

Swiss Culinary Society

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SWISS CULINARY SOCIETY.

The Annual Banquet, and Ball of the Swiss Culinary Society took place on Monday, February 1st, at the Union Helvetia Club, 1, Gerrard Place, W.

When Knights of the cooking realm assemble, in order to treat themselves, and their guests to a dinner, one can expect something really out of the ordinary; and a veritable masterpiece had been prepared. I propose to re-produce here the Menu, not in order to make those readers, who were not so lucky in participating, envious, but for the original way it was composed.

Une COUPE de PAMPLEMOUSSE à l'eau de CERISES DE BALE vous préparera l'appétit pour déguster un POTAGE dont la recette nous parvient de la REINE BERTHE.

Les SIRENES de la MANCHE accommodées à la façon de TANTE LEONTINE vous seront présentées avec leurs petits CHAUSSONS de BAIN.

Un COQ FRIBOURGEOIS se meurt de désespoir devant son poutailler déserté pendant que l'on vous sert sa BASSE-COUR accompagnée d'HERBES de son PATURAGE.

La NEIGE de nos MONTAGNES parfumée à l'ESSENCE de nos FORETS vous rappellera le patelin.

Quelques "RONZONS" qui datent du temps de BONIVARD seront soumis à votre approbation.

Un MOKA tout fumant terminera le programme.

I did not regret having gone on a slight diet, at least two days previous to this event; it was well worth the temporary privation.

The dinner started about 9 o'clock, my ticket bore the puzzling remark 8.30 p.m. *Swiss time*, and I am very grateful to the Swiss Culinary Society for having taught me, that *Swiss time* is only about 30 minutes behind Greenwich time; things are improving, at some other Swiss functions, I waited considerably longer than that.

Well over two hundred members, guests and friends sat down to the exquisitely decorated tables; whoever was responsible for the floral decorations, deserves a hearty tap on the back, he (or is it perhaps a she) displayed remarkable artistic taste. As I am just about to distribute some bouquets, I am more than anxious to congratulate M. and Mme. Borgeaud, the stewards of the Union Helvetia Club, for the excellent dinner, which they served; it was indeed a regal treat.

If I had any children, I should have told them the next day, in answer to their enquiries, that their Daddy and Mummy had such a lovely dinner, giving them one or two sweets, which I should have managed to extract from the plate, when nobody was looking; but as I am not blessed with any sweet little ones, I shall have to tell all my friends amongst our readers, how we all "gorged."

I had just swallowed the "Reine Berthe" (that was the name of the soup), when I discovered with the greatest consternation that my table card bore the number *thirteen*, a shudder ran through the whole of my body, (quite of a substantial dimension) and I was just about to reflect on what dreadful calamity might change for me this feast of joy into a tragedy, when the band struck up a lively tune, and forgotten were all my fears.

Shortly before the coffee was served, M. Juriens, who officiated very efficiently as toast master, announced that the Chairman, M. G. E. De Brunner would propose the loyal toasts which were heartily responded to, especially the one to "La Patrie." I noticed with great pleasure, that M. E. Herbodeau, Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur and President of the French Culinary Society, sang the first verse of our National Anthem, word for word. This delicate attention to our country impressed me all the more, as I must shamefacedly admit, that he knows it better than I do; but I made, there and then, a resolution to make good, and not only learn my own national hymn in all three languages, but also to learn at least, once again, the first two verses of the "Marseillaise."

The usual noisy little hammer was brought into action again, and it was announced, that M. G. E. De Brunner, Honorary President of the Culinary Society, would propose the toast to the Society. M. De Brunner, on rising, received a hearty ovation, he said:

I am proud and happy to address you for a few moments. Proud I feel that such a distinction, as the Honorary Presidency of so important a body of men as the Société Culinare Suisse, should have been bestowed upon me, and happy I am that you have proved by your numerous presence to-night that the commendable aims and objects of the Society do claim your sympathetic consideration and valued support. In fact, I am not trespassing upon any secrets when I say that we had to stop the sale of tickets, since we were afraid that overcrowding at this evening's function would impair the comfort of the friends and patrons who have responded to our call.

On behalf of the S.C.S. may I extend to you all a most hearty welcome, coupled with the wish that you may spend a right enjoyable evening in our midst. Without wishing to encroach on the territory reserved for the speech of a friend who will be heard later on, I am bound to say that I am delighted to see among us the distinguished representatives of the French and Italian Culinary Societies of London. Their presence denotes that although from time to time we may be engaged upon competitive missions yet the time honoured traditions of fair play, chivalry and sportsmanship are respected and cultivated among us. Long may these commendable sentiments continue! I think we are all agreed that competition of a friendly character is what we are looking for in these troublesome times, rather than the erection of artificial walls, which are supposed to remedy the highly unsatisfactory state of affairs, but which, by common logic, are bound to failure, since the survival of the fittest will assert itself every time.

Under present-day conditions it is certainly no sinecure to manage the affairs of any association of men, and I would therefore like to express my especial appreciation of the tireless and unselfish work performed by M. Crausaz, the Acting President of the S.C.S., and his colleagues. It goes without saying that his predecessor, Mr. Juriens, who has accomplished so much for the good cause of the Society, is equally entitled to a full measure of our gratitude. I have the privilege of being more or less intimately connected with a number of Societies in the London Swiss Colony, but there are but one or two whose aims and objects I place on so high a pedestal as I do the real "raison d'être" of La Culinare Suisse à Londres. Indeed the praiseworthy efforts of the Acting President, Committee, as well as the Members, to protect and further fame of Swiss Catering on foreign soil amount, in my humble judgment, to a National service and one which is worthy of every support and encouragement from official quarters. Switzerland is "le pays des touristes par excellence," and the more the Swiss, engaged in the Hotel industry in this country, can do to impress our British friends that we do know how to cater for the "Ministry of the Interior," the greater the service they render to the land of our birth. May I therefore voice the hope and belief that although the times are most trying and difficult, and furthermore that one's public-spirited actions give more rise to adverse criticism than appreciation and appropriate understanding, there will never be any lack of men among you, Members of La Culinare Suisse, to emulate some of the glorious features in our history by keeping our flag proudly aloft even in face of heavy odds! Let everyone remember that only by doing our level best for a common cause can we expect to overcome successfully the difficulties of our times; more than ever the motto "United we stand, divided we fall" should be translated into reality.

I for one have added tremendously to the sum total of my knowledge since I have been called to the Kitchen, and which I deem a higher destination than being called to the Bar. Speedily I learnt to appreciate the fact that the profession of a Chef has its ramifications into all walks of life. We behold in the Chef the Artist in the truest sense. He does not only bring us into close touch with Smithfield, Billingsgate and Covent Garden, but initiates us into the mysteries of Chemistry, the problems of Architecture, Geography, Sculpture, Music and what not. The average Chef would also make a Diplomat par excellence, for does he not name to-day's Tomato Soup, Potage Portugais to-morrow, and Crème Aurore the day following? But on the other hand, I am also bound to admit that the calling lends itself to a certain amount of deception, as I will briefly illustrate: It is asserted that constant dripping will wear down the *hardest* stone; well, I have been fed on dripping for the last eight years and instead of wearing down I have substantially increased in weight — possibly this is due to my *soft* nature!

The Chef is, of course, dependent for his reputation on the proper functioning of the "overground" service. The other day while sitting with a friend in a Restaurant, famous for its Chef, and wainly waiting for the Garçon to bestir himself, my companion came to the conclusion that it might possibly be a very lengthy job and took the precaution of slipping into the adjacent Post Office to apply for his Old Age Pension form.

Please do not think that I intend to emulate the example of a Motoring friend, who when addressed by a policeman with the words: Why on earth don't you stop when the traffic signals are against you — can't you see or read? explained, I am sorry, Constable, my car can't read and unfortunately I cannot manage to stop the engine. I will, therefore, put the brake on my observations and propose concluding with one or two recommendations to my good friends of La Culinare Suisse:

Never boil over with anger or indignation. Never allow trifles to upset you.

If anything does go wrong, take a couple of Angels on Horseback for a Vol au Vent: the fresh air will put you right again.

Remember that Humour is the salt of life — use it plentifully.

Let your present and future Committees substitute Chef-d'oeuvres for Hors-d'oeuvres and above all let them beware of any split in the Cabinet pudding!

Ladies and Gentlemen: The toast is La Culinare Suisse de Londres. Long may it live and prosper.

Great applause greeted M. De Brunner on resuming his "Fauteuil Présidentiel," and the prosperity of the Society was drunk with warmth and sincerity. I had hardly time to congratulate the President, whom I had the pleasure of sitting next to on his fine oration, when M. Crausaz, the popular President of the Swiss Culinary Society, rose to respond to the previous toast. He extended a hearty welcome to the distinguished gathering, and thanked the Chairman for having agreed to preside on this festive occasion. "Whenever we are in trouble we come to you, and you always help us" he said, M. Crausaz then mentioned, that he was exceedingly pleased to see amongst the company so many prominent members of the Hotel profession, a fact which is very gratifying to the Committee which fully appreciates the honour thus bestowed on the Society. He extended a particularly hearty welcome to M. Herbodeau, President of the French Culinary Society, and to M. Bianchi, President of the Italian Culinary Society, saying how much he valued their presence, and expressing the wish, that the relations between the two Societies, and the Swiss Culinary might remain on the same cordial footing, as it has been in the past. M. Crausaz, also spoke of the many great services which M. Juriens, the Founder of the Swiss Culinary Society had rendered, these remarks were heartily applauded by the whole gathering.

M. P. F. Boehringer, Editor of the Swiss Observer, was then called upon to give the toast to the Ladies; in spite of the fact, as he apologetically stated, of being bound in holy matrimony, he accomplished his task in his usual masterful way. His witty allusions to Helen of Troy, who became in time Helen of Cambridge, and ended with being called "Helen of the 'glue pot,'" caused much amusement. He expressed the wish, that the members of this gathering would not imitate the founders of Rome, who stole the Sabine women from their husbands by running away with all the radiant beauties present. This toast was honoured with great deference by all members of the "down trodden sex."

The next toast was the one responding, here however, seemed to have occurred a little hitch, as Mr. Bentley Capper, Editor of the Hotel Review, was under the impression, that the task of eulogizing the Ladies was allotted to him, with the result that the Ladies got away with a double dose of praise, which, however, I am sure nobody will begrudge them, Mr. Bentley Capper said:

For some reason which I have never been able to understand — the toast of "The Ladies" is always regarded as a subject for joking. You and I Mr. Chairman do not agree with that. We know that Woman is *beyond a joke!* — "Uncertain, coy and hard to please," as one of our English poets has described her, Woman flatly refuses to be treated as a joke.

Many clever men have tried to find a definition for that charming elusive being, Woman; and not one has ever succeeded. It was a woman herself who perhaps came nearest to a definition. "What is Woman?" she asked, and answered, "Only one of Nature's agreeable blunders." — At any rate, we must all agree that if Nature blundered in making Woman, she blundered *handsomely*. And if it were not for that "agreeable blunder" we should none of us be here to-night! — So why should we complain?

As my eyes are dazzled by the sight of beautiful womanhood, in looking round this room, so is my mind crowded and bewildered by the women who have made history. St. Jeanne d'Arc was a great woman; she made an English army skedaddle. Helen of Troy kept two countries fighting over her charms for 10 years. Cleopatra, for love of whom Mark Anthony gave up a world. Our own Florence Nightingale and Nurse Cavell were great in another way. While the others made wars, they repaired the havoc of war. And Nurse Cavell left as a legacy to humanity one of the noblest sayings ever recorded — "Patriotism is not enough."

Naturally before coming here to-night, I wanted to embroider my theme with some famous example of Swiss womanhood. Forgive me, but in my ignorance of your country's history, the only name I could think of was Mrs. William Tell? — Was there ever a Mrs. William Tell? Perhaps not; because some say there never was a Mr. William Tell. So that the

alleged wife of a legendary figure may well be merely a figment of my imagination. Can it be that what I had in mind was that old conundrum: "Should a woman tell?" — The answer to which is, I believe, that it depends what there is to tell!

Seriously, however, there is no need to search the pages of history and literature for examples of wonderful women. Are they not always around us in our daily lives? Does not everyone of us love and revere the wonderful woman who gave us birth, and at whose knee we learned everything as infants? Did I say "at whose knee? I might have added — "across whose knee." — That is where the ladies have the advantage of us — when we are young and defenceless: too young to resist any indignity!

But speaking of wonderful women — they surround us like guardian angels at every stage of our lives — our mothers, our wives, daughters, sisters. In a word — our *Sweethearts*: for that embraces the lot. Gentlemen, the loveliest being in all creation —

"A perfect woman nobly planned
To warn, to comfort and command.
And yet a spirit still, and bright
"With something of angelic light."

This humorous oration was much appreciated, and I noticed that when the speaker exclaimed, *Should a Woman Tell?* a Lady in the vicinity, sat rather suddenly on the floor, which I took for an intimation that she at least would not tell.

M. A. Indermaur, President of the Territorial Administration of the Union Helvetia, then proposed the Toast to the Guests, saying, that it gave him infinite pleasure to be able to welcome some of the leading men in the Hotel World; "that they have so generously accepted our invitation," he said, "has given us all immense pleasure." We have to-night, the following guests amongst us," he continued:

M. Walters, General Manager, Carlton Hotel; M. Walters, General Manager, Ritz Hotel; M. Jordan, Manager, Grosvenor House Hotel, M. Delaloye, Manager Trocadero Restaurant; M. Herbodeau, Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, Maître chef, Carlton Hotel; M. Latory, Maître chef, Savoy Hotel; M. Avignon, Chef, Ritz Hotel; M. Paget, Maître chef, Dorchester House Hotel.

Amongst the Hotel Proprietors the following were present:

Messrs A. Schmid, A. Wyss, Krebsler, Muller, with their Ladies.

Other guests:

M. Brun, President of the Birmingham Section; M. Bianchi, President Italian Culinary Society; Mrs. Hutchinson, M. Bentley Capper, Editor of the Hotel Review; M. Stauffer, from the Swiss Observer; M. Verger, Secretary of the French Culinary Society.

M. Indermaur finished his address with the wish, that the friendships made that night, might live for ever and ever.

The reply for the guests was made by M. E. Herbodeau, Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, President of the French Culinary Society, who, in his short and impressive address said, that he was glad to be amongst his Swiss colleagues, and that he hoped there would never be any unfair rivalry amongst the members of this world-famed profession; but that all should endeavour to work for the creation of an "Entente d'esprits" for the common good of all. This oration, which voiced that great human feeling of which the world is so badly in need of, was heartily cheered. M. Bianchi, President of the Italian Culinary Society, emphasized the good relations which were existing between the members of the respective institutions. This ended the official part of the evening; it was a most successful affair, the speeches were not only interesting, but entertaining and not too lengthy.

Up till now, I knew very little about the Swiss Culinary Society, as I had never before, the pleasure of attending a function of this institution, and I respectfully submit, that a Society which is able to muster such a distinguished attendance, is indeed entitled to take an honoured place amongst the many Swiss Institutions in the London Colony. I always had a grateful feeling towards those men, who look so well after, as one speaker termed it the *Ministry of the Interior*, and whom one so seldom meets. It was therefore, a special pleasure to meet such famous men, and this gathering will linger for many a day in my memory as having been one of the most pleasant functions of the many, which I am privileged to attend.

The Banqueting Hall was then cleared and dancing started. Mlle. Daphne de Wyt delighted the revellers by a few most competently performed burlesque dances, and at 2 a.m. sharp, the traditional onion soup was served, a worthy closing to a most successful and enjoyable evening.

ST.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Saturday, February 6th, from 7 p.m.-1 a.m. — Swiss Mercantile Society — Cinderella Dance, at the Midland Grand Hotel, St. Pancras, N.W.1. Price of ticket 8/6 (including Supper).

Wednesday, February 17th, at 8.15 — Nouvelle Société Helvétique and Swiss Institute Orchestral Society — Literary and Musical Evening — at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1. (See Advertisement.)

Friday, February 19th — from 8 p.m.-2 p.m. — Swiss Choral Society — Buffet-Dance — at the First Avenue Hotel, High Holborn, W.C.1. Tickets 5/6. All are cordially invited.

Saturday, February 20th, at 2 and 4 o'clock — Nouvelle Société Helvétique (London Group) — Swiss Film Show — at King George's Hall, Caroline Street, Tottenham Court Road, W.

Saturday, February 20th from 6.45-12p.m. — City Swiss Club — Dinner and Dance — at the May Fair Hotel, Berkeley Square, W.1.

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7 Uhr abends, Gottesdienst.

8 Uhr Chorprobe.

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