



CABANE BRITANNIA.



PASTOR MULLER'S SPEECH.

Speeches at the Dinner.

At the dinner held the same day at 8 p.m. at the Dom Hotel, Saas Fee, the toast was given of the Association of British Members of Swiss Alpine Club, and the Chairman called on Messrs. Radford, Larden, Foa, and King-Church, to reply.

MR. RADFORD, M.P. : Messieurs et chers collègues, Mesdames, et je regrette que les dames ne sont pas nos collègues, je regrette beaucoup que je me trouve un peu monoglotte. (Cries of speak in English!) Je m'en souviens des mots que notre roi Henri V. a dit à la princesse Catherine: "I shall never move thee in French except to laugh at me," so I will lapse into my native tongue.

I am sorry that the honour of responding to this toast was not entrusted to my friend and colleague, Mr. Noel Buxton, who has taken international affairs for his province. I appreciate the honour conferred upon me of responding for the British members, but I have little to say except to offer their grateful acknowledgments. Indeed, you must not expect oratory from English sportsmen. We strenuous athletes (some of us not in our first youth), who have risen betimes and climbed 5,000 odd feet before midday are content in the evening with the exploits of the day, and have little capacity for speech. In England we have athletes and we have orators, but it is seldom that the two rôles are combined in one person. It seems from our happy experience to-night that the Swiss excel us in

this respect, for after daring exploits they speak with brilliant eloquence. But the English if somewhat reticent are sincere, and they erect lasting friendship on the basis of sincerity. We rejoice in the friendship which we have formed with our Swiss colleagues and we hope always to preserve it. I will conclude by repeating the original and spiritual words of my distinguished friend, Mr. Bruce: Vive la Suisse! Vive la Grande Bretagne! and I will add: et surtout vive la Liberté, which is the sentiment which distinguishes the two nations and binds them together.

MR. WALTER LARDEN: Ladies and Gentlemen, and especially my dear colleagues of the S.A.C. Most unexpectedly the chairman has just asked me to say a few words, and that in German. Had I been free to use my own tongue there is much that I could have said; but, speaking in German, I am sadly hampered. I came to Switzerland first in 1880; but it was many years before I set to work to learn something of German. My motive in attacking it was that I might in the future come to Switzerland more as a friend and less as a tourist, since I was so deeply interested in the country and the people. It was hard work alone; and to this day I have never attained mastery over the mysteries of the Genders! Therefore, I must beg you to listen to me with patience and forbearance, and to put up with lack of facility and eloquence in consideration of the fact that what I say comes from my heart.

I will limit myself to one point; *viz.*, the debt that I and many like me owe to the mountains and to the Swiss people—especially to the S.A.C.

As boy and undergraduate the quiet pleasures of trout fishing in England were enough to refresh me in my holidays. But when I came to real work, that of teaching, with all its strain and worry, I found that only the mountains had power to re-make me.

Year after year I came here exhausted, out of heart, doubtful whether I was doing any good; and year after year the kind welcome of the Swiss and the healing power of the mountains sent me back refreshed and able to try again.

And therefore I feel strongly that I and many like me owe a great debt to you Swiss and to your land, and especially perhaps to the Club that offered us English its hospitality in the huts.

With this I feel I had better close; "let no one venture out too far who cannot swim well." Faulty, I fear, has been this my first attempt at a speech in a foreign tongue; but as your own House-inscription say:

Gefält es Schon nicht Zederman
So hab' ich doch mein Best gethan!

(The above is a free translation, and given from memory).

MR. EDGAR FOA replied to the toast (in French) as follows:

Ladies and Gentlemen: I have been asked to say a few words in French in appreciation of the very kind and courteous reception which you have given to us the English delegates on this auspicious occasion, in view of the circumstance that that language happens to be a little more familiar to me than to most of my colleagues here assembled. This has been a day which none of us will easily forget, even though our

days should be prolonged beyond the ordinary span allotted to us. The unique occasion, the glorious sunshine, the beautiful mountains and glaciers by which we were surrounded, made up altogether a picture, the recollection of which we shall all carry away and treasure up among the most beautiful of our memories. And we had the further privilege of listening to an address from M. le Pasteur, which went straight to our hearts, and which, not less from the impassioned force of its language than from the surroundings in which it was delivered, moved us all to a degree which it is difficult to describe.

Ladies and Gentlemen: I speak now as the representative of a nation who, no doubt, were the pioneers in opening up the ways to your mountains. But the love for them which they felt and which they instilled into others is now shared by all; and you, the members of the Swiss Alpine Club, who share it also, have ever been most willing and ready to allow us to come here and taste of those great joys, and have given us all the facilities we could reasonably desire for doing so. I agree with what has been so forcibly said by preceding speakers, that the love for the mountains which I have just referred to is, and will continue to be, a most powerful factor in uniting the Swiss and English peoples, who have besides so much in common.

Ladies and Gentlemen: I will not detain you by prolonging this speech, for I feel that I should only be weakening what I have already said. It is the first time that I have found myself called on—and at a moment's notice—to make a public speech in a foreign language, but I have not found it as difficult as I had

dreaded; because when one wishes to express gratitude for much real kindness received the words almost come of themselves. Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of all my colleagues I tender you our most sincere thanks.

MR. C. E. KING-CHURCH also replied to toast of the B.M.S.A.C. They had heard that the Hut was only finished that morning. He was glad to be able to announce that the £800 they had set out to collect was completed that afternoon up at the Hut, but that further subscriptions would not be declined, because the final cost was not yet ascertained. The collection of subscriptions in England for S.A.C. sections had gone fairly well—only two out of 200 Geneva members had failed to pay—but it would work better next year. They were prepared to do the same for all other sections.

A telegram of congratulation from the English at Mont Collon Hotel, Arolla, signed Colonel Capper and Mr. S. Spencer, was read and received with enthusiasm and a suitable reply was despatched.

A letter in French was read from Mr. Archer Thomson on behalf of Ski Club of Great Britain asking that certain specified suggestions for the advantage of Ski runners should be considered. In reply to the postscript, apologising for the imperfection of his French, the Swiss raised cries "But it is very good French."

DR. DUBI: Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: I find myself to-night in the curious and somewhat alarming position of a man who is supposed to have, besides a rather copious

dinner, three souls in his body and who is expected to express the feelings of these three souls in three different languages. This seems a heavy task for a man whose theological studies are far behind his now daily occupations, and have always been very superficial. In my present state of mind the respective feelings of my three souls are alternatively those of modesty, of proudness and of truth. Let me begin with modesty. It is always useful to begin with modesty, even if you are not quite sincerely modest. I restrain therefore from addressing you in three languages and shall content myself with English and German, as French has already been used profusely both at the inauguration ceremony and in the speeches delivered this evening. I will thus speak German on behalf of the Central Committee of S.A.C., because German is the one official language in the Canton des Grisons, and because I knew not a word of Romansch or Italian. Then I may answer in English the compliments given me to-day by my dear friend, Mr. Bruce, a kindness I value the more as his words were translated immediately afterwards in excellent French by a charming English girl, Miss Ursula Radford. I shall end with a German speech upon and perhaps for the good people of Saas, of whom I may assure you with truth I am an old and convinced friend and worshipper.

(The following was spoken in German).

The Central Committee of S.A.C. has honoured me with the task of seconding its delegate, Herr Meisser, in presenting the best thanks of S.A.C. to the Association of British Members of S.A.C. for their splendid gift, the

Cabane Britannia; to the Geneva section for the excellent manner in which they executed the work of building the Hut, and arranging things for the inauguration, and their readiness to take care of the new Hut. I accepted the task quite willingly, not so much as an acknowledgment of the humble merits I may have for S.A.C. as an old mountaineer—it is a sad thing to feel old, even if you have gained some reputation by climbing for years and years—or as an author of works on Alpine history and literature, but because I was aware that it was my right as well as my duty to be present at the inauguration of a cabane, the site of which I had first selected by going up there some two years ago with my old friend, Herr Clemens Imseng, who, although a Saas man, had never been on the spot before! The Swiss Alpine Club is now, by the kindness of its British Members and their friends and Allies, in possession of a Club Hut that is really its own and they ought no longer to be ashamed because the “Akademischer Alpenclub Zürich” went ahead of them by building the “Mischabel hütte” on a spot where it was the duty of S.A.C. to give, at their cost and expense, shelter to the climbers of all nations who come to visit the splendid mountains of Saas. Now a second time we have to thank for the gift of a Hut that costs us nothing and gives us so much profit. I feel sure that all who have been up there to-day agree with me that the Hut stands on the right place, that it is convenient and well done, and that it will be useful for a series of ascents and traverse of cols in the neighbouring region.

I come now to the agreeable duty to thank the Committee of the British Association of

Members of S.A.C. for the very kind way in which they acknowledged to-day the few services I may have given them on this occasion and assure them that I shall always be ready to help them as best I can in this and similar matter of Alpine interest. I wish also to express here publicly my heartiest thanks for the honour they bestowed on me in electing me an honorary member. I am also thankful that the Association accepted in preference to other plans the site I proposed for the Britannia Hut, and also for the many marks of friendship and sympathy I receive whenever I meet with members of your Association or of the Alpine Club, with which most of you are connected as well and better than I. I am proud to possess so many friends in England, and I am sure it was the common love of the Alps that procured me this favour.

(The following was again spoken in German).

Monsieur le préfet du district de Viège has already pointed to the fact that it is nearly to the day, 30 years since the Hotel du Dom, where we are now banqueting, was built by the initiative of the then president of the commune of Saas Fée, our guest of to-night, Herr Clemens Imseng, my good friend of many years standing, and that our hosts, the Lagger family, are the worthy successors of the sympathetic first Hotel-keeper at Saas Fée, Herr Stampfer, their parent. Allow me to add a few remarks, as I had the good fortune to see the work of Herren Imseng, Stampfer and Lagger, that has grown up so splendidly in a comparatively speaking short time, in the very beginning. Since the Autumn of 1881 and the Summer of

1882 I have been at Saas Fée a great many times. Since then most things have changed here; many may be altered in future days, I hope to their best and for the real prosperity of this wonderful spot of Alpine scenery. But what I can testify as the simple truth is this: the good people of Saas, the simple peasants, men and women, who earn their livings honestly by hard labour and without complaint in hot summer, and cold winter have remained, in spite of the wiles that are inevitably connected with what we used to call "Freundenindustrie," an unspoiled, honest and loyal folk of brave Swiss and true Valaisans. So are also the guides and porters who worked so hard in bringing up the materials to the Hut, and who now rejoice with us that the work is done, and will help them in some way to keep the high standard of "guiding" in the Saas Valley. May this blessing last for so long as the Saas men are worthy of it, and I trust for ever.

(In English).

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: I am at the end of my task, and endeavour to unite in the form of a "triple entente cordiale." Thus I propose to drink the health of the "Swiss Alpine Club," of the Association of British Members of S.A.C. to be coupled with the name of the English Alpine Club—I beg your pardon, *the* Alpine Club—and of the "good people of Saas."

[Dr. Dubi kindly translated his own speeches.]

The Company separated about midnight.