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# Students' X'mas Dinner & Ball

at the

Prince's Galleries, Piccadilly, W.1

on

FRIDAY, DECEMBER, 18th 1936.

President Education Dept.: W. MEIER.



No, there were no Excellencies nor Lords present, like at a recent Swiss Dinner, but the "aristocracy of youth" played a conspicuous part at the very enjoyable Annual Banquet and Ball of the Students of the Swiss Mercantile College, which was held at Prince's Galleries, Piccadilly, W.1, on Friday, December 18th.

My invitation card informed me that a reception was to be held from 7 to 7.30 p.m.; hence almost on the stroke of 7 o'clock I entered the spacious rooms of the Prince's Galleries, arrayed in my "usual splendour," hoping to be "received."

To cut a long story short, I was *not* "received," nor was anybody else; it was a pity because I simply love to hear the names of some of the celebrities of the Colony called out either by a red or black coated toast master, because he generally makes such a "hash" of some of our lovely Swiss names, and that is amusing, at least to those who are blessed with a sense of humour. May I in all humility suggest to some members of the teaching staff, that the subject of one of the next essays for the students should be: "When is a reception not a reception," and I am sure the answer will not be "a lemon." But I must not complain, I *was* at least received at the "Bar" not by a bewigged Judge, but by the charming President of the S.M.S., and the "reception" was quite substantial, so why grumble?

Somewhere a voice announced "Dinner is served!" and everyone proceeded to their allotted seats; after a short interval, which proved very trying to ones nerves, a voice once more announced that the "high and mighty ones" would make their entry, and amongst much clapping, the President of the Education Committee, Mr. W. Meier, who was in the Chair, accompanied by his charming Lady, Dr. Rezzonico from the Swiss Legation, the principal guest of the evening, and an array of "lesser" celebrities gravely took their seats, whilst the band struck up a martial tune: why they did so, I do not know because I am sure those who had last entered were distinctly peaceful in their bearing.

And then the dinner started, a dinner which was excellent, both in quality and quantity; I could have wished that the band which provided the music would have been a little more subdued, as their boisterous playing made any conversation with one's neighbour almost impossible; it was such a pity, especially in my case, as I had on either side most charming companions. I tried hard to get the better of the Band, but they would not let me; and when one of my colleague's of the Press, who sat opposite me, "shouted" to me across the table that he was going to tell me the latest joke of a Lady, who is much in the public eye at the present moment, I gave him an appealing look and asked him to reserve it till later on, as really these little tit-bits can hardly be shouted as it were from the house-tops.

Whilst I am in this critical mood, I should like to point out once again to the Committee that the two flags (Swiss flag and Union Jack) which were so prominently displayed could do with a little cleaning up, especially the Swiss cross. I had always thought it was white, but it appeared a pronounced grey and the Union Jack looked as if it had "kept company" for the last twelve months with the rats and mice of some of the lofts at "Swiss House."

May I be allowed to make a suggestion, on behalf of my wife and myself: I offer to undertake to have these emblems "boiled," we have never yet taken in washing, but for the sake of the reputation for cleanliness which these two countries enjoy, we are prepared to make this little sacrifice. Whilst proceedings with the cleaning we shall have the respective National Anthems played by a Swiss made Gramophone using British made needles. —

Towards the end of the Dinner, the Chairman, Mr. Meier, proposed the toast to the King and Switzerland, both toasts were accompanied with musical honours.

Soon after, the Chairman who, by the way sat in a most imposing chair, which undoubtedly added to the glory of his office, rose to address the company, he was received with great applause.

He said:

First of all, I would like to thank you for the honour and privilege you have given me by asking me to take the Chair at this Annual Banquet of the College. This is a function to which my wife and I have been looking forward with pleasure, for we knew that its youthful and happy atmosphere would make it a most enjoyable evening.

On behalf of the Education Committee I wish to welcome everyone present: Students, Staff, Guests and Members of the Swiss Mercantile Society.

May I be permitted to make special reference to our distinguished guests?

We are honoured by the presence of Dr. Rezzonico, First Secretary of Legation and Commercial Attaché. We of the College have come to regard Dr. Rezzonico as our own member of the Legation. Many of you will remember Dr. Rezzonico's address on the 1st of August or one of his periodic visits to Swiss House. I trust that Dr. Rezzonico will continue his active interest in the welfare of the College, and in thanking him for what he has done for us in the past, I would ask him to convey our greetings and best thanks to our Minister, Monsieur Paravicini and his staff for the valuable services they have again rendered the College this year.

I am happy to welcome in our midst Mr. Steinmann, the popular president of the Swiss Mercantile Society and chairman of the Council. Under his captaincy the Society has been very active both in the educational and the social fields.

Incidentally, Mr. Steinmann is a former student of the College.

I wish to extend a special welcome to Mr. De Brunner who was one of the founders of the College in 1922. Mr. De Brunner has ever since been sharing in the responsibility and the work connected with its management and administration, and he has always been keenly interested in the improvement of the standard of education of our students. Mr. De Brunner is a Trustee and an Honorary Member of the Society and his opinion and advice are always highly appreciated by the Council and the various Committees.

Another Honorary Member of the Society present to-night is Mrs. Boos, accompanied by Mrs. Boos. Mr. Boos has won great credit in his capacity as chairman of the House Committee and vice-chairman of the Council. When National-Councillor Schmid-Ruedin, Zentralsekretär of the S.K.V. was in London a few weeks ago, he presented Mr. Boos with the golden S.K.V. medal, in recognition of his valuable work for the London Section.

We are pleased to have as one of our guests Miss Bradbury of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. We owe it to her influence that for the past 4 years our students have been given a civic welcome by the Mayor and Corporation of Cambridge. She has also arranged for parties of students to be taken round the University Colleges.

An equally important guest is Mr. Weaver, who is an old friend of the College. This is probably the only occasion when students have an opportunity of meeting Mr. Weaver in another than his official capacity of Examiner at our Diploma Examinations.

We have assembled with us this evening the members of the Teaching Staff, headed by the ever-active Principal, Mr. Levy, accompanied by Mrs. Levy, and supported by the Vice-Principal, Mr. Barraston.

The Office Staff is here in full with their leader Mr. Schneider.

Our company would be incomplete without the representatives of the powerful Press. I would like to welcome the ever-popular editor of the "Swiss Observer," Mr. Stauffer, a former president and an Honorary Member of the Swiss Mercantile Society. Further, Dr. Egli of the "Bund" and Mr. Keller, of the "Schweizerische Depeschagentur."

In accordance with tradition I am greeting my colleagues of the Education Committee last of all. As it is usual at the many meetings of

the Committee during the year, every member is present: Mr. Bannmann, the vice-chairman, Mr. Hardmeier, Mr. Weist, Mr. Streit, Mr. Roethlisberger and Mr. Haberstick. I take this opportunity for thanking them for their continued co-operation and loyal support. I am glad to notice the happy smile on the faces of their ladies, which unmistakably proves that they are getting some compensation for the many lonely nights they have to put up with.

And now Ladies and Gentlemen, let us remember for a moment the far-away country which is the homeland of most of us. Switzerland, during 1936, although comparatively quiet in a turbulent world, has had to weather many a storm of different opinion. But the overwhelming success of the Wehrmacht for the fortification of her frontiers has provided a wonderful example of the unity of mind of her population. And the alignment of her currency to the level of the most powerful economic units of the world, the British Empire and the United States, prove her determination to share in any improvement there may be in the fortunes of the world.

Many of you will be returning home before Christmas, but while we are still here together, let us wish for the continued prosperity of Switzerland and drink to the everlasting happiness of the Swiss people at home and abroad.

Hearty applause greeted the Chairman on the resumption of his seat.

Dr. Rezzonico, first Secretary of Legation, who, received a cordial reception, informed the gathering, that the Minister, owing to a bad cold was unfortunately prevented from attending. He thanked the President and the Members for the great and useful work they are rendering for the benefit of the College, including the teaching staff. Wishing everyone a Happy Xmas he ended his short oration amongst much clapping.

Before the next speaker was announced the band played a medley of Swiss Folk tunes: one can, of course, hardly expect that musicians dressed up as Russians would enter into the spirit of some of our lovely folk tunes, but when they started to play the "Bärner Marsch" at a speed similar to an aeroplane engine, I could have murdered the leader of the Band. —

The next speaker was Mr. Regensburger a Student of the College, who with an almost perfect accent, expressed, on behalf of his fellow students the thanks to the Swiss Mercantile Society for the opportunity they enjoy of gaining a wider experience both in the English language as well as in other subjects.

"It is an enormous asset" he said, "to every Swiss to be able to attend such an excellent school on arrival in a strange city: with the high moral standard of a school which caters for all the needs of young Swiss."

The efficient delivery of the speech of this young orator was befittingly acknowledged.

Mr. Steinmann, Chairman of the Council of the S.M.S. replied as follows:

It gives me great pleasure to reply to Mr. Regensburger's excellent toast of the S.M.S., and I thank you all most sincerely for the cordial way in which you received it.

I also wish to thank you for the kind invitation extended to us, the President and Vice-President of the S.M.S. and the members of the Education Committee, to be with you to-night. We all feel greatly honoured to be with you.

I was, naturally, glad to hear your appreciation of what the College of the S.M.S. is doing. This is a welcome encouragement to the Council and Committee members, who, believe me, have only one ambition, that is to make the S.M.S. College the best of its kind in England. If we have succeeded in achieving this, it is mainly due to the great efforts of our splendid teaching staff and to the work of the Education Committee — most particularly to the efforts of its untiring chairman, Mr. Meier.

But this work could not be done without the great help, both financial and moral that is accorded us, on the one hand by disinterested supporters and, on the other by the Federal Authorities and the Swiss Legation here in

London. I would therefore ask you to join with me in expressing our sincere thanks to those numerous friends.

Mr. Regensburger said that he imagined we must have a hard task in running our school under difficult circumstances. I admit that occasionally I should prefer to go home to my Philco after a day's hard work in the City rather than to go to Swiss House to a lengthy Committee meeting. But even so it has its compensations. I was very proud only quite recently to think that I was President of the S.M.S. when I heard that the students had made such a splendid effort to help our unfortunate compatriots who had to leave Spain and had collected a very substantial sum for the aid of the refugees. I think it was a very fine deed on your part.

I was also delighted to hear the promise of your spokesman that he would recommend our College whenever possible — for this is, surely, the finest form of thanks that we can ask.

I should like, in conclusion, in my own name and that of the Council, to express to you all the heartiest good wishes for Christmas and the New Year and I feel that I cannot do better than couple with this the hope that the training and experience you receive during your time at the S.M.S. College, may serve to make you all the better able to further and to share the prosperity of our beloved Switzerland.

The President's words were greeted with applause.

Mr. De Brunner, a trustee of the Society proposed the toast to the College and the Teaching staff, he said:

When recently sitting in a 1st class railway carriage, I was much amused to read over both doors the phrase "Wait until the Pain stops." Some inventive genius had carefully erased the letter "T" from the word "train" and turned the letter "R" into a "P." — Doubtless the spirit of the famous Sherlock Holmes or Dr. Watson, said to have at one time permeated the district of Baker Street, where I found myself, made me picture in my mind's eye the perpetrator of this joke, and I came to the conclusion that it must have been a youthful person having a keen sense of humour — that admirable tonic which helps one to overcome so many difficulties and troubles — and being also blessed with the faculty of creating, and taking advantage of, an opportunity. — Opportunity! what a magic word, so full of meaning! Daily we are faced with, or could ourselves create, good opportunities: to help others, to succour, to perform good deeds, to co-operate, to make friends, to end strife, to become better acquainted with the world and its ways, to add to the sum total of our knowledge and experience, etc., etc.

There is, however, one aspect of the revised wording "Wait until the Pain stops" with which I did not find myself in agreement. Pain we all suffer more or less as the inevitable consequence of the deep rooted crisis and economic upheaval of our times, but can we afford to wait until it stops? No, we must lose no chances to create and build up opportunities for better days to come, and already 14 years ago this was the guiding thought which gave birth to the College of the Swiss Mercantile Society, an Institution intended to offer you, my dear Students, as also to thousands of others before you, and we hope to many thousands more in the future, the opportunity of learning the World's leading Commercial language, and to become acquainted with English life, characteristics, customs, literature, art and science, and what not. Our home government was fully alive to the manifold advantages we were holding out to our young compatriots, — who through force of circumstances are, unfortunately, deprived from accepting employment — to extend their knowledge and experience of things British for the common good. Nobly the Swiss Authorities came to our aid with a substantial yearly subsidy, and for this practical evidence of their appreciation of our efforts we are deeply grateful.

I am glad to say that many splendid achievements in the educational domain stand to the credit of our College, and well may we be proud and happy to see that our labours and sacrifices were not in vain. But to whom is the credit for our excellent results chiefly due? To the Headmaster of our College, Mr. Levy, Mr. Burraston, Vice-Principal, and his splendid Staff, who, all and sundry, have for many years past given of their very best, in order that our young friends from Switzerland may derive the utmost benefit from a relatively short stay in this country; to enable you in due course to turn to good account the additional knowledge and experience assimilated from their tutorage, guidance and friendly interest in your future welfare. To our excellent and painstaking Teachers I would express on behalf of the Trustees and Council our warmest thanks for their collaboration in

the past, and which I trust will be fully maintained for long to come in harmonious teamwork, among themselves and conjointly with administrative staff, who are likewise entitled to hearty praise. And you my dear Students can best give proof of your appreciation of what is being done for our young Compatriots by embracing — (I trust I am not using a risky word seeing the bevy of youthful beauty here assembled), I say by embracing to the fullest extent the opportunities proffered you by our College and the Teaching Staff, and by assiduous studies, and exemplary conduct in and out of College to add lustre to our Institution, and thus constantly to maintain, and even enhance, its reputation at home and abroad.

As one closely identified with the inception of our College, it gives me particular pleasure to raise my glass and invite you very cordially to honour this toast: The S.M.S. College and the Teaching Staff, and coupled therewith the name of the Principal, Mr. Levy.

Mr. De Brunner received a hearty ovation on resuming his seat.

The last speaker on the Programme was Mr. Levy, the Headmaster of the College who responded to the previous speech.

If anybody was in doubt about the popularity of the Headmaster he must have changed his opinion, because he received an ovation lasting several minutes, before he could start his address. Mr. Levy acquainted the company that he has now been connected with the S.M.S. school for 19 years. "If we can to-day look back on some fine achievements, it is principally due to the help and hard work which I have always received from my colleagues on the teaching staff, the members of the Committee and the Swiss Legation."

He continued to compare the work of the College with a watch where every wheel must perform its duty to make the whole work in harmony. He said, amongst much hilarity that the letters S.M.S. stood for "Steinmann, Meier and Students."

He urged the Students to work conscientiously in order to make them fit for their work when they enter the most important stage of their lives; he also entreated them to follow the customs and acquaint themselves with the manners of the people with whom they are staying in whichever country that might be.

He ended his address by thanking in the name of his colleagues the Society for their appreciation which has been so frequently and generously voiced by the various authorities.

Another salvo of applause from the students and guests greeted his oration.

This ended the official part of the evening, and soon after dancing began. It was a happy and merry crowd which valed, hopped and fox-trotted to the tune of the band which now felt properly in its element.

A *polonaise*, headed by the ever young Secretary of the Society, Mr. J. J. Schneider, was a most enjoyable affair, all the more so as the couples had to pass underneath a large bunch of mistletoe, with the obvious result of receiving or giving a kiss. Now some were very shy, some only a little so, and others seemed to love it, judging from their unwillingness to move on, and give the other fellow a chance.

It was a fine evening and I feel sure, the memory of it will remain with all those present for a very long time.

ST.

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Ecole du Dimanche — Choeurs — solistes. — Thé dès 4 heures.

Dimanche 27 Décembre. 11h. — M. le Pasteur F. Christol — par échange.

Le culte du soir sera supprimé.

Jeu 31 Décembre. 8h. du soir St. Sylvestre. Service de fin d'année avec communion. — L'arbre sera rallumé.

Vendredi 1er Janvier. 11h. — Culte du Your de l'An.

### MARIAGE.

Louis Samuel Mury — de Montreux — Châtelard (Vaud) et Olive Riley Price de Ysbrad Mynach (Glam.) — le 19/12/36.

### BAPTEME.

W. Grégoire Minkoff et Mme Marie Minkoff — de Rjstcher (Ukraine) — le 20/12/36.

A tous ceux qui ont contribué au succès des fêtes et distributions de Noël par leurs dons d'argent, de vêtements ou de nourriture, un chaleureux merci et des vœux réitérés de bénédiction!

### SCHWEIZERKIRCHE

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Freitag, den 25. Dezember 1936. CHRISTTAG.

11 Uhr morgens, Gottesdienst und Feier des Heiligen Abendmahls.

Es findet kein Abendgottesdienst statt.

Sonntag, den 27. Dezember 1936.

11 Uhr morgens, Gottesdienst.

7 Uhr abends: Liturgische Weihnachtsfeier. Der Weihnachtsbaum wird wieder angezündet werden.

Donnerstag, den 31. Dezember 1936. Sylvester.

7 Uhr abends, Altjahresabendgottesdienst und Feier des Heiligen Abendmahls. — Der Baum wird wieder angezündet werden.

### VERDANKUNG.

Die Kirchenpflege und der Pfarrer der Schweizerkirche danken allen freundlichen Gebern, ob bekannt oder unbekannt, herzlich für ihre freudige und bereitwillige Mitarbeit in diesen Festtagen.

Anfragen wegen Religions-bezw. Confirmandenstunden und Amtshandlungen sind erbeten an den Pfarrer der Gemeinde: C. Th. Hahn, 43, Priory Road, Bedford Park, W.4 (Telephon: Chiswick 4156). Sprechstunden: Dienstag 12-2 Uhr in der Kirche.