

Unione Ticinese

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UNIONE TICINESE. ANNUAL BANQUET AND BALL.

The Unione Ticinese Banquet and Ball took place on Tuesday, March the 8th, at the Monico (International Hall) Piccadilly Circus, W.

I was looking forward to this event with great expectations, knowing from past experience, how well our brethren from beyond the Gothard, can entertain their guests, and I am delighted to report that my expectations met with no disappointment.

Mr. W. Notari, the popular President received the official guests and members of the U. T. shortly before 8 o'clock, in the Renaissance Hall, and the happy laughter and gay merriment of the company was a promising feature for what was in store for the participants.

Nearly two hundred members and guests sat down to a most sumptuous dinner, and first class honours must be allotted to Messrs. Monico for their excellent fare. It still makes my mouth water, when I think of all the dainty dishes, with which the company was regaled; and the verdict of everyone present was: Well done Monico!

In the unavoidable absence of The Swiss Minister, Monsieur Ch. Paravicini, Monsieur de Jenner, the Chargé d'Affaires, was in the Chair. The customary Toasts to H. M. the King and the President of the Swiss Confederation and the Federal Council, were proposed by the Chairman and honoured with great acclamation.

M. de Jenner then presented Mme. Meschini with a beautiful bouquet of red and white carnations, on behalf of the members of the U. T., and this delicate attention once more proved to me, that the Unione Ticinese are past masters in according honour, where honour is due, and fully merited.

I was deeply engaged in some interesting conversation with my table neighbour, a prominent member of the Swiss Colony, when our intimate tête à tête was interrupted by some tremendous cheering; the cause of which was, that M. Notari, President of the U. T. rose to address the company.

M. Notari is not only a great President, but he is also a fine orator, and one could have heard a pin drop, when he started his speech by welcoming M. de Jenner, as a worthy substitute of the Swiss Minister. "We deeply regret," he said, "not to be able to welcome our chief amongst us to-night, but we charge his worthy representative to convey to him the greetings of the whole company."

A cordial welcome was also extended to the following official guests:

Mons. de Bourg, First Secretary of Legation, M. G. Marchand, Vice-President of the City Swiss Club, M. Zimmermann, Hon. Secretary of the City Swiss Club, M. Dupraz, President of the Fonds de Secours, M. Stauffer, representing the Swiss Observer and M. and Mme. Christen of the Swiss Club (Schweizerbund).—

Now I have a bone to pick with the worthy President, is he aware that he nearly wrecked a happy home, does he know that he sent me away that night with serious misgivings as to my immediate future? In introducing the representative of the official paper of the Swiss Colony, he called me the "jovial monk" of the colony, I could hardly believe my ears, if only he would have said the "jovial monkey" I could have forgiven him, but "monk," surely he must have made a mistake; he could have hardly called me that on account of my celestial achievements.

Going home, early in the morning, it made me think very hard, and when I announced the very same morning, over breakfast, to my faithful life companion, that I may try to find rest, peace and solace from this world's turmoil in a monastery, I heard some plain speaking, and I only regret that the President of the U. T. did not get a taste of it.

M. Notari then acquainted the company with the fact that the U. T. was founded in 1874 as a Mutual Benevolent Society to aid those who had fallen on the battlefield of our daily life; and the short resumé given about the glorious traditions of this great Society, received the acknowledgment which is fully due to it.

"We are proud," he said, "that members of the U. T. are, and have been, pioneers in the catering industry, names like Carlo Gatti, Monico, Pagani, Odonino, Reggione, Diviani, De Maria, Tetramanti, Toriani and many others, will live and will tell the world what hard work, honesty and perseverance can achieve, and those names just mentioned are the backbone of our Society, and we are rightly proud of them."

Finally M. Notari paid a great and well deserved tribute to M. Meschini, a member "Benemeriti" of the U. T. "No call is too much for him," he exclaimed, "and could one pay a greater compliment to any one."

This fine oration met with a great reception and hardly before the last cheers had died down, Mons. Ch. de Jenner, Chargé d'Affaires, addressed the company as follows:

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C'est avec grand plaisir que je me suis rendu ce soir à votre si aimable invitation, non seulement parce qu'elle me donnait l'occasion de faire la connaissance de mes compatriotes de la Suisse italienne, mais aussi parce que depuis de nombreuses années, j'ai un faible tout particulier pour votre canton.

Comme beaucoup de mes compatriotes en-deça du Gothard, j'ai fait la découverte du Tessin pendant l'occupation des frontières, en qualité de soldat. Je ne pense pas ici à vos belles vallées, à vos montagnes, à vos lacs magnifiques et reflétant l'azur du ciel méridional, que je connaissais déjà comme écolier, mais au cœur tessinois que j'ai appris à connaître le soir dans les foyers, ou à la danse qui nous réunissait avec les charmantes jeunes filles des bords du Ticino et de la Maggia dans le Sottoceneri et le Malcantone, aux sons d'un piano mécanique que nous appelions le "cingei." Dans tous les cœurs tessinois, j'ai trouvé la patrie suisse.

Grande était la joie des officiers et des soldats de ma batterie quand après la mobilisation notre train se dirigeait vers le Sud. Nous savions que nous allions retrouver d'anciennes amitiés et en former de nouvelles. Mais vos soldats qui traversaient le Gothard étaient, eux aussi, reçus à bras ouverts et partout ils surent se faire aimer.

Il n'est pas exagéré de dire que votre canton est devenu, pour ainsi dire, l'enfant chéri de la famille helvétique. Et il le mérite.

Vous avez su créer ici, à l'étranger, une union tessinoise. D'aucuns pensent peut-être qu'il n'est pas bon que les différentes races dont se compose notre peuple forment des bandes à part. Mais moi je ne suis pas de cet avis et j'estime que vous avez raison de garder, surtout à l'étranger, votre caractère tessinois, car c'est précisément la diversité de caractère de nos différentes races qui font la force et la richesse de notre patrie commune. Bons Tessinois bons Suisses, mauvais Tessinois, mauvais Suisses.

Développez ce caractère tessinois, non seulement chez vous, mais surtout chez vos enfants, sauvegardez vos mœurs, cultivez votre langue, votre italianité.

Vous avez un exemple en la personne de votre vénéré Président de la Confédération, mon Chef, M. Motta, qui réunit en lui d'une manière si parfaite l'amour de son canton et l'amour de la patrie commune.

Mes chers compatriotes, je ne veux pas abuser de votre patience, aussi, en levant mon verre, je vous invite à boire à la prospérité de votre Union, de votre Canton, de la Confédération Suisse et à la santé de son Président.

An equally hearty applause was accorded to the distinguished speaker.

M. Dupraz, President of the Swiss Benevolent Society, then addressed the gathering in his usual efficient way, as follows:

"In coming here to-night I had the feeling of being a very privileged guest of a very friendly and useful Society, but after your President's speech I realize more than ever before, the wonderful work carried out by the Unione Ticinese, and I feel all the more honoured at being your guest to-night.

This gathering is better proof than any word I might say of the popularity and vitality of your Society: this popularity is due to a large extent to you, Sir, their able and ever cheerful President, and to the other members of your Committee who give you such devoted support. No Swiss Society in England is better managed than the Ticinese, and no annual function draws such a bevy of smart and beautiful women; if Paris was called upon to pronounce judgment once again, and this in this room, it would take him the whole night long to make up his mind, and one golden apple would be completely inadequate.

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Looking upon this loveliness, I cannot but come to the conclusion that the Ticinese must be a man of good taste, and knowing my southern compatriot as I do, I must also come to the conclusion that the charming ladies who seek his company also show undoubted good taste and wisdom.

I am sure I am voicing the feelings of all the ladies and of my fellow guests, in telling you how much we appreciate the privilege of sharing these happy hours with you to-night, and we thank you for your welcome. We all agree in saying that we really love the Unione Ticinese and the Ticinese himself in particular. You people are the enfants gâtés of Switzerland and of the Federal Authorities. You have, I was going to say, the most beautiful Canton, but on second thoughts I think mine is just as beautiful as yours so we will say a beautiful Canton. You have more sun than any other Swiss, you have Giuseppe Motta and you have your melodious language. Being of unselfish disposition I hear that you have been good enough lately to take legal steps so that your compatriots of the other side of the Gotthard, living in your country, be compelled to adopt their guttural vocal chords to your home tongue. Wasn't that thoughtful of you, enough said.

I now would ask the ladies and guests to be upstanding and drink to the happiness and prosperity of our old friends the Unione Ticinese."

As no Banquet of the Unione Ticinese would be complete without at least a few words from the Hon. Vice-President, M. Meschini yielded to insistent calls, and concluded the official part of the evening with a brilliant, and witty speech which was loudly applauded.

During the dinner a small orchestra rendered most appropriate music, and when *f.i.*, they started their musical programme with that, unfortunately much hackneyed tune: *O Sole mio*, I could see the faces of our Ticinese brighten up; no doubt they were thinking of that glorious sun which is shining over their beautiful canton, over those lovely lakes, those gorgeous valleys of which they are so proud. It brought back to me too, sweet memories of long ago, when, as a young man, I spent my first holiday at Lugano. Well do I remember, how I passed one evening in that lovely little place called Gandria, writing my first love letter, kindling my inspiration with a bottle of Asti spumante, and how I got into trouble over it, as this letter somehow came into wrong hands and all those beautiful words about star-lit nights, eyes of heaven and all that love-sick sentimentality were wasted.— I was still deeply engaged in meditation when the Blue Danube Valse nearly made me swallow the *Bombe Monico* whole from sheer excitement, and my vis-à-vis, a sweet little Lady, from somewhere near Locarno, sent me such a sweet longing and tempting little look, which made me nearly forget that I made a resolution beforehand, not to be lured to the dancing floor, but like a good little boy and dutiful husband to listen to the Cabaret Entertainment instead, which under the direction of M. Claude Chandler, provided such a fine and splendid diversion for the less athletically-minded section of the gathering.

Needless to say, that I got tempted and slipped, how can a poor mortal like myself resist the sunny smile, the dreaming and yet sparkling eyes of a Tessinoise. Never have I seen, at the many functions which I have the privilege of attending such an array of lovely ladies, all my good resolutions and promises were forgotten, Eve had called and Adam took a big bite from the apple. (I have since confessed, so no copy of the S.O. need be sent to my private address).

To my great joy I met again many old faces, oh, what a happy family our Brethren from beyond the Gotthard are, their melodious lingua, their smiling faces was a wonderful stimulant, and many a care worn heart found a beneficial respite from the turmoil of an anxious time through which we are all passing. Thanks, Members of the Unione Ticinese for those golden hours, they have once again brought us nearer to each other, they have once again filled us with pride that we are all children of the same country, the country which we proudly call "La Patrie."

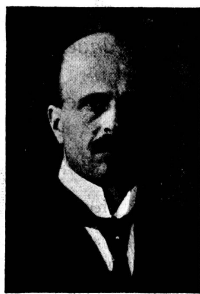
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PERSONAL.

We have great pleasure to acquaint our readers and friends of the engagement of Miss Ruth Bertschinger, daughter of Mr. Charles Bertschinger, a popular member of the London Colony, with M. Marcel Pradervand, Pasteur-Suffragant of the Eglise Suisse.

We are tendering them our heartiest congratulations, and are wishing them a happy and bright future.

NEWS FROM THE COLONY.



W. LEHMANN,
PRESIDENT
and
CHAIRMAN
of the Council of the
SWISS MERCANTILE
SOCIETY LTD.

We have great pleasure in publishing the portrait of M. W. Lehmann, the new President and Chairman of the Swiss Mercantile Society Ltd., who was elected on the 9th inst.

The new President is in a responsible position at the Swiss Bank Corporation, London Office; and he came to this country 26 years ago. M. Lehmann hails from the Canton of Berne.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY LIMITED.

An Extraordinary General Meeting of the Swiss Mercantile Society Ltd. was held in Swiss House, 34/35, Fitzroy Square, W.1., on Wednesday, March 9th. Mr. M. Paschoud (the Chairman) presided. There were present 44 Members and the Meeting was honoured by the attendance of Monsieur Ch. de Jenner, Counsellor of the Swiss Legation, Monsieur W. De Bourg, First Secretary of Legation, Monsieur W. Ruefenacht, Secretary of Legation and Monsieur P. Hilfiker, Chancellor of Legation.

The Chairman, in opening the proceedings, explained the reasons for convening an Extraordinary General Meeting. He said he was leaving London shortly to take up an important position in Paris and was therefore reluctantly compelled to relinquish his offices of Chairman of the Council and President of the Society. Mr. Paschoud joined the Society as an Active Member in 1911, was President of the Society in 1914 after having previously served on the Committee. He had to abandon the Presidency during his term of office when being called on business to South America. In 1928, Mr. Paschoud was elected Chairman of the Education Committee and in 1929, President of the Society, and by retaining the former office for another year acted in a dual capacity during a most strenuous period. One of his chief tasks was the reorganisation of the College to which he was deeply attached. In 1931, Mr. Paschoud was elected first Chairman of the Council of the Swiss Mercantile Society Ltd.

Mr. A. C. Stahelin, Vice-Chairman of the Council, proposed that Mr. Paschoud be elected an Honorary Member of the Society. He eulogized the unselfish work done by Mr. Paschoud which would not be forgotten, and he left with the very best wishes of the Society. Mr. P. F. Boehringer, in seconding the Council's motion, related some reminiscences of Mr. Paschoud's earlier activities. The motion was then adopted with rousing cheers.

The Chairman answering in suitable terms, said that this election added to the sadness of having to leave this country in which he has resided for some 26 years and where he left good friends, many of whom he met at the S.M.S.

The Chairman thereupon reported that Mr. C. Chapuis was unable to fill the office of Chairman of the Education Committee. The election was due to a misunderstanding. Mr. Chapuis, who had declared his willingness to serve on the Committee, was abroad at the time when the election took place. Although he would have been very willing to do the work, Mr. Chapuis could not see his way to accept the office.

The Chairman had great pleasure in putting forward the nomination of Mr. W. Lehmann as President of the Society and Chairman of the Council. On being duly seconded the motion was carried unanimously by show of hands and hearty applause. Mr. W. Lehmann therefore succeeded to the vacant offices.

Mr. E. Hardmeier, Vice-Chairman of the Education Committee, was prepared to accept the Chairmanship of the Education Committee. Mr. Hardmeier, who has great experience in the work of the said Committee, was duly elected with acclamation.

It was proposed and seconded that Mr. J. H. Attinger, who was elected as a fifth Member of the General Purposes Committee, four only being required in accordance with the Bye Laws, be transferred to the Education Committee to complete the number of Members (four) being required on that Committee. There was no dissentient.

In order to assure the services of Mr. C. Chapuis, the Chairman proposed that Mr. Chapuis be elected an additional Member of the Council. The motion was carried with acclamation.

Mr. Chapuis then informed the Meeting that a farewell party would be held at the Union Helvetia on Tuesday, March 15th, on which

occasion a presentation would be made to Mr. Paschoud. The necessary arrangements for this "Souper dansant" had been completed and Mr. Chapuis exhorted the Members present to make it a point of attending and bring along their friends in order to give Mr. Paschoud a hearty send off.

The proceedings then terminated.

The Extraordinary General Meeting was immediately followed by the Monthly Meeting.

W.B.

Owing to lack of space, we are unable to publish the report of the Supper Dance in this issue; a full report will however appear in next week's number.

E. NEUSCHWANDER †

Last Wednesday the funeral service of M. E. Neuschwander, one of the oldest and most lovable Members of the Swiss Colony, took place at the Swiss Church, Endell Street, W.C.2.

M. E. Neuschwander was born at Onchy in the year 1846, and like his parents, he chose the Hotel profession for his career. After an apprenticeship, and subsequent employment in various hotels in Switzerland, the young and ambitious man decided to say valet to the country of his birth, in order to see the world and seek further experience. It was a momentous decision for a man who deeply loved his native country, as travelling in those far away days was a far bigger undertaking than it is now. There were no "Golden Arrow Expresses" and no "Trains de Luxe," but to young Neuschwander discomfort or fatigue meant nothing, before him lay God's wide world open, golden opportunities waited to be gathered, and that he did not let them pass by will be proved by this short biography.

His journey took him to the sunny south and at the French Riviera he started his career abroad. Those were happy years for our late friend, he was fortunate in finding amongst his employers men of intellect and human understanding, and although he had to work hard, these years left happy memories behind. At that time the family of a Cabinet Minister of Her Majesty Queen Victoria's Government were spending their vacation at the hotel of M. Neuschwander's parents in Switzerland, and he was induced by correspondence which took place, to change his abode and come to Albion's shores in their service.

Was it the change of environment, the difference between the happy always smiling southerner and the grave and conventional Englishmen of Victorian days which created in the young man a longing for his country, with its silvery mountains, its lakes and its hamlets? He did not feel happy in private service, there was not enough scope for a man full of enterprise, so the day came, when the box was packed and the wanderer returned to the home of his fathers. But not for long, the "Wanderlust" was awakened, the fire of seeing foreign lands was kindled, and again his way took him to the great Metropolis of a great Empire, but this time to seek a position in a hotel.

It was on May 15th, 1870, that he arrived in London, where, a position at the Charing Cross Hotel was offered to him and which he accepted; hardly could he know then, that this would be his home for the next 52 years. With great zeal and enthusiasm he fulfilled his duty; these were hard days, and but little time for recreation was available, but the award for devotion to work did not fail to appear. In 1885 the Directors of the then South Eastern and Chatham Railway Company appointed him Manager of the Charing Cross Hotel. The reminiscences and experiences, some of which he related to the writer some time ago, during the 37 years of Management (M. Neuschwander retired in 1922) would fill pages of the Swiss Observer, amongst them was no doubt the marriage to an English lady, who was through many years a never-failing true companion and helpmate to him; she presented him with five children, three daughters and two sons, all of whom are married and are to-day mourning their beloved father.

In 1920, shortly before his retirement, the loss of his wife cast a cloud over the many years of happy companionship; but the devotion of one of his daughters, with whom he subsequently made his home, lessened the grievous loss sustained.

Our departed friend came in contact with people in all walks of life, he rubbed shoulders with crowned heads, princes of Industry and Commerce, Politicians, Diplomates, etc.

In a quiet and unobtrusive way, he accomplished his heavy and not always enviable task, loved and respected by all who came in touch with him; to his subordinates he was at all times a most considerable master. On his retirement, a banquet in his honour was held at Frascati's Restaurant, which was attended by a great number of hotel managers and was a striking proof in what great esteem he was held in his profession. Amongst his many friends was the late M. Ritz, our famous compatriot of Ritz Hotels fame.