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HOME NEWS

It is rumoured that efforts are being made in official circles at Berne to re-open diplomatic relations with Russia.

The League of Nations Council has nominated Dr. Paul Lachenal, advocate in Geneva, President of the Germano-Polish Arbitration Tribunal.

In the elections for the St. Gall Regierungsrat during the week-end all the former seven members were re-elected; the Council consists of three Conservatives, three Liberals and one Democrat, the latter being the much-attacked Mr. Otto Weber, who has recently been in the limelight on account of certain newspaper polemics.

In the canton Thurgau Proportional Representation is to be retained in spite of an intensive propaganda campaign of the Liberals against this system, which was first introduced for cantonal elections in 1919.

Considerable damage was caused to the Hotel Waldhaus in Sils-Maria (Grisons) by a fire which broke out in a room where repairs were in progress. The neighbouring fire brigades were able to confine the flames to the eastern part of the large building, which altogether holds 230 beds. Very few guests were in residence as the hotel was on the point of closing for the season.

The cigar factory, and most of the stock, belonging to D. Weber in Triengen (Lucerne) has been destroyed by fire.

For being responsible for an accident which caused the death of a passenger while driving his car in an intoxicated condition, a Zurich butcher, Emil Diener, has been sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

Whilst felling wood near Münster (Grisons) a gang of four were surprised by an avalanche which suddenly descended from the Piz Cavallatsch; one of them, Anton Andri, from Münster, was caught and perished in its wake.

National Councillor Dr. Emil Hofman died last Wednesday (March 9th) at the age of 62 in the Victoria hospital in Berne after a protracted illness. He was born at Engishofen (Thurgau) and studied both theology and philosophy. At the age of 25 he was elected pastor of Stettfurt (Thurgau) which living he relinquished eight years after on his appointment as school inspector. For 29 years he has been a member of the National Council, which he presided over last year. Dr. Hofmann was extremely popular in every part of the Thurgau; he lost his two sons in 1918 during the critical days of the general strike.

EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

Ferienheim für Auslandschweizer.—Mit Sitz in Rhäzüns ist eine Gesellschaft gegründet worden, die das alte Schloss Rhäzüns im Domleschg ankaufen und zu einem Ferienheim für wenig bemittelte Auslandschweizer ausbauen will. Der Gedanke dieser Gründung, der tatkräftig gefördert wird von Auslandschweizer-Sekretariat der Neuen Helvetischen Gesellschaft, verdient die Unterstützung weiterer Volkskreise. Nicht nur wird dadurch eines der schönsten Schlösser des Landes in gutem Zustand erhalten sondern es wird auch ein alter Wunsch der Schweizerkolonien im Auslande verwirklicht, durch Schaffung einer billigen und guten Feriengelag für Landsleute, denen das Glück keine grossen Güter in den Schoss warf.

Der Ankauf der Liegenschaft kommt auf 50,000 Fr. zu stehen, die Instandstellung des Schlosses auf 57,000 Fr. Für Mobiliar sind 22,000 Fr. vergesehen, weitere 20,000 Fr. als Betriebskapital, 5,000 Fr. für die Anlage von Obst- und Gemüsekulturen, 15,000 Franken für Spesen, Vorarbeiten, Verwaltung, Steuern, Reserve usw., so dass also insgesamt 170,000 Fr. aufgebracht werden müssen, und zwar durch freiwillige Spenden à fonds perdu und durch Zeichnung von unverzinslichen Anteilscheinen im Nominalbetrag von 100 Fr. Beiträge und Einzahlungen für Anteilscheine sind zu richten an das Auslandschweizersekretariat in Freiburg.

Luzerner Tagblatt.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

The Free Zones Controversy.

The ratification by the French Senate of the Franco-Swiss Agreement with reference to the Savoy Zones seems to be relegated to the Greek Kalends. At a moment when it looked as if all obstacles had been removed a French senator made the startling statement that Switzerland had not yet given its formal consent to Article 435 of the Versailles Treaty, by which the military neutrality of Upper Savoy is abolished. It seems strange that these two entirely different matters should be mixed up, all the more as this particular issue was never mentioned at the time when the then French Premier—M. Heriot—signed the Free Zones agreement. Here is what the *Manchester Guardian* (March 9th) says on the matter:

For reasons known only to her Foreign Office officials France is still finding means to prevent her dispute with the Swiss from coming before the Permanent Court of International Justice. The dispute concerns what are known as the "free zones" of Savoy. Those districts immediately adjoin Geneva, and for convenience' sake the treaties of 1814 and 1815 fixed the Customs line at their western border and not at the national frontier. The Treaty of Versailles, however, declared that these treaties were "no longer consistent with present conditions," and recommended the two countries to sign a new agreement on the matter. After prolonged discussions an agreement was reached satisfying the French demands, but the Swiss nation rejected it by referendum, and in November, 1923, the French, without more ado, advanced the Customs line to the Franco-Swiss frontier. Against this high-handed action the Swiss protested, but it was not until October, 1924, that France—M. Heriot having meantime replaced M. Poincaré—consented to submit the matter to the Permanent Court of Justice. Not until last year, however, did the French Chamber ratify that consent, and before the Senate can follow suit a new obstacle has been created. The old treaties also contained provisions for the neutralisation of the so-called Savoy zones, which correspond partly with the Customs zones, and these provisions were abrogated by the Franco-Swiss Agreement of 1919. The agreement is fully operative, but, in the heat of the controversy before 1923, the formal ratification by Switzerland was held up. Now, though it has hardly ever been mentioned since then, what is purely a formal omission is made the occasion of holding up an urgent arbitration case and the Swiss can hardly be blamed for showing their annoyance. They speak of appealing to the League, and if they do so it will be interesting to see what sort of defence France can offer.

A History of Switzerland.

The latest addition to the history of our Confederation is supplied by a volume just published by Messrs. Payot in Paris (Frs. 24) and written by that great authority, Mr. William Martin. The following are some critical remarks which appeared in the *Spectator* (March 5th) over the signature of James F. Muirhead:

The well-known International Editor of the *Journal de Genève* has given us what is in many respects a model of a short history. The author belongs to the modern philosophical school of historians; and he has succeeded in imparting both clearness and unity to the somewhat complicated story of the numerous separate entities now combined in the Swiss Confederation.

The thesis might, perhaps, be formulated as an attempt to explain how Switzerland, small both in area and population, has played an historical rôle so out of proportion to its material importance. The Swiss Confederation was born—a little League of Nations—at the end of the thirteenth century, an amazing co-operation of units, differing in race and language, which might very well have been prejudged as essentially incapable of combination. The principle of co-operation thus established was severely tried by the new source of disagreement introduced by the Reformation; but it stood the test even of the *odium theologicum*. And down to our own day the subsequent story of the country may be summed up as a constant and steady advance in internal federation, with strict adherence to neutrality as its external counterpart.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century Switzerland was one of the most stable countries and greatest military powers in Europe; and

ANNIVERSARIES OF SWISS EVENTS.

March 20th, 1633.—During the Thirty Years' War: Swedish soldiers appear at the gates of Basel. During these Religious Wars, Switzerland was split into factions. The Protestants inclined for an alliance towards Sweden. During the battle, near Rheinfelden, the Duke de Rohan, called the "Good Duke" and beloved by all with whom he came in contact, was killed. His body was buried in the Cathedral of St. Pierre, at Geneva.

March 21st, 1487.—Death of Niklaus von der Flue at Ranft. This pious hermit is one of the most sympathetic figures in our national history. He it was who prevented a split of the Confederates at the meeting at Stans (22nd Dec., 1481).

March 25th, 1653.—Peasants' War, caused by dissatisfaction of the peasantry. The "hards," as the rebels named themselves, threatened to burn the dwellings of the "softs," that is to say, the adherents of the Government, and cut off their beards, and even slit their ears in order to be able to recognise them.—*Oechslis*.

March 25th, 1388.—Battle between Bern and Fribourg at the Roten Turm.

March 26th, 1906.—Swiss Mountain Artillery newly organised.

the religious dissensions may be the chief cause why she was checked on this more adventurous path and developed her present independence on safer and more modest lines.

It is a little disappointing to find that the art and literature of Switzerland are practically ignored in this volume; but doubtless M. Martin deliberately decided that they were beyond his scope. A British reviewer may, perhaps, be pardoned for wishing for a little fuller recognition of England's support of Swiss policy, such as was so generously accorded by the eminent Swiss historian, Wilhelm Oechslis, and by the great Swiss poet, Carl Spitteler, in his oration of December 14th, 1914. It is also, to our English ideas, strange that a book of this importance should be issued without either maps or index; but, except for these minor criticisms, the book is one which can be cordially, indeed enthusiastically, recommended.

Land of Most Suicides.

No comment is needed on the following from the *Daily Mail* (March 2nd):—

Between eight and nine hundred suicides take place yearly in Switzerland, which after Denmark enjoys the unenviable distinction of having more deaths of this kind in proportion to its population than any other country in Europe.

Alcoholism is responsible for 17 per cent of the suicides.

An anti-suicide committee, founded in Zurich five years ago, intervened effectively in 600 cases of attempted or contemplated suicide.

Thanks to a communal subsidy and private donations it was possible to give a new start in life to many of the utterly despairing who had made the tragic resolve to end their lives.

Froth Blowers in Switzerland.

The Froth Blowers are conquering Switzerland with flying colours, to judge from the following from the *Daily Mail* (March 5th); if there are any Swiss amongst our subscribers who have not yet joined this inspiring Order I shall be delighted to get them initiated on receiving the statutory five shilling fee.

Like football, boxing, and other British pursuits, froth blowing has taken complete hold on the Continent, and almost every country now boasts at least two or three centres where the blowers' order is well entrenched.

The honour of pioneering unquestionably goes to Switzerland, which now prides itself on several branches with pretensions to the coveted titles of "Grand Typhoon," "Cloudburst" and what not. Territet was first initiated into the brotherhood more than a year ago, when a young Scot from London breezed into the English club and informed its astonished members that he was prepared to give "immediate delivery" of the insignia to all new subscribers.

In order to expedite business this young philanthropist offered the Froth Blowers' cuff

links at considerably less than he had paid for them—a fact which possibly explains why there are so many Blowers at Terrier to-day.

Next the young Scot paid a visit to the Engadine. His first victim was an American youth who was travelling to St. Moritz to "look the place over." The idea did not appeal to him at all, but fate conspired to break his resistance.

The thermometer was down somewhere below zero, and as all the hotels were full, the American looked like spending an unpleasant night in the waiting room on St. Moritz station. "Will you join the Froth Blowers if I find you a room?" demanded the Scot. It took an hour's sleigh ride through a blizzard to reach that room, but the American kept his word and bought three pairs of links.

Practically every bar tender at St. Moritz is a Froth Blower. One, who dispenses a wonderful potion, known as "the manager's cocktail" to privileged guests was asked a day or two ago by a German for "ein Manager." "Certainly, sir," smiled the cocktail-mixer, "but you must be a Froth Blower first." The equivalent of five shillings changed hands and the barman added another name to his already long list of victims.

The Froth Blowers' anthem threatens to become as popular abroad as was "Tipperary." A big dance was in progress at St. Moritz when the band suddenly switched off into a frenzied rendering of the song. British, French, Germans, Poles and others took up the refrain with such gusto that the manager was obliged to stop the band.

Mittelholzer's Flying Feat.

Little notice has been taken in the English Press of the achievement of our premier aviator, but the *Birmingham Post* (March 3rd) has the following notice:—

Aviation has provided small countries with a comparatively cheap and effective means of "showing the flag" in distant lands. Scarcely a country of any importance has not arranged a demonstration long-distance flight. So many such flights have been undertaken that some quite meritorious feats have been overlooked, perhaps because they have been happily free from the spectacular and the dramatic. Recently a Swiss aviator, Walter Mittelholzer, carried Helvetia's flag to the heart of Africa, touching on the way Italy, Greece, Egypt, and the equatorial colonies and mandated territories of Great Britain. Little has been heard of this fine achievement because the Swiss expedition was scientific rather than propagandist. A seaplane was used. Switzerland uses such on her great lakes, and now it is said she is looking to aviation as a means to link her land-locked State more directly with the outer world. Swiss airmen, though we hear little about them, are famous for their skill. The difficult nature of their country compels a high standard of airmanship, and Swiss engineering practice is sound and progressive. To make these things better known abroad is the purpose of a patriotic body that organised Mittelholzer's recent highly successful flight to Africa.

The *Daily Telegraph* (March 15th) published a large picture showing Mittelholzer's arrival in Cape Town "after setting up a new record by flying from Zurich to Cape Town in 100 hours,"

Kippel.

It is not often that an insignificant spot so far off the beaten track as the hamlet of Kippel finds a sponsor in the English Press; this is what the *Richmond Herald* (Feb. 19th) says about this place:—

Clustering on the sunny slopes of a deep valley, and guarded on all sides by steep, inaccessible mountains, the little village of Kippel has flourished for some hundreds of years, entirely hidden from the world and completely untouched by the progress and civilisation of modern times.

This little place of old time customs, with its straggly, narrow streets, and low, deep-eaved houses, is at the end of the Loetschen-valley, whose only link with the rest of Switzerland was a high and generally snowbound pass, until the Loetschberg tunnel—which runs through nine miles of mountain wall—opened the door of the world for the people of this remote little village.

The modern road which now winds up the valley from the new station to the village is steep and precipitous and high above the Loetschen River, which leaps over stones and boulders down from the glacier at the head of the valley; and along the road the peasant people drive their cows and flocks of mountain goats.

They are a queer, shy people, as if the reticence of their two hundred year sleep were still upon them, and they were almost afraid of the gay, confident modern people who have pierced their ancient silence with a nine-mile tunnel, and who now come to look with interest on something two hundred years younger than the rest of the world.

The clustering houses of Kippel are all built of rich weather-stained wood, with deep overhanging roofs, sometimes carved in a beautiful primitive manner, and they jostle each other in and out along the uneven streets, making quaint corners where old, witch-like women in quaint black dresses sit and spin, and where the sunshine streams down in long slanting beams to bleach the churning left drying along the house sides.

The crowning glory of the village is the fine white church, whose tower stands up proudly above the low sloping roofs of the houses, from which a soft-toned bell tolls for vespers and matins—for this valley was hidden even from the mighty wave of Protestantism which swept over Switzerland, and is one of the most devoutly Catholic communities in Europe. It is so much honoured by the Pope that from the earliest times the Swiss Guard at the Vatican has been chosen from and is still composed of the stalwart sons of Kippel and the neighbouring village.

The church fills a great part of the lives of these primitive people, whose interests are entirely self-centred, and whose living is so peacefully communal that they have a general dairy and bakehouse and cheese factory, where each villager can work with his own materials on his own particular day of the week and make just sufficient for his own needs and the needs of his family.

Nearly all the business of the village is done by barter, for they have had very little use for currency of any description until recently, but now that visitors flock into the valley and look longingly at their inlaid wooden doors and curiously beaten iron hinges and locks, the quaint shy-eyed peasant folk are learning to drive as good a bargain in francs as they ever made with each other in cheeses or the bales of coarse linen woven by the women.

But the mentality of the villagers is very low, and apart from agricultural knowledge and the little shrewdnesses of village life they are almost depressingly primitive and live entirely from hand to mouth, surrounded by the grand and impressive beauty of the mountains.

During the winter, when the villagers and cattle are tucked in under a thick blanket of snow and the fields and gardens are hidden, there is a feeling of cosy warmth inside these crudely furnished houses.

In the summer time the valley pastures are carpeted with flowers; the wide eaves of the houses shelter clusters of little blossoms which are just waiting to waken up smiling when the sunshine has melted the snowdrifts. And the long warm days bring the village children out into the fields, and the old women with their spinning wheels out into the sunny corner at the side of their houses, where the drone of their wheels in the hot sunshine is the only sound which breaks the peace of the village the world forgot.

The Earliest Swiss Book.

One of the first books printed in Switzerland was recently put up for auction at Messrs. Sotheby's sale (Feb. 23rd), realising £200, and presumably being bought for an American collector. It was the "Postilla super Evangelia," by Nicolaus de Lyra, issued in 1468 by the Basle printer Berthold Kuppel.

Freak Language.

From time immemorial the languages of countries have been subjected to distortion in some form or another by bodies of peculiar-minded people. Yet in the case mentioned below, the motive would appear to have been considerable to have justified such an elaborate distortion. One can but guess at the reason. The psychologist may trace it to some common eccentricity of the mind; or, like the "rhyming slang" which is of such perennial interest to English philologists, it may have its origin in a secret code invented by the

QUOTATIONS from the SWISS STOCK EXCHANGES.

		Mar. 8	Mar. 15
BONDS.		£	£
Confederation 3% 1908	...	82.50	83.25
5% 1917, VIII. Mob. Ln	...	101.75	101.65
Federal Railways 3½% A—K	...	84.25	83.90
" 1924 IV. Elect. Ln.	...	102.50	103.00
SHARES.		Mar. 8	Mar. 15
Swiss Bank Corporation	500	768	767
Credit Suisse	500	805	800
Union de Banques Suisses	500	690	690
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique	1000	2565	2595
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	4250	4302
Soc. Ind. pour la Schappo	1000	2805	2840
S.A. Brown Boveri	350	569	573
C. F. Bally	1000	1265	1300
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	704	713
Entreprises Suizér S.A.	1000	1052	1072
Comp. de Navig'n sur le Lac Léman	500	555	560
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criminal fraternity by which to convey their messages. In any case, such a linguistic feat as what virtually amounts to "talking backwards" no doubt provokes no little indignation on the part of purists in the language concerned. The cutting is from *John o' London's* (March 19th):—

It may interest some of your readers to hear that in a slum district of the town of Berne (Switzerland) a "secret language" is used among the inhabitants (not only children) which is a form of gibberish interspersed with Yiddish and "thieves' talk" words, and is dubbed "Matten-Englisch." It is so long since I read or heard it that I have somewhat forgotten how it went, but some words anyway are transposed, i.e., the first syllable is taken off and tacked on at the end and the second following syllables put first, preceded by an "i," so that Kloeesterlé becomes Isterlekoe. This language is so peculiar that it has drawn the attention of local philologists, and a number of articles on the subject have been written about it in Switzerland.

MISS BROWNE'S RECITAL. A NOTABLE APPRECIATION.

The musical critic of the *Daily Telegraph* (March 17th) thus records his impression:—

So much aimless singing is heard nowadays at West-end recitals that in effect many performances are little better than mere improvisations. Certainly a vocalist with definite aims is something of a rarity, and it was with a distinct sense of relief that one listened to Miss Violette Browne, who sang at the Wigmore Hall last night. Not for her the preliminary incursions into the easy by-ways of song, in order to test her technique and put her mettle to the proof. She began with a Bach aria, and at an early stage of the programme gave us Beethoven's dramatic "Ah, perfido." We were also privileged to hear for the first time in London, the soprano aria "Tu che di gel sei cinta," from Puccini's "Turandot." If any there were who went expecting to hear another "Un bel di," they must have been puzzled—and, perhaps, disappointed. This boldness of selection on the part of Miss Browne was justified, for she was always mistress of herself, and sang in a consistently calm, sanguine manner. We may not always have been in agreement with her interpretative ideas, but we could not fail to respect her for her obvious faith in the music she sang, and for her unequivocal mode of expression. She did much, too, to gain our sympathy by a winning quality of tone. Although her voice was of no great size, it reflected a sufficient variety of expressive shades to give contrast to widely differing songs, and her soft notes were so soft that by comparison those at the other end of the scale were quite big enough. Miss Browne had, too, a gift for impassioned utterance. Her Italian was mercifully free from double vowels. She had faults. Some of her upper notes were hard; occasionally in quick passages she was inclined to be fretful, and her English diction, though clear, was not always duly pointed.

'BERNHARD MOSER' CONFERENCE.

Grossmutter lehnt am Krummstamm
Des Birnbaums vor dem Haus :
Sie schaut mit lieben Augen
Nach reifen Früchten aus,
Und über ihrem Frieden,
Im Astwerk eingehängt,
Geduldet sich die Sene,
Bis ihre Arbeit drängt.

are verses culled at random from an imposing array of poetical effusions, of striking merit, from the pen of our compatriot, Bernhard Moser.

On Monday last, Dr. E. Schwegler, of Zurich, held a conference at the "Union Helvética," Gerard Place, W.1, with the object of making his hearers acquainted with a Swiss poet of our times whose talent in the direction of lyric poetry is deemed to rank as high as that of many masters of bygone days.

Those few who rewarded, by their presence, the splendid efforts made by Dr. Schwegler on behalf of his friend Bernhard Moser, found it difficult to make up their minds whether they were more impressed by the decidedly beautiful odes which Dr. Schwegler recited from Moser's work "Irrfahrt," or by his own masterly style in which he presented the Poet, his life and work, his sufferings past and present, as also his claim to our moral, intellectual and pecuniary help, to the audience.

The papers that the lecturer had prepared were indeed worthy of a far larger gathering of our co-citizens, but Dr. Schwegler may take heart that while in these days of extreme materialism many of the "finer sentiments" of mankind are often crushed out of existence, those who were privileged to follow his conference and recitations offer him their warm congratulations, not only on the quality of the work performed, but especially in reference to the touching loyalty towards, and the strong and sincere appeal made on behalf of, "a friend in need." To the poet himself, who in a few days

will reach his thirtieth birthday—unfortunately under conditions of health and finance that leave much to be desired—we would wish to convey the message: "Set your face against the difficulties of the future, as you have done so successfully in the past. Keep on speaking your language of the flowers, for the fragrance will in time become diffused and win over to your cause new friends and supporters who do appreciate the outcome of the high poetical and dramatic gifts which you have received from your Creator *pro bono publico*."

SWISS WATCHMAKING INDUSTRY. A PROMISING YEAR.

On more than one occasion we have already laid stress, in these columns, on the spirit animating the *élite* amongst watchmakers, who, in spite of new difficulties constantly cropping up, have ever been striving after perfection. We have further proof of it in the latest awards of the Neuchâtel Observatory, where severe tests are carried out for chronometers and where the best firms of Neuchâtel and Berne, which constitute the majority of watchmaking firms, win every winter a further great success.

This time prizes for series of exhibits have been awarded for the six best pocket and marine chronometers to the firms of Zenith, Paul Ditisheim, Movado, Nardin, Omega, Barbezat-Bôle and Valcain. The best marine chronometer was an "Nardin"; this excellent and old-standing firm winning, besides, all the first prizes in that category. The best ship-chronometer was this time a "Movado," and the best pocket chronometer, following a custom which will soon become a tradition, a "Zenith." Moreover, the chief watchmaking centres (excluding Geneva, which has its own observatory) have done brilliantly in this competition; some of the finest prizes went to Le Locle, La Chaux-de-Fonds and Biel. The sense of perfection, the spirit of emulation, are virtues that are by no means waning amongst our watchmakers.

For the first time, a competition for clocks had been organised by the Neuchâtel Observatory. Excellent idea, considering that the clock, which is going through a period of real renaissance in Switzerland, is not merely an article of luxury, intended to decorate the hall of some villa or the antiquated drawing-room in a country house. The first prize winners in this competition were two of the biggest firms, Zenith and Favarger. Thus, no one will be able to apply to the Neuchâtel clocks that caustic remark about the ornamental "Three Graces" clock of Falconet, "One can see everything there except the right time." Beautiful and ornamental as they are, the modern clocks of Neuchâtel are intended in the first place to give the correct time. Thus, the newly created competition at the Neuchâtel observatory has proved an excellent innovation which has had a good beginning.

The latest statistics of the Federal Government on the Export trade of Swiss watchmaking in 1926 have not come as a surprise to anyone.

After the high figures of 1925, which were mainly due to the intense exportation that immediately preceded the introduction of new customs duties in England and Germany, a period of comparative slackness was to be expected. There is, however, no cause for alarm, seeing that in the course of that year the exports amounted to 18,800,000 pieces, worth altogether 258 million francs. These figures are very nearly the same as those for 1924, which was a normal year.

No doubt there is good reason to deplore the proportionate increase in the exportation of "movements alone" and detached parts, mainly due to the creation abroad of industries for the manufacture of watch-cases and the remounting of parts. But it is chiefly the customer who is to be pitied, for a watch whose parts have been put together abroad will never present the same guarantees in regard to wear and precision as the one that has been completed in the Swiss factories. However, the fact remains that the year which has just come to a close is by no means conspicuous as a bad one in the series that followed the war, and on the whole the watchmaking industry is holding out brilliantly in this period of universal crisis.

As the Fédération Horlogère points out, the present year has had a more promising beginning than the last, and there is good reason to hope that the commercial treaty with Germany which came into force on the 1st January, and the treaty with Czechoslovakia now being elaborated, will have a good influence on the flow of business. —B.I.S.

UNIONE TICINESE.

FESTA SOCIALE.

Così, come i padri nostri si riunirono nello storico praticello del Grutli per manifestare il loro ardente desiderio di scuotere il giogo straniero, con il medesimo slancio patriottico noi ticinesi a Londra, ci riunimmo nelle vaste sale del Ristorante Monaco, la sera dell'8 marzo, per ancora una volta partecipare all'annuale festa della Società nostra; l'Unione Ticinese. E questa festa fu una vera rivelazione. Manifestò di quanta

stima, di quanto amore l'Unione Ticinese seppe circondarsi, manifestò il desiderio nostro di riunirci, di vivere per qualche ora in ambiente ticinese, fra i nostri compatrioti, parlare quel nostro pittoresco dialetto. Era impossibile coronare con maggior successo il grande lavoro di preparazione onde la festa riuscisse veramente degna della Società nostra, fatto dall'instancabile nostro Presidente, Sig. W. Notari, e dagli indefessi membri dell'Unione Ticinese.

Più di trecento eravamo seduti nel International Hall del Monaco, un mosaico di luci e colori, artisticamente preparato, rallegrato da fiori, da candelabri, dalla musica che accompagnava con le sue dolci note la melodia dei piatti, dei bicchieri, delle conversazioni... Il nostro amato vesillo era pure là, vigilante su tanta gaiezza.

Anche quest'anno, come per quelli passati, l'On. Ministro svizzero a Londra, Sig. Paravicini, ci onorava con la sua presenza e tra noi, in questa occasione, ebbimo la fortuna di avere la gentilissima figlia di Giuseppe Motta, questo nostro grande, caro ticinese che tanto onore fa alla Svizzera, al Ticino. Pure erano presenti il Sig. De Bourg e Sig. C. Rezzonico, rispettivamente primo e secondo segretario alla Legazione svizzera.

Alla fine di un eccellente e ben servito banchetto, l'On. Ministro s'alzò e con parole argute, facete e briose, espresse come ancora una volta si sentiva contento di trovarsi fra i ticinesi. Seguì il Presidente dell'Unione, Sig. W. Notari, che con quella sua ormai ben conosciuta eloquenza, da vero oratore, con parole calde e ispirate, seppe suscitare tanti battimani e evviva; a nome degli invitati parlò il Sig. Pfaendler, della Swiss Mercantile Society. Il Sig. A. Meschini s'alzò e brevemente espresse auguri onde la Società nostra sempre abbia a prosperare.

Da un affezionato socio dell'Unione Ticinese, Sig. G. Cusi, sfortunatamente all'estero causa malattia, il nostro Presidente lesse un telegramma che nella sua concisione esprimeva come da lontano il suo pensiero volava alla Società :

"Benché lontano mente cuore con voi cari consoci on, Ministro amici tutti affettuoso convegno festa sociale auguro successo viva Ticino, viva Svizzera."

Pure dal Sig. Aldo Genoni di Plymouth giungeva la seguente lettera: "Cari compatrioti,—Con voi con la mente ed il cuore, mi compiaccio vederli riuniti e divertenti. Godetela questa ben meritata allegria, questo breve intervallo dalle quotidiane occupazioni, che richiedono nella nostra industria la maggior assiduità e abnegazione. Ritempratevi nella tenacia di tener alta la nostra Bandiera in mezzo alla concorrenza sfrenata del giorno d'oggi, fattaci dai nostri imitatori. Viva la Patria lontana e i suoi Figli dell'Unione Ticinese."

Al Presidente Motta veniva spiccato il seguente telegramma dal Ministro svizzero, Sig. Paravicini, a nome dell'Unione Ticinese della quale è Presidente Onorario :

"Unione Ticinese riunita simposio annuale commemorazione invia Onorevole concittadino Presidente e membri Consiglio Federale sensi attaccamento omaggi e devozione."

Come sempre, le altre Società svizzere a Londra erano rappresentate e precisamente :

Secours Mutuels dal Sig. Campart e signora, City Swiss Club dai sigg. G. Marchand e L. Jobin, Fonds de Secours dal sig. R. Dupraz, Schweizerbund dai sigg. L. Pache e Winckleman, Union Helvética dal sig. Lehrian e signora, Swiss Mercantile Society dal sig. Pfaendler e signora, Swiss Institute dal sig. Joss, Swiss Choral Society dal sig. Manzoni, Nouvelle Société Helvétique dal sig. Fred Suter. Per il *Swiss Observer* il sig. P. F. Boehringer.

La musica intonò il "Ci chiami o patria" che segnò la fine del banchetto, mentre nell'altra vasta sala vicina le prime battute di un waltz si facevano sentire, aprendo così l'animato ballo che durò sino alle due del mattino. La sala del banchetto si trasformò in sala café-concert e chi non desiderava seguire le danze, o voleva riposarsi dopo un vivace fox-trot, poté così divertirsi ascoltando gli abili artisti, sorbendo una diaccia aranciata, o sboccanellando un gustoso éclair...

Ma, purtroppo, "ogni cosa mortal passa e non dura," e il tempo non volle fermare il suo corso nemmeno per i ticinesi... scoccarono le due e le battute del "God Save the King" gentilmente c'informarono che era arrivato il termine di questa nostra simpatica riunione. L'illusione nostra cadeva, dal Ticino, dove alcuni momenti prima credevamo di vivere, ci trovavamo in Piccadilly, nel centro di Londra...

Rimarrà però sempre in noi il profondo, nostalgico ricordo di questa festa che fu una vera apoteosi; una viva riconoscenza per chi seppe organizzarla, un sincero attaccamento all'Unione Ticinese, un ardente desiderio di trovarci ancora così, riuniti e allegri. —ELENA LUNGHI.

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