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SOCIETE DE SECOURS MUTUELS DES SUISSES A LONDRES.
Annual Dinner.

The Annual Dinner of the above Society took place on Wednesday, May 2nd, at their headquarters, 74, Charlotte Street, W.1.

It has always been a puzzle to me, why this Society, which is the oldest one of all Swiss Societies in Great Britain, having been founded *Anno Domini* 1703, is not better known, because it is a remarkable institution in more than one respect. The aims of the "Secours Mutuels" are, of course, explained in the words of its title.

I am sure, no other Swiss Society throughout this land, offers its members so many benefits for so little outlay in cash.

Let me enumerate some of the advantages members enjoy; first of all, in case of illness they can claim compensation, and should they decide to leave this "valley of sorrow", the next of kin or those who are responsible to make their "exit" as decorative as possible, will receive a cheque for £20; furthermore, every member attending an ordinary Meeting is entitled to one bottle of beer at the expense of the Society, and, would you believe it, the Annual dinner is also paid for by the Society, plus the traditional bottle of beer.

This wants a lot of beating; as alive or dead you receive benefits, and yet the membership is only slightly above one hundred, this is amazing, and I feel sure, if such an institution would exist, say *f.i.* in Scotland, the membership roll would be not far below the thousand mark. We Swiss are indeed a queer lot, if we get nothing we grumble, and if we are spoilt we ignore it.

The young and energetic President, Mr. A. L. Gandon, before sitting down to dinner, told me, that the functions of his Society are purely a "family affair" and should be reported as such, especially as no speeches of great importance dealing with world affairs would be inflicted on the audience. This suited me very well and has saved me no end of trouble, but nevertheless I can report, that we had an excellent dinner, which reflects most favourably on the management of the "Schweizerbund" and the compliments which were, later on paid by the President to Mr. and Mrs. L. Portmann, the stewards, were well deserved, proof of its excellence was, that one member asked for more, which was quite in order, as it did not effect his own pocket.

Mr. C. Campart, Hon. President of the Society, proposed the toast to H.M. the King and Switzerland, and Mr. A. Martin, Vice-President of the Secours Mutuels very eloquently greeted the guests who were invited to this feast, they were: Pasteurs C. Reverdin, H. Blum, A. Lanfranchi and Mr. A. Stauffer, Editor of the "Swiss Observer". One of the oldest members of the Society. Mr. Louis Chapuis, asked the company to sing in their honour, "for they are jolly good fellows" which was greatly appreciated, as we know ourselves what remarkable fellows we are. Mr. A. Stauffer, on behalf of the guests, thanked the President for the invitation.

Hardly had the sounds of this flattering tune evaporated, when Mr. Gandon rose from his presidential seat, and gave a short *resumé* of the activities of the Society during the last twelve months, he

referred also to the banner of the Society which was prominently displayed and which was given to the Secours Mutuels by the Ladies of the Colony in 1903, on the occasion of its 200th anniversary.

The President, informed the company, that the previous day (May 1st) Mr. Louis Audemars, had completed his 50th year of membership, and amidst great applause, he presented him with a "red" flower, and to match it the happy birthday child blushed like a young bride. I take this opportunity to associate myself with the President in wishing Mr. Audemars many, many happy returns of the day. Mr. Gandon also mentioned, that next year Mr. J. Joerin will "score his half century."

The official part of the evening thus came to a close and was followed by a musical programme and a *causerie*.

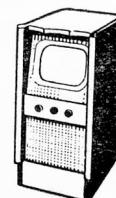
Before finishing this short report, I should like to pay a compliment to the untiring and efficient Secretary of the Secours Mutuels, Mr. W. Kilchenmann, who was responsible for the organisation of this really enjoyable evening; he too deserves a flower, but it need not be a "red" one.

ST.

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