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LONDONERS' CHRISTMAS AT DÜRRENAESCH

When one has no grandchildren and one's own children are grown up, Christmas can be rather sad, and when we were invited to join a party going to Dürrenesch, the cost of which would be only a small part of the charge at an English hotel, we decided to go along.

The party (12 in all) assembled at London Airport, somewhat tired from the pre-Christmas rush of card writing and present buying, and wondering what lay ahead: but conversation gradually became more animated, and by the time we boarded the aircraft a tiny spark of anticipation and excitement had been kindled. Little more than an hour later we touched down at Zurich Airport, to be greeted by a smiling young lady who introduced herself as a courier from the "Home". She escorted us to a warm and comfortable coach, and soon we were at Dürrenesch. When we saw the lighted Christmas tree in the garden, had been refreshed with large cups of tea and conducted to our rooms, with their comfortable beds, wash basins, easy chairs, spacious cupboards, abundance of lighting and delightful traditional Christmas decorations on the table, that tiny spark kindled at London Airport began to glow. We knew that the people at the "Home" had really given time and thought to preparing our welcome.

From then on, one surprise led to another. The candle-lit Christmas trees with their Nativity scenes under their branches, which adorned the lounge and *Schweizerstube*, the visit on Christmas Eve of the local Sunday School children who sang carols and performed the Nativity — comprehensible in every language — the arrival of Father Christmas with presents for everyone, the visit to Lenzburg to attend Midnight Mass, the typical Swiss food beautifully garnished and served on huge silver dishes, with generous second-helpings for those who wanted them. Every day brought some fresh pleasure, be it only a walk through the beautiful countryside or joining one of the well organised tours to a winter sports centre, or one of the big cities for a sightseeing and shopping tour. All the guests at the "Home", whatever their nationality, and these included French, Dutch, and Brazilian as well as Swiss and British, joined in these activities which culminated in a hilarious New Year party — Switzerland's time of traditional rejoicing.

So ended our Christmas holiday at Dürrenesch. This, however, is only one small part of the "Home's" activities. Whenever you visit it, the same friendly greeting awaits you. Throughout the year, parties of young and not so young, or individuals travelling alone can be assured that their comfort and well-being are the only concern of the staff, and pleasure trips, study courses, or a combination of both can be arranged to suit any requirements.

The very low cost of a holiday is made possible by the generosity of a Swiss philanthropist whose main desire is that his homeland may be appreciated by Swiss living abroad, British and other foreign nationals and the more the "Home" and its facilities are used the greater is the pleasure derived by all concerned. The informal atmosphere, comfortable accommodation, unfailing friendliness and cheerfulness of the staff cannot be surpassed at any of the sophisticated hotels publicised in the glossy brochures of the more widely known tourist centres.

Already our party is planning other holidays here, and we hope that during these we shall, maybe, meet some of you who have read this account of our Christmas "At Home at Dürrenesch".

Other enthusiastic reports have been sent to us by S.O. subscribers who took advantage of the scheme, and excellent write-ups have appeared in the Swiss Press.

Please apply to Dr. E. Wiget, 1 Umbria Street, Roehampton, S.W.15, for information regarding group visits at reduced cost. Ed.

SWISSAIR FLIES "MARMITE"



By courtesy "Swissair".

Each year on 12th December, Geneva celebrates its victory over the Duke of Savoy's army in 1602 which finally secured the city's independence. Among the Genevians successfully defending their city that night against a surprise attempt to scale the walls with ladders was a gallant lady who hurled at a Savoy soldier an iron pot with the soup she was cooking in it.

Commemorating the event, soup pots made of chocolate and filled with vegetables made of marzipan are sold in Geneva at that time of year. They are put on the table at the traditional "Escalade" (Scaling of the Walls) dinner and smashed at the end of the meal with the words "May thus perish the enemies of the Republic!" — the chocolate and marzipan being distributed to the children.

This year the event was marked by Swissair flying into London from Geneva a large and ornate chocolate "soup pot". It was put on show in the newly opened restaurants at the Swiss Centre, Leicester Square, before being presented to the children's hospital at Gt. Ormond Street.

Our photo shows Swissair hostess Miss Irene Mani and Swissair's London Airport station manager, Mr. P. von Felbert with the pot, bearing the arms of Geneva, after arrival at Heathrow.

Remember the special Annual Film Show on 18th January (see page 52740).