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Students' X'mas Dinner & Ball

at the
Prince's Galleries, Piccadilly, W.1
on
FRIDAY, DECEMBER, 16th 1938.
President Education Dept. : W. MEIER.

There are moments in a man's life, when one realises with almost unpleasant suddenness, that the years of golden youth are left far behind; that the spectre of old age is rapidly approaching.

This feeling took hold of me last Friday, when I had the pleasure to be a guest at the Xmas Dinner and Ball of the Students of the S.M.S. College.

Fortunately this, perhaps unwarranted depression lasted only a few seconds, how could one feel sad, when one is surrounded by such a splendid array of young, happy and smiling faces, it is a real tonic in these days of uncertainty when heavy clouds pregnant with evil forebodings are still hovering over us.

The "motto" of the evening was, "let us forget and be merry and bright," are we not near Xmas, the time of goodwill and kindness to our fellow men?

Outside it rained in torrents, inside reigned sunshine. —

A short reception was held previous to the dinner, which gave everybody a chance to get acquainted with "Who is Who."

I am glad to say that there was no toastmaster with red coat, knee breeches and medals, nor were there any Excellencies or Lords, or great celebrities, (apart from the celebrities known in the Colony), but the aristocracy of youth was present, and that was all that was necessary to make the evening a huge success.

It has become a habit to-day that certain people fail to attend at dinners for fear that something might be said which could hurt their dignity, or walk out, because they were not made enough fuss off.

Nothing of this sort happened here, the gathering was quite prepared to swallow, apart from an excellent dinner, a few home truths; and as to the lack of compliments to be showered upon them, they know full well that such cheap glory is not worth a tinker's toss.

Two compliments, however, I should like to pay at this point, firstly to the management of the Prince's Galleries who deserve praise for their excellent and wholesome dinner efficiently served, and to the organisers for having dispensed with a noisy orchestra during the dinner. Nothing is so exasperating as to have to shout at one's neighbour, especially when one has a young and pretty table companion, how can one pay a tribute to their charms, when everybody around can hear you uttering those sweet things which are only meant for two dainty little ears. —

During the Dinner the two customary toasts were given, the one to H.M. the King and to our country, the latter one was particularly enthusiastically received.

The speeches which followed were not too long, and found an attentive audience.

The youthful and energetic President of the Education Committee, Mr. W. Meier, accompanied by his equally youthful and charming wife, was in the Chair, an ideal couple for a students dinner. It was left to Mr. Meier to give the first speech of the evening and when he rose he was heartily cheered, he said :

Once again we are gathered here for the Annual Christmas Dinner and Dance of the Swiss Mercantile Society College. This has always been the outstanding social event in College life, in which many of us have taken part regularly for years past. But most of the students are here for the first time and to them I would say that in this country Christmas marks a very jolly and cheerful time. Gay parties are held in almost every house and good food and strong drinks are of great importance. Most important of all, however, is the spirit of true friendship and goodwill.

This is the students' own Christmas party and on their behalf I wish to welcome you all, Ladies and Gentlemen, in the real Christmas spirit.

When arrangements were discussed for this dinner we were trying to break with tradi-

tion and to get a student to take the chair. We were unsuccessful, however, and this is why my wife and I are again in this position to-night.

As your Chairman I have the privilege to say a few special words of welcome to our distinguished guests and visitors.

From the Swiss Legation we have Monsieur Girardet, Counsellor of Legation and Commercial Attaché. This is his first visit, as he has only recently taken over the duties of Dr. Rezzonico whom we remember as a great friend of the College. We are honoured by your presence, Sir, and we hope you will feel at home in our company.

I am happy to welcome the President of the Swiss Mercantile Society, Mr. A. Steinmann. At the recent Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Society Mr. Steinmann was made an Honorary Member which is the highest honour the Society can bestow upon its members.

I am particularly glad we have as our guest this evening one who has been a member of the Society for 41 years and who is one of the founders of the College. I am referring to Mr. G. De Brunner. He has been one of the leading members of the Society for many years and as a Trustee he still takes an active part in the administration of the College. His advice is often sought and highly respected.

We are fortunate in having with us such distinguished visitors as Mr. Carlo Chapuis, accompanied by Madame Chapuis, Mr. Krucker, Mr. Max Schneider. These gentlemen are members of the Council. In addition there are many Committees and other members present and I regret I cannot mention them all by name. I would say this, however, that their attendance shows once more the great interest they take in the College and the students. Here I must mention, also, the members of the Education Committee. Unfortunately, for the first time for many years the Committee is not complete, several members having been unable to come. But Mr. Weist, Mr. Streit and Mr. Rothlisberger are here together with their ladies. I take this opportunity to thank my colleagues for their continued co-operation.

As you know, we are in the happy position to know the Police from the friendly side. We can look upon a long series of football matches and athletic contests with the C Division of the Metropolitan Police. We have on many occasions enjoyed the hospitality of their Sports Ground and Club House, complete with bar, at Imber Court. We are glad, therefore, to have as our guest this evening one of their high officers, Mr. Cole, who is Superintendent of the C. Division. Unfortunately, Mr. Mulvey, who is Sub-Divisional Inspector at Tottenham Court Road Station and whom we had the pleasure of meeting at Imber Court recently, has at the last moment been prevented from being here by official duties.

I now come to the College itself. From there we entertain as our guests Mr. Weaver, our official examiner, who is also an examiner at the London University, and Mr. White, who is chief invigilator at the examinations held at the College by the Institute of Commerce. I recommend the students to be particularly kind to these gentlemen.

Then I wish to greet the members of the Teaching and Administration Staff of the College headed by Mr. Levy and Mr. J. J. Schneider. I take it that your applause is meant to the same measure for every individual member of the staff including Mr. Bossard and the office boy. (Renewed applause).

Lastly, I have pleasure in welcoming the representatives of the press. The press occupies such an important part in our lives to-day that I am sure the press lords will forgive me for mentioning them at the end. Besides, if you will look at your menu you will find that the finest delicacies are served at the end. We have with us the Editor of the "Swiss Observer," Mr. Stauffer, accompanied by Mrs.



Stauffer, also Dr. Egli of the "Bund" and Dr. Kessler of the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung." Having followed the maxim "d'abord la jeunesse, après la beauté" I now welcome Miss Du Bois of "La Suisse" and "La Patrie Suisse."

And now, Ladies and Gentlemen, let us forget the troubles of the world and enjoy the invigorating atmosphere of youth. I would ask all the students of the College to rise and to drink with me the health of our guests and our visitors.

On resuming his seat Mr. Meier received great applause.

Second on the toast list was Monsieur L. A. Girardet, Counsellor of Legation, who represented the Swiss Minister, who is at present on his vacation in Switzerland.

It was the first time, that M. Girardet had attended a students dinner, and if I am not mistaken, it was also the first time that he had spoken officially at a function in the Swiss Colony in England, and these two facts, no doubt accounted for the generous applause he received when addressing the company, his words were as follows :

It is with the greatest of pleasure that in addressing you to-night I am upholding what nearly amounts to a tradition or, in other words, that I do as our mutual friend Monsieur Rezzonico has been doing during the last few years on the same occasion. Just before leaving London he reminded me: Don't forget the Swiss College! I promised I would not and so, when your Principal, Mr. Levy, came the other day to "rake me in," I replied stoutly: Here I am, let us go to the School.

Now having got there I must start with a confession. This is my maiden speech in England. I am feeling very shy and subdued. However, I sincerely hope that you won't boo me down for this, but in case you should feel like it, please think preferably beforehand of the pianist in the well-known story who was doing his best.

It seems likely that most of us have been to school. Some may have learnt something there, others perhaps less so. I do not wish to be personal. How be it, we have been lectured at for years on end and, which means a lot in favour of our teachers anyway, most of us have come to like and love it. Thus, there remains in the years after deep in our memories an unfailing affection for our old school. Out of this feeling we have gathered together to-night, pupils of the Swiss College or of other schools here and elsewhere to bid the College of the Swiss Mercantile Society a "Long may it live!"

We are nearing Christmas. This is the proper time to mention gifts. Don't be afraid, I am not going to make you any with the exception of my very best wishes for all and sundry, and especially for the teachers and the pupils of the Swiss College. I also take this opportunity of expressing to you on behalf of the Minister who, as you know, is on his vacation in Switzerland, his regrets of not being with us to-night, and his sincerest wishes for all of you, for the prosperity of the College and for the success of this celebration.

There is however one gift of which I wish to remind the pupils of the College. It is a gift they are receiving and not giving, not receiving at Christmas only but every day of their life in England. It is the privilege of living in peace and comfort and amongst friends in the greatest city of the largest empire in this world. This is a great privilege. Enjoy it and make the most of it. To be sure, I know that you do and I am even aware that you are on sporting terms with the Police Force. That's the spirit! Good sport and good fellowship. These are the best years of your life. Years during which each day brings new experiences and new thoughts. I am thinking in particular of those amongst you who, being newcomers, may sometimes be surprised at all the novelties and the differences in comparison with our Swiss ways and customs. Here is a little advice to those who

may find it at times difficult to find their bearing in their new surroundings. Do not forget that you are here as guests among friends, and that a guest is never welcome when criticising his host. Do not forget either that it takes two to make a friendship and that kindness must never be let go unrequited.

Do not take this as a lecture. We have come here to eat, dance and be merry. We are here amongst friends and I wish you to think that your honorary uncle of Montagu Place is also one of your friends.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, there is one more thing for me to say. It is to thank you for not having shouted me down so far. Do be sure that I appreciate it.

Long and sincere was the cheering when M. Girardet concluded his address.

The next speaker was Mr. B. Rosenberg, a student of the College, who, with a good accent, expressed, on behalf of his colleagues the thanks to the Swiss Mercantile Society for the opportunity they enjoy of gaining a wider experience both in the English language as well as in other subjects.

Mr. Rosenberg said :

It is my privilege and honour to be called upon to speak on behalf of all the students. Do not fear that I am going to tell a long, long story for nearly all present know the old proverb, "Short speeches and long sausages."

We students owe a deep debt of gratitude to the Swiss Mercantile Society, which is the London Section of the "Schweizerische Kaufmännische Verein." As far as I have been able to see, the chief activity of the S.M.S. is the College to which we have the pleasure to belong.

The year 1938 is now coming to an end and with some trembling we think of some of the dark days we have spent in this hospitable country. This is not the time or the place to refer to political matters but to what I refer are the dark days of hard work and the light nights, when instead of being in bed our land-ladies complained of the consumption of electricity which enabled us to stay up late in order to continue our studies. I am certain my fellow students will agree with me that not one of us regrets the time we have spent at Swiss House and if we had our choice over again we should not miss the great opportunity of going to the College in Fitzroy Square. At that great seat of study we have learned very much and if on our part we had worked harder we should have known much more. If we at times missed some of the excellent lessons, it was not entirely due to the number of "Corner Houses" and cinemas in this great city. I hope the teachers will realize that on all occasions "the spirit was willing but the flesh was weak." There were times when we were officially advised to miss work. That delighted us very much indeed for they were the occasions when we went on the various interesting excursions arranged by the College. Although I am not a great athlete, I know most of the students appreciate the College arrangements made for athletics, tennis and football.

May I express a few words of our great gratitude to the Teaching Staff of the College for all they do for the students. I must admit that sometimes some of us are troublesome in different ways but I assure you that *Your* "naughty girls and naughty boys" in no way bear any malice. I ask you to forgive us, for our "mental indigence" is in no way intended to be "criminal."

I am fully aware that the success of the College largely depends on those Swiss gentlemen who are on the various Committees and give up so much of their time to direct the affairs of the Swiss Mercantile Society and its College and specially on those "Ausländer," the Principal of the College and his active teaching staff.

We shall ever keep happy memories of those delightful days spent at Swiss House and I ask all my fellow students to drink to the continued success of the College.

The efficient delivery of the speech was befittingly acknowledged.

M. A. Levy, Principal of the College, who received an almost riotous reception on rising, thanked M. Rosenberg for the words of appreciation so spontaneously given; he continued saying "our College is a very important institution, it was not founded as a commercial concern, and it never will be run on commercial lines. The machinery of the College is very intricate and the Gentlemen on the various committees will see that the machinery is in full working order."

Addressing the students in particular, Mr. Levy said: "I do sincerely hope for yourselves that a fair number of hours every day are devoted to serious study, so that when you come to that horror, the Diploma Examination you will not

imagine that the Examiner has put down questions simply to trick you and to cause mental tortures."

The speaker then said, that it is common knowledge that the Diploma issued by the College is recognised by many big firms in Switzerland as a document worth having.

In concluding Mr. Levy said: "We sincerely hope that our efforts for the students are not in vain. Our great purpose is not simply to try to ram into your heads the various subjects marked on the time-table. If you learn all that, well and good, for that will help you in the course of time to get a little bread and butter which is very important. We try to do more than that. When you get out into the world we want you to do your best for the happiness of mankind in general, for the welfare of yourselves, and last but not least for the honour and glory of your small but great country — Switzerland."

On the conclusion of this sincere address, the gathering witnessed another great ovation.

This was the last speech, and everyone was then asked to adjourn to one of the adjoining halls, where a "Schnitzelbank" was recited by one of the students. Unfortunately the usual caricatures were not forthcoming, either the artist or his work failed to appear.

Then dancing started, to the accompaniment of a very lively orchestra.

Paul Jones, valse and the Lambeth Walk followed each other in quick succession. During an interval Mr. W. Matthyer, a student of the College, gave us a few yodells, accompanied on his accordion which were greatly enjoyed.

The *clou* of the evening was again the *Polonaise*, under the direction of M. J. J. Schneider, the lively secretary of the S.M.S. Here I must confess to a rather mean trick, which I played on one of my colleagues from the Press, a newly appointed Lady correspondent of some French Swiss papers.

This charming Lady could, of course, not know that this famous *Polonaise* ended up under the mistletoe, as she had never attended before, but I, full-well knowing what was in store for her, led her to the "slaughter-bench;" when it dawned on her what was waiting for her, I noticed a certain nervousness but I am glad to say, that she bravely faced the ordeal, and as some good friends of mine mercifully drew the curtain, I will not divulge what actually happened in that "seclusion" I am, however, still alive "to tell the tale."

At two o'clock this very successful evening came to an end, and everybody departed with the satisfaction of having spent an enjoyable few hours, which were, alas, far too short.

ST.

"DER ALTJAHRLOBE."

Chömmet ihr Fründe vo nah und vo fern
Hüt fieret mer Sylvester im goldige Stärn,
Näh Abschied vom nunzähdrissig und acht
Das üs so viel Chummer und Sorge het gmacht.

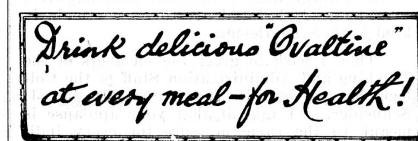
Wei vergässe, mags au für an Obe nur sy
Alli Müeh, alles Wueschte und böse derby,
Da lieg, nur was z'Menu üs offeriert
Zufriedeheit wird als ersti Platte serviert —

Druf G'sundheitsuppe und den persee
A Glückspastete, als würdlige Entrée,
G'Muetlichkeit isch der Name vom Brate
Zum Dessert ihr chönnets gwüss errate —

Gibts artige Flouse, a bitzli Humor
Mit Frohsinn, a Liedli vom g'sammte Chor
A' gffächet mit eme Tröpfeli Wy
Da chame gwisse vieles vergässe derby

Jez lütte d'Glogge, so fierlig und schön
Zur "Gräbt" vom Altjahr i tiefdumpfe Tön,
Und hält jubiliend deme neue etgäge
J wünsche Euch Alle viel Glück und viel Säge.

H.E.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Monday, December 26th, from 8.30 p.m.-2 a.m. — Boxing Day Ball — Helvetia Club — at 1, Gerrard Place, W.1.

Saturday, December 31st, at 8.30 p.m. — New Year's Eve Grand Ball and Carnival — Helvetia Club, 1, Gerrard Place, W.1.

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Dimanche, 25 décembre 1938.

11h. — Prédication et Culte de St. Cène. M. M. Pradervand.

Lundi, 26 décembre 1938.

Arbre de Noël, avec le concours du Chœur, violoniste, et enfants de l'école du dimanche.

THE de 4 heures à 5 heures.

Invitation cordiale à tous.

SCHWEIZERKIRCHE (Deutschsprachige Gemeinde).

St. Anne's Church, 9, Gresham Street, E.C.2.
(near General Post Office.)

Sonntag, den 25. Dezember 1938.

11h — Vormittagsgottesdienst mit Abendmahlfeier Pfr. E. Bommeli.

Kein Abendgottesdienst.

Sylvester-Altjahrsabend,
Samstag, den 31. Dezember, 7h. Abends :

Gottesdienst und Feier des Abendmahlies,
Pfr. E. Bommeli.

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