

Swiss Club Birmingham

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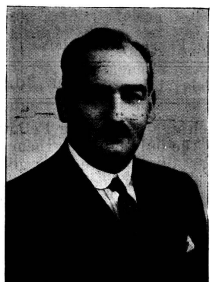
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SWISS CLUB BIRMINGHAM.

GRAND SWISS RALLY.
ANNUAL DINNER AND BALL.



P. BRUN

President
SWISS CLUB
BIRMINGHAM

It has always been a puzzle to me, why the theatrical and musical profession, whenever they stage a new show or bring out a new work, choose one of the provincial towns for its *première*. The only explanation to this phenomenon I can think of, is, that people in the provinces are credited with a more artistic taste, perhaps in many cases a broader and more unbiased outlook at things in general, than we in the Metropolis.

This assumption has been considerably strengthened, since I have attended the Swiss Rally and Annual Dinner and Ball of the Swiss Club Birmingham, which took place last Saturday, at the Grand Hotel in Birmingham.

There we have a small Swiss Society, small in numbers, but large in enthusiasm; we in London do not hear a great deal of them, but once a year they like to remind us that they are in existence, that they are very much alive, and that they have a message for us. This message they convey to us at their Annual Banquet, which this year again was a splendid gathering. The attendance nearly reached the 200 mark, and many were the visitors from outside Birmingham, a sure sign, that the Swiss Club has a reputation of being the bulwark of Swiss thought and Swiss fraternity in the provinces. That, they look at things in a wider way, was confirmed by the many questions the visitors were asked and had to answer, I was, *f.i.*, asked whether I was married, and for how long, and I did not deny it, the dear lady thought I did not look it, for which I shall always harbour a soft corner in my heart for her.

Our Birmingham friends take a keen interest in the doings of the various Swiss Colonies, they are well informed, and their message to their compatriots near and far is, to work unitedly together for the common good of our country, to promote true friend-and-comradship, and to practise charity towards those who have been severely hit through adverse circumstances.—

The reception was held by the Swiss Minister, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, assisted by the President, M. P. Brun, accompanied by his charming wife.

Many familiar faces could be seen, and I was happy to shake hands with such old friends as Mr. and Mrs. Kunzle, Mr. and Mrs. Ellisson, Mr. and Mrs. Reinhart, Mr. and Mrs. Brunner, Mrs. Bassano, Mr. and Mrs. Montag and many others. Mr. Egger, one of the oldest members of the Club was also present.

The reception being over, the company adjourned to the Banqueting Hall, which was nicely decorated with flowers and both the Swiss Flag and the Union Jack. The fare was splendid, but is it to be wondered at, when I mention that the chef of the Grand Hotel is M. Beer, one of the members of the Club; he had no doubt taken a special pride in catering for his compatriots.—

The loyal toasts having been proposed by the Chairman, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, and duly honoured, M. Brun, the popular President of the Swiss Club Birmingham rose, and on behalf of his Society warmly welcomed the Swiss Minister, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, "we fully appreciate the honour bestowed on our Club, by your acceptance to take the chair to-night," he said, amidst acclamation; he also expressed the wish that a kind providence will enable our diplomatic representative to look after the interest of our country for many more years to come. The great applause which greeted these words is a sure sign, how much the services of our Minister are appreciated by his countrymen. M. Brun then said, "I am not going to say much about the Swiss Club Birmingham, which was founded some 35 years ago, our membership is about 35, and we are a happy family, and I am glad to say we have been able to help some of our less fortunate compatriots." The President also extended a hearty welcome to M. E. Montag, Swiss Consul at Liverpool, and to Mrs. Montag, saying that the Birmingham Swiss all look upon him as a father, who is ever ready to help and advise.—

"I can hardly give an accurate expression of my feelings of joy and pleasure," M. Brun

continued, "to see amongst us so many official representatives of our sister Societies in London and in the provinces, we are happy to greet the following Gentlemen:

M. G. Marchand, Vice-Pres. City Swiss Club, London.
M. A. Stahelin, Swiss Mercantile Society, Ltd., London.
M. G. De Brunner, Pres. Swiss Rifle Association, London.
M. W. Beckmann, Nouvelle Société Helvétique, London.
M. Buchi, Union Helvetia Club, London.
M. J. Nussle, Swiss Club (Schweizerbund), London.
M. L. Faivre, Pres. Swiss Club Liverpool.
M. H. Ott, Swiss Club Liverpool.
Dr. J. Schedler, Pres. Swiss Club Manchester.
M. Kubler, Vice-Pres. Swiss Club Manchester.
M. A. Stauffer, Editor, Swiss Observer, London.

The President also welcomed the numerous unofficial visitors from London, Bristol, Sheffield, Liverpool, Manchester, York, Cardiff, Hull, Kenilworth, Coventry, Old Hill.

A special tribute was paid to Mr. C. Kunzle, one of the members of the Swiss Club Birmingham, for his generous efforts to cure poor English children from the ravaging evil of consumption, by putting at their disposal his "Château" at Davos. He said, "Your work, and your services rendered to a suffering humanity, are not only appreciated by the Authorities of this town, but also by every countryman of yours, and to prove that, we are willing to help you in your great work, a few ladies have kindly consented to collect to-night, for the purpose of sending one child to Davos for three months, the Swiss Club Birmingham to act in the capacity of God-father." (The result of the collection was very gratifying, over £20 having been given). In concluding, the President wished everybody a pleasant and enjoyable evening, and on resuming his seat, loud applause greeted the speaker.

Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, Swiss Minister, received a great ovation when he rose to address the company, he said:

One would think that the official representative of a foreign Government in the United Kingdom would have many opportunities of paying calls to a centre such as Birmingham, that city in the midst of the most active area of one of the greatest industrial and producing countries. And yet opportunities for such visits are rare. It is one of the drawbacks of our modern life that there is always so much work, partly useful, often vain, to be done that there is so little time for the many other things which one would like to do.

Indeed, I hesitate to confess that this is not more than my third visit to Birmingham, and these three visits have been spread over more than 30 years.

My first visit was in 1902, if I remember rightly it was in November or December, when, as an attaché to the Swiss Legation at the time, I came down from London to witness one of the great events in the history of this modern city, namely, the opening of the first campaign for the introduction of tariffs, led by Birmingham's greatest citizen, Joseph Chamberlain himself. I then had the privilege of being the guest of his brother, at his house in the neighbourhood of this city, and I well remember to-day all the details and incidents of the memorable evening in Birmingham's Town Hall. I see to-day, as if it were yesterday, Joseph Chamberlain standing on the platform in his frock coat, decorated with the traditional orchid, his monocle in his right eye, and a loaf of bread of different weight and size in either hand, a gesture by which he demonstrated "ad oculos" the advantage of his policy, and a gesture which at once became a symbol and which remained as such during the whole campaign.

Now, you perhaps remember from your school days the famous word of Goethe, the German poet, who, on the night of the battle of Valmy, when the young French Republic beat the rest of Europe, said to his comrades: "This day sees the beginning of a new era for the world, and we shall be able to say that we watched it happen." Well, I could use similar words with respect to that new era which started somehow for this Empire in Birmingham 30 years ago. The leaders of that policy, which in the meantime, after many vicissitudes, has been put into concrete form, are still of the same dynasty as its famous originator, and that policy has itself become to-day a rallying cry for the British Empire.

Present conditions all over the world are fundamentally disturbed and humanity lives in a state of continuous anxiety. Every country seeks salvation from impending economic dangers in measures of protection of this or that kind. For us Swiss the fact that our markets abroad are falling off on all sides, is the cause of serious concern. No wonder that

we must, by exceptional measures, secure for our products at least the market within our own frontiers. Other countries are in the same position and thus the unfortunate state of affairs to-day drives the nations along the road of economic separation — and yet there is not a man in the world who does not acknowledge the fact that economic separation means distress and depression for all and that economic collaboration means work and prosperity for all.

Thus, one would think that, I as the representative of a country of exporters, some of whose principal markets have hitherto been in the United Kingdom and its dominions, should say as little as possible of the disappearance of Free Trade in this country, and should certainly not say anything which might be taken as sympathising with that disappearance. I do not quite agree with this view, since in the life of peoples, as in the life of individuals, the joys and sorrows of our friends are also our own joys and sorrows.

The transition from one period into another is always a difficult affair, but such difficulties do not last for ever, and where there is the goodwill, long-standing friendship and the centuries old traditions of straight-forward and loyal business intercourse, we will not worry about the future. Means will be found — and here I can refer you to the speech delivered in this very city yesterday by Mr. Neville Chamberlain, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, a speech which opens a hopeful outlook in this respect — means will be found by which this fruitful intercourse between Switzerland and Great Britain, tariffs or no tariffs, will be preserved or re-established in the new era as it was in the old; we cannot for the present say how this will come about, but what we can say is that the confidence is there — that the will is there, and where there is a will there is a way.—

My second visit to this city was in 1920, when I had the pleasure of making my first appearance officially amongst the Swiss in Birmingham. In this very room were assembled my compatriots, under the presidency of M. Reinhart, here present. He, one of the leaders of my countrymen in the Midlands, has done many things for the common weal of the Swiss Colony, both in his capacity as Founder and President for many years of the Swiss Club, and as correspondent of the Swiss Consulate in Manchester.

He is to-day replaced in the chair by M. Brun, to whom we owe this very welcome opportunity of meeting in this Hall. Sir, we have come here to-night from all parts, far and near, around Birmingham, as we followed your call last summer at Whipsnade. It is owing to your energy and happy initiative that we have

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assembled under the flag of the Swiss Club, an emblem which, raised by you, is obviously one of particularly successful rallying power.

Having mentioned these two, from the number of our friends gathered here, this would seem to be the moment to mention many others, whose names convey to us the recollection of useful and appreciated services in the past and in the present. To the credit of our Colony and of our country that list would be a very long one, and it would mean more time than is at my disposal to-night, to name them all and to say all that I would have to say about their merits.

But there is one to whom a special tribute on this occasion is surely not out of place. I am happy to see him here and to be able to give expression publicly to our feelings of gratitude for the generosity in spirit and in deed with which he does honour to his own good old Swiss name and to the name of our country. I know that the Burglers of Birmingham are proud of counting Mr. Kunzle as one of them, although he hails from far beyond the sea, and I would make sure that he is not left in any doubt about the feelings of appreciation and esteem of his own countrymen.

Before I sit down I would convey our cordial messages to this great and industrious City through its citizens who are our guests to-night — and I would especially recommend this mission to our friend Mr. Ellison who, continually through long years has given us such precious proof of his feelings towards us and who, through the gracious lady at his side, is linked to us with bonds of affection. — Their presence here, besides being a pleasure to us, is a testimony of the excellent relations existing between them and the Swiss Residents in the Community.

I can assure them that Birmingham is a name which rings very pleasantly in the Swiss ear. And I believe that the people of Birmingham return the good feelings towards us, at least this was my impression when some years ago I had the good fortune of greeting their representatives in my native city of Basle, at a large Anglo-Swiss economic gathering.

May the happy relations and good feelings between their City and mine, and between their Country and mine, whether times be bad or prosperous, remain for ever unaltered.

Such is my wish, in all sincerity and cordiality, on this my third, but let us hope not my last, visit to Birmingham.

This remarkable oration was greatly cheered, and musical honours were accorded.

The President then called upon M. G. Marchand to whom the reply for the guests was entrusted, he said:

A very pleasant task has been allotted to me by your President, namely the task to respond to the toast to the guests.

This is an honour which I greatly appreciate, all the more as it is the first time that the City Swiss Club is represented officially by a member of its Committee, at one of your functions.

In having asked us to attend your Annual Banquet and Rally, you have given us an opportunity to re-new your acquaintance which we had previously made under such happy auguries at Whipsnade, there, we were surrounded by wild beasts, here to-night, we are in less ferocious company, and I am sure, or I dare to hope at least, that we are safer in this spacious Hall, than we were in the wilds of Whipsnade.

There is a saying that "absence makes the heart grow fonder," its significance I only realised to-night, we do not often see you, we read occasionally about you in that famous paper the "Swiss Observer," or we meet your smiling President at some of the functions in the Metropolis; this absence of a more frequent intercourse has all the more endeared you to us, and our visit to you, we treat like a visit to old and trusted friends.

We London Swiss are often apt to claim to be privileged in arranging patriotic functions, we often even imagine that we are just a few per cent. more Swiss, than our brothers in the Provinces; who ever held or is still holding this belief, should come to Birmingham, he will return home a wiser, and I am convinced a better Swiss.

Your patriotism, your endeavours to help each other have created that esteem in which the Swiss Club Birmingham is held amongst our compatriots, we know that your hearts beat as warmly for our country as ours do, and we know that if our country should need you, you will not fail. We are proud of you, and I am sure I am voicing the conviction of my fellow guests here present to-night, when I express the wish and the hope, that the relations between your Society and your sister institutions in the Metropolis and other parts of the Country, may remain as happy as they are now.

I will now ask my fellow guests to be understanding and to drink to the health and prosperity of the Swiss Club Birmingham!

Great applause also rewarded this speaker.

M. Montag, Swiss Consul at Liverpool, and a member of the Club then shortly addressed the gathering, expressing his pleasure at the presence of M. C. R. Paravicini. "You receive many communications from me," he said, turning to the members of the Club, "some are pleasant and some are less so, but believe me, I am always delighted to be amongst you, and I am always willing to help you if it is in my power to do so."

Loud was the applause which greeted this "short and sweet" speech. And last but by no means least, Mr. C. Kunzle, the prominent member of the Club, and Chairman of the Children's Hospital in Birmingham, expressed his pleasure at seeing the Swiss Minister amongst the company. "The best policy is charity," he said, "and that is why I am a politician." He voiced the wish of collaboration amongst Christian nations to unite themselves in combating the manifold diseases. "We want to give the children Pure Air and Health, the latter is the greatest gift we can bestow on our fellow men." Mr. Kunzle said that experience has proved that children affected with tuberculosis were cured in a relatively short time at Davos, and that the efforts undertaken so far had been very encouraging. He made a fervent appeal for collaboration in a scheme, which will, with God's help become a blessing to mankind. The applause was loud when the speaker resumed his seat.

I would like to record, that a very efficient orchestra supplied the "Tafel Music" during the dinner, and a pot-pourri of familiar Swiss airs was much appreciated, such popular tunes as the "Zapfenstreich" and many others, brought back to not a few, treasured memories of happy moments spent in the service of our beloved homeland. A Swiss lady sitting opposite me at the table, sang some of these homely tunes with such energetic and patriotic inspiration, that it made my heart beat more quickly, quite an achievement, considering that I hail from a canton where slowness has become proverbial.

Dancing then started, and forgotten were the troubles, tribulations and worries which are such a common occurrence in these times full of anxieties.

It was only right, that "yoddlng" should find a place in the programme. Messrs Gattiker and Beer supplied the necessary want, unfortunately they had chosen one song in their, no doubt, extensive repertoire, which seemed to have upset them, I mean the song, with the refrain, "Ich geh jetzt fort" (I am going to leave you), and the mere thought of an intended separation, seemed to have upset them to such an extent, that the harmony slightly suffered, but I feel sure that in the meantime they have made up their minds to stick to the "old firm," and that we may enjoy their yoddlng duets on many more occasions.

Much enjoyed was the dancing and recitation of Mlle. Daphne de Wyt, who is no stranger to the Swiss Colony.

In my introduction I mentioned the curious fact, that both in the theatrical and musical profession novelties are tried out in the provinces, much to my surprise and enlightenment, I found that this practice has now been followed up in fashion circles. One of my good London friends, appeared on the dancing floor in a pair of beautifully polished brown shoes, otherwise immaculately arrayed in full evening dress, which seems to revolutionize the ball-room fashion, and I am eagerly looking forward to see how this innovation will take on in London; in the meantime, I wish to congratulate my friend on his courage and enterprise. — One lives and learns. — Shortly before 12 o'clock the National Anthem was played, and a memorable evening came to a happy conclusion.

On Sunday morning, about 11 o'clock a char-à-banc, followed by a small fleet of private cars, containing about 70 passengers, set off from the Grand Hotel on the way to Kenilworth Castle, and Leamington Spa. The first stopping place was made at the imposing ruins of Kenilworth Castle, where the entire company disembarked, with awe one viewed the remains of this historic

castle, where the Earl of Leicester, at one time favourite of the mighty Queen Elisabeth, had his spouse Amy Robsart put to sleep in a rather nasty fashion.

The memories of this bloody tragedy however did not seem to upset the spirit of the happy revellers too much; various photographs were taken, and your reporter was induced by sheer force to have his photo taken in company with a "ghost" who was very much alive, and I sincerely hope that no ill use will be made of this photograph, as otherwise, I am afraid my future visits to my Birmingham friends will suffer a drastic curtailment. I intended to take the waters at Leamington Spa, but as no stop was made, I was prevented from partaking of a beverage, which would have been very beneficial to my health, and incidentally also to the health of many, who complained that they suffered from an infernal thirst.

Back once more at the Grand Hotel the entire company sat down to a special luncheon which was greatly enjoyed. Nearly 40 members of the party adjourned later on to the private residence of the President by special invitation, and a very jolly afternoon it was. Mme. Brun, presided over the gathering, proving that she was equally efficient as her husband in "taking the Chair." Many were the bottles emptied to the health of the generous host and hostess, and to the future prosperity of the Swiss Club Birmingham; all too soon the departing hour approached, and we had to take leave, from our smiling host and hostess.

In concluding this rather lengthy report, I would like to congratulate the Swiss Club Birmingham, and especially its President, M. P. Brun for this splendid Rally, it was one of the most enjoyable functions I have had the pleasure to attend, and the message which again has come from our countrymen in the Midlands will not be forgotten.

ST.

SWISS CLUB BIRMINGHAM TANZ.

Im "Grand" isch's gester lustig g'si
Der Swiss Club het wie jedes Jahr
Um gmüetli alli z'ame z'si
J'glade d'Fründ vo fern und nah.
Tanzet hei si, Liedli g'sunge
"So walze, tuet jetz niemer meh"
Gar schöni Rede hend si g'schwunge
Und grossi Freud g'ha am Diner.
Wenn Jodler aber tönt d'r d'Halle
Wie mängem Schwyzer geit das nah
Inwendig lasst er Träne Falle
Und usse rüeft er lut "Hurrah."
Hüt geits bim schönsten Sunneschi
Uf Kenilworth im Chara bang
Am Obe isch scho alls vorbi
Ach keini Frende duret lang.
J möcht iez no as Strissle binde
Für alli die im Comitée
Mehr Wörtli cha ni nütme finde
Als "Danke schön" uf Wiederseh.

H.E.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

March 25th, 1933.

Last Saturday evening, as I entered the May Fair Garden City, my heart was filled with sadness and bitterness welled up within my breast as I reflected on the vanity of this life, and the cruelty of the Committee of the C.S.C. in deciding to hold another Dinner and Dance.

For I was wondering what I could find to say, having exhausted my energies in my recital of the events which took place in February. But as I slipped into the Dance Room and received a smiling welcome (naturally) from our Secretary, I began to hope that something would materialise.

The dinner was good. At least, I inferred from the Menu that it was good, and several of my friends informed me that my surmise was correct. Although there were not quite so many present as in February, there was a goodly and

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