

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: - (1933)
Heft: 635

Rubrik: Swiss Mercantile Society

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: 14.12.2025

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

The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. F. BOEHRINGER.

The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain.

EDITED WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF MEMBERS OF THE LONDON COLONY.

Published every Friday at 23, LEONARD STREET, LONDON, E.C.2.

Telegrams: FREPRINCO. LONDON.

Telephone: CLERKENWELL 9595

VOL. 13—No. 635

LONDON, DECEMBER 23, 1933.

PRICE 3d.

A Merry Christmas to all our Readers



HOME NEWS

FEDERAL.

NEW PRESIDENT OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION.

The two Chambers sitting as one body, elected on Thursday, the 14th, the new President and Vice-President of the Swiss Confederation.

Dr. Marcel Pilet-Golaz was elected President of the Confederation for the year 1934. The new President is, for many years, the youngest Swiss citizen to occupy this distinguished position, as he will celebrate his 44th birthday anniversary on New Year's Eve.

M. Pilet entered the Government in December 1928 in succession to M. Chuard, who resigned from his post. He then took over the Home Office Dept. until a vacancy occurred at the Federal Post and Railway Dept. through the departure of M. Haab, when he took over this Department.

M. Pilet hails from the canton of Vaud, he entered the Grand Council of his canton in 1921, where his brilliant qualities made him at once one of the most influential members of this body.

Four years later he was sent to Parliament (National Council).

The new President is one of the most brilliant politicians in our home country, and we join the whole Swiss Press in congratulating him on having been elected to this high and responsible office.

THE NEW VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION.

The Chambers have elected M. Rudolf Minger, Vice-President of the Confederation; he entered the Government in 1929 as successor to the late M. Scheurer. Like his predecessor, M. Minger is a Bernese; and he was the first farmer who entered the Federal Council. He is 52 years of age. Until the year 1918 he was quite an unknown personality in politics; he occupied himself in administering the large farm at Schüpfen, which was left to him by his father.

In 1918 he founded the Farmer's Party of which he was the 1st President. In 1917 he entered Parliament (National Council) and 10 years later he was made a member of the Government, where the Federal Military Department was assigned to him. In the Army he reached the rank of a Colonel.

SAVOY FREE ZONES.

Negotiations between France and Switzerland for establishing a new régime in the Free Zones of the Pays de Gex and Upper Savoy have now been brought to a conclusion. As the discussions at Territet during October and November failed to produce agreement on a number of points, the questions in dispute were referred to the arbitration of Sir John Baldwin, M. Unden (Sweden), and Señor Lopez Olivan (Spain). A permanent arrangement has been made by which free entry into Switzerland is accorded to the agricultural products of the Free Zones, the term being interpreted for the present to mean dairy produce, cattle, and wine. With regard to industrial products a list of quotas is to be issued. A permanent Franco-Swiss Commission will be appointed to deal with any differences which may arise from the working of the new arrangement.

The decision of the arbiters on the economic régime of the Free Zones in Savoy and the Pays de Gex, which adjoin the territory of the Canton of Geneva, was published on the 15th inst., and it is evident that the new arrangement satisfies both the Canton of Geneva and the population of the Free Zones, as it again permits free trading between the two areas. Some agricultural products from the Free Zones will be freely imported into Switzerland provided that they are brought to market in Geneva by the peasants themselves. A number of agricultural and industrial products will be imported without duty from the Free Zones, but subject to yearly quotas.

This new arrangement will come into force on January 1st, 1934, when the French frontier posts, which were advanced to the political boundary in 1923, will be withdrawn to that of the Free Zones as specified by the Treaty of Vienna in 1815. Thus comes to an end a dispute which has lasted since the end of the War and had at times affected friendly relations between France and Switzerland. The Hague Court had acknowledged the right of Switzerland to insist on maintaining the Free Zones, but the remaining economic questions were left to settlement between the parties.

£295,000 FINES FOR SMUGGLERS.

A vast conspiracy to defraud the Swiss Customs authorities resulted in the imposition of enormous fines by the Swiss Federal courts. The total of the fines was nearly five million francs (£295,000), and the principal offenders, who had incidentally fled from Geneva, were sentenced to six months imprisonment each.

The conspiracy was discovered by chance, when a railway van, specially made for carrying wine, was damaged in a railway accident at Fiume.

Italian railway officials discovered that instead of the red wines supposed to be in the tank, crude alcohol was flowing from the damaged container. In the investigations which naturally followed it was found that inside the main tank was a smaller container filled with pure alcohol.

Warned in advance that official action was to be taken, the two principal persons accused fled the country. In their absence they were fined £135,000 each, as well as the sentences of imprisonment already mentioned. Three persons who had been used in the conspiracy by the principals and had remained in Geneva, were sentenced to fines totalling £25,000. The convicted persons were well-known wine merchants.

SWISS ROADS PUSH.

The Swiss National Tourist Office announce a big push is to be made to widen and improve and extend the roads in the Swiss Alps with a view to making the climbs easy and safe for all road users. This is good news to anyone who delights to tour in Switzerland. The rather pronounced anti-motoring attitude of some of the Cantons, which was marked a few years ago, seems completely to have evaporated.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

The shareholders of the Banque Fédérale (Eidgenössische Bank) have at an extra-ordinary General Meeting, which took place on the 14th, decided to reduce the share-capital from 100 million to 75 million francs. The reduction is to be effected by the purchase and cancellation of shares; which have already been bought in the open market, so that there is no question of any loss. The reduction is being made because a general shrinkage of banking business has rendered a part of the capital superfluous. (The "Basler Handelsbank" and the "Schweizerische Bankgesellschaft" have also reduced their share capital owing to the same reason.)

LAUSANNE.

M. Theodor Weiss, Federal Judge has celebrated his 25th anniversary of being a member of the Federal Tribunal. M. Weiss was born in 1868 at Zurich, he entered the Federal Tribunal in 1908 over which he presided in 1925.

BERNE.

Dr. Meyer, Manager of the Swiss Bank Corporation Zurich, has been appointed General Manager of the Banque Populaire Suisse (Schweiz. Volksbank). General Manager Hirs will remain at his post. General Managers Steiger and Stadlin are leaving the institution.

Mlle. Nelly Schulthess, daughter of M. E. Schulthess, President of the Swiss Confederation, was married last week to M. Vasco de Quevedo Pessanha, son of a former Portuguese Ambassador.

COLLEGE OF THE SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY LTD.

STUDENTS' CHRISTMAS DINNER AND BALL.

Some people, in order to feel young again, are injecting monkey glands into their withering bodies, others are reverting to beauty specialists and having their faces shifted and lifted, if not to feel, at least, to look younger. — A much cheaper and equally efficient cure for rejuvenescence seemed to me to attend the Students' Dinner and Ball of the S.M.S. College, which took place at the Prince's Galleries, Piccadilly, W., on Friday, December 15th. There was glorious youth in unlimited abundance, nearly two hundred young Ladies and Gentlemen adorned the nicely decorated tables. But, there was really no need to have any floral decorations at all, the happy, smiling faces, the sparkling eyes and sunny smiles of the maidens created a picture which not the most beautiful flowers could have equalled. The spirit of youth and adventure even affected an old stager like me, and back wandered my thoughts to those days when I was a Student too, back to those carefree happy times, when the world looked good and the future rosy. —

Almost punctual to the hour, the company sat down to dinner, to a fare, which was not only good but wholesome.

I had just tackled a delicious Pêche Melba, when a terrific bang nearly brought on a choking fit. I had a suspicion who was the instigator of this noise, and I was right; with a voice, as if he was going to summon the sinners to their last judgment, Mr. J. J. Schneider, the vivacious Secretary of the S.M.S. Society, informed the revellers, that the Chairman wishes to "take wine" with all the Ladies. That was not all, in quick succession he condemned the poor Chairman to "take wine" with the "Gentlemen present;" with the "Teaching Staff;" the "President of the S.M.S." the "Committee Members," the "Press," etc., etc. I cast an anxious glance at the Chairman, Mr. E. Hardmeier, and I was much relieved when I saw, that he bore the strain with courage and fortitude, ably seconded by his charming Lady, as I expected at any moment, that the popular Chairman would have to be put on a dinner waggon, and wheeled out of the Banqueting Hall. This "drinking bout" of the Chairman, who was thus victimised by the Master of Ceremonies, was at each occasion heralded with a tremendous bang with a mallet on the table, which nearly brought me to the verge of a nervous breakdown. I understand that these ceremonies are the special feature of a certain fraternity, and I have no objection to that, they get used to it, and no doubt in time begin to like it, but I thank Heaven, and the Stars above that this practice has not yet been adopted at other Swiss Banquets and Dinners, as I should at the end of the Season be reduced to a raving maniac. If such be the case, I would leave in my will (the only thing I ever shall be able to leave) instructions, to put the following inscription on my tomb stone:

Here rests ST.
"hammered" to death
by thoughtless friends.

The company too was at frequent intervals asked to "take wine" with someone or other, with the result, that long before the toast to "H. M. the King" and "La Suisse" was proposed my glass and the bottle was empty. Being a guest, I could of course, not order on my own, and all I could do when the Loyal Toast was proposed was to carry an empty glass to my mouth and swallow the air it contained, no, it just had some sediment at the bottom, which enabled me to honour the toast to my beloved country, but I never before toasted it with such discomfort. —

Shortly before the coffee was served, Mr. Hardmeier, Chairman of the Education Committee, amongst great applause rose and addressed the gathering as follows:

Once again I have the privilege and the pleasure of welcoming you to our Students' Banquet and Ball, which is an annual feature of our College Activities. I do hope that all of you will have a merry time and that you will carry away with you happy memories of this gathering.

One object of this soirée is to enable you Students to meet not only our Teaching and Administrative Staffs, whom — after all — you see practically every day, but also those of the Members of the Swiss Mercantile Society who are directly entrusted with the management of our College. Another object is to compensate to a certain extent those of you who will not return to Switzerland before 1934 and who will, therefore, miss the Xmas and New Year festivities, to which they have been accustomed at home.

However, I do not intend to make a lengthy address on this subject. I am fully aware that most of you came here not so much because you wanted to listen to speeches, but rather because you wish to dance. I shall, therefore, get on at once with my task, which is; to express to you my sincerest thanks for the invitation you have so kindly extended to my wife and myself, as well as to the other guests, whom I shall now have the pleasure of introducing to you.

First and foremost I wish to welcome my neighbour and guest of honour *Dr. Ruefenacht*. *Dr. Ruefenacht* is First Secretary of Legation and Commercial Attaché and as such — and being also a member of our Society — he takes a keen interest in the activities and progress of our College. He is always willing to give us the benefit of his valued advice, for which I wish to thank him most heartily.

Then we have the honour to have with us *Mr. Steinmann*, who has quite recently been elected President of our Society after having been Honorary Secretary for a long period. *Mr. Steinmann* is not yet married — fortunately for us and unfortunately for him — and he will, therefore, be able to use his spare time and devote the whole of his affections to the interests of the S.M.S. I have no doubt that he will prove to be an able Captain of our ship.

Next I wish to welcome our honorary member and Vice-Chairman of the Council *Mr. Stahelin*, who had been Chairman of the Education Committee and President of our Society for a long number of years.

With his name I would like to couple that of our honorary member *Mr. Paschoud*, who has held the same offices as *Mr. Stahelin* and with whom he worked hand in hand, to the great benefit of our Society. It is due to the energy, ability and foresight of these two Gentlemen that our College has reached its high standard. *Mr. Paschoud* has come over from Paris for this occasion.

No doubt, most of you Students are not aware that our financial interests and obligations are watched over by a Board of Trustees, in order to prevent the Education Committee from exceeding its bounds. One of these Trustees, our honorary member and former President *Mr. De Brunner*, was to be one of your guests to-night, but he — I regret to say — has found it impossible to come.

The proper running of a College like ours depends to a large extent on the provision of comfortable class- and restrooms, adequate heating and lighting, etc. For all that has been done in this direction we have to thank our honorary member and Vice-President *Mr. Boos*, who is Chairman of the House Committee. If I am not mistaken, it was the House Committee which introduced the supply of Cigarettes for the Male Students and Chocolates for the young Ladies — or vice-versa — but so far they have forgotten two interesting items — and which, I hope, they will continue to overlook — namely powder for the Gentlemen and lipstick for the Ladies! Or vice-versa!!

Mr. Boos is ably seconded by *Mrs. Lunghi-Rezzonico*, to whom the young Ladies in particular are indebted for all the comforts that have been provided for them. I am sorry that *Mrs. Lunghi* has also been prevented from being with us to-night.

On the other hand we have the pleasure to have with us a Gentleman whose presence — though welcome to you to-night — is apt to make you shake in your shoes when it comes to the Diploma examinations. I am referring to our official examiner, *Mr. Weaver*, on whose decision — apart from your ability — depends the number of distinctions with which, or without which, your Diplomas may be decorated.

Another Gentleman whom we are glad to have with us is *Mr. White*, our chief invigilator at the Institute of Commerce examinations. His friendly expression does not instill any fear in your hearts, especially as you know that he is not sitting in judgment over you.

I take this opportunity to express to these two Gentlemen the Education Committee's best thanks for their valued services.

Then I would welcome our ever popular Principal, *Mr. Levy* with his staff of able and untiring Lecturers, who take a sheer delight in cramming your heads with idioms and commercial terms!

I am particularly glad — and so are you, I'm sure — to see again amongst us the smiling and happy face of our Vice-Principal *Mr. Burraston*. *Mr. Burraston* quite recently had to undergo a very serious operation and we are glad that he got over it so well, and wish him a speedy return to normal health and strength, to enable him to resume his duties as soon as he is quite fit again.

Then I wish to greet our "venerable" Secretary, of "Argus" fame, *Mr. Schneider*, and his devoted staff, who are so painstaking in the execution of their duties that they relieve you of most of your cash before you have even had time to arrive in London!

An important function like ours naturally merits to be reported in the Press and that is why we have the pleasure of having with us *Dr. Egli* of the "Bund," *Dr. Kessler* of the "N.Z.Z." and our honorary member and former President, *Mr. Stauffer*, of the "Swiss Observer." These three papers, together with our "College Magazine" are the four most important journals of the world, at any rate as far as we are concerned!

Modesty dictates that I shall introduce to you last, not least, my friends and collaborators on the Education Committee, namely the Vice-Chairman *Mr. Meier*, *Mr. Streit*, *Mr. Baumann* and *Mr. Weist*, whereas the remaining member *Mr. Attinger* has been prevented from being with us. I take this opportunity to thank my Committee Members for the unstinted help they have always given me during my two years of office.

The applause had hardly died away, when *Monsieur Ruefenacht*, who received a hearty ovation said:

It is the custom of public speakers nowadays to refer in their speeches to the world crisis and to the difficult times we are experiencing at present. I do not in the least wish to minimize the importance and the gravity of the world situation to-day nor of the remarks referring thereto, but I feel that this evening I should be allowed to dispense with these rather weighty subjects; after all, this is not one of those very formal and austere public banquets where the affairs of the world are properly discussed, but it is, as the programme says, a Students' Banquet and Ball, therefore an assembly of youth and, I may gallantly add, beauty in all its varieties.

I am grateful to you for having invited me again to your Annual Christmas Dinner which it is always a special pleasure to attend. As a matter of fact, this is already the third

time that I am present at this function and every year I see new and different faces around me, but every year there is the same spirit of cordiality and gaiety which always adds its special charm to the gathering.

On the other side, this appearing of new faces every year makes me realise that, while we stay on and should, therefore, have plenty of time to get to know this great and wonderful city of London, your time here is limited so that you have to make the very best of it.

I am not going to give you any hints as to how to employ your time. I think that everyone of you must decide that for himself. But I just wish to say a few words about the splendid help you get from your College in this respect.

As you all know, the best way to get acquainted with a foreign country and its inhabitants is by the knowledge of their language, which alone allows us really to penetrate another country. I need not stress the invaluable services your teachers are performing in teaching you the English language, which it is always difficult for a foreigner to master perfectly. I do not believe that anywhere else you could find such an understanding of the Swiss pupils' special difficulties, and I am very pleased to hear that in the examinations you all do awfully well. This is as much to the credit of *Mr. Levy* and his assistants as to your own.


The College is not satisfied with procuring the higher learning, but it also sees that the broader interests are equally well taken care of. As two of the most outstanding examples I should like to mention the regular excursions which are so successfully arranged and carried through by the Principal and his devoted Staff, the accounts of which I always read with great interest. On the other hand, I would not permit myself to forget the splendid services afforded you by the "S.M.S. Student" which, not so long ago, appeared in a new form. I am very glad to see that the editor in chief, *Mr. Burraston*, is with us to-night, and I hope that he will soon completely recover from his very serious illness which we all deeply regretted.

I raise my glass to the Swiss Mercantile Society, the Principal and Staff and to the Students of the College!

On resuming his seat the sympathetic Commercial Attaché of the Legation was greatly cheered.

A special treat was the rendering of the famous S.M.S. College Song, which was written by *Miss Benzie* and set to music by *Mr. Burraston*, Vice-Principal of the College, it is a very alluring tune and was sung with great fervour.

The Toast to the "Swiss Mercantile Society" was entrusted to *M. W. Glauser*, a student of the College, and a wish to congratulate him on his fine speech, which was both in substance and rendering excellent, considering that his stay in London does not exceed 5 months, here it is:



Swiss Hotel

AND

Restaurant

53, OLD COMPTON STREET
W.I.

Telephone
Gerrard 4445

Table d'Hôte 2/- and à la Carte
Weddings and Dinner Parties
catered for at shortest notice

Wines, Beers and Spirits
of best quality
Bedrooms from 6s. 6d.
(including Breakfast)
Excellent Cuisine

I minute from Piccadilly Circus or Leicester Square

Wishing all our Patrons
a Happy New Year

Mr. & Mrs. A. Wyss, (Propr.)

A speech short though it may be is always a difficult task, especially for a young man somewhat nervous. But, however, I am glad to have this evening the honour of transmitting, in the name of all the Students, their heartfelt thanks to the members of the Swiss Mercantile Society which is the London Section of the S.K.V.

Not a few people owe to the evening classes held in Switzerland both a better education and a brighter position in the commercial world than would have been possible without the assistance of such classes.

The S.K.V. is an institution almost unique in the world. Wherever our Swiss countrymen go, they are at liberty to form Sections and so keep in touch with the Homeland. Thus the Swiss spirit and Swiss traditions are kept alive, no matter where the Swiss may be.

Like the parent society in Switzerland, the members of the Swiss Mercantile Society have devoted much time and money for granting educational facilities for their compatriots in London. Several members of my family have retold on many occasions how, when they were in London, they learned English at the evening classes of the S.M.S. There was no day school.

As years went by, and may I say rolled by, members of the Committee of the S.M.S. suggested the formation of a College or Day classes for those Swiss who came to England solely for learning English. As far as we Students are concerned we know very little of the activities of the London Section of the S.K.V. apart from their educational work and we, young Swiss, who have taken or are taking advantage of receiving tuition at Swiss House owe a deep debt of gratitude to the S.M.S. for all they do for their young compatriots.

I am sure, I am expressing the views of my fellow students in saying, that there is no other school in existence which can be compared with ours. Our building may not be of the best, but our teachers and our Principal are without doubt the best.

Let me assure the Committees of the S.M.S. that their efforts on our behalf, though their work is one away from us, are greatly appreciated and we thank them from the bottom of our hearts.

Every year hundreds of young Swiss enjoy the benefit of the college of the S.M.S. Whilst in London we are given the opportunity of visiting many places of interest which we would not otherwise have been able to visit by ourselves. Our stay at the College has been not only to our material advantage, but also to the betterment of our general outlook which must in the course of time be to our interests.

May I be permitted to suggest to my fellow-Students that for the interests of the College, and for the benefit of our friends, we shall always recommend the school founded by the Swiss Mercantile Society — The London Section of the S.K.V.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have the pleasure and honour of giving you the toast of the Swiss Mercantile Society, and ask you to rise and drink to the health of the Swiss Mercantile Society, coupling with it the name of Mr. Steinmann, the President of the S.M.S.

Mr. Steinmann, the President of the Society, replied to the last speaker, saying:

I rise with great pleasure to reply to the toast of the S.M.S. so ably proposed by Mr. Glauser, and to thank you all most sincerely for the cordial way in which you have supported it.

I also wish to thank you for the kind invitation extended to the members of the Education Committee and several members of the Council and House Committee. We are indeed honoured to be amongst you to-night.

The honour of being President of the Society has been mine for only a few months, and this is the first occasion I have had of coming into actual contact with you students, although the atmosphere is not completely foreign to me as I am one of the young "Old Boys" of eleven years ago.

I can assure you, that the sincere appreciation and the good will expressed by your Spokesman is a welcome encouragement to the members of the various committees and the Council, who, I can assure you, already spare no efforts to play their part in making this College of ours worthy of its traditional good name enjoyed not only here, but in the Homeland. I may say that Mr. Hardmeier as Chairman of the Education Committee, is, as he always has been, a very hard working servant of the College.

I take this opportunity of emphasising that without the substantial help, both financially and morally, of patriotic and disinterested persons since the inception of our Society, we could not have stood where we now stand, and I therefore ask you to join in with me in ex-

pressing our very warm thanks to those numerous unnamed benefactors. We are also indebted to the Federal Authorities for their generous financial help, and to the Swiss Legation for its moral support as a result of which we are enabled to retain an efficient teaching staff, and to make the curriculum as attractive and useful as possible, while keeping the school fee at a reasonable figure.

I am sure that everyone of you on returning to Switzerland will feel completely justified in recommending our College to others and I urge you on behalf of the Society to do so. It naturally follows that you will continue to be part of the College, by joining the nearest Section of the S.K.V. which can give you still further assistance in your future careers.

There is no need for me to tell you that conditions everywhere are not as bright as we should wish. It is my sincere hope, however, that the clouds will break in the very near future, and that, in the better times that we all desire you all will play no small part, as a result of the excellent training you have received as Students of the College.

This speaker was also rewarded with applause for his excellent address.

That Mr. A. C. Stähelin, Vice-Chairman of the Council, is perhaps the most popular member of the S.M.S. was proved by the almost riotous applause which greeted him, when he was called upon to propose the Toast to the "College and the Teaching Staff."

Born orator as he is, he urged the students in moving words, to make the best use of their stay at the College, "it is for your own good and the good of your future." He pointed out that the College of the S.M.S. has a most efficient teaching staff, willing to assist the students in every direction, and to prepare them thoroughly for their future career. Mr. Stähelin also paid a great tribute to the Office Staff so ably headed by the Secretary, Mr. J. J. Schneider. He concluded his oration with an appeal to present and former students to make propaganda for the College.

Long applause greeted Mr. Stähelin's words, a sure proof that his work in the past and in the present is appreciated.

Mr. Portmann, another student of the College, on behalf of his colleagues, asked Mr. A. Levy, to accept, as a mark of the high esteem in which he is held, as Principal of the School, a gift of robes in commemoration of the recent honour bestowed on him by the Institute of Commerce, in conferring on him its highest degree, that of Fellow of the Institute. The robes were handed over to Mr. Levy by the Vice-Principal, Mr. Burraston amongst thunderous applause.

Mr. Levy thanked the students for their present which he highly appreciated. He made a spirited appeal for co-operation, and encouraged them besides studying hard, not to neglect their physical welfare and to indulge in sport and physical exercise; he said that S.M.S. does not only stand for "Swiss Matrimonial Society," or "Santé, Meditation, Succès," but also for "Studiere Mit Sport."

Judging from the hearty applause which was so spontaneously given, Mr. Levy must be a great favourite with the students. This was the last speech, and the company was asked to adjourn to one of the adjoining halls, where a most enjoyable "Schnitzelbank" was sung by one of the students. The pictures were very cleverly executed, although to be quite frank, I preferred some hanging on the wall.

Then suddenly the orchestra started a lively dance tune, and all and sundry started to swing around.

A Polonaise, headed by M. Schneider was a most enjoyable affair, all the more as the couples had to pass underneath a large bunch of mistletoe, with the obvious result of receiving or giving a kiss. Now some were very shy, some only just a little so, and others seemed to enjoy it, judging from their unwillingness to move on, and give the other fellow a chance. I won't say, to which category I belonged, for the good reason, that my partner in life who was not present, still reads the Swiss Observer.—

It was a fine evening and I feel sure, the memory of it will remain with all those present for a long time. ST.

EDITOR'S POSTBAG.

17th, December, 1933.

Dear Stauffer,

When I promised you to review "*Dieu Sait Pourquoi*" — Letters written by the late Mrs. Suzanne Hoffmann-de Visme during her illness to her husband, the Rev. R. Hoffmann-de Visme, I undertook a task which is beyond me.

Most of us treat Religion very much like we treat other things, which are of daily occurrence during our earthly life. We take breakfast, without thinking much about it. We work for a living, we play for our amusement and in order to keep fit, we laugh and weep, grow up, marry and grow old again, but, as long as our health is fairly good, as long as no severe interruptions threaten our daily routine, as long as we feel fairly comfortable and safe, we do not bother much about Religion, beyond attending to its outer manifestations, such as going to Church, insisting on having the Church's blessings on our more important events, such as weddings christenings, etc.

In other words, Religion is one of the many things which combine to make our so-called civilized existence what it is. We have our clergymen, our priests, we have our churches, our charitable institutions, we celebrate our religious and semi-religious festivals and, some of us, we even read the Bible sometimes, or listen to a religious lecture, either in Church, or, more comfortably now, at home, tuning in our wireless set.

And, our cemeteries testify to the glorious lives we lead, on the whole. The inscriptions on the head-stones prove what good and excellent fathers and mothers, sons and daughters we all were and presumably still are.

We are apt to suspect those who exhibit their religious fervour. We do not like demonstrative religion, except from those whom we pay to so demonstrate.

We feel serenely confident that, as far as Religion is concerned, we are on a very much higher plane than the heathens and pagans.

And now comes this *Voice from Beyond*.

Remember, these letters were not written for publication. They are the equivalent of the daily talk between husband and wife, who, loving each other, fortify each other by an exchange of thoughts, by spiritual help, freely given and as freely taken.

Remember the two, deeply attached to each other and to their six children, have been ideally happy comrades for 21 years, before this dread illness attacked the wife and necessitated her spending most of the two last years of her life in Switzerland, there to fight for her life, successfully above all expectations at first, and there too to discover in her innermost soul that strength which enabled her to write

"Prends courage et regardons en-haut, avec larmes peut-être, mais en-haut!" (page 30).

"Avec larmes peut-être!" My vocabulary is utterly inadequate to convey my feelings when readings these "cris de coeur" and reading, as I read on and on, how her faith in God keeping her in His care grew and grew and became an absolute unshakable certainty.

Mrs. Hoffmann-de Visme would not have been human, had her faith not faltered at times, or rather had she not hoped that she might be spared the bitter cup. In turn these pages reveal how she suffered from "Heimweh" after her husband, after her children and after her work in London.

"Nous sommes entrées chez Nyfenegger prendre une tasse de thé. Hélas, à la table à côté de la nôtre, se trouvaient avec papa et maman, deux petits bonshommes, de cinq à six ans environ, et cela m'a donné du noir." (page 42).

or again

"Oh! oui, les vagues s'agitent pour pas grand-chose: "un petit jersey bleu comme en porte Guy, vu dans une devanture de magasin, suffit!" Mais le fond est calme." (page 46/7).

Le fond est calme!

As I go on, reading letter after letter, feeling more and more humbled by the courage and fortitude which enabled this woman, physically weak, to give forth such wonderful a testimony of undaunted faith, I have to sit back again and again to re-read some passage in order to extract from it its very essence, often to my pain and anguish, because, the nearer one approaches the truth, the more one gets hurt.

That is it, perhaps. There emanates from these pages an aura of spiritual Truth which hurts. It hurts because I am made so acutely conscious of how far from it I am, myself. These pages, written by a frail gracious lady, suffering untold pains, show me a personality possessed of such strength of Faith, of such wondrously fine character, of such sublime belief in the goodness of God's purpose in all things, that my lack of these things, my indifference, now so terribly revealed by this voice beyond, humble me, shame me.

And yet, thank you, Stauffer, for putting this small book into my hands. Not for anything would I have missed it.



New Year's Eve Ball

UNION HELVETIA CLUB
1 GERRARD PLACE, LONDON, W.1

SUNDAY
Dec. 31, 1933

Special Attractions
Extension till 2 a.m.

Tickets 3/-

A Special New Year Dinner will be served from 6-8 p.m. Price 3/6 (please reserve in advance)

