

La caverna degli dei

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY LIMITED.

After a long spell of Meetings in connection with the incorporation of the Society and therefore of a very businesslike character, the Society held a social evening on Wednesday, July 1st, at the Swiss Club, 74 Charlotte Street, W.1. The President of the Society, Mr. M. Paschoud, who acted as chairman, in his opening speech said that this gathering was arranged as a first social meeting before the summer vacation, to be followed by a number of socials during the coming winter. Secondly, the Society intended to mark their appreciation of two valiant members by presenting them tokens of gratitude. Furthermore the Society's competitors at the Swiss Sports, who had so successfully represented the S.M.S. colours, were invited to celebrate the gaining of the Georges Dimier Cup for the second time in succession. Among the assembly one could discern many of the older brigade, staunch supporters of the Society and last but not least many of the fair sex had wended their way to the Swiss Club and saw that the right atmosphere prevailed at the meeting. Mr. Pellet, accompanied on the piano by Mr. Dick, delighted the audience with a violin solo, which was very ably rendered and heartily applauded.

Mr. W. Kern, one of the students, who is known for his very humorous recitals not only at the College but also to the Colony (since the Fête Suisse), gave us one of his best. His introduction caused great amusement for when he said he was going to speak he used the word 'reden' in all its varieties in the German vernacular. This was followed by a Dialect recital "Das Familienglück" which resulted in an ecstasy of peeling laughter among the audience.

The Swiss Choral Society, who have on many occasions delighted us with their beautiful songs, staged their full choir. They rendered no less than three songs and gave the evening an aspect of a concert with their melodious songs. Thanks are due to all the vocalists and the able conductor who so generously contributed to the evening's pleasure.

The President now had a very pleasant duty to perform. Mr. J. Pfaendler, who after 25 years faithful and unselfish services had decided to take a well deserved rest from Committee work, was presented with a gold watch bearing a suitable inscription of the Society's mark of gratitude.

Mrs. Pfaendler, who had to spare her husband on so many occasions when engaged at long Committee Meetings, was presented with a bouquet. Another faithful member of the Society, Mr. O. Grob, who has been a Committee Member for some years and by his wise economy strengthened the once so sadly depleted coffers, has lately joined those men who find bachelorhood a boredom. The Society marked this occasion with a negotiable instrument as the real article, a piece of furniture, could not conveniently be displayed. Mrs. Grob was also presented with a bouquet, as a forebode of her sacrifices.

Both members answered in suitable terms, thanking the members for their appreciation and assuring them of their continued interest in the Society's welfare. Mr. Pfaendler in his speech recalled some of the past history of the S.M.S. and its progress in the course of more than two decades.

Mr. Paschoud now read out the names of the competitors of the Swiss Sports and thanked them in the name of the Society for their achievements. The juice of some fermented plant growing in the vineyards above Lake Neuchâtel was sparkling in the coveted trophy which was handed round first to the competitors and then to the Members.

Mr. von Bergen, accompanied by Mr. Chappuis, resumed the musical programme with some popular tunes. Both Members have entertained the Society on previous occasions, Mr. von Bergen as vocalist and Mr. Chappuis as accompanist. The audience heartily applauded the two artists.

Mr. Kern once more gave us one of his famous Huggenberger recitals, which held the audience spellbound to the last when they broke forth into bursts of laughter.

The President now called on Mr. L. Chappuis, a member of 35 years' standing. His experiences with the S.M.S. go back into the nineties and he revealed himself as an excellent impromptu narrator. The Meetings at that time must have been of a somewhat different character and the Society had to go through some stormy periods. To our great surprise, the 'root of all evils' was the cause of many sleepless nights to the treasurer and even Committee Members. We even heard of election gangs and broken chairs. Those members who lagged behind with their contributions were not struck off in those days for fear of reducing the Society to the non-paying Committee Members. Mr. Chappuis' speech greatly amused the audience which burst into roars of laughter.

To the great surprise of the assembly, Mr. Paschoud called on Mr. Boehringer, to give us an account of his experiences as a past President. Mr. Boehringer's absence was referred to with great regret by some of the previous speakers and

suddenly he was almost dragged into the room by some members who had noticed him at the entrance. Not having heard the previous speeches, Mr. Boehringer re-asserted some of the remarks by his predecessor, which left no doubt as to the genuine character of the statements.

Messrs. von Bergen and Chappuis wound up the musical programme with 'An old Fashioned House.'

Like lightening the tables and chairs disappeared and many stayed on to worship terspichore the muse of dancing. The band was also 'home made.' Messrs. Pellet and Dick offered to stay on and we here express our best thanks for their generosity, which greatly added to the evening's enjoyment. W.B.

SWISS RIFLE ASSOCIATION.

We are informed that the new Committee of the Swiss Rifle Association has been constituted as follows:—

President: Mr. G. E. De Brunner.

Vice-Presidents: Messrs. W. A. De Bourg and Edward Brullhardt.

Hon. Secretary and License Holder: Mr. G. Burger.

Hon. Treasurer: Mr. J. Muller.

Hon. Asst. Treasurer: Mr. G. Lutz.

Hon. Actg. Secretary: Mr. Edward Brullhardt.

Auditors: Messrs. Zogg, Senn and Holliger.

RANGE OFFICERS.

Chief Range Officer: Mr. P. Odermatt.

Asst. Chief Range Officer: Mr. Adolf Schmid.

Range Officers: Messrs. Fuchs, Deubelbeiss, Meier, Lucca, Buechi and Rognon.

Expert for Automatic Targets:

Mr. A. Deubelbeiss.

Bar Committee: Messrs. G. Lutz, J. Muller, E. Lutz, Bartholdi, Burger, A. Wyss, Wullschlegler, Rohr and Indermaur.

Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, Swiss Minister, is Honorary President of the Swiss Rifle Association.

VISIT OF "BASLER JODLERS."

By the time the present issue of the "Swiss Observer" reaches its readers, we shall have amongst us the "Basler Jodler Gruppe" to whom we extend on behalf of our subscribers a hearty welcome.

We wish to inform our Wireless Fans that a "jodling concert" will be broadcast from the B.B.C. Studio, on Monday July 13th, from 7.30-9 p.m., and we hope that they will all "tune in" in good time.

On July 11th, at 9.30 a.m. our compatriots will lay a wreath of "Alpenrosen" and "Edelweiss" at the Cenotaph.

GREETINGS FROM THE ALPS.

One of our readers has sent us a small bunch of Alpine flowers, this delicate attention has so excited the Editor that it nearly brought on a fit of homesickness, and he was on the point of packing his bag and departing to that country whence the lovely flowers had come from, when he recovered sufficiently to postpone the home-going for a week.

Meanwhile those flowers are adorning the Editor's desk, reminding him both of the gentle sender and our homeland.

SWISS CHERRIES ON THE LONDON MARKET.

Our readers will be interested to hear that considerable quantities of Swiss Cherries (caroons) are sold on the London market. They are sent from the north-east part of Switzerland (chiefly Basel-Land) in daily consignments of five to six tons, and on account of their superior quality command higher prices than the English fruit. Generally speaking the importation of foreign cherries (French and Italian) has been prohibited, they being affected by a disease (cherry fly): the consignments from Switzerland are regularly inspected by an official from the Ministry of Agriculture and have without exception been found to be perfectly sound.

This is the first time that Swiss cherries have been sold over here in large quantities. The distribution is being handled by our compatriot, Mr. T. Surer of 37, King Street, Covent Garden, W.C.2, who will be pleased to supply original baskets (about 15 lbs.) at current prices.

BUNDESSTIL.

Der Stil der Bundesbureaukratie ist in allen drei Nationalsprachen berühmt. Ein lieblesches Muster habe ich just noch entdeckt, bevor ich den Rechenschaftsbericht des Bundesrates für 1929-30, beim Anwalzen des dickleibigen Bandes 1930-31, der Makulatur übergab. Da lese ich zufällig beim letzten Durchblättern auf Seite 589 folgenden Satz: "Bei den Krankengeldkassen entfielen im Durchschnitt 2.17 Wochenbette auf ein weibliches Mitglied." Ich bitte das Volkswirtschaftsdepartement, mir zu berichten, sobald einmal ein männliches Krankenkassenmitglied ins Wochenbett kommen sollte. Ich werde es sofort besuchen, selbst wenn im Bundeshaus läge. "Auslandsschweizer 25.6.31." J. B. Rusch.

LA CAVERNA DEGLI DEI.

Locarno. Giornata afosa di giugno. Un'afa che oprime e par che fermi la vita, ogni cosa essendo così immobile... e immobili siamo anche noi che, seduti sotto il porticato che corre tutto lungo la Piazza Grande, ad un tavolino da caffè, non osiamo neppure quasi piu' allungare la mano per prendere la bibita ghiacciata che ordinammo or ora con la speranza di trovar in essa un po' di refrigerio... non apriam quasi piu' la bocca, se non per sbuffare ogni tanto l'eterno ritornello "auff! che caldo!" Credo che facciamo l'effetto di quei polli mezzo assopiti appunto dal caldo, che se ne stanno in un angolo oscuro di pollaio, con le palpebre ben tese sul bulbo dell'occhio, con il becco aperto a mezzo e che respirando danno un senso strano di fatica anche a chi li guarda... Quanti gradi saranno? Nessuno di noi osa scrutare i misteri del termometro per timore forse di scoprire che poi poi non abbiamo ancora raggiunto certe caldane equatoriali e che quindi dovremmo aver in corpo un po' piu' d'energia e di... frescura! Locarno non si muove. Nessuno intorno. Veramente noi ben sappiamo che al Lido saranno numerosi quelli che cercano e trovano sollievo da questo po' po' di caldo tuffandosi nelle chiare e generose acque del Verbano, uno di noi tre anzi e' armato dal costume da bagno (veramente dovrei dirlo "costumino" dato che questi... arnesi sono ormai ridotti ai minimi termini) ma chi ha il coraggio di recarvisi? bisogna fare della strada sotto questo soleone... Una scossa. Un pugno si batte sul tavolino e fa rimbalzare i tre bicchieri e relative "cannette" di paglia. Un'idea luminosa (brilla quasi come il sole d'oggi) e' saltata in capo ad uno di noi. Perche' non andare a visitare la "Caverna degli Dei" che e' proprio li a due passi, ancora sotto i portici? Tre mani si sollevano ad un tempo, quasi ubbidendo ad un unico ordine, portano alla bocca l'ultimo sorso della bibita ghiacciata qualche momento fa, quasi per attingere in essa la forza di muoversi e via verso la "Caverna degli Dei."

'Empi il bicchier ch'e' vuoto, vuota il bicchier ch'e' pieno, non lo lasciar mai vuoto, non lo lasciar mai pieno' Se non lo si sapesse questa dicitura basterebbe ad illuminare anche i piu' profani... si tratta indubbiamente di un'osteria. Osteria pero' stranissima che ha del lugubre al primo entrarci, che diventa comica quando la si e' osservata attentamente — ma lugubre o comica ha un pregio grandissimo: e' molto fresca. Si entra da un passaggio stretto, buio, e buia e' la prima stanza che si sceglie a mala pena su un tavolo di rozza legno una candela sprizza intorno qualche tremulo bagliore, ma noi siamo curiosi, vogliamo vedere, esaminare e "fiat lux" — anche in questa grotta (che' la "Caverna degli Dei" e' una vera grotta dalle volte basse e tagliate irregolarmente) impera l'elettricit'. Intorno, quelle strani pareti sono letteralmente coperte da ancor piu' strane figure — gruppi di donne, e diciture, diciture tolte a stornelli popolari, tolte a poemi. In un angolo la fontana — bell'imitazione di fontana antica — ha accanto questo detto "meglio ber acqua piuttosto che crepar"... La grotta e' divisa in diverse piccole camere, ognuna con il suo bravo tavolo primitivo e relativi seggiolini; il vino e' servito nei boccali caratteristici e di qui non si uscirebbe piu' tanto ci si trova bene, qui si dimentica che fuori e' così caldo, qui e' l'ideale per una giornata afosa estiva... "Com'e' bella giovinezza che si fugge tuttavia"... ma noi a questa profonda verita' che pure leggiamo sul soffitto, non badiamo... e ci divertiamo a criticare, a ridere per quelle figure così goffamente dipinte, ma di un goffo magistrale (se cio' non sembra paradossoso), ma chi ebbe tale geniale aspirazione ci chiese all'arte, ed ottenne, e' un pittore ticinese ben conosciuto che con l'aiuto di un suo discepolo trasformò questa semplice cantina in un luogo degno di essere visitato, ma visitato attentamente, perche', ripeto, ogni pezzetto di parete rappresenta una scena diversa... e la' vediamo Euterpe e Calliope e Tersicore che benignamente ci guardano e par ci dicano "bevete, bevete pure, siete sotto la nostra piu' alta protezione"... e noi beviamo, sperando forse nel nostro intimo, che in questi boccali qualche generosa dea abbia versato un filtro misterioso che ci dia il potere di raggiungere ogni nostro ideale... ma anche gli dei avevano le loro sfortune... quindi accontentiamoci del vino fresco!

giugno 1931.

Elena Lunghi.

"FUNNY CUTS"

Londoner to a London Swiss: What does S.M.S. stand for? Why don't you know?—Swiss Matrimonial Society.