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OUR NATIONAL DAY IN THE LONDON COLONY.

No official celebration to commemorate the 1st of August had been arranged in deference to the existing curfew restrictions, but wherever Swiss happened to meet — in restaurants and clubs — the patriotic manifestations lost none of the traditional fervour which always characterizes these occasions. Here are a few reports :—

Mycket Arms. — Can you picture Lake Lucerne right in the middle of Switzerland with its beautiful scenery on a fine summer evening — in fact on August 1st — the very heart of our beloved Switzerland where our confederation originated 649 years ago — a comfortable and modern Swiss Inn filled with enthusiastic Landleute, all ready to celebrate in a cheerful yet dignified manner all that Switzerland stands for and to listen to the Mayor or to a well known Conseiller d'état or a Bundesrat — a good recherche meal rendered even more attractive by the addition of Swiss wines — lots of flowers too and of the proper red and white national colours — a small band with the typical accordionist giving it that local colour so highly appreciated by us Swiss.

That is in a nut shell the atmosphere which our artist, Mr. A. Widmer, specially created to give a touch of homeland to those of his compatriots who were fortunate enough to attend the 1st August celebrations at his famous establishment “The Mycket Arms,” Perivale, London.

The lake and the scenery were artistically exhibited on the walls of Mr. Widmer's restaurant. I understand this masterpiece is the work of one of his close collaborators. Mr. Widmer pushed the delicacy of his feelings a step further by adorning the dance hall with a huge Swiss flag on either side of which hung proudly a Union Jack. A true picture of the intimate friendship which has always existed between our two democracies. The stage was indeed properly set to ensure the complete happiness of some 90 English and Swiss guests.

The ladies were at their best, they all looked “a million dollars” as our American friends would say, particularly after being presented with a lovely buttonhole of carnations, red and white, of course, by Mr. Widmer.

I need not enlarge on the success of the dinner. The Mycket Arms's cuisine in the hands of a most able Swiss Chef is already reputed. In a few moments one forgot the awful war with all its atrocities and worries, and a typical Swiss atmosphere prevailed. Mr. Widmer had also thought of the official speech, and here again his arrangements were perfect for he asked Mr. Louis Chapuis, President of the City Swiss Club, to address the audience. Mr. Chapuis confirmed the feelings of friendship, the mutual respect which have united our two countries for centuries. We are the proud citizens of the only two democracies left in Europe, said Mr. Chapuis. All those present were greatly moved by his patriotic exhortation and our English friends joined wholeheartedly in the tumultuous applause that greeted our esteemed President.

An English Major who had spent some time in Switzerland was so pleased with the proceedings that he insisted on also praising our beloved Motherland.

He went on to describe his happy reminiscences of the Swiss Navy performing on Lake Leman, and gave us a vivid recollection of what he called the peaceful Swiss Aircraft guns — Canons à grele; they are so useful, he said in protecting the famous Dezaley, which he justly qualified one of the finest nectars in the World. He then invited his compatriots to drink to the continued prosperity of Switzerland, and this I notice he did with real Zuger Kirsch. Well, that confirmed my opinion that he must be a real connoisseur.

The whole assembly joined in singing the British and Swiss National Anthems, and gave an ovation to both speakers, Mr. Louis Chapuis and the Major by singing to each “For he's a jolly good fellow.”

An enthusiastic Englishman insisted on making a donation towards the Swiss Relief Centre which was gratefully received, and all those present bought the emblems in aid of the Swiss Relief Centre which had kindly been supplied by the Union Helveticia.

Then on with the dance, and a pleasant interlude of Swiss Potpourri on the accordion.

Suddenly, we had to face the enemy: Time. A friend suggested that some enterprising clock man should invent a timepiece which would go really slow on such occasions. The Curfew ... our sense of order and duty ... and we had to leave that Paradise of Swiss sunshine and happiness, and re-enter darkness. Everyone realised all too soon that we were not in pre-war peaceful Switzerland, but in the blackout, and at war.

All left very happy at having spent a most enjoyable evening, met old friends, and made new ones, and were fortified in that feeling which we cherish and fight for, freedom and happiness.

Our hearty congratulation and thanks go to our friend Widmer who has once more confirmed his reputation as a perfect host and a good patriot.

Bee.

* * *

Union Helveticia Club. — More enthusiasm than could really be expected in these serious times was in evidence at 1, Gerrard Place, W.1, which is the London home of the “Swiss Hotel Employees Society.” The dance arranged for the occasion attracted a large number of compatriots and their English friends. Badges were sold for the benefit of the Swiss National Day and Swiss Relief Centre funds and found ready buyers.

* * *

Swiss Club Schweizerbund. — An equally high-spirited gathering mustered at 74, Charlotte Street, W.1. A few Swiss legionaires from the now disbanded French Foreign Legion formed the centre of attraction; their experiences were eagerly listened to and one of them addressed the audience as follows:—

Switzerland feiert hente am 1. Aug die Gründung seines Bestehens. Von allen Bergen und Tälern leuten die Glocken. In allen Herzen leuchtet die Freude der Freiheit und strömt der Dank zu Gott für den Schutz im Völkerkampf. Switzerland, die Insel des Friedens, umbraust von den Wogen des Krieges, schütze deine Grenzen, erhalte deine Traditionen, ruhmvoll ist deine Vergangenheit!

Auch wir Schweizer im Ausland besonders im gastfreundlichen England feiern den Tag des Rütl-

Schwures. Mit sehnstüchten Blicken schauen wir aus weiter Ferne die Bergspitzen mit ewigem Schnee herniederleuchten auf unser Land und die ganze Welt. Sie rufen uns zu: Schweizer, vergiss deine Heimat nicht. Viele haben die Heimat verlassen, sind ausgewandert in alle Welt, die Not der Arbeitslosigkeit, der Drang nach der grossen Welt, Fehler und Schwächen der menschlichen Seele, haben sie sogar in die Fremden-Legion getrieben. Mutter Helvetia, auch diese Söhne gedenken Deiner an diesem Jahrestage; viele sind nicht mehr unter uns, sind gefallen auf Frankreichs Erde und in den Bergen von Norwegen für die Freiheit des Geisteslebens der Völker und die Freiheit der Demokratien der Welt. Nun ist die Legion aufgehoben; der Verrat und Betrug an der französischen Nation hat auch uns in eine schwierige Situation gebracht. Wir geniessen zur Zeit die Gastfreundschaft Englands sowie viel Sympathie und Entgegenkommen einer guten Bevölkerung, was wir an dieser Stelle herzlich verdanken. Viele sind zurück nach Frankreich, andere sind in Konzentrations-Lagern, der Rest ist Volontair. Die neue Formierung einer franz. Legion gibt uns allen zu denken. Nicht alles was glänzt ist Gold und wir sehen die grossen Gefahren, denen unser eigenes Land ausgesetzt ist. Wir appellieren deshalb an die Vertreter unseres Landes uns in unserer Verlassenheit beizustehen mit Rat und Tat. Gott schütze die Schweiz, Gott schütze England, Gott schütze den König.

* * *

Eglise Suisse. — Dimanche 28 juillet, l'Eglise Suisse était comble pour le culte patriotique célébré à l'occasion de la Fête nationale. Les membres des deux communautés s'étaient joints pour cette occasion, et le culte fut célébré en français et en allemand. C'était émouvant d'entendre chanter nos cantiques en des langues différentes, mais dans un même esprit.

Ce culte a non seulement permis aux Suisses de Londres de prier pour leur patrie, en ces temps sérieux. Il a affirmé l'unité spirituelle de notre colonie, unité plus nécessaire que jamais.

THE THOUSANDTH CLIMB.

(“*The Times*,” 6.8.1940.)

A well-known Swiss guide, M. Fritz Steuri, yesterday climbed the Jungfrau for the thousandth time. Many a yet active and able-bodied traveller, looking up at that mountain from even so high as the upper end of the Jungfrau railway, once and perhaps still the highest railway station in the world, must have vowed that so pure a maiden could never be overcome, so terrible a mountain never climbed. And, though it was as long ago as 1811 that the two Meyer brothers, of Aarau, first climbed the Jungfrau, the ascent was only made four times in the next forty years. The most beautiful mountain in the world, in the opinion of Mr. Ruskin, was not, he felt, properly appreciated by the travellers of his time. Its beauty may not yet be properly appreciated by the many to whom those three monarchs of the Bernese Oberland — the Mönch, the Eiger, and the Jungfrau — are made more than familiar by the coloured picture postcards. But no lover of beauty has failed to worship; no climber has

ever found the Jungfrau easy. Fifteen years ago Mr. F. S. Smythe, young and rash, nearly cut short his promising career on the quest. M. Fritz Steuri has climbed the Jungfrau a thousand times in thirty-six years — for one reason because he never underrated the difficulty of climbing her once.

In countries where active men, even in middle life, have other things to do just now M. Steuri's persistence in climbing the Jungfrau may suggest the activities which roused Kipling's fury at the flannelled fool and the muddied oaf. How nice to be able to go on climbing the Jungfrau and coming down again! But so long as our own people are urged to strenuous P.T. in the cause of Fitness for Service, so long will it be wise to consider whether the prudent and energetic people of Switzerland see in mountain climbing nothing but an exciting sport and a not unprofitable industry. Switzerland is said to have the finest H.G. in the world, a Citizen Army in which the whole nation is enrolled. And mountaineers to a man are the voluntary officers and men of the skier patrols, masters of snow and ice, at home in great altitudes and like chamois for mobility and physical fitness. In the land of William Tell, moreover, it is only natural that the tradition of straight shooting should be kept up. A Swiss *Schützenfest* is not an annual Bisley for the few; it is a recurrent and truly popular competition, because every man is a marksman, and the rivalry is as keen as it is widespread. Doubtless when M. Steuri is tired of climbing the Jungfrau he takes his rifle and scores bulls-eyes; and he and his fellow-climbers and fellow-shooters are doing more, as we shall do well to remember, than practise substitutes for cricket and football.

CORRESPONDENCE.

5th August, 1940.

The Editor,

The Swiss Observer,

23, Leonard Street, E.C.2.

Dear Sir,

In your last issue, you gave amongst the names of Swiss pilots lost, Lieut. Homberger. I am in the happy position to say that Lieut. Homberger, although at the time very severely wounded, is now recovering. A wire received some little time ago mentioned that he was making good progress and was considered out of danger. The “*Times*” on June 10th reported on the engagement between Swiss and German aircraft and mentioning his name said that, although he was hit in the lungs by two bullets, he succeeded in landing his plane.

Some of your readers will remember Lieut. Homberger as one of the crew that won the famous victory for the Swiss colours at Henley a few years ago. He is a son of Mr. Ernst Homberger who is the Chairman of our Company (Britannia Iron & Steel Works Ltd.), as well as President of the well-known George Fischer Steelworks, Schaffhausen.

Perhaps you will be good enough to correct your last week's statement for the benefit of Mr. Homberger's friends in the Swiss Colony here.

Yours faithfully,

P. BUCHER.