong and err, but believe me, it is much better to think for yourself and err in the process than not to think at all. And it will only be by people thinking really hard and pondering over the result of present-day Nationalism, etc., that we shall get a *Universal Free Opinion Breathing Goodwill Among Men*.

PENNY-WISE AND £ FOOLISH!

This is the conclusion at which every good Swiss, having the international welfare in mind, must have arrived when becoming aware of the fact that the Swiss National Council by 74 votes to 45 decided to cut down the credit for the Swiss Delegation to the Disarmament Conference next year, whilst on the other hand preparations on a lavish scale have been undertaken at Geneva for this conference, as announced by the Swiss Observer of December 15th.

Such a decision is incomprehensible if one considers that millions of Francs will come to Switzerland directly and indirectly through the Disarmament and International Conferences, and that the grant in question is destined for the most noble cause, that of promoting and securing international peace and welfare.

It is obvious that the Swiss credit reduction for the disarmament is not giving a good example to the other countries. Should not just Switzerland that was spared from the war and its disastrous consequences show other nations her gratitude and her great interest in the Disarmament Problem by supporting same magnanimously?

Such an act on the part of Switzerland would mean a blessing and a divine service not only to herself but to the whole civilisation.

It is therefore most regrettable that our National Councils with the right spirit in the Disarmament question are in minority.

Christian Kunzle,
Birmingham, England.

NEWS FROM THE COLONY.

L'ESCALADE DE LA COLONIE GENEVOISE DE LONDRES.

Notre petite colonie s'est réunie le 11 décembre au Restaurant tessinois Paganini, sous la présidence de Monsieur Raoul de Cintra. Etaient présents 23 membres, parmi lesquels l'on remarquait, outre le président, le pasteur de l'Eglise suisse M. R. Hoffmann-de Visme, M. C. Campart, H. Charnaux, E. Cottier, le Dr. Ferrière, Fred Gampier, L. Haussauer, P. Oltramare, P. Savio, Messieurs L. and A. V. Flægel père et fils, les doyens et benjamin respectifs de la réunion, et d'autres figures bien connues.

Ce fut une soirée très réussie, qui fit revivre au cœur de chacun l'un des épisodes les plus glorieux et les plus romantiques de l'Histoire de Genève, si riche en événements qui ont en leur répercussion bien au delà de ses murs.

Une surprise agréable attendait les convives, sous la forme d'une Chronique arrangée par Monsieur Campart, des dîners d'Escalade des Genevois de Londres et de leurs amis, depuis leur institution en 1914; c'est un manuscrit des plus intéressants, accompagné de documents dont la valeur rétrospective ne manquera pas d'augmenter

avec les années, chaque participant signant la page spéciale dédiée à cette gentille réunion annuelle.

Le toast habituel à la santé de Genève fut proposé par Monsieur de Cintra et cordialement offert par l'assistance. La solennité de l'occasion fut marquée par la lecture, de Monsieur Hoffmann-de Visme, du Rôle Officiel des victimes de l'Escalade, puis, en un mouvement d'une énergie appropriée et en s'exclamant: "Ainsi péra tout ennemi de la Patrie!" Monsieur de Cintra défonça d'un couteau (probablement faute de poignard) la magnifique Marmite d'Escalade qui décorait la table.

Monsieur Hoffmann-de Visme eut également l'obligeance de lire un extrait d'un choix heureux du livre de Blaise, cette oeuvre toujours si fraîche, qui ne manque jamais de ramener les souvenirs de tout Genevois à ses bancs d'école. D'autres communications, d'un intérêt historique, furent faites par Monsieur H. Charnaux, qui s'intéresse tout particulièrement à ce qui, dans les débris du passé de Londres, pourrait avoir trait à l'Histoire de Genève.

Comme de coutume, le fameux "carnet noir" circula; ce Noël prochain il fera de nouveau des heureux, à témoin les 350 et quelques enfants de la grande colonie suisse qui l'an dernier, bénéficièrent de ses largesses.

Avant de se séparer, le président adressa des remerciements à Messieurs Meschini et son bras droit W. Notari, qui avaient si bien préparé table et menu, et contribué au contentement des "escaladeurs"; n'oublions point notre jeune major de table M. George Dimier qui lui aussi, y mit entrain et gaieté, et occasionna quelques délicieux bourdonnements de M. Piaget.

Puisse cette belle tradition de la réunion d'Escalade, être maintenue longtemps encore parmi les quelques Genevois exilés par les circonstances dans la grande capitale britannique et ses environs; même les brouillards les plus épais, ne sauraient refroidir dans leurs coeurs la place chaude qu'ils y gardent pour leur chère ville natale ou celle de leurs années de jeunesse.

H.A.

OLD FOLKS CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON AT THE FOYER SUISSE.

Not very long ago, I had the pleasure to spend an evening amongst the younger and coming generation of the Colony; I speak of the Students dinner of the Swiss Mercantile Society College. There I was surrounded by youth, by an unbounding spirit of optimism; God's wide world lay before them, the future belonged to them, life with its bitter experiences had not yet succeeded in putting a damper on their youthful aspirations, many of them still looked at the world through rose coloured glasses. Hardly did I expect then, that soon after, I should be a guest at a function quite different from the one just mentioned.

The House Committee of the Foyer Suisse once again gave their customary Luncheon to the old Folks of the Colony at 15, Upper Bedford Place, W.C. on Monday, December 21st. Here was a gathering of some 50 venerable Ladies and Gentlemen, most of them at the eventide of their worldly pilgrimage. They have all experienced life in its fullness and gladness, as well as in its harshness and disappointments. Many of those who sat round those nicely decorated tables could relate tales of bitter experiences, of incessant, hard and untiring work, of hardship, but also of success and happiness; some have made careers some have climbed to the top of the ladder, some have not reached those exalted heights, but have rested half way, but all of them, I am sure have struggled to overcome the many adversities of which life is so full, and to all of them I hope a kind providence will sweeten their remaining days amongst us.

To be quite candid, I must admit that I felt rather uncomfortable at first, I somehow had an idea as if I was trespassing, I imagined that all those old Ladies and Gentlemen asked themselves what on earth this "baby" has come here for; and the first time in my life I was proud of the few white hairs which I possess and which I so often try to hide; still my embarrassment soon wore off, when I looked in their kind faces and saw their happy smiles, after all what do years matter, do we not all hail from the same country and are we not members of the same great family?

The Luncheon started shortly before 2 o'clock, and about fifty people sat down to a most delicious meal, which Mr. Meyer put before them; not only was the food exquisite but the service too was most efficient, and the staff of the Foyer Suisse could compete anywhere successfully, where politeness and attention are still considered to be a virtue.

The Hall was artistically decorated, even a picture depicting the snow clad mountain tops was put up for the occasion, and I feel sure this unpretending painting has brought back to many present, glorious times of happy days spent in that land; which although far away, is ever present in their memories.