Farewell dinner to Monsieur C. R. Paravicini

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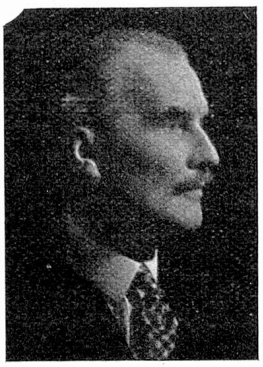
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Farewell Dinner to

Monsieur C. R. PARAVICINI

ENVOYÉ EXTRAORDINAIRE ET MINISTRE PLÉNIPOTENTIAIRE
DE LA CONFÉDÉRATION HELVÉTIQUE
PRÈS DE LA COUR DE ST. JAMES

on FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15th, 1939

at RESTAURANT MONICO, Shaftesbury Avenue, W.1



Chairman: Monsieur LOUIS CHAPUIS.

Hail and Farewell!

The pen which I laid down as Editor of this paper at the outbreak of the war, not without genuine regrets, after ten years, has been once more pressed into my hand and I am only sorry that my services have not been requested for a more joyous task.

To bid farewell to a friend, or to take leave of someone who has endeared himself to a community is always a sad affair; and yet it has its bright aspects. Does not the fact that a parting leaves behind sincere regrets denote that we have been genuinely fond of that person, and therefore it will make the separation for the one who is leaving us more bearable.

The Swiss Colony has taken leave of its head, and the spontaneous demonstration of affection and appreciation for long and faithful services rendered, not only to our Colony, but in a far wider range to our beloved country, will live in the memory of all those who had the privilege to be present, for many a day.

We would have wished that his departure could have been timed for a more appropriate moment, when the peace for which our Minister strove so ardently throughout his diplomatic career, might have been enjoyed. It was not to be, dark clouds of evil forebodings lie heavily over a harrassed world, and heavy are our hearts and disturbed are our minds. And yet for some fleeting moments our cares were forgotten, even the "black-out" with its exasperating inconveniences did not succeed in dampening the happy atmosphere, we were all there to say farewell and we were determined to say it with a smile, even if the heart ached.

Nearly 400 visitors and guests assembled at the Monico Restaurant on Friday last, and it was one of the most representative gatherings which I have witnessed in the Colony for the last 25 years. Our sister colonies in the Provinces were well represented, contingents from the Midlands, and even Scotland came to the Metropolis for this special occasion.

It was not one of the Banquets where Peers, Ambassadors, Knights and Soldiers of repute, paid tribute to the achievement of our country, no it was a simple function to which everybody was welcome, rich or poor, thus proving that we have remained faithful to our democratic principles.

Previous to the dinner a reception was held in one of the spacious drawing rooms of the Monico, where cock-tails were served. I do not know whether the hearty laughter and the sparkling eyes of the Ladies were due to this or to the pleasure of seeing so many old friends who have been "blacked out" far too long.

Before I start to describe this function in detail, I would like to mention the names of a few of the distinguished visitors who attended the Minister's and Madame Paravicini's Farewell Party.

Apart from the Presidents and representatives of the following Swiss Societies and institutions:— Société de Secours Mutuels, Eglise Suisse, City Swiss Club, Fonds de Secours, Unione Ticinese, Union Helvetia, Schweizerbund, Swiss Mercantile Society, Fête Suisse de Londres, Swiss Y.M.C.A., Swiss Orchestral Society, Nouvelle Société Helvétique, Swiss Choral Society, London Swiss Rifle Team, Schweizerkirche, Swiss Observer, Swiss Accordion Club, Foyer Suisse, Swiss Club Manchester, Swiss Club Liverpool, Swiss Club Birmingham, Swiss Club Bradford, Swiss Club Dunfermline and Balloch, — were present the Minister's immediate collaborators: Messieurs de Jenner, Girardet, de Rham, Hilfiker, and members of the staff of the Legation. From the Swiss Legation, Special Division, attended M. Preiswerk, head of the Division and M. Moretti, accompanied by Mme. Moretti and members of the staff. The Economic mission at present in London was represented by Professor J. Keller, Dr. Koch and Colonel Zürcher. From the Consular Service were present M. Montag, Consul in Liverpool, M. Hofstetter, Consular Agent in Balloch, and M. Langenegger, late of San Francisco. Further amongst the heads of Swiss Commercial concerns were: Messrs. Lorsignol, Nussbaumer, de Wolff, Huber, Luterbacher, Mayr, Rueff (Swiss Bank), Messrs. P. Walser, C. Kunzle, Wuthrich, Gattiker, F. M. Gamper, Berger, Sommer, etc., etc.

With a punctuality hitherto unknown in the Colony the dinner started shortly before 7 o'clock with a most enjoyable menu which had a "family touch." I hope that the Minister's son enjoyed the "Rondelle de Sole Vincent" a little different, no doubt, from "Bully Beef," the "Mignon de Bœuf Lyvia" and the "Dindonneau Rôti à la Jacqueline" were as tender and sweet as their namesakes. The "Neige Glacée Blümlisalp" could only be melted by the warmth of my charming table companions, who owing to "lack of space" had to "snuggle up" to which I had no objection.

During the dinner the Swiss Orchestral Society provided the musical fare, and they performed extremely well, in fact at one time I did not know whether I should eat or join in singing some of our popular Swiss songs.

Towards the end of the dinner, M. Louis Chapuis, the popular President of the City Swiss Club, who was in the Chair, proposed the toast to H. M. the King which was rendered with musical honours.

The second toast to the President of the Swiss Confederation and the Federal Council, also proposed by the Chairman, was enthusiastically responded to, whilst the Orchestra played our National Hymn.

Then came a lull during which everyone prepared themselves to listen to the coming speeches. Having been always a little bit of a gambler I made a bet with one of my colleagues that the speeches would take two hours, it was perhaps not quite fair, as I have heard most of the speakers before, and thus knew their "capacity;" needless to say I won almost to the exact minute, and I wish to thank the various orators for having enabled me to have a bottle of wine through their consideration, and silently I have wished them "jolly good health."

Nothing could have brought it nearer to me, that I was attending a farewell party than the following two incidents. One of the waiters who attended at my table timidly approached me, and in a sad voice said: "I am leaving you now," I had it on the tip of my tongue to say, "you too," but bearing in mind my "entourage" I said that I was very sorry, and that I hoped we would meet again one day, but as he made no effort to take his departure, I had to show my grief in a more tangible way after which he departed with joy written on his face wishing me the "compliments of the season."

In addition, I am afraid, Messrs. Monico will find that they too had to bid farewell, although involuntary to two small forks, which mysteriously found the way into the bag of an ardent souvenir hunter, this time a very charming young lady with a pair of lovely innocent eyes. I do not know what Messrs. Monico are going to do about it, but I hardly think that they will wish her "the compliments of the season." To safeguard myself I would like to make it clear, that the lady in question does not share my private address.

Whilst I was pondering over what I should do in a case like this, the toastmaster announced that Mr. Bingguely, the indefatigable Secretary of the City Swiss Club, would read a number of telegrams which had arrived. To make himself understood he used the microphone, which for some reason or other refused to work, in fact none of the microphones provided for the different speakers showed the slightest inclination "to oblige."

Amongst the telegrams read out was one from South Africa, from our old friend Mr. Schaerer, Dr. Schedler, Swiss Consul at Manchester, also sent his greetings over the wire, from Ireland arrived a message from M. Benziger, Swiss Chargé d'Affaires in Dublin, two of the Minister's former collaborators, Messieurs Rezzonico and Rüfenacht as well as M. Senn sent greetings from Berne, etc., etc.

Then came a further sharp knock from the quarters of the toast-master, this time it was to announce. that the Chairman, M. Louis Chapuis, was to make the first speech of the evening.

M. Chapuis, who was heartily greeted when rising from his fauteuil Presidentielle said:

On behalf of all the Swiss Societies and Institutions, and in the name of all his compatriots in Great Britain, I have the great but sad privilege to propose for the last time the toast of our highly esteemed Minister, Monsieur Charles Paravicini.

We are assembled here, on the eve of his retirement, to pay him our tribute of appreciation and gratitude for all he has done for Switzerland and for his countrymen in this land of our adoption. Above all, we came here to demonstrate the deep and sincere affection in which he is held by everyone of us, and to tell him how much we shall miss him and Mme. Paravicini after they have returned to our beloved Motherland.

Monsieur le Ministre!

By a happy coincidence you and I are sitting to-night in exactly the same position as we did 39 years ago in this same room. You were then a young Attaché at the Legation; I was a very young President of a young Swiss Society. 250 compatriots were present on that ocasion to welcome you in the Colony and to give you the baptism of the fire you have had to face hundreds of times since.

To-night, with sadness in our hearts, we meet again to say "Farewell" and to sever this connection of nearly 40 years with the Swiss Colony, which is undoubtedly a record in the annals of the Swiss Diplomatic Service.

Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to give you a brief résumé of the career of our guest of honour. He was born in Basle on the 22nd August, 1872. After completing his studies at the Universities of Basle, Munich, Lausanne, Berlin and Paris, crowned with the degree of Dr. juris, Monsieur Paravicini entered the Diplomatic Service in 1900 as Attaché to the Swiss Legation in London. After four years, in 1904, he went for a change to Rome; in 1905 he was Secretary of the Legation in Paris; in 1906 he was transferred to St. Petersburg.

In 1911 he was again with us in London, where he was promoted *Conseiller de Légation* the following year. We kept him then for over six years, until 1917, when he went to Berne as Chief of the Foreign Affairs Division of the Département Politique Fédéral.

In 1920 he returned to London, to his first diplomatic love, as Ministre Plénipotentiare, and for the last 20 years, he has remained the faithful guide, philosopher and friend of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain.

Therefore, Ladies and Gentlemen, we can say that apart from a few short diplomatic flirtations in other European capitals, our Minister has spent his diplomatic career in London, which was his home, and where his three children were born.

Now, after all those long years, that home is to be broken up and with it, that close and happy association with us, his compatriots, as well as with the innumerable friends which he and Madame Paravicini have made in English Society.

It is true that everything has an end, but we wish most sincerely that Monsieur Paravicini's departure might have been delayed for a few years

yet — at least until this country has emerged victorious from the life and death struggle in which it is engaged.

If anything can make it easier for us to bear this separation, it is the thought that our Minister's retirement is not due to ill health. He is still hale and hearty, and except for a few grey hairs, does not look a day older than he did 20 years ago, when he became the living symbol of our national emblem in this country.

During those strenuous years, Europe has been in a constant turmoil. Crisis has threatened the neutrality — the independence — the very life — of our country. The strain upon our Minister has been tremendous. Night and day, month after month, he was watched — he has made the voice of Switzerland heard. With infinite patience and great dignity he has made its neutrality understood and admired. He has raised the prestige of our country far above that of other nations much larger in size and population. "Il a bien mérité de la Patrie." Yet with all those responsibilities, he has always found time to take the keenest interest in all the activities of the Swiss Colony. He has lived with us, dined with us, inspired and participated in all our patriotic endeavours. In every way our Minister has performed his high mission faithfully, zealously and well.

It is all that, and his ready devotion of time and energy to help his compatriots, his great courtesy, his charming smile, which have earned for him our everlasting gratitude and affection. We pray that providence will preserve him, Madame Paravicini and those who are dear to him, in good health, give him every happiness in his new sphere of life, and also an irresistible desire to come and visit us often, when he will find a warm and enthusiastic welcome in the Colony he has served so well and loved so much.

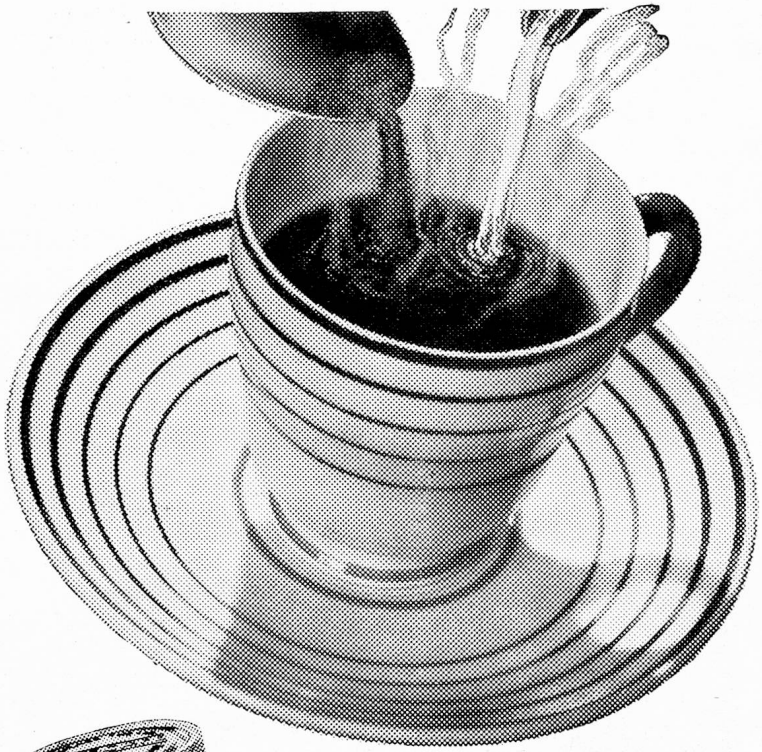
Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you the toast of our beloved Minister, Monsieur Charles Paravicini.

Long and sincere applause greeted the words of M. Chapuis.

It was then anounced that the Swiss Choral Society would sing, and their excellent rendering of

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that well-known Swiss song "Oh Heiwehland" was much appreciated.

No sooner had the last cords of this lovely song faded away, than Mr. Suter's speech was delivered.

Mr. Suter, who received a hearty reception, said:

The Committee have thought it wise to put the Farewell Address of the Swiss Colony in Great Britian into the hands, respectively mouths, of more than one speaker, lest a single speaker should not remember all the legitimate compliments which are due to you, or lest he should make the tenor of his speech too sad altogether, or not sad enough. We have worked on the principle that two, or three, or even four heads are better than one.

So it is now my turn to speak, and if I do so for the moment as the President of the London Group of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, may I ask you to permit me, Sir, to recall to your mind two dates:— the 19th of February, 1920, when Dr. Arnold Lätt, our then Secretary, welcomed you in the name of the Swiss Societies in London as our newly appointed Minister Plenipotentiary in Great Britain. And the second date, the 31st of May, 1930, on the occasion of your Decennial Jubilee, when the honour was mine to address you on behalf of the Swiss in Great Britain in this same room.

The hopes and wishes then expressed by the speakers — wishes for the success of your mission and hopes of our own prosperity — have come true to a degree of which to-night's gathering of your countrymen is an eloquent proof. Your noble mission, truly and strongly to interpret Switzerland's needs, her interests and her policies to the Government and the people of this great Empire, must have been a particularly strenuous one during the years between the two wars; years of turmoil, social dissolution, of political and economic reconstruction, of inflation and deflation, of violent booms and long drawn out depressions; years of most sincere and promising struggles for world peace and of rapidly changing constellations of international politics and aspirations.

Where we, the ordinary citizens, found it hard enough merely to follow and understand developments, you, the diplomatist, were expected to know, to see ahead, to prepare or prevent as the case might demand, to advise your Government and to interpret their policies in the most favourable light to the British people.

This great service, M. le Ministre, you have performed in a manner which has earned you the respect and the willing ear of this Kingdom's Governments, as well as the praise and the gratitude of your home Government. We have not forgotten yet an occasion which made a deep impression on everyone of us present, when M. Motta, in February of 1930 (and, I believe, again in this very room) told you himself how much your work and your merits were appreciated at home.

To us Swiss living in Great Britain, you have been our chief patriot, our head and our guide in matters of political attitude in this country for the last twenty years. You have given us abundant proof of goodwill and friendship towards all our societies and institutions. We have witnessed your deep and constant solicitude for the trouble of the colony and its less fortunate members. You were with us not only on those formal occasions when duty called you forth, but also — and this is what we so particularly appreciate in you, M. le Ministre — but also on the many occasions when we were just "entre nous et sans façon."

We thank you for meeting us in this spirit of homeliness and simplicity. We thank you for coming to our meetings to attend our functions, to enjoy our concerts, to take part in our sports and athletics, our festivals and social gatherings, to encourage our religious and philanthropic institutions; *in fine,* to approve of our well meant efforts, and our good, bad and indifferent performances.

And yet, what we know of your official capacity, M. le Ministre, can be but a small fraction of all the cares and the labours, all the responsibilities and difficulties which are the price of your exalted position — and which you could not relegate to others. For each of us, it is a full man's job to make ends meet, to keep our families and businesses going, and, just because we recognise it, we do all the more gratefully appreciate what you have done for us individually, for our colony and for our country.

M. le Ministre, you must be experiencing a great feeling of relief at the successful termination of your arduous official career, particularly now that Europe is in flames again. But for that very reason the Confederation's loss of your experienced services is all the greater. Equally must you feel sorrow at the parting with a multitude of good friends, and from a land which reality has become a second home to you and your family. But we, the Swiss colony so long in your charge, fondly believe that your greatest sorrow must be the parting from us. You see, in our own estimation we are a model colony of model Swiss, true-hearted, patriotic, industrious, frugal and saving. We may have changed our speech, but we have not changed our hearts.

It is a wonderful thing to part as good friends after so long a contact, and for us Swiss perhaps this is a particularly severe test because of the diversity in our languages; I mean the diversity between "Baslerdiitsch" and Züritüütsch, quite apart from the other three national languages. Madame Paravicini, will you permit me to express to you also the feelings that we of the colony enter-

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tain now and have always entertained for you. Your gracious charm, your splendid personality, your distinguished individuality, your benign and constant activity for the welfare of the colony have endeared you to us beyond measure, while your fame as one of the most distinguished hostesses of this Kingdom has shed glory and great credit upon our colony. As in the case of your husband, it is these fine personal qualities which make the pain of parting all the keener.

Ladies and Gentlemen, will you please fill your glasses, rise and drink with me to the continued health and happiness of our Minister's Wife: — MADAME PARAVICINI.

Monsieur et Madame Paravicini, may this demonstration of loyalty and attachment be agreeable to you, M. le Ministre, as a tribute of our feelings, a proof of our recognition and indebtedness, a token of our gratitude to you. May your future hold for you many years of perfect health, of peace and happiness in the circle of your family; may the beauty and sunshine of Switzerland warm your heart again after your long absence in the service of our country, your noble life's task nobly done.

Godspeed and au revoir!

Mr. Suter's sincere *éloge* of the Minister and especially of Mme. Paravicini was heartily cheered.

Deeply moved, M. Bingguely proposed a " Ban de Cœur " in honour of Madame Paravicini. This means that on counting and reaching the number three everybody gives a gentle tap to the quarters where the heart is supposed to be located. I am sorry to say that this was the only failure of the evening, not only did a great number of the company tap the wrong side, thus showing that they have not the slightest idea where this very important organ is functioning, but some even clapped, surely their hearts have not " slipped " thus far; fortunately we have a number of excellent Swiss medical men in the Colony, who will no doubt be willing to mend the various dislocations.

Again the Swiss Choral Society assembled on the platform and this time they sang a song in Italian. (Addio la Caserma). The long applause was proof enough that their performance was enjoyed.

Now came a surprise, although not listed amongst the speakers of the evening, it was announced that Mme. Paravicini would like to address the gathering. Thunderous applause greeted this announcement and when it subsided Mme. Paravicini said:

You can imagine what my feelings are at having to take leave of you after all these years. I have spent exactly 25 years in London. Our children were born here, and my greatest friends live here.

I want to express to you all my deep gratitude for your unfailing friendship to us all, your loyalty, your generosity, and your tolerance. I cannot describe my feelings better than by saying: you have never let me down, in good or bad days. Whenever I needed advice or money for causes like the " Saffa " Exhibition or the Int. Red Cross Bazaar, you have given both most generously. How I wish you could say the same about me! I feel that I ought to have done much more for the Colony, and the fact that my health has often been a handicap to me, and that time seems shorter here than anywhere else, and distances longer, does not make up for my shortcomings. Yet you have always had a nice word and thought for me, and no cloud has ever darkened our relations.

We shall think always of the Swiss Colony in London with affection and admiration. A high Police official once said to me: Of all foreign colonies yours are the best behaved. They don't drink and they don't fight with knives and guns. Surely a compliment, if you take it the right way.

May I say a few words about my successor, Mme. Thurnheer. She and her husband are very old friends of ours. She is charming, kind, very decorative, which, as you know, is an important factor in London. She loves Switzerland, and can understand Schwyzerdütch! In fact, she is one of us.

My daughters are very sad not to be here tonight and send you many kind messages. I am glad my son has been able to come.

And now may I finish on a more cheerful note: This is a true story of my daughter, Jacqueline, when she was a tiny pupil at a day school. Another girl asked her: Is it true that your father is a minister. Where does he preach?

She answered: Mostly at home. Now that the Minister in question will have more time for his sermons, I invite any of you who happen to be passing Berne, not to omit booking a seat in time, by writing or telephone, No. B.21.932. You will be received with open arms and I promise you a first class sermon.

The applause which greeted Mme. Paravicini on resuming her seat was tremendous, and I for one regret that we have not had the pleasure of hearing her speak more often in the past.

Pasteur Pradervand, whose popularity in the Colony leaves no doubts, paid a touching and eloquent tribute both to the departing Minister and Mme. Paravicini, whom he thanked in terms of affection for the interest they have always shown in the spiritual sphere of the Colony, and for the help they have given to the poor, amongst great applause he wished them both a happy and carefree eventide.

Again the Choral Society sang one of our Swiss songs, this time in French.

This was followed by an oration by Madame Bingguely who paid homage to M. and Mme. Paravicini by saying:—

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Were we asked to join because "Women are a new force to be reckoned with" or were the gentlemen afraid of . . . reprisals, had they kept to-night for themselves.

No, we had to be together, we had to be united to convey to you and to Madame Paravicini our warm affection, our infinite gratitude and our deep regrets.

We are sad because you are going away but we must be brave and keep smiling, I am sure you would like us to do that.

Monsieur le Ministre, I am very pleased indeed to have the privilege to speak to you to-night on behalf of the Swiss Ladies, but after the splendid speeches of the "sexe fort" may the Gods help me and inspire me, not to shine like they did — the nice great big men — but just to follow them, as a little satellite in their circle of light.

First of all I want to tell you that we were determined to be here to-night, we would have walked all the way in the black-out for it, winsome girls in their "teens," sweet and twenty, lovely thirties . . . (now there may be a few forties in the thirties) . . . thrilling forties, stately fifties, handsome sixties, gracious seventies and . . . who knows . . . eighties and naughty nineties, we all came here to-night to tell you that we have a special little corner in our heart for our Minister.

Our Chairman and Messieurs Suter and Pradervand have told us how admirably you have fulfilled your mission in this country but there is just a little more that I would like to say:

Madame Paravicini, nous vous remercions infiniment pour votre discours et pour avoir pendant de longues années paré nos réunions de votre charme, de votre douceur, de votre élégance de votre beauté et surtout de votre cœur. En vous voyant ce soir auprès de ces fleurs — hommage de vos compatriotes — je pense aux vers du poéte qui a dit: "Et quand vous les toucherez, Madame, elles seront deux fois fleurs."

Monsieur le Ministre, vous avez la noblesse du cœur, la force et les grâces de l'esprit et vous resterer pour nous tout à la fois ce que l'on appelait au Moyen-Age, "un grand chevalier," au dix-huitième siècle "un parfait gentilhomme" et ce que nous appelons de nos jours "a fine gentleman." Au nom des suissesses d'Angleterre, je vous salue et je rends hommage à votre gentillesse, à votre bonté, à votre inlassable courtoisie.

Et voici la fin de l'année qui s'avance à grands pas et décembre à nouveau va retourner le Sablier. Je souhaite a vous et aux vôtres de douces fêtes de Noël, que tout danger s'écarte de vous et que les horreurs de la guerre soient épargnées à notre chère Patrie pour que vous puissiez y vivre heureux. Ici, nous resterons bloquées dans notre Destin et quelque soit le point d'interrogation suspendu au dessus de nos têtes, les femmes de Suisse en Angleterre sauront Penser, Travailler et Servir jusqu'au jour béni qui nous apportera l'oxygène nouveau et la lumière qui nous fera enfin des générations d'hommes heureux.

And now, you are going back to your native land and we must part! We shall remember this gathering as long as we live and I know you will do the same. Look all round, look at your compatriots, they are deeply moved, they have felt things inside and it is all working out, read in their eyes, read of the sincerity of their affection for their beloved Minister and his Wife, it is a wonderful sight and it is something that no money in the world could buy!!!

"Au revoir," Monsieur le Ministre, "au revoir," Madame Paravicini! . . . Come to see us . . . often . . . we shall miss you so! May you set your sail and steer your course — happily! May no storm delay and may the way be clear! May Joy and Peace and Health and Friends and Love be with you . . . EVER!

Mrs. Bingguely's charming speech was greatly applauded, and she might safely add to her many artistic accomplishments the one of an orator.

In fact, this speech made everybody so happy and jolly that the entire gathering decided forthwith to burst into song and as a community item that well-known Swiss marching song "Wo Berge sich erheben" was sung with great patriotic fervour. —

Then came the speech of the evening. Monsieur Paravicini on rising from his seat received a tremendous ovation. I have witnessed many a patriotic demonstration in the Colony, but never have I seen such genuine enthusiasm. For nearly three minutes these, as they were termed "well behaved Swiss" became riotous, and I had serious misgivings whether our Minister would get a chance to make himself heard. Some of my friends whom in the past I had classified amongst the "quiet and sedate" made such a noise, that I became quite concerned about their well being.

After order was restored the Swiss Minister, who seemed to be touched by this spontaneous outburst of enthusiasm, addressed the gathering as follows:—

"Amongst other characteristics, the Swiss has two chief qualities for which he is well-known at home and abroad — his truthfulness and his frankness. What a Swiss says is either the real truth or at least what he himself is convinced to be the real truth.

"This being so, and after having listened carefully to the speeches of four Swiss, you now know exactly what to think of the unsurpassed and un-

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surpassable qualities of your out-going Minister and his wife.

"I have myself listened to these statements with far too much eagerness and satisfaction to feel any desire to argue the case. But however this may be, listening to farewell speeches is one thing, and replying to them is quite another. One is, I find, inclined to feel rather rattled."

The Minister then said that when he was a young man he had once taken part in a farewell banquet for a tough old Cavalry officer, on his retirement. The old soldier rose to speak but broke down completely, and it was only after about an hour, during which time he had consumed two bottles of champagne, that he was on his feet again, speaking with the greatest ease and to everyone's admiration, though neither he himself not anyone present knew what language he was speaking in or what he was talking about. M. Paravicini said that he thought this was such a splendid way of getting out of a difficult situation that he must make a note of it, for the night when he would himself be going to his own farewell banquet. He went on:

"That night has now come. But to my disappointment I find that, in view of the traffic prescriptions, the black-out and closing hours, I cannot keep you waiting here for an hour while I have my two bottles of champagne! Isn't this just like life? One makes the most beautiful cut-and-dried plans during a lifetime and then — when it comes to the point — everything invariably turns out just the other way round!

"No, not invariably. Sometimes, but not always. When I look back, I find that there are all the same a good many things which have turned out as I hoped they would.

"Thus some of my older friends present may know that from my earliest days in London it has been my wish to have the opportunity in my time of doing my principal work here, as one of you; to be put on the Members' List of the Swiss Colony and to devote such means as were at my disposal to the strengthening of the traditional bonds of friendship and intercourse between Switzerland and this great country and Empire. This was a task which had its particular attraction for me, not only on account of my personal feelings, but also because I saw in the Anglo-Swiss friendship one of the most valuable factors in Switzerland's life as a nation.

"I have always considered it a stroke of good fortune that this wish should have come true, and I am happy to hear you say so generously to-night that I need not worry too much about the result and outcome of the mission entrusted to me in 1920.

"But I nevertheless have a vague feeling that, to be really at ease with myself, I should — at least in some respects — have done far better and far more. That is the old complaint of the man who worries about what he ought to have done and how he ought to have done it. From now onwards I am determined to bear in mind the version of the result of my activity adopted by the four eloquent and optimistic reviewers who have spoken before me.

"Yet, even so, I wonder whether I shall succeed in silencing one regretful thought, which is that in the continual turmoil of London's immensity, I have had all too little occasion for personal contact with my friends of the Colony."

The Minister said that both he and Mme. Paravicini had always deplored that particular drawback in their London life, which had otherwise been unique in its abundance of interests, possibilities and enjoyment. And when they looked round and saw four hundred of their Swiss friends acting as such splendid and enthusiastic hosts, they were more sorry than ever that they could not more often receive them as their own guests at Bryanston Square. He felt, however, that all who lived in London would realise that this apparent shortcoming was not altogether their fault and would know what it meant to get through one's engagements, day by day, in this giant city with its world-wide political, financial, social, national and international network of connections and obligations. He said that as it was, he and Mme. Paravicini would have to be content with the memory of such hospitality as they had been able to offer, but he wanted everyone to know that the Swiss parties at Bryanston Square had invariably been the most cordial and enjoyable events of the year.

The Minister went on to say that while listening to him, some of those present might wonder that he should speak of such everyday things at a time when everyone's mind was filled with more serious matters.

"All of us," he said, "are going through anxious days, and many for the second time; and to you, as to me, it may at moments seem as if the



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horrible state of affairs had never stopped at all since 1914. Yet there has been an interval of twenty years of grace during which the world was given its chance to secure a real and permanent peace. Strange it is that the efforts to that end should have been insufficient and that we should again be where we were in 1916 and 1917.

" It was in the autumn of that latter year that I crossed over to the Continent with my family on a troopship, under the protection of men-of-war. Who would have thought it possible that my last official journey, little over twenty years afterwards, would be so similar? At that time M. Ador had called me from my post as Counsellor here to become his assistant at the Département Politique, and for two and a half years, up to the time when I returned here as Minister, I had ample opportunity to observe the progress of Armageddon from closer and better situated quarters. My observations from Berne, situated as it was in the very midst of the fighting giants, left me convinced that what was happening must cure the world of the will to go through such hell again, certainly not during my own lifetime.

" Not only was my conclusion wrong as regards the case, but also as regards the timing. Not only has the same thing come again within my lifetime, but within my term of office. And since Europe is now at an historical turning-point of the first magnitude, I have repeatedly been asked how I could abandon my work just at such a time, and Swiss and English friends have sometimes, half jokingly, called me names for doing this.

" My answer must be that it was not for me to say and that any such decision lies exclusively (and quite rightly so) with the responsible quarters at home.

" Our departure will not be made too easy by the need for breaking the many ties which have, in the course of three decades, linked me and my family to this city and this country.

" But there is nevertheless a bright spot in the picture, and that is my conviction that my successor will be the right man in the right place. M. Thurnheer will be in your midst in two or three weeks' time and you will find in him — as I did myself when we worked together during the last war and after — the cultured, intelligent, friendly Swiss diplomat, equipped with a sense of fairness and of proportion, with experience in home and world affairs, and also with plenty of sense of humour in all matters of life. He should therefore do splendidly here, as he possesses just those qualities which will open the way to the hearts of his countrymen and to the friendship and confidence of his future English hosts.

" By a strange coincidence, this change of the guard over Anglo-Swiss friendship happens to fall on the same date in Berne and in London. My opposite number, Sir George Warner, will cede his post to Mr. Kelly as I cede mine to my friend Thurnheer.

" I think that both Sir George and I are leaving, confident that what we hand over to our successors is in good order and that there need be no anxiety about the good old British-Swiss associations and comradeship continuing to flourish unimpaired.

" Your new Minister will find a splendidly organised and patriotic Colony and an efficient personnel of able officials at the Legation Chancery. He will find the wide experience of our City Section, composed of excellent, efficient and loyal men, and the equally faithful and loyal assistance of our Societies and Clubs, with their Committees and Members, awaiting him. He will find the right spirit, that is to say, a body of work, energy and



resource such as is needed to cope with the material and moral pressure of hard times like these. What better or more useful could anyone wish for?

" For deep down in the heart of every Swiss lies the conviction that, whatever he may do or not do, he must always think of his country, which — when all is said and done — is the most precious possession of each of us and, should the world come to grief, his sacred and imperishable hope.

" I thank you."

On resuming his seat, Monsieur Paravicini witnessed a second edition of congenial applause, and led by the vivacious Chairman the entire company sang " For he is a jolly good fellow " and many were the glasses emptied for his and Mme. Paravicini's future welfare.

After the toastmaster had made frantic efforts to make himself heard he at last succeeded in announcing the last speaker, in the person of Colonel Anton Bon, to whom the presentation, on behalf of the Colony, was entrusted.

One could have almost heard a pin drop, as the company which a few minutes previously had tried to shout itself hoarse became suddenly quiet, and when Colonel Bon announced that the present which the Colony had made to its departing Minister was a motor car, a sigh of relief broke from everyone, as the speculation as to the nature of the gift had been intense.

Owing to the fact that Messrs. Monico were unable to make the necessary structural alterations in time to have the motor car brought up to the Banqueting hall, Colonel Bon presented the Minister with the plaque bearing the following inscription :

Presented to
The Swiss Minister
Monsieur C. R. Paravicini
by the
Swiss Colony in Great Britain
as a token of affection and gratitude
1920-1939.

Curiosity has always been a weak spot of human nature, and no sooner had the announcement been made than some of the Ladies wanted to know what kind of a car it would be (God bless them), well all I can say is, it won't be a " Baby Austin " nor will it be a " Rolls Royce " and therefore they must keep on guessing, at least for the time being.

Colonel Bon in a very witty speech said that if ever the Minister takes his car over the lofty heights of our Swiss mountain passes, the mist which he will no doubt encounter, will remind him of the " good old London fog " or if he should venture to some of the Swiss Race Courses, pleasant memories will come back to him of his visits to Epsom, Ascot and Goodwood.

The speaker then, amidst great applause, finished with a few words in " Schweizerdütsch " which were greatly appreciated and duly acknowledged.

And so ended a most enjoyable evening, my good old friend, the Chairman, thanked everybody for having attended this festive gathering, not without making in his final words a delightful slip of the tongue, he asked all and sundry to " keep their seats and stand up whilst the guests of honour are leaving the room."

I tried hard to follow his instructions but never having been an acrobat it was a devil of a job, and I am still suffering from the frantic attempts which I made to carry out his orders.

A word of thanks for the splendid arrangements which were made should be given to the members of the organising committee who had worked very hard so that no hitch should occur, they succeeded splendidly.

In a very few days our Minister and Madame Paravicini will leave these hospitable shores, where they have made so many friends, and where they leave behind a still larger circle of friends, a land where, to judge from their own admission, they have spent many happy years, and if the parting will be hard for them, it will be shared by all their compatriots in this realm.

You, Monsieur le Ministre, have been loyal to us and to your task, we on our part have reciprocated in the same spirit, without loyalty there can be no lasting friendships, and it is for this reason that we part the best of friends. We will not say good-bye but " au revoir," and once again " thank you."

ST.

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