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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

CITY SWISS CLUB

CHRISTMAS DINNER

"Never say die!" — For some time, and not without justification, we have been told that the Swiss Colony in this country is slowly dying for want of new blood. One could almost imagine that the majority of the many Societies had already pulled down their shutters and put up the notice "Gone out of business".

Without trying to belittle the position, I am glad to say that matters are not yet as desperate as some people wish us to believe. There is still some life and some hope left. Proof of this is that on the occasion of the 97th Annual Banquet and Ball of the City Swiss Club in November of last year (reported in the December issue) just over two hundred and fifty members and friends attended; barely a month later, on 12th December, nearly one hundred and fifty members and guests were present at the Annual Christmas Dinner of the Club at the Dorchester Hotel. That does not look like "dying", does it?

Christmas Dinners of the City Swiss Club have always been very popular, and well attended; the need is felt, that before a new year is to begin, members should meet to spend a few happy hours together.

On this occasion there was no need to engage a toastmaster to announce the names of the members present, as is done at the banquets of the Club; almost everyone knew each other. Again, as at the last banquet, a good many of the older members were in attendance, and the younger generation was equally well represented.

During cocktails a real Christmas *Stimmung* could be felt, and when it was announced that dinner was to be served, everyone entered the Orchid Room full of pleasant anticipation. This suite, which has seen so many of the Club's dinners in the past, achieved a "new look"; it has changed its colour from pink to pale blue. There was no need to have any Christmas decorations as the room in its additional finery looked festive enough.

It goes without saying, that the principal fare at a Christmas dinner consists, of course, of turkey, Christmas pudding, mince pies, etc., and the company thoroughly enjoyed these, and other delicacies.

On coffee being served, the president, Mr. Th. von Speyr, proposed the usual toasts to H.M. the Queen and "La Suisse". He also voiced his pleasure at seeing such a large attendance, expressing the hope that some of the other meetings of the Club would be better attended. He extended a hearty welcome to Mr. B. Frick, Swiss Consul in Scotland, who has many friends amongst the members of the Club. There were four new members elected. The official part being closed, our old friend, Mr. A. Gandon, and his companions entertained the company by playing various Swiss songs on their accordions, in which everybody lustily joined. There was a humorous "Schnitzelbank" by Mr. J. Heimerdinger, an address in French by the late Mr. A. Renou, and the relating of stories by some of the members, nearly all drawing-room ones.

Before leaving the Dorchester Hotel, Mr. von Speyr wished the members and their families a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year. He also thanked Mr. G. A. Ronus — who unfortunately was unable to be present — for the always generous hospitality the Hotel management extends to the Club.

Everyone departed from Park Lane in joyful spirit, having spent a gay and happy evening in congenial company.

*A. STAUFFER,
Press Reporter, C.S.C.*

SCHWEIZERBUND CHRISTMAS DINNER

Some forty members and friends of the "Schweizerbund" met at the Montana Hotel on Monday night, 10th December. The Club, which had had to quit its premises in Charlotte Street, has been kept going, largely due to the active President, Mr. V. Berti, and the enterprising Honorary Secretary, Mr. J. Schmid, not to forget the jovial Honorary Treasurer, Mr. R. Asch. It was an excellent idea to have a "Fondue Bourgignonne" at the pre-Christmas gathering, and it was a happy crowd who sat round the half-score of spirit heaters on which the copper pans stood full of sizzling oil. The food and wine were excellent, including the Kirsch kindly donated by Montana's Manager, Mr. Bonvin.

The Swiss Ambassador and Madame Daeniker were welcomed by the President, who expressed his appreciation of the steady support always received by the Embassy and its members. The Ambassador addressed the party in a humorous vein. He alluded to the Swiss Centre planned for London and hoped that whilst it might provide the "Schweizerbund" with a new roof over its head, it could also bring a change in the structure of the Colony — fewer clubs and fewer dinners — perhaps one big society with sub-sections. He wished the Swiss Club and the Colony a happy future, whatever its shape.

Mr. Delaloye, an old and respected member of the Society, addressed the gathering and recalled the many AGM's of the Club at which the late Mr. Walter Meier had acted as efficient temporary chairman. He was honoured to welcome his widow, the new Editor of the "Swiss Observer".

The evening was a great success and the writer had only one complaint: The cantonal flags gaily arranged across the room were all complete except for her own — the red bishop's staff of Baselland was missing. Actually, the Appenzell escutcheon was not complete either, but she believes that particular omission to be far less serious than that a "Basellandschäftler" be presumed to belong to Baselstadt! Let that wait until the "Wiedervereinigung", the reunion, becomes a fact, and then we shall see how the flag problem will be solved officially!

But even that slip-up by the flag hangers could not mar the evening for the writer or for anybody else. The Christmas spirit of good-will was at large at this first of the Colony's Christmas Dinners.

Mariann.