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Annual Banquet

of the

Société de Secours Mutuels

on Friday, May 8th at 74, Charlotte Street, W.

C. CAMPART, President.



This yearly event of the oldest Swiss Society in London took place last Friday, at the Swiss Club, and was a most enjoyable affair, and yet to me that evening had some perplexing features.

For the last few years I have received invitations to the "Old Folks" Luncheon, and the Swiss Mercantile Students Dinner, and when describing these functions in the Swiss Observer, I have always laid stress on the fact, that these two gatherings represented the oldest and the youngest members of the Colony. I was wrong and I humbly apologise for this mis-statement. The Société de Secours Mutuels combines both, the youngest and the oldest in one fold; the oldest member present at the gathering was 81, and I have been informed that the Society has at least 4 members who are above this venerable age, in fact the Honorary President, M. Georges Forrer, has reached the great age of 91. There were also present a large number of Gentlemen between 70 and 75, and the youngest about 20, but the "riper" age predominated.

As mentioned above, this Society is the oldest Swiss Society not only in London but in Great Britain. It was founded in 1703 and has therefore 233 birthdays behind it, this is a very fine age, and that accounts perhaps for the cordiality which exists amongst the members; they are so imbued with the age of their institution that they cannot help but use the word "old" on every conceivable opportunity. When I entered the portals of 74, Charlotte Street, I heard one prominent member say: Look! here comes the "old" Swiss Observer, which made me look at once grave and sedate, and I only allowed my usual grin to return to my face, when I was treated, with the rest of the guests, to some cocktails.

I had hardly exchanged a few words, when I heard one of the committee members mention that the "old" Minister was coming, this proved to me that a most friendly atmosphere must reign in these quarters and I was not mistaken. —

About 8 o'clock the company sat down to Dinner, M. C. Campart, President of the Society, taking the Chair, on his right sat Monsieur le Ministre, C. R. Paravicini, looking as "young" as ever. During the dinner some Gentleman played various pieces of music, and when he rendered the song: Wien, Wien nur Du allein, sollst jetzt die Stadt meiner Träume sein," I at once thought of a friend of mine, and a well-known member of the Colony, who is now on a visit in the beautiful Donau Stadt, "Dort wo die schönen Mädchen gehn," and I hope he enjoys himself as much as I did some months ago, an der "schönen blauen Donau." —

Soon after a delicious ice-cream had been served, the Minister rose to propose the toasts to H.M. The King and to "La Suisse."

M. Campart, the President then opened the oratorial part of the evening by expressing his personal appreciation and that of the Society, to the Minister for having honoured this gathering by his presence. He suggested that some special greetings should be sent to M. G. Forrer, "Président d'Honneur," and M. A. Baume, "Membre Honoraire," this suggestion was agreed to with acclamation, he also warmly greeted M. Hans Hug, the oldest member present, expressing the wish that he might be able to attend many more annual dinners in perfect health. M. Campart then gave a short history of the Society mentioning that the membership which amounts at present to 104 members was very satisfactory.

He also mentioned that the finances were in a healthy state thanks to the untiring efforts of his two collaborators Mr. Kilchenmann (Secretary) and M. Kunzle (Treasurer). The President expressed his appreciation to his colleague M. Martin, who is acting very efficiently as Vice-President. M. G. W. Wetter was also mentioned for services rendered. M. Campart pointed out the friendly relations which exist between the Swiss Club, which acts as landlord, asking M. Hediger, the President to convey the thanks of the Society to his members. He also complimented M. and Mme. Rossier on the excellent dinner with which the company was regaled with.

The President then extended special greetings to the various representatives from sister Societies and friends, naming them as follows: —

City Swiss Club: M. R. Ryf, Vice-President.
Fonds-de-Secours: M. R. Dupraz, President.
Unione Ticinese: M. O. Gambazzi, President.
 M. Berti.

Swiss Mercantile Society: M. Max Schneider.
Nouvelle Société Helvétique: M. H. Trepp.
Schweizerbund: M. Lächler and M. Imhof, (Secretary.)

Swiss Observer: M. A. Stauffer, Editor.
Swiss Church: Pasteur R. Sauty.
Friends: M. Hill, M. P. Savoie.

M. Dupraz, President of the Fonds-de-Secours, in a very witty speech thanked the Society on behalf of the guests for their generous invitation.

Amongst hearty applause the Swiss Minister then addressed the company, saying that it has always been a special pleasure to him to attend a function of the oldest Society in the Colony, a Society which always reminded him of our country, one of the oldest countries and the oldest republic in Europe, a country well respected amongst other nations. After having once more justified his reputation as a witty after dinner speaker, by referring to some of the members present and to the "Swiss Press" he emptied his glass wishing the Société-de-Secours Mutuels many years of prosperity and happiness.

This speech received a tremendous applause and once more proved how popular the head of our Colony is.

M. Hill, who is a very old friend of the Society and of our country, then thanked the President for having asked him to attend the Annual Dinner, saying that some of his happiest days have been spent in the circle of the Society.

M. Martin, who expressed himself in the "langue diplomatique," thanked the members for having attended so numerously, voicing the wish that these gatherings will be kept on for many more years to come.

M. Hug, the Doyen of the company present, also gave thanks for the kind words which were addressed to him by the Minister and the President, and said that the secret of a long life lies in a contented mind and in doing one's duty conscientiously.

M. Durwanger, a very old member, related some old "Erinnerungen," and Pasteur Sauty spoke about our country which should always serve as an ideal in all our work.

This ended the official part of the evening, and for many hours the company sat together, singing some of the patriotic songs of the land which we call "our country."

Mr. Russell, a first class entertainer then gave a marvellous exhibition of wit, conjuring and card tricks, and earned a well deserved applause.

Those who had the privilege to attend the Annual Dinner of the Société-de-Secours Mutuels will remember this evening for a long time, it was a fine evening amongst "old" friends and can one wish for better company?

ST.

SWISS GYMNASTIC SOCIETY LONDON.

A combined Display, followed by a Dance, will take place on Sunday evening, May 17th, at 8.15 p.m., at the Swiss Club "Schweizerbund," 74, Charlotte Street, W.1.

The three teams:—Ladies, Juniors and Active Members will do their best to provide an interesting entertainment and the show will be well worth seeing quite apart from the support the Society needs at all times. —

Programme:—

Ladies:— Skipping, Indian Club Swinging, Parallel Bars and Vaulting Horse.
Juniors:— Aarau Free Exercises, Parallel Bars, Vaulting Horse.
Active Members:— Parallel Bars, Horse and Winterthur Free Exercises.

It is hoped that the colony will support the Society in the usual way. —

X.Y.Z.

ELLEN MAILLARD'S LONDON HONOURS.

Our distinguished compatriote, who accompanied Peter Fleming on his daring journey across the most inaccessible parts of Asia, has on her recent visit to London been received as a guest of great distinction both by a number of important organizations and in the highest social circles.

Several times she has been permitted to talk on the British Broadcasting Service about her exceptional experiences. The Royal Geographical Society honoured her greatly by inviting her to give a lecture under its auspices.

Mlle. Maillard has also given a conference at Burlington House, and lectures at the Institut Français, at the Forum Club and at the Royal Central Asian Society. The French Ambassador, M. Corbin, has entertained her at dinner and the Swiss Minister recently arranged a reception for her jointly with Miss Trudy Schoop, as has already been reported in the Swiss Observer.

Lady Ravensdale, the daughter of Lord Curzon, was Mlle. Maillard's hostess during her stay in London, that surely brought her more tokens of the highest esteem than any other Swiss woman has attained to so far in the British capital.

Dr. E.

PERSONAL.

There was a large congregation at the Church of St. Lawrence Jewry-next-Guildhall, in the city last Friday, for the marriage of Miss Phyllis Marian Durrant, youngest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Durrant, of Staple, Russell-hill, Purley, to Mr. Fritz Jean Heusser, youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. E. Heusser, of Zurich. The Rev. A. Lombardini officiated.

The bride was given away by her father. Her bridal gown was of silver lame, and a net veil was surmounted by a headdress of crystal and orange blossom. She carried arum lilies arranged waterfall fashion with loops of silver ribbon.

The bridesmaids were Miss Coath, Miss K. and Miss M. Cove, Miss D. Shaw, with Mrs. J. D. Blackham, sister of the bride, as matron of honour. They wore dresses in pastel shades of mauve, green, primrose, pink, and blue, and net hats with floral crowns, and carried posies looped with velvet ribbons.

Two pages, Alister Norton and Bob Lazenby, were in "David Copperfield" suits of bronze and champagne colour.

After the ceremony there was a reception at the Connaught Rooms, Great Queen Street, at which the Swiss Minister was represented by M. A. de Bourg, Counsellor at the Legation.

FRUEHLING.

Heut hab' ich den Einzug des Frühling erschaut,
 Das ewige Leben und Werden.
 Um dessen Zauber der Mensch wieder baut
 Neues Leben, Hoffen und Streben.

Die Luft ist voll Flimmen und Klingen
 Nebel die grauen von der Sonne zerstäubt.
 Die Vögel bauen Nester und singen,
 Ihr Werbelfied, so alt, so neu wieder heut.

Erwachende Blumen schmiegen
 Sich zum Teppich auf schwelendem Grün,
 Quellen die versiegt, rauschen wieder
 "O" Lenz wie bist du so schön."

Wie Bronnen von Segen entspringen
 Ruh' Friede, Gesundheit und Licht
 Und streifen dem Menschen, dem müden
 Die Sorgen vom ernsten Gesicht.

H.E.

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