

Swiss Mercantile Society

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made after the devaluation of the dollar (May 29th, 1933) and in spite of the circumstances, this loan also was repaid to the full gold value of the dollar. Our American creditors had surely scarcely expected this and they had reason to rejoice in Switzerland's generous interpretation of the meaning of the terms "good faith in contractual undertakings" and in her national honesty.

(S. I. T.)

L'ESSENCE DE LA LIBERTE *.

L'essence de la liberté n'a rien de politique, d'économique, de social: elle est morale. La liberté est en nous. Si nous ne l'avons pas en nous, l'extérieur — la constitution, la loi, l'Etat — est impuissant à nous la donner. Les plus éloquents déclarations ne font que du bruit dans du vide, et voilà pourquoi je te conseille, Helvète moyen, d'être sobre quand tu parles de liberté.

La liberté est cette capacité que nous avons en nous, mais que nous pouvons perdre, d'accroître et défendre notre être propre, d'accroître et défendre les éléments spirituels de cet être. La liberté, c'est l'espace intérieur qui est nécessaire à notre effort de nous assimiler à Dieu. La liberté n'existe que là où l'être humain est parvenu à réaliser sa vraie nature dont les deux caractères sont la raison et la moralité, que là où l'être humain est devenu pleinement une personne. Personnalité et liberté ainsi se confondent. Une personnalité riche et forte a besoin de plus de liberté qu'une personnalité faible et pauvre. Mais la liberté, dans l'intérieur de l'homme, dans sa vie personnelle, c'est le gouvernement, la dictature du haut sur le bas, de l'esprit sur la matière. Les plus libres sont, pour citer Bossuet, ces âmes guerrières, maîtresses du corps qu'elles conduisent. Et nul homme n'est libre s'il n'est unifié, s'il n'est parvenu à enfermer dans la cage, au fond des oubliettes, la bête féroce que nous portons en chacun de nous, s'il n'a ensuite lancé la clef dans la mer. Au sommet, liberté et sainteté se rejoignent. Avant d'être un droit politique, et pour avoir droit à ce droit, la liberté est une vertu, un devoir.

Ce qui justifie les libertés politiques, c'est la liberté morale qui doit régner dans notre vie intérieure, dans ta vie à toi, Helvète moyen. Plus l'homme est parvenu à dominer son égoïsme, ses passions, ses instincts, moins il a besoin de contraintes extérieures. Plus il retombe dans la confusion des esprits et l'indiscipline des mœurs, plus il devra subir de contraintes extérieures.

Ce qui rend un peuple indigne de la liberté et incapable de s'en servir, c'est le matérialisme. Toute doctrine matérialiste, toute conception matérialiste de l'Etat, abolit nécessairement la liberté. Pourquoi? Parce que la liberté est spirituelle dans son essence. Parce que, la matière étant déterminée, plus on y enfonce la vie humaine, plus on lui enlève le sens et le besoin de la liberté. Je fais allusion ici, non pas seulement au marxisme des Internationales, mais à la théorie bourgeoise du *Wirtschaftsstaat*. Et je prie l'Helvète moyen de méditer un instant là-dessus.

* Extract from "Défense et Illustration de l'Esprit Suisse" by Gonzague de Reynold. Editions de La Baconnière, Neuchâtel. 172pp. 8vo Frs.3.75.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

The Monthly Meeting of the Society was held at Swiss House on Wednesday, April 10th. Mr. J. J. Boos, President, was in the Chair and over thirty members were present.

The President informed the meeting that this year's Delegates' Meeting of the S.K.V. will be held at Bienne on May 18th and 19th. The S.M.S., which is still the largest foreign section of the association, will be represented by Mr. M. Schneider, who was Hon. Secretary of the Society for a number of years and is now serving with the colours in Switzerland.

Mr. C. Chapis, Hon. Treasurer of the Fête Suisse Committee, announced that the Fête Suisse will be held on June 27th. He made an eloquent appeal for the support of this annual gathering which has long established itself as one of the outstanding events in the Colony.

Mr. W. Meier, Vice-President, reported that the response to the recent efforts to re-open the Evening Classes had been fairly good, two classes having been formed, viz. one for Italian and one for English Short-hand. Further classes will be formed if and when the demand arises. The Society is prepared to provide all the necessary facilities and it is up to those who are interested to come forward.

Mr. W. Meier, in his capacity as Chairman of the First of August Committee, then announced that the necessary arrangements were being made to celebrate the National Day in a suitable manner. Although the present circumstances will impose certain restrictions on this function, the responsible Committee, encouraged by last year's resounding success, nevertheless felt that every effort should be made to repeat the venture. May their work be crowned with success.

This concluded the business part of the Meeting and many friends then joined the assembly.

The pièce de résistance of the evening was a film show presented by Mr. A. Tall of the Swiss Federal Railways, a member of the Society.

The Chairman, in introducing the lecturer, mentioned that Mr. Tall was already well known to most of the members through his previous lectures, and had earned himself the reputation of being the most prominent lecturer in the United Kingdom on travelling and winter sports in Switzerland.

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Mr. Tall treated the audience to the première of a coloured film under the title of "Air France Challenge Cup." The film was taken at Villars in January 1939 and was sponsored by Mr. Jack Banford, London Manager of the "Air France." A silver cup presented by the "Air France" is competed for every winter at Villars and this competition formed the main theme of the film which was shot by an amateur, Mr. Archibald, now Flying Officer with the Royal Air Force. The lecturer himself took a leading part as skiing expert, displaying his skill in numerous exhibitions and assisting the cameraman whenever the latter made personal appearances.

Although the film had the usual titles and descriptions, the lecturer's running commentary greatly enhanced its showing.

The adventure started with "dry ski-ing" classes in London for business men who are not used to the vigours of this sport. The classes were held by courtesy of Messrs. Lillywhites on their own premises. The participants are then shown boarding the luxurious "Bloch 220" aeroplane of Air France at Croydon. This aeroplane is in appearance and performance not unlike the "Douglas" of "Swiss Air" fame. The first stop was made at Le Bourget, thence on to Lyons where the travellers boarded a different aeroplane for the last stage of the flight — Geneva. According to the lecturer these stops were very pleasant as brandy is cheap in France. The travellers then reached Villars after a few hours pleasant journey by train. Villars, the lecturer pointed out, is a really first-class ski-ing and all-round winter sports centre. The film, in the latest colouring process, depicted the beauty of the Swiss landscape, showing the marvellous views and mountain scenery as seen from Villars and the higher viewpoints above. There were numerous shots in slow motion, actually some of the first taken in a coloured film. This has been rendered possible by the brilliant sunshine in the Swiss alps.

We saw beginners on their first day of ski-ing experience, as well as some of the best Swiss experts at work, with demonstrations of the Swiss ski technique by the lecturer.

The Air France Challenge Cup Competition, which is an all day affair, was photographed from start to finish, with the Slalom races in the morning and the down-hill racing in the afternoon. The remarkable fact is that the Chamoseire/Villars run, called the Bouquetin, is made at an average speed of 50 miles per hour, with maximum shots of 70 miles. The whole run has a drop of 4,000 feet and is over three miles long.

There were, furthermore, scenes of figure skating on the Palace Rink, an ice-hockey match between Cambridge and Villars, curling, etc.

We as Swiss feel that a word of thanks is due to Mr. Jack Banford, the London Manager of Air France, and his Company, for the marvellous propaganda film they made for our native country. The cameraman, though a member of the Royal Photographic Society, is, as already pointed out, an amateur and now serving with the R.A.F. "somewhere in Europe," and in his arduous duties and dangerous work we wish him good luck — Archie.

Mr. Tall, at the close of the film show, was accorded a hearty vote of thanks and this concluded a very pleasant evening at Swiss House.

W.B.

SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY.

The Committee of the Swiss Benevolent Society gratefully acknowledges the receipt of the sum of £71. 6. 6 from the organising Committee of the Tea-Reception held at The Dorchester Hotel on March 2nd to welcome the Swiss Minister and Madame Thurnheer. The great success of the Reception, producing this very useful contribution, is entirely due to the efforts of the organising Committee and their kindly thought for our poor is warmly appreciated. Sincere thanks are also hereby expressed to all those who by their presence at this function have helped their less fortunate countrymen.

TO SWISS FRIENDS.

Not once or twice we met,
Shook hands.
To-day between us all expands,
A sheet of rumbling waters wide,
A sea by many yet untried,
Vague with the thought of beauteous lands.

Time — like a seashore speeds its sands :
The gentle waves on sun-tanned hands ;
We walked, we talked by mountain side
Not once or twice.

What makes a friend? what silky strands
Are these that turn to metal bands?
What knot is this so firmly tied
That naught but God can now divide?
Ah, these are things one understands
Not once or twice.

Mary E. Brandwood.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Saturday, May 25th, from 2 p.m. — Swiss Church Bazaar — at the "Foyer Suisse," 15, Bedford Way, Russell Square, W.C.1.

Divine Services.

Dimanche 21 avril 1940 : à l'**Eglise Suisse**, 79, Endell Street, W.C.2.
11h. Culte M. M. Pradervand.
11h. Ecole du dimanche.
6h. Culte au Foyer Suisse, 15 Bedford Way, W.C.1.

Pour tout ce qui concerne le ministère pastoral, prière de s'adresser à Monsieur le pasteur Marcel Pradervand, 65, Mount View Road, N.4. (Téléphone Mountview 5003). Heure de réception à l'église le mercredi de 11-12h.30.

Sonntag, den 21. April 1940: in der **Schweizerkirche**, 9, Gresham Street, E.C.2.

11 Uhr. Gottesdienst.

6 Uhr. Gottesdienst in Französisch im Foyer Suisse.

Für Amtshandlungen u. alle Anfragen wende man sich an Pfr. Stutz, 23, Womersley Road, N.8. (MOU. 4649).

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