

# Swiss Club, Birmingham

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âme, le christianisme la lui donnera. Je veux évoquer ici les saints nationaux qui, de saint Maurice et de ses compagnons martyrs, jusqu'au bienheureux Nicolas de Flue, patron de la Suisse, ont vu, de leur éternité, leur culte se répandre partout; je veux également parler de l'action civilisatrice exercée sur le pays entier de Charlemagne, par des monastères comme celui de St.-Gall. Enfin, la Suisse, comme telle, est surtout une survivance du Saint-Empire germanique et romain. Les paysans libres de la Suisse primitive, cette aristocratie montagnards, ne relevaient que des empereurs. Pas besoin de légende pour expliquer la naissance politique de la Suisse: sa date est l'ouverture au trafic du Saint-Gothard, le seul passage avec Brenner, qui reliait directement l'Italie et la Germanie, ces deux moitiés de l'Empire.

Ainsi, notre civilisation est composite, complète. Nous avons beaucoup moins créé, qu'adapté, assimilé. Là où cette civilisation est la plus originale, comme à Berne, à Fribourg, dans la région du Saint-Gothard, dans les Grisons, on pourrait lui appliquer cette définition que le philologue Ascoli donne de la langue gréco-romaine: forme latine et matière tudesque. Elle est l'image de notre terre et de notre peuple. Genève est purement latine, française avec des influences italiennes; à l'autre bout du pays, Schaffhouse est purement allemande du Haut-Rhin; mais on passe de Genève à Schaffhouse par des gradations et des transformations lentes, successives. Là est le charme, la saveur des œuvres suisses.

Nous demeurons des traditionalistes, des conservateurs. Notre génie est populaire avec des éléments aristocratiques; nos élites, de naissance ou de culture, n'ont jamais perdu contact avec le peuple. Nos plus grands esprits vivent d'une vie concentrée: la personne est le centre, puis la famille, puis le canton, qui est chez nous la patrie, puis la Suisse, puis enfin l'Europe. Nous devons à notre histoire d'avoir naturellement le sens de l'Europe, de joindre le particularisme à l'universalité. Ce petit pays ne cesse de produire et dans tous les domaines de la vie, vie économique ou vie militaire, vie d'aventure ou vie de la pensée, des tempéraments qu'il est trop étroit pour contenir, qui brisent les cercles, mais qui finissent par revenir au centre.

C'est ainsi qu'un type d'humanité, un idéal humain se dégage de notre terre et de notre histoire. Entre l'individualisme et l'étatisme, nous affirmons l'autonomie des intermédiaires: la famille, la cité, les associations de toutes sortes. Par là, nous avons maintenu et modernisé la manière primitive et naturelle de vivre. Nous opposons à l'unitarisme, le complexe, cette condition même de l'unité. Nous prouvons que des hommes de race, de langue, de religions différentes, ailleurs hostiles, peuvent vivre ensemble et que leur terre et leur histoire ont formé une nation. Nous sommes, comme l'écrivait Samuel Cornut, une petite Europe réconciliée avec elle-même, et, comme l'écrivait Robert de Traz, une affirmation de la volonté humaine contre toutes les formes de fatalisme, une victoire de l'homme sur l'homme. C'est par là que nous avons notre raison d'être, et cette raison est l'esprit.

*Schweizer Echo.*

**NEWS FROM THE COLONY.**

**CITY SWISS CLUB.**

The monthly meeting, preceded by dinner, of the City Swiss Club took place on Tuesday last, at Pagan's Restaurant, Great Portland Street, W., and was attended by about fifty members and guests: amongst the latter was Mr. A. E. Tschiffely, author of the book, "Southern Cross to Pole Star," and Mr. A. Steinmann, President of the Swiss Mercantile Society. Mr. Tschiffely made a very interesting after-dinner speech which was much appreciated.

After various speeches, the ordinary business of the meeting was quickly despatched by the President, M. H. Senn. Two resignations were announced and accepted; no admission. — "Tir Fédéral": a contribution of five guineas was voted from the funds as a donation towards the "Gaben Fund." The meeting also agreed in principle to again hold a First of August celebration this year. Close of the meeting, ten o'clock.

**SWISS CLUB, BIRMINGHAM.**

For one reason or another, our sister societies in the provinces make but little use of the official paper of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain; a fact which is all the more to be regretted, as we have on numerous occasions tried to encourage them by asking for reports of their doings.

It is hardly our fault, if many of our London Swiss are quite unaware that there are several Swiss Societies in existence throughout the country. Why all this shyness? Are they afraid that they will get bullied by their bigger Brethren in the Metropolis?

A much appreciated exception is the Swiss Club, Birmingham, an institution which periodically informs us of its activities. We have before us a circular which addresses itself to all Swiss, whether residing in Birmingham, or in the "vicinity."

We need hardly beat the drums for our friends at Birmingham; they are known as a stronghold of Swiss patriotism and solidarity in the provinces, and at the head of this small, but enterprising Society is our friend, M. P. Brun, who is a well-known and popular personality in the Swiss Colony in London.

The dinner and dance which has been arranged to take place on Saturday, March 17th, at the Midland Hotel in Birmingham, promises to become a most enjoyable event, and we are assured that no pains have been spared in order to make this function a great success.

The term "Swiss Rally" is used in the appeal, and we hope that many of our London Swiss, especially those who are owners of cars, will on Saturday, the 17th, drive down (or is it up?) to Birmingham, to spend a few happy hours with our compatriots in the Midlands; we are convinced that they will not regret it.

To Birmingham on the 17th.

**PERSONAL.**

We extend hearty congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. P. Bessire on the arrival of a little baby daughter, Anna-Marie.

**LUCULLUS LODGE.**

**Ladies' Festival.**

The Lucullus Lodge, which comprises amongst its members a large contingent of our countrymen, held its Ladies' Festival on Wednesday, February 28th at the First Avenue Res, taurant, London, W.C.1, Mr. G. Wyss being in the chair.

The function was preceded by a reception held by the President, who was ably assisted by his charming wife. During the dinner an attractive programme of music was played by the Billy Davies Band. The menu cards, bound with a blue ribbon, formed a very pretty table decoration, the front page showing the colours of the Canton of Aargau, which was meant as a compliment to the Chairman, who hails from these quarters.

The Lodge, I assume, takes its name from that famous Roman General Lucullus, who was not only a great warrior, but an equally celebrated gourmet. This illustrious person, when once served with a mediocre meal, turned with disgust to his attendant, exclaiming: "Ne savais-tu pas que Lucullus soupait chez Lucullus?"

Well, this time Lucullus dined at the First Avenue Restaurant, and the menu was compiled by a famous chef, who is not only a member of the Lodge, but also one of our compatriots, namely, Mr. A. Indermaur. I feel almost tempted to give the full contents of the bill-of-fare, but space and a kindly feeling towards those who were not able to be present, prevent me from doing so. All I will say is that it was a "princely" feast, and I am convinced even Lucullus himself would have enjoyed it.

It is the custom at these functions that numerous toasts are proposed and drunk; these are announced by loud knocks with a wooden hammer, and two other gentlemen, whom I could not locate, lustily provided the echo, thus preventing anybody from taking a few winks in between the sumptuous courses.

The speeches were short. I especially enjoyed the one by the President, Mr. Wyss, who most feelingly dwelt on the happy relationship between the English and the Swiss members of the Lodge. Mr. J. Presnail eulogized with a very witty speech the Ladies, and his charming wife shortly and adequately replied to this toast. The toast to the President was proposed by Mr. C. L. Smith, and was heartily responded to. Mr. Stoddon, amid great applause, presented to Mrs. Wyss, on behalf of the members of the Lodge, a diamond bracelet as "a slight compensation for the absence of her husband from home on so many occasions, and as a token of the great esteem in which she is held." I thought this idea a very fine one, and I only wish that some of my friends, who at times keep me out late, would follow their example.

During the evening an entertainment was provided by Miss Bertha Willmott, who insisted on enticing all the gentlemen present into some dark valley, and if it had not been for their spouses being present, they would have "succumbed." Miss Polly Bask, who was as pretty as she was fair, sang charmingly about the "sweetest things," and all the men gazed at her in ecstasy, but when she suddenly burst into yodling and to intone that well-known Swiss song, "Nine geit's so schön u lustig," she absolutely brought the "house down," because it awakened amongst the Swiss members many sweet remem-

brances, and yodling seems to be always a source of amusement to our English friends. Clown Argo, with his mimics and funny noises, was most entertaining.

I understand that the greater part of the arrangements for this festival was in the capable hands of Mr. Edwards, and he is to be complimented for the excellent way in which he fulfilled his duties; everything went off without a hitch.

Dancing then followed, to the accompaniment of Billy Davies and his Pasadena Boys Bands, until the hour of 2.30 a.m. brought the Festival, which was attended by about 200 members and guests, to a close. It was truly a most enjoyable evening, and the Lucullus Lodge may be heartily congratulated on the success of this Ladies' Festival.

ST.

**WILHELM WIDLER.†**

We deeply regret to inform our readers of the death of Mr. Wilhelm Widler, *huissier* at the Swiss Legation, 18, Montagu Place, W.1, which occurred on Wednesday last.

\* \* \*

Wilhelm Widler was born on the 13th of January, 1890, and was a native of Ottenbach (Ct. Zurich); he married Anna Widler, née Schwaninger, and there are two children; one boy, Richard, born in 1921, and a girl, Margaret-Anna, born in 1924.

Mr. Widler, who unfortunately lost his life in connection with a lift accident at the Legation, entered during the war into the service of our former Minister, Dr. Carlin, as a servant, and in 1920 was appointed *huissier* (Weibel). In this position he showed great capabilities, and a good all-round schooling which he enjoyed in his youth was a great help to him; he spoke fluent German, French and English. Widler was furthermore a clever mechanic, which, unfortunately, as he was using the lift in a different and unauthorised way, has cost him his life. He was also a handy cabinet maker, and several pieces at the Legation give proof of his great skill.

The Legation loses in Wilhelm Widler a conscientious and loyal servant, who has well attended to his duties. He was of a quiet and reserved disposition, and his shyness was often taken for a kind of roughness; but those who came in daily contact with him could make allowance for this peculiarity. Widler was at all times civil and obliging.

We tender to his wife and family our deepest sympathy in their tragic loss. Might the proofs of esteem which the short span of his life work earned him, be some consolation to them.

**ARTHUR HONEGGER. BY W. TAPPOLET.**

**Hug; Zurich (in German).**

The story told in this book makes it clear that Honegger is a composer to whom opportunities and repute came early. He received his first commission in 1918, at the age of twenty-six—it was to write incidental music to Paul Mèral's play, "Le Dit des Jeux du Monde," and this music created a scandal which witnesses described as a repetition on a smaller scale of that caused by Stravinsky's "Rite of Spring"—and in 1921 another two: from the Swedish Ballets for "Skating Rink," and from Switzerland for "Le Roi David," a work which created a great impression. By the time he was thirty his output was fairly considerable, and also fairly well-known. Shortly afterwards, "Horace Victorieux" and "Pacific 231" attracted considerable notice. He has been a subject of heated discussion, and new works from his pen find a ready welcome. All this may help to account for Mr. Tappolet's unhesitatingly proclaiming that "all that Stravinsky signifies for Europe, and Hindemith for the music of Germanic countries, is summed up no less strikingly in Honegger." But to indulge in sweeping assertions of this kind is dangerous. How many readers will agree with this other one, that the oratorio "The Cries of the World" is "a most powerful artistic expression of our time"? Probably very few in this country, where that work, recently broadcast, was almost unanimously found very disappointing. More generally, there is evidence enough that many judges whom one has every reason to suppose unprejudiced find that Honegger's music, despite its theoretical merits, often lacks the power to convince—very much like Hindemith's and probably for the same reasons: because he is (as pointed out by the Italian critics, Pannain, in a capital essay) too exclusively a technician, and a composer whose technical efficiency is not matched by his experience of, or interest in, life. He may be praised for his classical affinities, his sense of structure, his capacity for working according to plan; but he does not always succeed in imparting