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Dinner. Miss Lili Habegger (soprano) and Mr. Lennart Rabes (piano) were unfortunately prevented from coming, but some recorded Christmas Music was played after dinner when coffee and Swiss Christmas "Guezli" were served in a happy Christmas atmosphere created by the light of candles and the smell of fir, as much as by the friendly chatting of members and visitors.

TS

*The next two Open Meetings of the Society will be held on 15th and 29th January. Please see special announcement "DOUBLE BILL".*

## DOUBLE BILL

### Two forthcoming film evenings

The London Group of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique has at the start of recent years shown a special film of events in Switzerland during the previous 12 months. The Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad in Berne have informed the Society that the demand in Swiss communities abroad had been rather disappointing, and that the review film was now no longer compiled. The Council decided to keep to the tradition of showing films at the beginning of a new year, and they have pleasure in announcing two film evenings in January.

On **Thursday, 15th January**, the full-length film based on Gottfried Keller's famous story

#### "ROMEO UND JULIA AUF DEM DORFE"

will be shown by courtesy of the "Pro Helvetia" Foundation.

On **Thursday, 29th January**, the well-known Swiss mountain guide Mr. Denis Bertholet, Verbier, will show two films on

#### "SWISS MOUNTAINEERING SCHOOLS"

combined with a talk in English.

Both meetings will be held at 7.45 p.m. at the Swiss Hostel for Girls, 9-11 Belsize Grove, N.W.3, only three minutes away from Belsize Park Underground Station (Northern — Edgware-Line). All Swiss and their friends are welcome.

## OUR MANCUNIAN CHRISTMAS

On Saturday, 13th December, the traditional annual Christmas Tree Party, organised by the Swiss Club of Manchester, took place. The main purpose of our party being to give our youngsters, including the tiny tots, a really enjoyable time, and hoping that such an afternoon would provide them with happy, unforgettable memories, which for many of them in later life could prove of great benefit and help outweigh the many worries and disappointments of our restless, exacting and sometimes cold everyday life. Even for those of us who were behind all this with our thoughts, work, and material help, can only benefit from mingling with our younger generation, and which can only be described as healthy, invigorating and extremely rewarding.

Having stated this, let me say that for many of us who had braved the inclement weather with its hazards of fog, snow and rain, it was a great relief to enter the Midland Hotel which once again received us in their customary warm and hospitable way. Well over a hundred people, of which the children formed the majority, assembled in the newly decorated "Rotonda", sat down at delightfully decorated tables and enjoyed the very rich afternoon-tea, which had special emphasis on sweets, multi-coloured jellies, trifles, and other goodies, as befitted the company. A truly youthful, if at times a somewhat noisy crowd, full of life, brimming with expectation and excitement.

Our President, Bernard Simon accompanied by his wife and young family, welcomed us in his typical warm and witty way. He then invited us to furnish ourselves with a chair and move to the nearby small ballroom where a beautifully and brilliantly lighted Christmas Tree greeted us. I felt that this year particularly, the room was well decorated and inviting. Soon the traditional multi-range ring was formed, the children, of course, having the privilege of sitting nearest to the Christmas Tree with its bounty spread around it. I caught the glances of several youngsters who were casting eager looks towards the many small and large parcels neatly arrayed beneath the tree.

Eventually the first strains of "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht", played by one of our Lady Members, echoed through the room, and soon everyone joined in this lovely Christmas Carol. Suddenly we were interrupted by a loud bang at the door! Sure enough, it was Father Christmas, with his flowing white beard and dressed in his seasonal red and white attire — perhaps a trifle on the warm side for him. He was heavily laden with what seemed to be an immense and well-filled sack. For many of our youngsters it was the moment of truth, for the believers and even those who may have started to nourish some doubts. The latter may not have been the more happy ones (this could have been the case with the adults, too.) Bravely and with so much goodwill, our children singly or in small groups, stepped forward to entertain our *Sankt Nikolaus* with song, prose and music. A very young chap pleasantly surprised us by flawlessly narrating the story of the Nativity. He was resoundingly applauded by the appreciative audience. There was some instrumental virtuoso and one of our younger members regaled the Saint with a soundless invocation. Nevertheless, everyone received a kind word of encouragement and was rewarded with a parcel filled with sweets and other things. Inevitably the time for our *Sankt Nikolaus*'s departure arrived. He left with our deepest regrets, accompanied by our thanks, good wishes, and thunderous applause. Thus, we made sure that

he would return again next year. After *Sankt Nikolaus* had gone, the remaining contents of his sack were distributed to the children who had stayed in the background, echoing the sentiments of the season that at such a time people should be generous, charitable and of good will. We then joined in another popular Christmas Carol after which the President, helped by some of the Ladies of our Committee, distributed the many individual Christmas gifts. There was a gift for everyone, all of which had been carefully chosen and were a great credit to the organisers.

Some of our usual supporters and our Consul could not be with us, having had to attend the Christmas Shoot of The Manchester Rifle Association, of which we form a part. Nevertheless, it was a great pleasure for all of us to greet Madame Born and a few of our other notable ladies. There was also a representation of the Yorkshire Swiss Club, accompanied by one of their veteran members, Mr. Amman of Halifax. All this helped to wards the success of the evening, which alas for many of us was too short. Perhaps, therefore, we may be allowed to express the hope that next year such a party could be slightly prolonged by organising games for our youngsters. Gradually our company disbanded, everyone having had a most enjoyable afternoon. We were all very happy and grateful to our Club for organising such a successful Christmas Party.

E. Berner

## THE CITY SWISS CLUB CHRISTMAS DINNER

Eighty of the businessmen of our Colony were present at this year's City Swiss Club Christmas Dinner. Addressing us with a few after-dinner-words, Mr. Alfred Kuhn congratulated the chef who had prepared us such exquisite red cabbages and thanked Mr. Keufeler, of the Dorchester Hotel, for the advantageous conditions he had been offering to the City Swiss Club table-companions. He mentioned the fact that three elderly members of the Colony had entered the Club half-a-century ago and over. They were Mr. Jean Oltramare, who became a member on April 4th 1917, Mr. Silvain Dreyfus, who joined the City Swiss on 3rd December 1918 and Mr. Adrien Rueff, the "late-comer", who entered it on 3rd June 1919. All three are "Swiss Observer" readers and, in passing, we take the opportunity of warmly congratulating them. Mr. Alfred Kuhn said that they had been elected honorary members of the City Swiss Club.

During the address, Father Bossard stole away deftly from the Orchid Suite. We were told not to leave until we had received a surprise, and sure enough, it came when Father Bossard, dressed up as a portly Santa Claus with a big white beard, and accompanied by his acolytes — the Devil and a band of sexless angels — returned to the room.