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Mr. President, Gentlemen. In my tender youth I understand it was the custom for very little boys to wear garments resembling feminine attire, presumably I suffered like all my contemporaries, is this the reason why I have been requested to acknowledge the toast to "The Ladies"?

Surely you do not suppose that I ever wore my hair long or bobbed? Further, I have never been "Sweet Seventeen" or a "Blushing Bride," and I have never been called "Mummy." You will, therefore, agree that I am not in a position to give true expressions to the thoughts of these charming members of the unfathomable sex. However, it does not need a thought reader to ascertain their feelings. A look at their radiant faces is sufficient proof of their appreciation, of their pleasure at being here to-night, their sentiments can rightly be expressed by quoting the words of that old ballad,

"With all your faults we love you still."

I thank Mr. A. C. Stahelin for the splendid manner in which he proposed this toast, and on behalf of all the guests I thank you for your overwhelming hospitality.

I raise my glass and will ask my fellow guests to drink to the continued prosperity and further successes of the Swiss Mercantile Society.

This speaker, who, by the way, is a very old friend of the Swiss Mercantile Society, was heartily cheered on resuming his seat.

Then Mr. Paschoud rose for the last time, to announce that Mr. J. Pfäendler would make the appeal for "Charity." In moving terms the speaker referred to the very valuable work done by the Swiss Benevolent Society for those of our less fortunate compatriots and his ardent appeal met with a ready response, some £30 having been collected.

The official programme having been concluded, everyone rushed to hear the cabaret show, which had been thoughtfully provided, whilst the banqueting hall was cleared for dancing. Dancing started soon after ten and lasted until the hour of one. Amongst the many jolly dancers one could spot the stately publisher of the S.O. solemnly waltzing to the tune of an alluring Viennese song with a charming partner.

The Swiss Mercantile Society deserves to be heartily congratulated for the way in which this banquet was arranged and managed, it was a thoroughly successful and enjoyable evening.

SWISS CLUB, BIRMINGHAM.

On account of lack of space the report of the Annual Banquet, which took place on Saturday, February 7th, is unavoidably held over until next week.

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.

(The figure in parentheses denotes the number of the issue in which the subscription expires.)

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BUCHBESPRECHUNG.

Gedichte. Marie Bretscher, Verlag Rascher & Cie, Zurich.

In der lyrischen Sprache gehen in den letzten Jahren Wandlungen zum Schönen und zum Unschönen vor. Wir erleben feiner abgeschattete Farben und Klänge, reicheren Wortschatz, hin und wieder auch neue Strophenformen und Versuche mit neuen Rhythmen im reinlosen Vers. Zum Getue gehört auch die modisch tiefsinnige Betitelung von Gedichtssammlungen. Eine der seltensten Ausnahmen wird von jetzt ab ein Band: "Gedichte von," selbst die wirklichen Dichter lassen sich verleiten ihre Verse zu nennen: Stürme—Ich und die Welt—Ein Sommer—Melancholie, und so weiter.

In Marie Bretscher's Band, "Gedichte", ganz einfach Gedichte, stehen fast durchwegs reife Stücke. Sie gebietet über alle Töne aus der lyrischen Mittellage, hat etwas rechtes zu sagen und sagt es in ihrer eigenen und meist sehr melodischen Sprache. In der Sammlung stehen allerliebst kleine Gedichte die eine stark lyrische Wirkung hervorrufen, wie z. B.

Abendklänge.

Abendwolken hängen unterm Himmel, Schweben leis mit lichtverklärten Schwingen. Von den Türmen steigen Glockentöne Hoch hinauf, sie liebend zu umschlingen. In den Lüften seliges Vermählen, Klang und Farbe einen sich zum Chöre, Und des Abends reinen Harmonien Oeffnen sich des Himmels goldne Tore.



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SWISS Y.M.C.A.

Mr. W. Elliott, Secretary for England of the Mission to Lepers, addressed the members and friends of the Swiss Y.M.C.A. on January 31st. An interesting and touching account was given of this most necessary and successful work among millions of lepers in various lands. Thousands, suffering from this terrible illness, are found by the mission in utter misery and desolation. A total cure is almost certain in cases where the disease is discovered at an early stage; to those unfortunate ones, who come under the category of incurables, the mission provides for treatment and tries to make their poor lives as comfortable as possible. Mr. Elliott informed the gathering that the respectable sum of 300-400 pounds is annually subscribed for in Switzerland, which announcement was received with great satisfaction by all those who were present. Our readers will no doubt be interested to hear that the small sum of 1/6 per week will keep one of those poor wretched children entirely. To those who are interested in this noble rescue work, the Secretary of the mission, 7 Bloomsbury Square, W.C.1, will gladly give any information.

SWISS INSTITUTE ORCHESTRAL SOCIETY.

The above Society is giving a concert on Thursday, February 19th, at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C., and the programme promises a great treat. The Society has been able to engage two prominent artists of wide repute, Miss Olivia Hilder and Mr. George Owen. The orchestral part contains such popular composers as Gounod, Boildieu and Schubert, and we hope that many of our readers will patronise the Swiss Institute Orchestral Society, as we can assure them of an enjoyable evening.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

An ordinary meeting was held on February 3rd at Pagani, thirty-eight members and guests being present.

The visitors included Mr. Sermier, President of the Swiss Gymnastic Society and Mr. Kung, Assistant Manager of the Mayfair Hotel. In welcoming these gentlemen, the President said that he wished to thank Mr. Kung on behalf of the members for all he had done to make the meetings of the Club at the Mayfair Hotel so successful.

The evening was exceptionally quiet and for once I have practically nothing to report. This may fill the Secretary's heart with joy when he comes to write the minutes, but does not make copy for me.

The President announced that the Concert of the Swiss Institute Orchestral Society would take place on Thursday, February 19th, at 8 p.m. in the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1, and it was decided to invest in a number of tickets which will be distributed among the old people who would otherwise be unable to be present. Mr. Paul Dick gave us a few details about the programme, and I have no hesitation in recommending members to do everything in their power to make this concert a great success.

PERSONAL.

We wish to express to M. René Marchand of 100, Hattou Garden, E.C.1, our sympathy, his father, M. Oswald Marchand, having died at Geneva, at the age of 73.

We regret to announce the death of Mr. Billeter's father, which has taken place at Männedorf at the age of 76, and wish him to accept our sincere sympathy.

Manch kleines empfundenes Lebenslied, wie z. B. "Den Toten" und "Meinem Vater" mit der ans Herz greifenden Schluss Strophe:

Und wie zum Grusse legt ich meine Hand - In letzte Glän, das noch dein Bild umwand. Da bist du leise, leise mir entwichen.

zeugen von tiefem und echten empfinden.

Es erklingen bei Marie Bretscher Töne gold-echter Lyrik, so in dem schönen kleinen Liede, "Fülle."

Es schäumt allüberall von Blumenwogen . . . oder in dem reizenden Gedichtchen:

Die Halme stehen hoch und ährenschwer.

Lyrik von echter Art und tiefster religiöser Eingebung sind die "Marienlieder":

Durch feuchte Wolken glänzt ein Sonnenstrahl . . .

und

Maria wandelt über Schnee. Ihr Kindlein starb in Kreuzesweh . . .

aus allen diesen Liedern erklingt echter Ton stiller Musik.

Man findet hier und da, in vereinzelt Fällen, etwas Gesuchtes mehr buntes Farbenspiel und klingende Wortmusik, und die Dichterin kann sich vielleicht entschliessen, bei einer Neuauflage diese anzuschliessen, das sonst allerliebste Bändchen, würde dadurch nur an Wert gewinnen.

Für seinen ganz eigenen Ton zeugt dieses schöne Gedicht, "Gott":

Der du mit leichter Hand die Berge schüttelst Und Felsen aus dem Grund der Meere hebst . . . Es sind wahrhaft prophetische Verse darin.

Zu ihren lieblichsten Gedichten gehört "Die Einsame":

Sie wandelt wie auf einer langen Strasse, Die einst vom grünen Grund emporgestiegen, Nun endlos sich durch öde Lande zieht, Endlos und doch begrenzt. Gleich einer Mauer, Steht vorn des Todes dunkle Machtgestalt, Nicht sichtbar, fühlbar nur in jähem Schauer . . .

Mit den tröstenden Schlussversen:

Und abends starrt sie in die kleine Glut, Auf der sie ihr frugales Mahl bereitet, Fühlt, wie ein Schluchzen ihre Seele weitet, und sucht sich bei den Sternen neuen Mut.

Marie Bretscher ist zweifellos eine unserer klang und gedankenreichsten jüngeren Lyrikerinnen und wir können unsern Lesern dieses Bändchen, welches zahllose Stellen mit vollendeter Tonmalerei enthält wärmstens empfehlen, es wird damit viel Genuss und Freude bereitet.

St.

