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The Swiss Observer

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A Merry Christmas to all our Readers

CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS.

This week we have entered upon the festival of Xmas — the happiest and most precious time of the year.

All over the globe there will arise glad tidings of praise. Let us then, dear readers, lay aside for a few hours, at least, the burden of our work and forget our troubles and worries. Let us be re-united once again in that happy state of companionship and mutual good-will! Let us turn away from our daily toil and routine, with its restless struggles of life, to welcome the peace of Christmas.

Although the world is still in a turmoil, and the cares and sorrows lay heavily on many shoulders, the spirit of Christmas is the same to-day as yesterday and will be for ever. May this blessed time of goodwill towards mankind remain a daily companion of unfailing help, and an inspirer of all that is good and kind.

Generations come and go, ideas and customs may change, but the spirit of Christmas will remain for ever a vital force. Its message will never grow old nor can it be exhausted.

No matter how fast and feverish the pace of life, Christmas will give us a decided reminder of all that is real in this world and worth while living for. It will remind us more than ever, that we are all God's children, united in one big family, here on this earth, for but a little time, requiring the warmth of human kindness and friendship. Let the Christmas spirit, which is the spirit of active usefulness, perseverance, cheerful discharge of duty, kindness and forbearance come nearer and closer to our hearts. —

Happy Christmas that can win us back to the delusion of our childhood days, that can transport our thoughts, hundreds of miles away, back to our dear ones, back to the land of our birth.

God grants, that the coming year will be for all of us a year of striving to lessen the hardships under which a tired world is labouring; may it once again bring back peace amongst all nations. May the silver lining for which we so often have gazed heavenwards, appear and shed its light over the darkness in which we have tumbled during the last few months.

Far away in the cities, villages and hamlets of our homeland, the bells will ring in the glorious Christmas Day, their sounds will spread the glad message of goodwill amongst the children of this universe, they will pierce the Alps and ride on the ocean waves and will bring to everyone of us the greetings of that dear land of ours. Let us then, dear readers, spread this inspired message, compiled with our sincerest wishes for the land, which has accorded us a generous hospitality, and to many of us a second home.

ST.



HOME NEWS

(Compiled by courtesy of the following contemporaries: National Zeitung, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, St. Galler Tagblatt, Vaterland, Tribune de Genève and Schweizerische Verkehrszentrale.)

FEDERAL.

SWISS PRESIDENT FOR 1938.

FEDERAL COUNCILLOR DR. J. BAUMANN.

The two Chambers of the Swiss Parliament held their annual joint meeting, known as the Federal Assembly, for electing the President of the Confederation for the ensuing year.

Federal Councillor Dr. Johannes Baumann, Chief of the Federal Department of Justice and Police since 1934, was elected President. Federal Councillor Ph. Etter, Chief of the Federal Department of the Interior, was elected Vice-President.

Dr. Baumann was born in Herisau (Appenzel) 64 years ago. He received his schooling in Berne and later on studied law at the Universities in Leipzig, Berne, Zurich and Basle.

On obtaining the degree of *doctor juris utriusque* he returned to his native town Herisau, where he received a judgeship (Verhörriechter), which post he relinquished six years later in order to enter the cantonal government of which he remained a member for 26 years. Dr. Baumann was four times elected "Landammann" (head of the cantonal government.)

In 1911 he entered Parliament (States Council) where he soon made a name for himself as the leader of the Liberal fraction. In 1934 he was elected a member of the Federal Government in succession to Dr. Häberlin, who had resigned. In the army he reached the rank of colonel of Infantry.

NEW VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION — DR. PHILIPP ETTER.

The newly elected Vice-President of the Swiss Confederation, Dr. Philipp Etter, was born in Menzingen (Zug) and is 46 years old.

He started his political career in 1918 as a member of the "Kantonsrat," four years later he entered the cantonal government, in 1930 he was elected a member of Parliament (States Council).

Dr. Etter was elected a member of the Federal Government in 1934.

NEW FEDERAL JUDGE.

The Federal Assembly has elected Dr. Adolf Ziegler as a member of the Supreme Court in succession to Dr. C. Jaeger, who has recently resigned.

Dr. Ziegler was born in 1890 in Lichtensteig; he attended the "Kantonsschule" in Frauenfeld and later on studied law at the Universities of Berne, Leipzig and Heidelberg. After the conclusion of his studies he was for some time practising as an advocate in St. Gall. In 1920 he was elected secretary to the Federal Court in Lausanne, and later on, Clerk of the Supreme Court, a post which he has held for the last twelve years. Dr. Ziegler is the author of a great many works dealing with matters of law.

A SWISS BANK'S MORATORIUM.

A six-months' moratorium on certain liabilities has been granted to the Schweizerische Spar und Kreditbank (Banque Suisse d'Epargne et de Crédit) by the Swiss Federal Council.

The bank was founded a year ago, with a share capital of Frs.13,400,000 (£620,000) to continue the business of the re-organised Banque Co-operative Suisse. It has now been found by the directors that the re-organisation was incomplete.

The moratorium will be in force as from 17th December.

Banking creditors at sight are not affected; the service of interest must be maintained under the moratorium and bills of exchange met on presentation. The bank's business is being continued.

MARCEL BENOIST PRIZE 1936.

The Marcel Benoist Foundation has bestowed the "Marcel Benoist Prize" for 1936 on Doctor A. Banotti from Bedigliora (Ticino), late Professor of Medicine at the University in Berne.

LOCAL.

VAUD.

The death has occurred in Lausanne of Dr. Oscar Däppen, since 1923, a Clerk of the Federal Tribunal, at the age of 43.

M. Fernando Pedrini, from Biasca, has been elected President of the Federal Insurance Tribunal in Lausanne.

GRISONS.

The death is reported of M. Thomas Dorta, President of the community of Samaden, and a member of the Grand Council, at the age of 64.

ZUG.

M. Josef Knüsel (Risch) a member of the cantonal government for the last 40 years, has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary. M. Knüsel was three times "Landammann."

"OLD FOLKS" CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON.

This unique function in the London Swiss Colony took place at the "Foyer Suisse," Upper Bedford Place, W.C., on Saturday last.

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 worldly 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 lucky to attend this enjoyable gathering for the last five or six years as a guest. —

It so often happens, that members of the Colony, who, owing to their getting on in years, or to misfortune are unable to take anymore an active part in the Colony, they, like a well-known English soldier's song says: "Faded away."

And yet, how many, have deeply felt, that they have been forgotten by their compatriots, and in their loneliness, which unfortunately is one of the less agreeable sides of old age, they have at times felt bitter that nobody seems to care anymore for them.

It is therefore all the more to the credit of the Management of the Foyer Suisse, that they at least show them that they are not forgotten, and I congratulate them on this "beau geste," which is so much appreciated.

This year's attendance was bigger than ever. I have been told that over 60 of our compatriots were present, some of those who I met during the last few years, have grown older, and got a little "whiter," and alas, some of my old friends, are no more amongst us, they have gone to their eternal rest, where they have found the peace which we so sadly need in these times.

Yes, some have grown old and perhaps a little tired, and yet, when they looked at the lovely Xmas tree and when they listened to those old, and yet ever young Xmas melodies, which perhaps they had sung, many, many years ago, as children in our beloved country, they once again, if only for a few moments, felt young, their eyes brightened up and many a tear was secretly wiped away; yes old in age but ever young in attachment to our country. Life has treated some none too kindly, and many a dream has been shattered, but whatever pranks destiny has played on them,

CITY SWISS CLUB.

Messieurs les membres sont avisés que

L'ASSEMBLÉE MENSUELLE

aura lieu Mardi 4 Janvier au Restaurant PAGANI-42, Great Portland Street, W.1. et sera précédée d'un souper à 7h. 15 précises (prix 5/-).

ORDRE DU JOUR:

Procès-verbal.	Démotions.
Admissions.	Divers.

Pour faciliter les arrangements, les participants sont priés de bien vouloir s'inscrire au plus tôt auprès de Monsieur P. F. Boehringer, 23, Leonard Street, E.C.2. (Téléphone: Clerkenwell 9595).

Le Comité.

hardship and disappointment was forgotten, they were happy in a companionship of mutual understanding.

There was, of course, everything there to make one happy, congenial company and a fine luncheon, consisting of soup, fish, turkey, Xmas pudding, sweets, fruit and even cigarettes and cigars; in addition the Hall was beautifully decorated, and I wish to pay a special compliment to the young lady who looked after the decorations, and whilst I am handing out compliments, I wish to mention that the young ladies who so efficiently served, were very kind and considerate to the old people, they were full of smiles and I am sure it added to the "brightness" of the gathering.

The presence of the Swiss Minister, who seldom misses an "Old Folks Xmas Luncheon" gave the party a certain *caché*, he addressed the gathering in a "homely" manner, and much hilarity was caused, when Monsieur Paravicini suggested, that next year a dance should be held after the Luncheon. He informed the company that the Silver Medal presented on this occasion, by the House Committee, to the oldest member present, would go to Mrs. Maria Halter who will be 84 years old on Xmas Day. 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 birthday of the recipient.

Mr. F. G. Sommer, extended to the guests a hearty welcome on behalf of the Committee of Management, he recalled the lamented death of Pasteur Hoffmann-de Visme, who on so many occasions had eloquently addressed this gathering. Pasteur U. Emery also spoke a few words, and gave a reading from the scripture.

But there were not only speeches, a musical programme had been arranged by a number of charming young Ladies, and that their kindness was greatly appreciated was proved by the warm applause which their performance earned.

And so ended once again one of the most successful Xmas Luncheons to our "Old Folks" to be present at such a function is a pleasure which I would not miss for anything, because it is a pleasure, and it does us "youngsters" (!) a lot of good to see how our old people still love their country, and how, at the eventide of their earthly pilgrimage their attachment to it is, if anything, growing stronger.

The Committee of Management of the Foyer Suisse, as well as the Staff of the Foyer, are to be congratulated on their splendid arrangement, this day will, I am sure, be remembered by many who were privileged to attend.

ST.

UNIONE TICINESE.

35th Annual Concert and Ball in aid of the "Fonds de Secours."

PAGANI'S, December 15th, 1937.

"Cheer up, Joe!" said I to an old, but still very strong acquaintance who is really quite a good sort despite the parallel wrinkles, as deep as the ruts of an ill-tended country lane, that traverse his forehead, and despite also a face as depressing as an October sky.

"Christmas 's round the corner, Joe; you and I should by now be getting down seriously to the business of making merry," I ventured encouragingly.

The response was a chuckle, followed by the mournful reply: "Xmas again eh — to me it is just a sign that we are halfway through the tunnel part of the year — there's never anything new; I'm bored stiff."

It looked a hopeless case when a helpful idea came to me: "Come on, Joe, come along to-night to Pagani's; the "Unione Ticinese" are having a do, and you may enjoy yourself." Somewhat reluctantly Joe agreed, and later kept his word.

To turn now to the serious business of reporting (may the kind reader pardon the flippant

introduction), the 35th Annual Concert and Ball, organized by the "Unione Ticinese" in aid of the "Fonds de Secours" — to give the "do" in question its official designation — provided an evening of sound entertainment in the most pleasant surroundings. No need to allude here to that atmosphere of cordial friendliness that is the hallmark of all the "Ticinese" gatherings; indeed hardly anybody present can have escaped the illusion of taking part in a big family party, such was the informality of the proceedings. Yet this year, in spite of the established popularity of the function, the attendance figure did not attain last year's record, kept down possibly by such diverse causes as becalmed stock markets, sinister events lurking on the political horizon, or maybe even "Xmas preparations" in most households. Whatever the real cause might have been, the moderate attendance undoubtedly disappointed in view especially of the philanthropic object, and also in view of the great effort made by the Organizing Committee in order to make the evening the success it well deserved to be. If your reporter be allowed to voice a personal opinion, the list of events in the Colony in the past three months has been a heavy one, and anybody who might have tried to "do" the lot might have found himself gasping for breath. Nevertheless, the fewer the merrier, seemed to be the watchword, and more than one item of a well chosen programme was encored.

The artists proved a workmanlike, yet highly efficient lot. Toni struck a characteristic note when he started off with an accordion recital of popular Italian tunes, and later demonstrated his skill as a one-man-band assisted by Yento, the monkey, who smartly saluted every time his master completed a piece.

At school the axiom that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points used to prelude an hour of unmitigated dullness. But not so the lines drawn with lightning rapidity by Mr. Rupert Harvey's crazy crayon, which provoked wave upon wave of mirth as they brought before our astonished eyes the likenesses of outstanding members of the audience. Particularly brilliant were, however, a scientific study of ladies ("Under the blue hat") and, oh, a whole row of marching guardsmen; this last drawn by Mr. Harvey whilst the audience at his instigation whistled the refrain of the Grenadier marching tune.

But the evening's "tour de force" belongs to Miss Eva Cattaneo, the "Ticinese's" own soprano, for at various appearances she sang a number of classical and popular arias, with all the charm and perfection we are now wont to expect from her, though battling in between whiles with an importunate headache. "Music in May" which, with another song, she executed with characteristic gusto during an interval in the dance held her hearers enraptured.

Miss Violetta Montuschi, who followed Signorina Cattaneo with the execution on the piano of two classical excerpts of the lighter kind, revealed a high ability to handle the keyboard. Unfortunately the titles went unannounced, but we hope we shall have the privilege of hearing her again in the near future.

A singing tone and a happy lyrical style seem to be natural with Mr. Ch. Katz, the violin virtuoso; on the platform, during the supper, and again in the course of the dance he valiantly and successfully performed to add to our musical entertainment.

The President of the "Unione Ticinese," the genial Mr. Oscar Gambazzi, butted in to make an impassioned appeal on behalf of the "Fonds de Secours," pointing out that through a succession of adverse circumstances the finances of this deserving Institution had undergone, during the current year, a severe strain. Monsieur R. Dupraz the President of the "Fonds de Secours," replied briefly to thank Signor Gambazzi for his appeal and the "Unione Ticinese" for their loyal support of his Society's activities.

The Organizing Committee, who are to be commended for an excellent effort, wish to thank most heartily from these columns two anonymous gentlemen "from Hampstead." A hitch in the otherwise impeccable arrangements caused the diners to be regaled by the band whereas the keen dancers who had sacrificed an exquisite meal on the altar of Terpsichore were left stranded. The said gentlemen with admirable "sang froid" gallantly stepped into the breach to supply the all-important means.

Spurred on by the band, the official one which finally arrived amid vigorous clapping, itching feet found plenty of scope in a rich succession of dances, from which the indispensable Paul Jones was not excluded.

All in all it was a most enjoyable evening, even though our friend Joe would not be prepared to admit it readily. One might have caught glimpses of him whirling around the parquet, delicate arms clasped around him, blonde, brunette; no trace of the parallel furrow-like wrinkles, but a blissful grin lighting up his features as brightly as the May sunshine.

A merry Christmas to all from

eusj.

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