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tion also in our country with troops moving and carriages rolling along the new road. Most important and lasting changes occurred in the political set-up and material features of our country which had suddenly come under close attention by the imperial government.

At the foot of the Grand St. Bernard the present-day town of Martigny became under the name of Forum Claudii Vallensium the chief-town of a new "civitas" uniting the Upper Rhône Valley formerly divided between four small tribes.

Further along the same route the territory of the Helvetians was extended to the Lake of Geneva in the South as far as the Jura and Avenches became its new chief-town. This and all other townships of the area, such as Martigny, Lausanne, Yverdon and Soleure took on a completely new aspect with markets, shops, aqueducts, etc. as in classical Roman towns appearing everywhere, as well as trading and shipping associations.

In conclusion, Prof. van Berchem dilated upon the important role an Italian banker, Flavius Selinus, played in helping to finance much of these new developments, based at Avenches, where he settled and died at a ripe old age. But, more important, he was the father of Vespasian, who followed Nero as Emperor and had his own son and later successor Titus brought up at Avenches by his grandparents, while Vespasian took part in the conquest of Britain as a legion commander.

It was he, foreseeing the wealthy development chances amongst the Helvetians under Roman influence, who

advised his father to establish himself at Avenches and who raised the town to the

status of a Roman Colony in the year A.D. 73 or 74.

H.W.E.

CITY SWISS CLUB

The City Swiss Club held its 111th Annual Banquet and Ball as usual at the Dorchester Hotel on 19th November.

If the attendance at this event — still regarded as socially most important in our Colony — was somewhat less numerous than on many previous occasions it was no doubt due to the increasingly serious economic situation in our host-country which was also reflected in the inevitably rising cost of admission.

Yet, it was a pleasure to see a well-balanced mixture of the older and the younger generations enjoying themselves at the tables and on the dance floor until 2 a.m. although the menu also, with saddle of lamb as its main dish, seemed to reflect the sterner mood of our times.

After dinner the Club's president, Mr. Roger Suess, welcomed the guests, amongst whom especially our Ambassador and Madame Ernesto Thalmann, the chairman of the Anglo-Swiss Parliamentary Group, Mr. Bryant Godman Irvine, M.P., the Ambassador's right-hand man Minister K. Fritschi and the President of our Federation of Swiss Societies in the U.K. Mr. Bernhard Simon and their ladies.

In his speech Dr. Thalmann, diligently striking a lighter vein in keeping with the festive occasion had only good news to impart to his listeners, such as that Britain is again the leading champagne-importing country while Switzerland also is not doing too badly in that

respect holding the 7th place; that Anglo-Swiss relations are at present vastly benefiting from the influx of Swiss Christmas-shoppers in their thousands confusing the staffs of Harrods and other monuments of Britishness with their motley dialects; and finally that the Swiss, despite appearances, are really deeply romantic spenders. They spend 95 francs per head per annum on flowers — more than any other nation in Europe! In conclusion the Ambassador rewarded his hosts with the following pleasing words, which after him were also echoed in an equally charming address of thanks to the Club by Mr. Godman Irvine, M.P., speaking on behalf of all invited guests.

We quote Dr. Thalmann's flattering peroration verbatim:

"The City Swiss Club's 111th Annual Banquet and Ball is proof, if proof were needed, of the vitality and prosperity of your fine Society. At a time when so many clubs, charming survivals of the old British way of life, have become sadly empty in the evening, your gatherings still seem to attract quite a number of people.

"For this achievement, Mr. President, you deserve my congratulations. And tonight, being members of this men-only Club, we have a bonus because we are lucky enough to have persons with us in whom we recognise our sweethearts. We have to confess and accept the fact that once a year we are more than delighted to be escorted by what is erroneously called the weaker sex. H.W.E.

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