

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK
Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom
Band: - (1961)
Heft: 1399

Artikel: Christmas present
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-693428>

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The Swiss Observer

76669
FOUNDED IN 1919 BY PAUL F. BOEHRINGER.

The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain

Advisory Council: R. J. KELLER (Chairman), GOTTFRIED KELLER (Vice-Chairman), O. F. BOEHRINGER, J. EUSEBIO, A. KUNZ, A. STAUFFER, G. E. SUTER.

EDITED BY P. HOFSTETTER WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF MEMBERS OF THE SWISS COLONY IN GREAT BRITAIN.

Telephone: CLERKENWELL 2321/2.

Published Twice Monthly at 23, LEONARD STREET, E.C.2.

Telegrams: FREPRINCO, LONDON.

Vol. 47. No. 1399

FRIDAY, 15th DECEMBER 1961



Christmas Eve in the old Geneva

Christmas Present

The time of gifts is near
The turkey fat for the roast
The tree stands there in the corner, somewhere
And the wine made ready for the toast.

Is there a glass raised for those absent?
Is there a gift aside for the poor?
Is there a thought for the sick and the lonely
As we gaze on that tree's bright decor?

There shall be joy and gladness
The day our Saviour was born
But didn't He intend that same spirit
To live on, long past Christmas morn?

JANE FIELDING.

Merry Christmas To All Our Readers

*I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old, familiar Carols play
And wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!*

—LONGFELLOW.

Berlin, Congo, Cuba, Tibet, Vietnam — names which mark new stakes in the fall of the old Western order. In fact, for quite a few years now, we have witnessed, powerless and horrified, a complete overthrow at world level. What is more, this year the Christmas feast is put under the terrible threat of the 50-megaton bomb, latest product of the atheistic Kremlin.

* * *

However, we must remember that as long as there is life there is hope, and the message of Christmas is a message of hope, generosity and kindness. We never know what tomorrow will bring, but we know for sure that there will always be Christmas in the hearts of men of good will.

* * *

Charles Dickens used picturesquely to speak about turkeys, puddings, oysters and all the good things we enjoy at about this time of the year. But that great writer, whose 150th anniversary we will celebrate next year, never forgot the true, spiritual meaning of Christmas. For behind the bright lights of Regent Street and aside from the material abundance of today, remains the eternal problem of human understanding amongst our fellow men.

* * *

The year which is ending has been marked in our colony by the loss of several dear friends, and also by the regrettable closing down of the Schweizerbund. On the other hand, the Swiss Church in London next year will be celebrating its bicentenary, and this indeed is an achievement which should give hope to all of us in these troubled times.

P.H.