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# Students Xmas Ball.

At the PRINCE'S GALLERIES, PICCADILLY,

on Friday, December 20th, 1935.

With memories still fresh from the "Old Folks Luncheon" where I was in the company of the older generation of the Colony, and where I felt "frightfully young," I had the privilege to attend the Xmas Dinner and Ball of the Students of the Swiss Mercantile Society College, where, I am sorry to say, I felt "less young."

Over two hundred young ladies and gentlemen attended this very successful function, and judging from their happy, smiling faces they enjoyed themselves immensely.

This evening had two surprises in store, and both were very pleasant ones. For the first time, since the inauguration of this function, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, the Swiss Minister, attended, giving thus a further proof of the great interest, which he takes in everything which is connected with the Swiss Mercantile Society.

The second surprise was the attendance of a group of "Appenzeller" yodlers and players, in their picturesque costumes. Being over here to take part in the shooting of a film at Elstree, they took this opportunity of giving their young compatriots a pleasant and much appreciated surprise.

As a sort of extra *hors-d'œuvres* they opened the evening with a hearty "Yodel," which at once broke the ice.

Talking of ice, reminds me, that there are other blizzards than economic ones in existence, and one of them lustily blew through the spacious room of the Princes Galleries, it also, unfortunately swept over the tables, depriving the various dainty dishes set before the company, of that little warmth to which they were entitled to.

Having thus started a little criticism, which is one of the few privileges of the Press, I would like to point out, that the two flags (the Swiss Flag and the Union Jack) which adorned the room, and which were placed, as it should be, in a conspicuous position, could have done with a little cleaning up. If they should belong to the S.M.S., I willingly will send them to my laundry, if they will be forwarded to me.

After a reception, which lasted rather longer than usual, the company sat down to a very nicely served dinner.

The toasts to H.M. The King and Switzerland were given by the Swiss Minister and were accompanied with musical honours.

M. Meier, the young and energetic President of the Education Committee, who was in the Chair, then rose to address the company as follows:

It is the first time that I have the privilege to take the chair at an annual Banquet of the College of the Swiss Mercantile Society, and I thank you for the honour you have given me. Although I have attended this annual function on several previous occasions, it is the first time that I am taking part as a married man, accompanied by my wife.

First and foremost I wish to welcome our guests of honour, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of St. James, and Dr. Rezzonico, First Secretary of Legation and Commercial Attaché. — We are indeed honoured by your presence, all the more so, as we know that your time is doubly precious at this period of international anxiety. Monsieur Paravicini has, since its foundation, taken the keenest interest in the welfare of our College and on behalf of those who are responsible for the management of the College I wish to express to him our grateful thanks.

As to Dr. Rezzonico, although he only recently returned to the Swiss Legation in London, is an old friend of the Society, and I well remember the occasion, several years ago, when the Swiss Mercantile Society held a reception in his honour. It was on his departure from London to Rome, and in appreciation of the valuable services he had rendered the College and the Society. I venture to hope, Sir, that you will continue to give us the value of your advice.

I am happy to welcome in our midst Mr. Steinmann, President of the Swiss Mercantile Society and Chairman of the Council. I know Mr. Steinmann is proud of the fact that he was one of the first and original students of the College at its foundation in 1922.

Unfortunately we are without the presence of Mr. De Brunner, who is absent from London for a few days. With other members of the Society he is held in honour as one of the founders of the College. He is to-day a Trustee and an Honorary Member of the Society.

We are fortunate to have with us Mr. Boos, accompanied by Mrs. Boos. He is Chairman of the House Committee and Vice-Chairman of the Council, and he, too, has been made an Honorary Member of the Society, in recognition of the great work he has been doing for many years.

Another member of the House Committee I would like to welcome to-night, namely Mrs. Lunghi-Rezzonico, who for many years has been looking after the welfare of our lady students at Swiss House. To her we owe a debt of gratitude for continued active help.

We are glad to have with us to-night Miss Bradbury of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. It is due to her instrumentality that the Mayors of Cambridge, for the past three years, gave the students of our College a civic welcome at the Cambridge Guildhall. Miss Bradbury also arranged for a number of ladies and Gentlemen to take parties of our students round the University Colleges.

Further, I am pleased to welcome Mr. Weaver, examiner to the University of London and official examiner for our Diploma Examinations. I am sure students and masters will be equally pleased to see him, this time as a friendly visitor.

We have with us also Mr. White, who, if not yet known to all of you students, will make the acquaintance of many as he conducts the examinations of the Institute of Commerce.

As you are aware, we maintain friendly relations with the Police. Our College Football Team have beaten the team of the C Division once, and have been trying to repeat that performance ever since — without success I should add. We have been entertained at the Sports Ground of the Police at Imber Court several times, and I am glad, therefore to welcome as our guests to-night, Mr. Ralph and Mr. Smith, accompanied by their ladies. Mr. Ralph is Superintendent of Police for the C Division, and Commissaire de Police for the West End of London. Mr. Smith is Inspector in charge of the Tottenham Court Road Police Station.

Then I wish to greet our popular Principal, Mr. Levy, accompanied by Mrs. Levy, as well as the Vice-Principal, Mr. Burraston. They are supported by other members of the Teaching staff and their guests.

We have with us also, members of the office staff, without however, their chief, Mr. Schneider, who, unfortunately, is recovering from a serious illness.

Further, I welcome the representatives of the Press. The ever popular editor of the "Swiss Observer" Mr. Stauffer, accompanied by Mrs. Stauffer. Mr. Stauffer is a past President of the Swiss Mercantile Society and an Honorary Member, and Dr. Egli of the "Bund." I hope they will be able to report in their Press on an evening spent in a very pleasant manner.

And last, but by no means least, I wish to welcome my colleagues and collaborators of the Education Committee, Mr. Baumann, Vice-Chairman, Mr. Hardmeier, Mr. Weist, Mr. Streit and Mr. Roethlisberger. — I would ask them to accept my grateful thanks for their co-operation throughout the past year.

And now, Ladies and Gentlemen, let us be reminded that we Swiss are enjoying the hospitality of this great country. Christmas is only a few days away and bells will ring out the old year soon afterwards. At this time of the year our thoughts wander more often than usual back to our native country and Christmas days spent with our families and old friends. Many of you will be returning home in a day or two, but let us now think of our far-away home land, and I wish you to raise your glasses, and I would ask our English friends to join us, in drinking to the well-being of our beloved Switzerland.

M. Meier received a hearty ovation on resuming his seat.

Monsieur Paravicini, the Swiss Minister, was greeted with great applause on rising from his seat. He made one of his witty after-dinner speeches of which he is such a master.

After having made excuses to the teaching staff for his linguistic shortcomings, he congratulated both the Society and the teaching staff on the splendid work which they are rendering.

He also addressed the Students relating, in a humorous way, some of his experiences of his student days.

The Minister then shortly referred to the political situation, which he said was fraught with dangers, but he expressed the hope that the New Year will bring some relief from a position which weighs heavily on everybody.

Long and hearty applause greeted the short address of the Minister.

The next speaker came from the ranks of the Students, Mr. Abbuehl said:

I have the honour and privilege of proposing the toast of the Swiss Mercantile Society.

In pre-war days, young Swiss were able to go from country to country in order to learn languages and gain experience in various branches of commerce and industry. Nowadays almost every country has put up a bar, a very strong bar, and so we find it extremely difficult to get situations and thus increase our knowledge outside our beloved Switzerland. Behind this darkness is a small star with a strong light which guides us and assists us to overcome many difficulties. Soon after the Great War when we found it almost impossible to get posts outside Switzerland, the Swiss Mercantile Society, which is the London Section of the Schweizerischen Kaufmännischen Vereins, started a scheme which has done excellent service for many thousands of our compatriots. Apart from their ordinary duties, the S.M.S. opened a school where we Swiss, young and old, can be taught English as well as important matters relating to practical commerce. Due to the excellent organisation and teaching staff I feel safe in saying that in all parts of the world can be found former students of Swiss House who hold important posts and that is entirely due to the training received at our College in Fitzroy Square. No one who enters that wonderful institution of the S.M.S. leaves with remorse except the regret of having to terminate his stay at the College.

We students congratulate the S.M.S. on their excellent work and we highly appreciate the good work done at Swiss House although sometimes on Monday mornings we find it difficult for "Gerunds" or "Foreign Exchange" to pass into our heads and stay there, ready to come out whenever required. That of course, is entirely our own fault.

On behalf of my fellow students I wish to thank the President and Committees of the S.M.S. for all they have done for us.

In conclusion I must say I have the greatest pleasure in proposing the Toast of the Swiss Mercantile Society and couple with this toast the name of Mr. Steinmann, the President of the S.M.S.

This youthful orator received a specially hearty acknowledgement from his fellow students.

As on previous occasions, this toast is replied to by the President of the Society, and Mr. Steinmann, who occupies this high office, was warmly applauded when he rose.

He said:

In responding to Mr. Abbuehl's excellent toast of the S.M.S., I appreciate the great honour he does me in linking my name, as President, with the Society. I would remind him that my office is held by me as a humble servant of the Society and that I am only able to carry out my duties properly because others, with whom I am associated, do their share of the work so faithfully and well. I will assume, therefore, that your coupling of the President's name is tantamount to an appreciation of the work done by the whole Council and the various Committees and Staffs of the Office and College. I almost feel that, as an old student, I should be rising as Mr. Abbuehl's second, for now that I am one of the governing Council I realise more fully the extent of the work that is done by them in the interest of the Members and Students of the Society.

I would like to pay a special tribute to the excellent work done by Mr. Meier, who has been Chairman of the Education Committee during the past year, after having been Vice-Chairman for a number of years.

From Mr. Abbuehl's able remarks I am quite certain that you appreciate the services given to you by the S.M.S. and I can only repeat that the best way of showing that appreciation is by each and all of you taking every opportunity to recommend our College to likely students.

I cannot omit to reiterate my remarks of last year when I drew the attention of this gathering to the great help, both financial and

moral, that is accorded to us by patriotic and disinterested well-wishers. In fact, it is very largely on account of their help that we are able to achieve so much and I would ask you, therefore, to join with me in expressing our sincere thanks to those numerous friends. We have to thank also the Federal authorities and the Swiss Legation for continued financial and moral support.

I am reminded by the brightness and spirit of this gathering to wish you all the old, yet ever new, wish, "A Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year." The latter half of that wish recalls the fact that, in spite of every difficulty, the economic situation in general tends to improve and, as far as our own country is concerned, the signs are certainly those of good omen for the future.

Once again I would express my sincere hope that in the better future that lies ahead you will all share, and that you will be the better able to take your part in bringing about more prosperous times by reason of the service you receive from our College.

The great applause which greeted his oration had hardly died down, when Mr. Boos, Vice-Chairman of the Council, rose to propose the toast to the College and the Teaching Staff.

He mentioned that the College was one of the bright spots in the Swiss Colony and recognised as the best Language Institution of the Swiss abroad. He pointed out that this institution serves as an example to other countries, who are trying to start similar schools.

"The College" he said, "has the full approval of the Swiss Authorities, and is considered to be of national importance, so much so that we receive yearly a very substantial subsidy from the *Volkswirtschafts Dept.* which enables us to give the Students such wonderful tuition at such a very moderate rate."

He said that since 1922, 7,500 students had visited the School and in the present year 400 pupils had attended classes.

He then gave some figures showing the splendid results which have been attained in the various examinations.

"What accounts for this success?" he asked, "only hard work by all concerned, by the Education Committee ably led by the youthful and energetic Mr. Meier, the teaching staff, controlled and guided by the Principal, Mr. Levy, who spares no effort for both staff and scholars, the office staff, marshalled by the energetic Mr. Schneider, assisted by Messrs. Burren and von Bergen, and last, but not least, the fine body of young Swiss Ladies and Gentlemen, all anxious to secure the best benefit from their often only too short a stay in London."

Mr. Boos ended up by saying: "The College has been compared with a Military Organisation — I would rather compare it with a successful and energetic Cricket Team."

A Good Team needs excellent individual players, such as we possess in our Staff — but above all you must have co-operation and real team work.

Mr. Levy has proved the *ideal* Captain placing his players in the positions best suited — and even if at times things do not go too smoothly the difficulties are soon overcome.

The players — the staff — may be at times up against big breaks — there may be body-line bowling and even barracking — severe competition and jealousy — a good team — good players know how to weather all storms and attacks. — That you have done this so far is proved by the wonderful success of the College. Let us hope that this good team spirit will always prevail — that the Students also will do their share in fostering our aim, not only when they are in London but also at home by always speaking for our College.

I can assure you, Mr. Levy, — and all you of the Staff the Council appreciates your work for the College — the success of which we all have so much at heart and for the honour of which I would ask you to charge your glasses and drink to the Toast of the S.M.S. College and Staff.

The speaker was much applauded when resuming his seat.

If popularity can be judged by applause, then surely Mr. Levy, Principal of the College, must have been the most popular man on that memorable evening, the noise which filled the Banqueting Hall, when Mr. Levy rose to give the response to the previous toast, was tremendous, as if 200 red Indians were starting to dance their war dance and hailing their chief.

Mr. Levy, who seemed to be much moved by the cordial reception, thanked the Minister and Dr. Rezzonico for having honoured this gathering by their presence; he also expressed his gratitude to the members of the Education Committee for their untiring work rendered in the interest of the College. He mentioned that again the Federal Government has liberally supported the school, which enabled them to go from strength to strength.

In concluding his speech, Mr. Levy paid a warm tribute to his fellow teachers and the office staff, and invited the students "always to play the game."

The applause was again vociferous when Mr. Levy sat down.

This was the last speech, and the company was asked to adjourn to one of the adjoining halls, where a most enjoyable "Schnitzelbank" was recited by one of the students.

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

A *Polonaise*, headed by Mr. and Mrs. Meier 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.

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

ST.

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#### FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Thursday, December 26th, at 9 p.m. — Helvetia Society — Grand Ball — Novelties — at 1 Gerrard Place, W.1.

December 26th (Boxing Day) at 2.30 p.m. — Swiss Club (Schweizerbund) — Christmas Tree Party — 8 p.m.  
Dance. — New Year's Eve at 8 p.m. Special Dinner and Dance (until 2 a.m.) at 74, Charlotte Street, W.1. (See advert.).

Tuesday, December 31st — Union Helvetia Club — New Year's Eve Ball — at 1 Gerrard Place, W.1. (See special announcement).

Tuesday, January 7th, 1936 — City Swiss Club — Monthly Meeting — (preceded by dinner 7.15 sharp) at Pagani's Restaurant, Great Portland Street, W.

Saturday, February 22nd, 1936 — Annual Banquet and Ball — Swiss Mercantile Society — at the Trocadero Restaurant, Piccadilly, W.

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6h.30. — M. R. Hoffmann-de Visme.

Mardi 31 décembre: 8h.30. Service de St. Sylvestre avec Ste Cène.

L'arbre sera rallumé!

Invitation à chacun.

Mercredi 1er Janvier 1936. 11h. — Service du Nouvel An.

#### MARIAGE.

Emmanuel Neustadt, de Berlin et Denyse Bourgeois, de Paris — le 24 décembre 1935.

#### SCHWEIZERKIRCHE

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CHRISTTAG, Mittwoch den 25. Dezember 1935.

11 Uhr morgens, Gottesdienst und Feier des Heilig. Abendmahls. Kein Abendgottesdienst.

Sonntag, den 29. Dezember 1935.

11 Uhr morgens, Gottesdienst und Sonntagsschule.

7 Uhr abends. Liturgischer Weihnachts-gottesdienst.

Der Baum wird wieder angezündet werden.

Dienstag, den 31. Dezember 1935. SYLVESTER.  
7 Uhr abends, Altjahrsabendgottesdienst und Feier des Heilig. Abendmahls.

Der Baum wird wieder angezündet werden.

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