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## SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY

### Monthly Meeting.

A large number of members and friends attended the last Monthly Meeting of the year at Swiss House on Wednesday, 11th December, with Mr. J. J. Boos presiding.

Two resignations were submitted, i.e. Miss O. Longeray and Mr. M. V. Platel, both of whom have returned to Switzerland where they intend to join the local sections of the S.K.V.

An amount of £37.15.6 has so far been subscribed to the "General Guisan Fund for Disabled Soldiers" by members of the Society and the President intimated that the list would shortly be closed so that the proceeds could be handed over before the end of the year. Any members still wishing to contribute are kindly requested to send their remittance at an early date.

Reporting on the activities of the College, Mr. W. Meier, Chairman of the Education Committee, stated that the second course has come to a close, 32 candidates having sat for the Diploma, most of them successfully. Mr. E. Steiner, Trustee, kindly acted as "Prüfungsexperte." The College will remain closed for repairs and renovations until January 20th, by which date it is hoped all essential repairs will have been carried out. Lady students will again be admitted as from that date, but the waiting list is so great that all vacancies have already been filled.

Following the meeting, our member, Mr. A. Tall, gave a very interesting talk on his recent *Mountaineering Experiences*, illustrated with lantern slides from his own photographs. He dealt chiefly with two different parts of his native Grisons, the Bernina region and the mountains of the Bergell, two totally different groups in character and geology. Whilst most of us remembered Mr. Tall's pre-war lectures under the auspices of the Swiss Federal Railways, many of us did not realise that he is not only a ski-ing expert, but also a very keen and adept climber. For variety of colour and contours, the massive giants of the Grisons are singular in their exquisite beauty and peak after peak was mastered by the lecturer and his companions, with many exciting climbing feats on almost perpendicular granite walls and razor-edge ridges. The photographs, taken with a Swiss precision camera, were excellent throughout.

Mr. Tall was given an enthusiastic ovation at the end of his most interesting and entertaining address, a hearty vote of thanks being proposed by the Hon. Secretary, Mr. W. Burren.

There was a surprise in store for those present. Through the good offices of Mr. F. Streit, a member of the Council, we were able to hear an account of the epic rescue on the Rosenlaui glacier. He had brought along with him Mr. Max Amstutz, Manager of the Traffic Office (Verkehrsverein) Meiringen and District, who was over here on a flying visit. Mr. Amstutz was a member of the rescue party which first reached the marooned passengers of the Dakota and enabled the daring Swiss pilots to make their famous flights. Although these operations have been the subject of numerous press, wireless and film reports, it was most interesting to learn the Swiss version from one who had actually taken part. Mr. Amstutz also showed a number of excellent photographs connected with the rescue operations. He was given a vociferous ovation at the conclusion of his thrilling account.

This being the last meeting of the year, the President, on behalf of the Committee, extended best wishes to the members and their families for a Happy Christmas and a Bright New Year.

The next Monthly Meeting will be held at Swiss House on Wednesday, January 8th, at 7 p.m., and will be followed by a "Jassabend."

Members are asked kindly to note the date of the Annual General Meeting, which will be held at the Swiss Club, 74, Charlotte Street, on Thursday, February 13th, 1947, preceded by a supper at 6.30 p.m.

### Children's Christmas Party.

Undaunted by a dismal afternoon, some forty children with their parents wended their way to Swiss House on Saturday, December 14th.

The lecture room was soon filled with the laughter and gay spirit of the expectant children, who were anxiously looking forward to seeing Father Christmas.

Mrs. W. Meier, Chairman of the Ladies' Group, under whose auspices the party had been arranged, welcomed the guests, whose ages ranged from three to fourteen. They soon felt at home and joined in the singing of Christmas carols and songs, to the accompaniment on the piano of Mr. R. Senn.

The star turn of the afternoon was provided by Mr. George King, whose conjuring feats were watched with rapt attention both by the juveniles and the adults. The children were intrigued by his magic touch, which repeatedly drew bursts of laughter and cheering.

After a couple of rounds of musical chairs, the audience adjourned to the second floor, where a room, adorned with a pretty Christmas tree and other decorations, had specially been set apart for the children. It was a treat to watch their expectant faces, all brightly lit up by the flickering candle lights, until finally Father Christmas appeared, dressed in his legendary red cloak and hood, with a long white beard. The excitement was further heightened when all were allowed to have two dips into the mysterious bag, from which they extracted all sorts of presents which gladdened the youngsters' hearts. The children thoroughly enjoyed the tea, which had been nicely set out for them, and I am giving no secret away when I mention that the parents heartily tucked in from the seemingly endless array of excellent pastries and cakes, with which they could serve themselves ad infinitum.

Thus came to a close a most successful and enjoyable afternoon, to the best of my knowledge the first of its kind and well worthy of repetition.

A special word of thanks is due to Mrs. Meier and all the members of the Ladies' Group, who had spared no efforts to make the occasion a memorable one for the children as well as the parents.

*W.B.*

## UNIONE TICINESE — LADIES' SECTION.

The members would like to convey their gratitude to all who came along and bought at the *Christmas Bazaar* at the Swiss House on the 30th November, also to all those kind supporters who gave gifts in money and in kind. As a result, the Section's Benevolent Fund has been considerably assisted, and the members only hope that their customers are well satisfied with their purchases ! Again — a big thank you.

*R.A.*