

# Arturo Meschini

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**ARTURO MESCHINI.**

Arturo Meschini is dead. Such is the sad news that went round the Colony on Thursday, February 12th, like lightning. For the deceased was known to us all, as by his charm of manner, as well as by his inborn modesty, he made firm friends of all whom he met.

He had studied both here and in Switzerland, and at an early age, owing to the premature death of his father, the lamented Carlo Meschini, took his place beside his mother, Signora Linda, in the management of "Pagani's."

Every Swiss who has lived any length of time in London has at one time or another dined at "Pagani's," made a speech in the "Alexandra Hall" and admired the signatures and caricatures scribbled on the walls of the "Artists' Room" by celebrities of song and music. When, to say it with Dante, you went "giù tra i miei meschini," you would come away refreshed not only in the body for the good food, but also in the spirit for the experience of meeting Arthur Meschini. Though the meeting might have been only by the merest chance, he would sympathize, admire, exchange advice or ideas, so that you could not but wonder at having missed such a good friend for so long. Under the polish of the perfect gentleman he hid all the charm and warmth of character of the Ticinese. And amongst his Ticinesi he could be at his best. In the memory of many he will linger as the little man, curly hair, twinkling eye, who used to wind up the bout of after-dinner oratory at the Banquets of the "Unione Ticinese" paying witty compliments all round.

It is easy to imagine how such a personality could serve as the unofficial ambassador of his Country. The patrons of "Pagani's" who have been introduced to the charms of our Homeland by Mr. Meschini are legion. He himself never failed to spend the summer holidays with his family at his

beautiful villa lapped by the waves of the blue Verbano. To mention but one example of his persuasive propaganda, one has only to recall the breaking of the world record for speedboats by Sir Malcolm Campbell at Locarno three years ago. Sir Malcolm had been a diner at Great Portland Street for many years.

This lively link between the two countries was, however, severed when in October 1940 the house of Pagani was almost completely destroyed by fire during a night raid on London. We had met, as it now happens for the last time, during the summer, and although saddened by his misfortune Signor Meschini had spoken of the future, a better future for mankind, and in that future he visualized a bigger, and better "Pagani's," but we both agreed that the latter would no longer be quite the same.

In conjunction with his mother, he had munificently endowed the church of his faith and, in recognition, the Pope conferred upon him the knight hood of the papal order of SS. Maurizio e Lazzero.

The limited scope of this notice does not allow room for payment of adequate tribute to the generous support the deceased has given to his 'conteranei' in London. A Ticinese, indeed a Swiss, in the catering profession is hard to find who has not profited by his association with the house of Pagani.

Various Swiss Societies set up their tents at 38-42 Great Portland Street, but especially the "Unione Ticinese" owes the late Signor Meschini a heavy debt of gratitude. For the past two decades he had been its honorary Vice-President, and as long ago as the years 1910 and 1915 had been President. His name, however, will forever be linked in the annals of the "Unione" with that especially brilliant revival of social activity that lies between the two Wars. The Society, then under the leadership of Mr. W. Notari, could always count on the whole-hearted backing of its honorary Vice-President, the celebrations of the Golden and Diamond Jubilees being two memorable occasions. As a token of appreciation the "Unione Ticinese" did Signor Meschini the rare honour of nominating him a "socio benemerito," and on this occasion presented him with an illuminated address, the text of which runs as follows:

*"Al Signor Arturo Meschini, Vice-Presidente Onorario, come pegno di riconoscenza e di stima per l'alta protezione morale e per il generoso aiuto materiale concesso alla Società, additandolo come nobile esempio all'intera Colonia, presenta questa pergamena; e nominandolo Socio Benemerito Lo ascrive nel suo Albo d'onore a perenne Ricordo — Londra 4 giugno 1931."*

The General Meeting of the "Unione Ticinese," called for Sunday, February 15th, adjourned "sine die," and the President eulogized the departed member.

#### THE FUNERAL.

In spite of the limitations imposed by the war situation, a numerous congregation gathered at the Church of St. Charles, Ogle Street, W.1, on the morning of Tuesday, February 17th, for the Requiem  
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Mass, Father Hanifin and his two colleagues officiating. The Swiss Minister was represented by M. De Jenner, Counsellor of Legation. It was chiefly the staff, past and present, of "Pagani's" who had come to pay their last respects to the "Padrun," and also the great majority of the Ticinese colony of London. Beautiful floral tributes were laid on the coffin; we counted twenty-five wreaths from members of the family, friends, staff and societies. Afterwards the funeral procession passed by the scarred walls of "Pagani's," on its way to the deceased's parish Church, St. Edward the Confessor, at Golders Green. Here another sun Requiem Mass was celebrated, Canon Sims officiating, with the Right Rev. Edward Myers, Bishops-Auxiliary of Westminster, and Right Rev. Mgr. Canon Joseph Tynan, in attendance. The congregation here was composed of relatives, friends, neighbours and the deputations from the Societies of the Colony. The sad procession then went on to St. Mary's Cemetery, Kensal Green, where the mortal remains were laid to rest in the Upper Catacomb to await transference to the family burial place at Magadino when favourable opportunity offers.

From these hospitable columns we renew our sincere condolences to the bereaved family, particularly to his widow, Signora Caterina, to his sons and daughters, and to his beloved mother, Signora Linda, who survives him at the robust age of 79, and assure them of our deepest sympathy in their great sorrow.

Amongst the large congregation attending the services we noticed, apart from the chief mourners, Mr. William Notari, Mr. and Mrs. F. Notari, A. Villa, F. Morosi, J. Eusebio, H. DeMaria, A. Morosi, E. Camozzi, C. Ferrari, C. Bolla, C. Berti, D. Lunghi, F. M. Gamper, W. L. Krucker, J. J. Pfaendler, W. Deutsch, Louis Chapuis, Carlo Chapuis, C. Frei, J. J. Boos, L. Jobin, A. Stauffer and P. F. Boehringer.

### SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

The Eleventh Ordinary General Meeting of the Swiss Mercantile Society (Limited by Guarantee) was held at Swiss House on Saturday, February 14th. (It was the eleventh General Meeting since the formation of the Company and the 54th since the foundation of the Society in 1888).

Mr. J. J. Boos, President, was in the Chair and over forty members were present, among whom were many Veteran Members and some who had joined the Society only recently.

The Secretary read the notice convening the meeting.

In opening the proceedings, the Chairman referred to the death of a great compatriot and benefactor of the Swiss Colony, Mr. Arthur Meschini, Proprietor of Pagani's Restaurant. In a few well chosen words, the President paid tribute to the deceased and the meeting rose in his memory.

The accounts for the period under review, as submitted to the meeting, were elucidated by the auditor, Mr. Percy H. Green, F.C.A. As was to be expected in the circumstances, the accounts showed a considerable loss, particularly as no subsidy had as yet been received, whilst there was still a heavy expenditure to be met in connection with Swiss House, contracted

through the pre-war lease. A motion to receive and adopt the accounts as submitted was passed without dissension, and the auditor, Mr. Green, was re-appointed.

The President then reported on the activities of the Society during the past year. After briefly alluding to the momentous happenings in the world affairs, he referred to the special position of Switzerland, both from an economic and political point of view. He expressed the hope that our country might be spared the ravages of war and thus be able to continue its humanitarian work.

As in 1940, so again in 1941, the work of the Society was greatly restricted. Nevertheless, the London Section carried on and the following is a brief résumé of its activities as reported by the President.

*Membership.* There were five admissions and eleven resignations. Of the latter, however, six were transfers to Swiss Sections.

*Meetings.* The Society, the Council and the General Purposes Committee met regularly on Saturday afternoons during the winter months and on Wednesday evenings in the summer. In spite of many difficulties and restrictions the meetings were, generally speaking, well attended. Various lectures and film shows on topical subjects proved a great success and helped to keep the interest alive.

*Educational.* All educational activities remained suspended. Great interest, however, was shown in the establishment of an English Centre at Frohburg near Olten, on the lines of the S.M.S. College. The Centre is to replace the College during the period of emergency. Its formation serves to emphasise the necessity and usefulness of the latter as an institution of national importance. May the day not be too far distant when the S.M.S. College will again open its portals to our young compatriots.

*Employment Department.* Under the able management of Mr. J. Pfaendler, the Employment Department carries on its activities at Swiss House. It is worthy to record that the Department has placed over 20,000 applicants, but present conditions are making Mr. Pfaendler's task more and more difficult.

*Headquarters S.K.V.* Despite difficulties of communication, the Society kept in close contact with Headquarters. It followed with interest the drive for new members which has resulted in the membership of the whole association reaching the imposing figure of 50,000. Unfortunately, special circumstances did not allow the London Section to contribute towards these efforts.

*Swiss House.* The lease of Swiss House, 34/35, Fitzroy Square expires in March 1942 and in view of the uncertain situation, the Trustees and the Council do not deem it advisable to renew the lease, but only to retain No. 35, Fitzroy Square, i.e., the original Swiss House, which will offer sufficient accommodation for the S.M.S., as well as the affiliated Societies which have their headquarters at Swiss House.

*Finance.* The President in his report mentioned that for 1941 no subsidy had been received from the Swiss Government, but that a petition had been forwarded to our authorities, who, it is hoped, will give it their favourable consideration. As all the educational activities were entirely suspended during last year, no appeal was made to the many business firms and friends of the Society both here and in Switzer-