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NEWS FROM THE COLONY.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY LTD.

The Monthly Meeting was held at Swiss House on Wednesday, December 11th. Mr. A. Steinnmann, President, was in the Chair. The Meeting was well attended and in view of the early start of the lecture which formed the pièce de résistance of the evening, the small agenda was speedily dealt with. The Meeting, as in former years, voted a donation towards the Christmas Collection of the S.K.V. for unemployed members. Mr. W. Meier, Chairman of the Education Committee, reported on the latest news of the College and Mr. J. J. Boos, Chairman of the House Committee, informed the Meeting that the Society had acquired a film projector and that in the near future performances will be given.

The Meeting then adjourned into the lecture room which was soon filled almost to its full capacity. The Society was fortunate in having secured for the evening Capt. H. C. Armstrong, O.B.E., B.A., who addressed the Meeting on "King Ibn Saud — T. E. Lawrence and his work." Captain Armstrong, himself an adventurous figure, described in a most fascinating manner the lives and deeds of two yet more romantic personalities, King Ibn Saud and T. E. Lawrence.

The lecturer from the outset enraptured the audience with his rhetoric and the beautiful slides he showed added colour to his words. He revealed the mysteries and brutalities of the desert with equal eloquence as the two great characters who are outstanding in Arabia's history. The story of King Ibn Saud, the conqueror of Arabia, which formed the subject matter of one of Capt. Armstrong's publications, was equally well depicted as that of the famous and widely discussed Lawrence of Arabia. Capt. Armstrong related many of his personal experiences with Lawrence and quoted relevant passages from his private correspondence. He endeavoured to give as true a picture of one of the most mysterious figures in recent history as was compatible with his friendship for the great specialist on Arab affairs and author of "The Seven Pillars of Wisdom" and "Revolt in the Desert." The lecture, despite some of its gruesome and grim revelations, was not in the least devoid of humour. The lecturer's forceful language was reminiscent of his type, the exponent of the officer experienced in foreign service in the vast tracts of the British Empire.

The lecturer received a hearty ovation at the close of his fine oration.

W.B.

"L'ESCALADE A LONDRES."

C'est le 10 décembre dernier que s'est réuni chez Pagani, 35 convives pour commémorer comme chaque année depuis 21 ans, la célèbre escalade genevoise.

Tout au long de la soirée le fameux "esprit genevois" ne cessa de régner.

Présidée par M. César Campart, M. De Cintra étant absent actuellement de Londres, la partie officielle débuta par la lecture par le Pasteur Hoffmann-de Visme du nom des héros morts pour la patrie. Le Président brisa ensuite la marmite sans oublier le rituel "Ainsi périsseront les ennemis de la République."

M. Haussauer donna la parole au Dr. Ferrière, qui dans une excellente improvisation nous parla de la chère cité.

La partie artistique débuta de façon heureuse par l'audition de vieilles chansons interprétées par le très actif et réputé pianiste de la B.B.C. Mr. G. Ferrari, puis comme à Genève chacun "y alla de la sienne."

Mentionnons au hasard de la plume: Dr. Bonnard, Mr. Ch. Ferrière, J. P. Oltramare, Chardon, Meschini, Cherpillod, sans oublier le benjamin Eggli (un de 1913).

L'on se sépara à regret en se donnant rendez-vous à 1936.

A. H. BABBAS.

AN IDEAL XMAS PRESENT.

Unsere Schweizerheimat, ein Buch für Landsleute im Auslande, issued by the Nouvelle Société Helvétique and the Commission des Suisses à l'Etranger. (4/- per copy French or German).

No better Xmas present could be made, than the above book, which is edited by Dr. A. Lätt and published by Orell Füssli.

Giuseppe Motta, the head of the Political Dept. at Berne, in a foreword of keen appreciation recommends this book to the study of every Swiss abroad, he praises the excellence of its make-up, text and illustrations, and in particular its educational purpose; he ends on a note of optimism in the perpetuity of the fidelity of the Swiss.

The contents of the book convey a most complete and satisfactory survey of our homeland. The physiological aspect of the country and the

OLD FOLKS CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Monday, December 16th

at the

FOYER SUISSE

15, UPPER BEDFORD PLACE, RUSSELL SQUARE, W.C.1.

The above function which took place on Monday last, is one of the most unique happenings in our Colony.

Every year the Committee of Management of the Foyer Suisse sends out invitations to Swiss who have attained their 65th year, this is the only qualification; there is no difference made whether they are blessed with wordly goods or whether they are poor. Although the above mentioned qualification does not yet entitle me to partake of this Luncheon "by right," I have nevertheless been fortunate to attend this function for the last four to five years as a guest. —

There are many arrangements made in the Colony during the year for the younger set and the middle aged, but nothing for the old ones'. On meeting occasionally some of the members of a former generation, one is struck by the interest which they still take in the doings of the Colony; although in quite a few cases they are not any more able to be present at some of the functions, on account of illness or other circumstances. It has often made me feel sad to hear that they thought that they were forgotten or not wanted anymore. The Committee of Management of the "Foyer Suisse" has given this assumption the lie, and it is to their credit that for the last six years they have annually assembled our old people to give them proof that they are still remembered, and that they still belong to us. Many of those who attend have in former years rendered useful services to the Swiss community in one way or another, and this function is a befitting occasion to say once again, "thank you!" —

Many a face has grown older, since I first attended this gathering, and alas- some are not anymore amongst us, whose happy laugh used to give us joy, but although age has whitened their hair, and has weakened their bodies, the heart has remained still young.

The mere mentioning of the name of our beloved country, which many have not seen for several years, makes their eyes shine brighter, and many a tear has trickled over their furrowed faces when they have heard those homely melodies which many, many years ago they used to sing in that land to which they have remained faithful. And you should have heard with what enthusiasm they have lustily joined in the singing. What a host of memories of far gone times this gathering must have awakened in a good few of them. Life has treated some none too kindly, and has shattered many a dream, whilst others can look back on fine achievements, but whatever pranks destiny has played on them, hardship and even success were forgotten, they were happy in a companionship of mutual understanding. And what an enjoyable luncheon it was, there was everything which, one could enjoy; soup, fish, turkey and sweets, nicely

served. The *cuisine* of the Foyer Suisse needs no advertisement, but it is only right to mention that it was a fare fit for kings, and the kindness with which the guests were treated by the smiling young lady attendants is a fact well worth mentioning.

This gathering has, of course, none of the *allures* of a Banquet, and therefore no official toasts were given.

Monsieur Ch. de Jenner, Councillor of Legation, who was representing the Swiss Minister, who was unfortunately prevented from being present, delivered the greetings and best wishes of Monsieur Paravicini, coupling these with his own. He informed the company that the Silver medal presented on this occasion, by the House Committee, to the oldest member present, would go to Mr. A. Huber, who was born in 1853. (I might mention that two guests were present who were older than the recipient of the medal, namely, Mlle. Bourquin, who will be 92 next January, and Signora Chiodo who was born in 1850, but these two have already received the medal on a previous occasion).

The medal depicts on one side an eagle perched on a rock, and bears the following biblical quotation: "They shall mount up on wings like eagles," and on the other side the name and birth-date of the recipient.

M. Ritter, Secretary of the "Fonds de Secours" expressed the thanks of the guests for this "beau geste" of the Foyer Suisse.

Pasteur Hoffmann-de Visme, extended to the guests a hearty welcome on behalf of the Committee of Management. He said that they were very happy to see such a large gathering; (there were 60 ladies and gentlemen present) and he hoped that they would all meet again next year. A short address by Pfarrer Hahn concluded the speech-making.

During the Luncheon, M. v. Bergen, who is known to be the champion "Jodler" of the Colony, sang a few Swiss songs in his masterful way, which earned a well-merited applause. Two young Ladies entertained the guests with some humorous duets. —

And so ended once again one of the most successful Christmas Luncheons to our "Old Folks." To be present at this function is a pleasure which I would not miss for anything, because it does us "Youngsters (!)" good to see how these old people still love their country, and how, at the eventide of their lives their attachment to it is undimmed.

The Committee of Management of the Foyer Suisse is to be congratulated on their splendid initiative in arranging such a gathering, which will remain a valued memory to many of those who were privileged to attend.

ST.

population, written by Prof. Alfred Chapuis of Neuchâtel, forms the introductory chapters, and a very sound foundation to the remarkable historical study of the country from mythical times until to-day by Dr. Alfred Specker of Zurich. The progress of the historical development is kept in a very concise frame, but is as good an abridged history of Switzerland as can be read. The following chapters deal with the political constitution of the country and are written by Tell Perrin in an easily comprehensible style and form. The next section of the book, on the culture and spiritual life of Switzerland, is composed of eight articles by different authors and deals with such subjects as culture and education, poetry and literature, the famous Ticinesi architects, Swiss art and art appreciation, folk songs and music, the activity of Swiss womanhood, etc. All of them, articles full of spirit and valuable information. The last section of the book, dedicated to the Swiss Abroad, is again divided into two parts. The authors are the two secretaries at the Secrétariat des Suisses à l'Etranger in Berne. Miss Alice Briod presents a very sympathetic study of the struggles and achievements of the emigrants; Mr. Gerhard Schurch draws the conclusions of the inter-dependence between the emigrant and his homeland and vice versa.

He defines the duties and obligations of each party, he reiterates the ideals underlying the attachment to the country of one's birth, the

greatest of which is contained in the warning:— Seid einig, einig, einig!

The illustrations are a fit accompaniment to the excellence of the literary contents. There are 16 full-page colour prints, some of them most exquisite and all of them delightful; there are pages and pages of beautifully reproduced photographs of the delectable land, of wonderful alpine scenery and prosperous towns, of famous architectural works and the railways, of many famous compatriots, etc., etc. Orders for single copies or parcels may be sent to the Secretariat of the N.S.H., 34, Fitzroy Square, London, W.1, with pre-payment.

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