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SWISS CLUB MANCHESTER.

On Sunday June 15th, over sixty of our members and friends, and a similar number from the West Riding Swiss Club (Bradford & Leeds), met at Hebden Bridge in Yorkshire for the annual excursion to Hardcastle Crags and the now traditional open-air meeting. This year we had the great joy of having as guest of honour Mademoiselle Alice Briod, and this alone makes the 1952 "Landsgemeinde" of the Swiss in the North West of England an occasion of historical significance. We had the privilege also of having as guests Father Lanfranchi and Pastor Spoerri, representing thus the Swiss Catholic and Protestant churches in this country.

We were lucky with the weather. The sky at times appeared very threatening, but the walk up the Crags and the greater part of the open-air meeting was held in bright sunshine. The leadership of the "Landsgemeinde" was again entrusted to Mons. P. Inebnit who, as usual, took a census of the cantons represented. Only two cantons were missing, Valais & Geneva. The singing of the "Cantique suisse" at the beginning and of the "Vieux Chalet" at the end was very enthusiastic.

Back at Hebden Bridge, after High Tea at the Victoria Hall, the chairman, our Consul Mr. Oscar Schneider, started the proceedings with a very patriotic speech. This was followed by short but very suitable addresses by first Mademoiselle Briod, then Mons. Jean P. Inebnit as president of the Yorkshire club, Mr. E. R. Cottet as president of the Manchester club, Father Lanfranchi and Pastor Spoerri. All were greatly applauded. The proceedings ended with the singing of the National Anthem and after a few minutes of informal conversation we parted with the feeling of having had a very pleasant and successful day.

For the next day, Monday 16th the Manchester Swiss Club had arranged a special meeting at The Midland Hotel, preceded by an informal dinner. The attendance at the meeting was more than fifty who heard an address by Mademoiselle Briod on the Influence of Women on National Life. As this was given also to the N.S.H. in London and will no doubt be commented upon by them, I shall not report it now. But it gave rise to an excited and interesting discussion, not missing in humour. The vote of thanks was proposed by Madame E. Bebié. The chairman on this occasion was Mr. E. Berner, our Vice President.

After welcoming Mademoiselle Briod and expressing appreciation for the tremendous work she has done for us for now almost a quarter of a century, Mr. Berner referred to the function of the previous day at Hardcastle Crags and here may I be permitted to quote two sentences from his speech, as follows:

"We were specially happy to have Mademoiselle Briod with us at Hardcastle Crags and may I be allowed to add a few words in explanation of that function . . . Yesterday we had a "Landsgemeinde". . . What is a Landsgemeinde? It is the legislative power of some cantons such as Appenzell, Uri, Unterwalden, Glarus and partially Graubünden, an open-air meeting renewed every year for now well over 2,000 years. Everybody attends this solemn civic and political function and none will forget the moment when citizen and Landamann pledge themselves to serve their country unreservedly and faithfully. . . These, Mademoiselle Briod, are some of the feelings of us Swiss living and working in Great Britain. You may tell our countrymen at home that we are very conscious, not only of our rights, but foremost of our duties towards our Country. . . "

On the Saturday 14th, with Mons. Jean P. Inebnit as host, Mademoiselle Briod was shown over the University of Leeds and also visited the City of York and its Minster, whilst on the Monday, 16th, under the wing of the Manchester Swiss Club, a visit was made to some of the most endearing parts of rural Cheshire and Derbyshire. On the Tuesday morning, before returning to Switzerland, an interview was given by the Lord Mayor of Manchester, followed by a visit to the Town Hall and to the famous John Ryland's library.

H.M.



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