

Swiss children annual Christmas party

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SWISS CHILDREN'S ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY.

Saturday, 1st January, 1938.

At Victoria Hall, Bloomsbury Square, W.C.1.

Most grown-ups sometimes feel that it would be very wonderful to become a child again with-out worries and troubles and full of hope and happiness. I most definitely felt like this when I saw the few hundred happy Swiss children at their Christmas Party last Saturday. At the entrance of Victoria Hall, when I was met by Father Christmas, I already wished I were a child. Then he could have patted my back and said — hallo little girl, what's your name? — instead of greeting me with a respectful — how-do-you-do. He certainly was very well made up. I would never have guessed his identity had it not been for his deep voice which is well-known in the Swiss Colony. (This is meant to be a compliment, Mr. Dupraz.)

As the programme only started after three I had plenty of time to inspect the hall thoroughly. It was indeed a good choice, one of the two halls being reserved for the party the other one for serving tea. The stage was draped with two Swiss flags and a Union Jack, and on the right of the platform there was a big Christmas tree. Had I been a child I could have gone right to the front which was reserved for the young guests. But I had to move right back where the parents were sitting. The children were all eager and expectant, some of the girls dressed up in their party frocks. Their age varied from nine months to about 15 years.

The programme opened with "The First Noël" which the young ones sang very well, accompanied on the piano by Mr. A. Steiner. The Rev. C. Th. Hahn then said a few well-chosen words about Christmas being the time when we commemorate the birth of Jesus, a time of joy when the children experience the love of their parents, and a time of goodwill which goes out to the children through the gifts of their fathers and mothers. He went on saying that, on Saturday, it was also a very sad time as we were without our friend, the late Pasteur Hoffmann-de Visme, who used to stand on that platform for many years. And he knew that Pasteur Hoffmann would like the children to enjoy themselves. He then asked all of us to be upstanding and honour the memory of the deceased by a brief silence.

After this address the beautiful old carol "Oh come all ye faithful" was sung, and then Mr. Graham Joss made the children sing "we're all together again." After that he gave them new words to the tune of "John Brown's Body," something about bananas, monkey-nuts and grapes and a gorilla. The third song was about the musician from fairy-land and his various instruments. And didn't the children like all this! They shouted and their eyes grew dark and their cheeks flushed with excitement. When Mr. Joss asked them whether they wanted to hear a Yodel their "Yes" could not be mistaken. I have never heard such an uproar with one single word. But it was justified as Mr. von Bergen, the Swiss Yodler, gave a splendid inimitable rendering of "Vo Luzern uf Wäggis zue..." and "Z'Unterbach han-i my Strumpf verlore...". The applause was — if anything — even more uproarious. Mr. Joss then came again on the stage, and the children sang the song of the six bottles (usually known as ten green bottles). Afterwards he made them try another tongue twister about railway engines, galloping horses and red Indians.

Meanwhile the hands of the clock had moved on to four o'clock, and the hall was practically full by now. — With great enthusiasm the children welcomed Uncle Syd and Uncle Nelson. The latter was a marvellous artist drawing pictures with top speed. Children and adults alike, I am sure, enjoyed his very clever and amazingly funny pictures which he did in black or coloured chalk. My husband liked the red Indian best, but I preferred the donkey's head which was a chicken when the panel was turned upside down.

When Uncle Syd called Joey the Clown (whom the children had met last year) their pleasure and excitement was boundless. The two men, otherwise known as Murray and Hylton, showed a few very good tricks with Mr. Campart's bowler hat. Joey took out of it innumerable silk handkerchiefs and miles of streamers. Uncle Syd broke an egg into the hat and when he took it out it was intact again. Joey swallowed Mr. Campart's gold watch and chain and do you know where they found it? — in a loaf of bread wrapped up in several papers. As the last part of their performance they produced some wonderful animal shadows on a screen, and crowned it all by Uncle Syd extracting out of Joey's mouth a tooth almost as big as his head. The children showed their appreciation by three riotous cheers. Mr. Campart and all those who helped in organising and carrying out the whole party also received three cheers, and they certainly very much deserved them. Thanks to their excellent organisation there was not the slightest disturbance or disorder when the children went

into the other hall for their tea. I watched them from the doorway munching cakes and sipping tea, their faces happy and shining. They wore paper hats and pulled crackers — a real Christmas Party!

Afterwards they all received a carrier bag with a very well chosen present. And soon after five they left with their parcel tucked under the arm and talking happily to Santa Clans and Joey the Clown.

In years to come when the children have grown up they will realize that these splendid Christmas parties are the result of the untiring work of such great lovers of children as those I have already mentioned, as well as Miss Matthey to whom it is due that the tradition of this Fête could be carried on, and Miss Sidler who has such a very good knowledge of catering and who did such excellent work in the refreshment department. I also mention Mrs. Joss who is an expert at organisation, Mmes. Mueller, Simmen, Wyss, Kummer, Campart, Chapuis, Hahn, Barty, Baume as well as Messrs. Joss, Weber, Nicklaus, Zwink, Chapuis, Goergens and the many other helpers, young and old, who have given their services year after year, but whose names cannot all be mentioned as I would have to give a very long list.

Marianne.

EMIGRATION OF SWISS INDUSTRIES.

By OSCAR WETZEL.

(Continuation).

METAL AND MECHANICAL INDUSTRY.

Watch Industry, etc.

This industry is established in Switzerland in three different districts. It was introduced in Geneva by French refugees towards the end of the 16th century. It was started in Neuchâtel in 1679, more by accident, by a young blacksmith, named Richard, who after having seen a pocket watch was able to imitate and perfect the production. His sons perfected his work, and 10 years after his death in 1752, we find already 500 watch-makers in the Neuchâtel mountains.

In the Canton of Vaud, the watch industry goes back to the activity of the French refugees who came to Nions at the beginning of the 18th century.

The Geneva industry is the most ancient of the three and naturally played the most important rôle in Switzerland up to the French Revolution.

From Neuchâtel the watch industry developed towards the Bernese Jura and the adjoining cantons.

After the Treaties of 1814 and 1815, which established peace in Europe, the watch industry as well as other Swiss industries marched continuously forward, naturally interrupted sometimes by rises of short duration.

Also in this industry, we find a certain amount of emigration, but owing to the fact that the necessary labour could not be found abroad, in most cases the success has not been as great as in other directions.

At the moment, there exists Swiss Works in Paris, St. Leu, Besançon, Morleau, Seloncourt, Annemasse, Cluses, Gaillard, Billegarde, etc. Quite a number of these factories are attached to Swiss works and few of them are independent.

The Swiss factories in France are the most dangerous competitors to our industry owing to their thorough knowledge of the process of manufacture, enabling them to make good quality watches at comparatively cheap prices.

In 1767 we find two Swiss starting at Pforzheim the first Watch and Jewellery factory. In 1800 this had already developed into 80 different firms with about 1,000 workmen in this town. Later, in the 19th century, Pforzheim developed more in the direction of jewellery, which attracted quite a number of good Swiss workers and manufacturers.

The development of the watch industry in the United States of America is connected with the name of Peter Ingold of Bienne, who after having invented a number of machines for the watch manufacturer and vainly tried to introduce them in his native country, found a new place of activity on the other side of the Atlantic. He founded his first factory in 1852 at Roxbury (Mass.) where his newly invented machines were installed. To develop this new industry more speedily, Swiss and English watchmakers were brought over to America and from then on it became a powerful competing firm.

It was in the second half of the 19th century, after the Exhibition at Philadelphia in 1876, that the Swiss manufacturers realised that they were up against powerful competition abroad, and it was then that the real development of Swiss quality watches started.

In this industry, more than in any other, we find to-day that the manufacturers and the workers co-operate in order to try and prevent emigration of sections of the industry, as well as the workers, because both sides can see the great dangers lying ahead.

Only a short while ago, it was stated in Swiss newspapers that the Swiss Government had refused permission for a series of watchmaking machines, made in Switzerland, to be exported to Russia. We only hope that such arrangements will not make the quality of the produced goods suffer in the vain hope that by sticking together they can run the world.

MACHINE INDUSTRY. Electro-Technique

Material, Etc.

The origin of Swiss machinery goes back to the end of the 18th century, but it really started more as repair shops for other industries. From this developed the construction of looms, etc., according to the requirements of the textile industry. Slowly these shops became independent.

The Electro-Technique industry naturally is still much younger, and really got its final push forward by the work done for the Electro-Technique development of our water power in Switzerland.

As many other Swiss industries, the machine industry works to a large extent for foreign markets where they have been able, in spite of many difficulties, to make a way for their products owing to the quality produced. Here again we find the same fact repeated that owing to competition abroad and protection of the respective countries by duty, the important firms of Switzerland were forced to make arrangements for manufacture in foreign countries.

Already long before the War, large firms like Sulzer, Brown Boveri and Escher Wyss had established subsidiary works in Germany. The first of these was Escher Wyss who in 1880 built a factory in Ravensburg. In 1881 Sulzer followed and started a factory at Ludwigschafen. In 1882, we find another Swiss firm starting in Budapest with agricultural machinery. From then onwards this movement of emigration developed and seemed to be inevitable with the increase in size of the Swiss factories.

Brown Boveri starting developing abroad long before the Great War:—

- In 1898 at Mannheim.
- In 1910 at Saarbrücken.
- In 1902 at Paris.
- In 1904 at Milan.
- In 1904 at Christiania.
- In 1910 at Vienna and Budapest.

In addition to these companies, Brown Boveri were interested in numerous associated firms.

The Company of Dubied started with a factory in Pontarlier, another in Sheffield and one in Milan.

We find Saurer starting in France at Suresnes, and after the War in 1919 in the same place with a factory for the production of textile machinery, whereas formerly they had only manufactured automobiles.

During the War, this movement of export of Swiss industries was naturally nearly stopped, but after the War there came a new impetus into this industry owing to the increased import duties of all adjoining countries.

METAL INDUSTRY.

Re: Aluminium.

The manufacture of aluminium was introduced into Switzerland by the Aluminium Company of Neuhausen in 1888. With the inception of this Company great interest was aroused abroad, and when later on emigration of this industry became necessary, the good connections greatly helped towards success.

For the production of aluminium, cheap labour is necessary. As the available power in Neuhausen was found to be insufficient, subsidiary companies were founded in Badisch Rheinfelden in 1897, and in Gastein (Austria) in 1899.

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