

The four seasons in Switzerland

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SWISS CLUB "SCHWEIZERBUND." 52nd ANNUAL DINNER AND BALL.

The last of the social functions of the season took place on Friday, the 20th inst., when the members of the "Schweizerbund" together with their families assembled in the spacious and gaily decorated hall at 74, Charlotte Street, W.I., to celebrate the 52nd anniversary of the foundation of the Club. The chair was occupied by Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, the Swiss Minister.

The two loyal toasts having been duly proposed and honoured, Mr. J. Christen, the President of the Schweizerbund, rose and heartily welcomed Monsieur Paravicini; he and his committee appreciated the great honour bestowed upon them by the presence of the Swiss Minister—an honour so much coveted by every Society in the Colony. He was not going to detain the company with a long report—Mr. Christen continued. In these hard times when old-established firms and great leaders in the business world went under it was matter of satisfaction that his committee had succeeded to adapt themselves to the changed conditions and keep the "good old" Schweizerbund going. He did not intend to give a detailed account the more so as speech-making was somewhat out of his line: while others spent their time in acquiring the rudiments of this delightful art his youth was spent with companions that could not talk to him or offer him any instructions; his time was spent in brushing and milking them twice a day (laughter). However, he felt he could not let the present occasion pass by without referring to the never-failing support they could always depend upon from the old members of the Club. There was present Mr. Gentsch, the first president of the Schweizerbund, who must feel proud that his early efforts had been so well founded and conceived. Mr. Christen also singled out Messrs. Bernhard, Wetter, Pache, Lütz, Nanzer, E. A. Scheidegger and F. Scheidegger. He terminated by asking the company to drink to the further prosperity of the Schweizerbund.

The toast to the official guests was proposed by Mr. H. Caluori, the vice-president of the Club, who said that their presence affirmed the cordial and harmonious relations that existed between the different clubs of the Colony. He welcomed M. and Mme. Martin for the Secours Mutuels, M. and Mme. Charles Chapuis for the City Swiss Club, Messrs Biucchi and Maresi for the Unione Ticinese, Mr. Keyser for the Union Helvetia, M. and Mme. Paschoud for the Swiss Mercantile Society, Messrs. Conrad and Ritzmann for the Swiss Choral Society, M. and Mme. Brun and Mr. Gattiker for the Swiss Club, Birmingham, Mr. and Mrs. Rhyn for the Swiss Rifle Assoc., Mr. and Mrs. Wagner for the Swiss Institute Orchestral Soc., and Mr. and Mrs. Boehringer for the Swiss Observer.

Mr. E. A. Nussle, the Secretary of the Club, proposed "The Ladies," saying that he esteemed it a great honour to address the Ladies, a privilege he has not had the pleasure of enjoying before. Not being a ladies' man, he continued, he was at a loss to find words eloquent enough, to do full justice to this toast. No gathering, and certainly not to-night's, he said, would be a success, without the presence of these charming ladies, and he wished to take this opportunity to thank them for their loyal support and keen interest they are taking in the activities of the Club. When mentioning the word interest, he said, the following story came back to his mind, of a friend who tried to take an interest in his wife's domestic affairs. They were in the midst of spring cleaning, when the husband, rather tired of the business, said to his wife, firmly: Now look here my dear, we must have things arranged so, that you know exactly where everything is kept. His wife, rather indignant at this remark, replied with a cold smile on her face: Yes, I agree, I certainly should like to know where everything is kept, so let's begin with Your Late Hours.

On behalf of the official guests M. Ch. Chapuis, the president of the City Swiss Club, responded. He said that whatever unfavourable financial considerations might influence these annual gatherings the Swiss clubs always made a point of extending a "royal" hospitality to the delegates of the sister societies and the "Schweizerbund" was certainly upholding this tradition; 74, Charlotte Street had, of course, always been known as a "home from home."

His Excellency, the Swiss Minister, was now called upon in the stentorian voice of the energetic toastmaster, Mr. Pache. M. Paravicini began by expressing the hope that nobody was frightened by the sudden and sinister way in which he had been announced. True, very often he occupied the chair to settle a dispute or a row but this seemed to him an exceedingly peaceful and melodious affair. He could not agree with the somewhat gloomy remarks of the president, on the contrary (turning to Mr. and Mrs. Christen) to see such good-looking and contented leaders he must conclude that matters were in a very flourishing state. In any case, the members of the Schweizerbund could rejoice that they

possessed a president at all as there was, at present, more than one club in the Colony without that desirable attribute. He had been thirty years in London and presided over many of their banquets but evidently had missed a good number out of the 52, but after all the figure meant nothing, it was only twice the age of any lady present. He looked forward to their next banquet when he hoped to have the same familiar people sitting round him again. Before concluding the Swiss Minister presented Mr. Hummel on behalf of the Committee a golden ring as a token of his devotion and the faithful services rendered as Secretary which post he had relinquished much against his will. M. Hummel being a Balois, M. Paravicini addressed him in Basler Duetsch adding that those who did not understand that unique way of expressing one's thoughts need not listen. M. Paravicini was understood to have accompanied the presentation with a recital of the "Ring of Polyocrates," one of the poetical performances so greatly cherished by the Basle school masters. He added however, the hope that Mr. Hummel would not follow the example of that great classic and hurl the ring into the Thames before going home that night (laughter).

The ensuing ball brought a most enjoyable evening to an end in the early hours of the morning. The arrangements were perfect in every direction, the dinner and speeches having scarcely occupied two hours. During dancing, Mr. Gattiker, from Birmingham, gave a few solos of Swiss Yodels which were eagerly joined in by the whole of the Company.

THE FOUR SEASONS IN SWITZERLAND.

Winter in the Jura, transforming the landscape into a new world, white and sparkling. There is snow everywhere, deep snow, smooth and, as yet, unbroken. The air is so *vif* that one has a wild desire to roll amongst that purity and spoil its tempting smoothness.

The trees are white, the pines lacy with their delicate mantle, and the sky is a delicious clean blue, lit by a warm dazzling sun.

The mountains, their old heads enveloped in new white night-caps, look down wise and mysterious, as if in beneficent contemplation of so much beauty.

At twilight the scene is a veritable fairy-land. The air is colder, the stars immense, the moon a pure bow of silver. Far down in the valley lights twinkle, and the chain of mountains, dark and clear cut, is silhouetted against a sky orange lemon, rapidly turning to a sombre crimson.

But all too soon the snow begins to thaw, and one goes down into the valley, there to await the Spring.

She is not long in announcing herself, and then Nature takes on an air delicate and fragile like a butterfly newly-born. The fields become mauve and yellow with violets and primroses amongst the soft green of the young grass, soon the fruit trees are a glory of white blossom. The sky, seen through the tracery of their branches, is a delicate eggshell blue.

Spring is all too short, and its first freshness is on the wane before the vividness of Summer—Summer amongst the mountains. The trees take on a slightly dusty appearance, their green bloom is marred by the intense heat and glare of the sun.

The sky is the deepest blue—not a cloud drifts across its wide expanse. The mountains rise granite-like in their grim coldness, while fleecy-white cloudlets play hide and seek around their summits.

How hot the sun is—a glorious all-pervading heat that warms the very heart! In the dim shade of the pine forests one finds relief and coolness from the intense light. It is certainly good to be alive in Summer.

At length the days mellow, and Autumn comes along, bringing in its wake the freshness of windy, cloudy, but still bright days, when the sun is quite friendly. Who has seen holly bushes laden with crimson berries against a blue, blue sky?

The leaves on the forest trees turn yellow and orange. It is a miracle in itself to see the vivid splashes of bright crimson sobered by patches of the dull green of the stately pines.

The air becomes cooler, the days shorter; the fragile flowers have long since died, leaving their fruits and brightly tinted berries. And then the sunsets—skies vivid with orange-red clouds changing in form and hue as they are swept along by the chill winds. The swallows prepare for their long flight, the trees shed their gaily coloured leaves like so many huge tears; whirling and drifting hither and thither, as though reluctant to fall, down they come, leaving behind them a terrible forlornness.

And then one morning the world has become white, covered with a soft fleecy eiderdown of new pure snow. "L'hiver est venu de nouveau."

BEATRICE NOVEMBER.

"Traveller's Gazette," March number.

"WILLIAM TELL" PASTORAL PLAYS AT INTERLAKEN.

The William Tell Pastoral Plays Society, of Interlaken, will present during the coming season the drama of Swiss deliverance from the yoke of the Habsburg dynasty (1308)—Frederic Schiller's "William Tell." These performances will be repetitions of the plays which were given, with the greatest success in the years 1912-1914. There will be 250 amateur performers who, through their customary participation in the local theatricals, are trained for the work to some extent. Many of them took part in the pre-war performances. It is just this selection from the Swiss inhabitants of Interlaken, and its surroundings, which gives the production of "William Tell" its peculiar character, its rural charm and atmosphere.

The general management, as well as the principal rôles of the drama, are in the hands of the same persons who participated in this pastoral play sixteen or eighteen years ago.

When the curtain rises on the first act the spectator will see, not the conventional back-cloth of canvas, but a real mountain world and herds of the finest Oberland cattle. He will hear the silvery tinkle of many cowbells and the *Kuhreigen* of the Alpine horn—typical folk-melodies blown and sung for centuries.

The stage is a wooded meadow at the foot of Mont Rügen, forming a natural amphitheatre. The scenery will include the lake, the Buetti, the outskirts of Kuesnacht, the house of Stauffacher, the tower residence of the nobles of Attinghausen, the castle of Zwing-Uri, and the village of Altdorf, with its towering church and the home of the Tell family—an artistic ensemble of hills, woodland and quaint mediæval buildings that alone is well worth seeing.

The costumes were designed by Rudolf Muenger, the foremost connoisseur of heraldry and mediæval dress in Switzerland; each one is a veritable study in mediæval garb.

For those who do not understand the German language text-books in English can be procured explaining the scenes as they come in short, pointed sentences, so that the foreign onlooker can easily follow the action.

The auditorium of the Tell plays has a seating capacity for 1,500 spectators, the prices ranging from 3 to 20 Swiss francs, plus 10 per cent. "community" tax.

The days fixed for the performances are:—June 14, 21, 28; July 5, 12, 19, 26; August 2, 9, 16, 23, 30; September 6, 13.

"Traveller's Gazette," March number.

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