

City Swiss Club

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

CITY SWISS CLUB Christmas Dinner

When these lines appear Christmas has passed, and will be almost forgotten. Father Christmas with his empty bag has gone up the chimney, the candles on the Christmas tree have burned down, the carol singers — who are getting scarcer every year — have departed. That spirit of goodwill towards each other, which is such a prominent feature, before and during the festive season, has also mostly been forgotten. The paper boys or girls, who for a short while delivered the papers neatly and in good time, sling them down again ferociously and in pieces at my front door, knocking over milk bottles and cream containers. The dustmen, who for a fortnight at least were tidy, have gone back to their bad habits, leaving half the contents of the bins in the drive, and the lids all over the place. The trades people delivery men who, on my opening the front door, seemed to be much concerned about the state of my health, saying that I never looked better, are ignoring me now. The road cleaner outside my house, who for some days wished me a cheery "Good morning Sir!" does not know me any more. With lamentation, I recall those bright days when kindness and consideration shone so brightly over a weary world, and amongst them I recall the Christmas dinner of the City Swiss Club, which took place on Wednesday, 11th December, at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1, an event which is invariably well attended. This year, again over a hundred members and friends assembled at the Orchid Room to pass a few care-free hours in jovial company. The dinner was preceded by cocktails, which greatly helped to create the necessary festive atmosphere.

The main fare of the dinner which followed consisted, of course, of Turkey, Christmas Pudding, Mince Pies, etc., and the company thoroughly enjoyed these and other delicacies. On coffee being served, the President, Mr. A. M. Keller, proposed the usual Toasts to H.M. the Queen, and "La Suisse". He voiced his appreciation at seeing such a large gathering, expressing the hope that the monthly meetings in the new year would show a bigger attendance. He extended a hearty welcome to Monsieur J. de Stoutz, the Swiss Chargé d'Affaires, and other members of the Embassy. He tendered sincere thanks to Mr. G. A. Ronus, Manager of the Dorchester Hotel, for the generous hospitality the Club always enjoys in Park Lane.

After a short business meeting, an accordionist (Mr. A. Gandon was not available) played a number of Swiss songs, but the company was somewhat shy to respond with voice. At the various tables lively conversations were held, and many bottles were uncorked. Reminiscences were exchanged, and old friends and members of the Club who had passed away during the last twelve months were remembered.

Before leaving the Dorchester Hotel, the members wished each other a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year. Thus another jolly Christmas Dinner of the City Swiss Club came to a successful end.

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Press Reporter, C.S.C.

ESCALADE

In memory of the successful defence against the Duke of Savoy, who in 1602 tried an assault on the city, the Genevese celebrate the *Escalade* every year. It is a true popular festival the historic background of which, however, has lost none of its impelling force, and the original proclamation is still read in public. The date this year was 11th and 12th December, for the historic procession, but general entertainments started already on 8th December.

The Cercle Genevois in London celebrated the *Escalade* on Thursday, 12th December, with a dinner at the Glendower Hotel in South Kensington. The President, Mr. A. Bleiker, was in the chair. He welcomed nearly forty members and friends who had assembled for the annual gathering dear to all those hailing from or connected with Geneva. Indeed, as the roll-call later in the evening showed, with the exception of the Editor of the "Swiss Observer", everyone present had close ties with Geneva, either by citizenship, parentage, through marriage, upbringing or work.

In the last issue of the "Swiss Observer" appeared a few facts about the *Escalade* from the pen of Mr. H. Charnaux. Since then we have heard that he died in August, and an obituary notice appears in this issue. It was he who, with two friends, started the first *Dîner d'Escalade* in London in 1922, and it has been held ever since.

This year's menu was not connected with traditional dishes. It contained, however, a last course of sweet chestnuts which had been donated by Mr. and Mrs. Bleiker. And, of course, everybody tasted a piece of the *marmite* made of sugary confectionery after it was smashed with the traditional "Ainsi périssent les ennemis de la République"!

Monsieur J. de Stoutz thanked the President for organising the *Escalade* so faithfully. He and Madame de Stoutz, Monsieur J. Revilliod and Monsieur W. Roch constituted the Genevese contingent from the Embassy. Monsieur Roch told of the happenings of the fateful night in 1602 and recited the names of the seventeen Geneva citizens who lost their lives. Homage was paid to them and the traditional songs were rendered by the gathering. The bells of *La Clémence* played on a record gave a specially authentic *cachet* to the ceremony. Afterwards, Mrs. Curchod, supported by Mr. P. Savoie, related the history of the Geneva flag, and a collection was made in favour of the Swiss Children's Annual Christmas Party early in January. Over twelve pounds could be handed in for the cause which had been so dear to another well-known Genevese of London, Mr. C. Campart. Incidentally, son and daughter of the late Mr. R. de Cintra, one of the founders of the *Escalade* Dinner in London, were present.

It was a very happy evening, and the President will be very glad to receive names and addresses of any Genevois who are not yet on the list, so that as many Geneva citizens as possible can be invited to come to next year's *Dîner d'Escalade*.

Mariann.