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CK. CORNER.

Although a lake is defined as "a sheet or body of water wholly surrounded by land," just as a body remains inanimate until it becomes the possessor of a soul, so a lake, adorned by its individual attributes is endowed with characteristics which lend it charm and cause it to appeal to individual tastes, so much so that each lake possesses its different moods which vary with the time of day and with the play of light influenced by the condition of the sky.

It is the custom of some guide books and many advertisements to label a lake with an alliterative libel, such as, Lovely Lucerne, Glorious Geneva, and some day no doubt we shall hear of other lakes being described as Beautiful Brienz, Tiny Thun or Zephyrous Zurich.

Nevertheless each has its peculiar charm, though it may be asked whether this charm pertains to the lake itself or if it be rather the effect thereof on any particular person, effect which is more the result of the way in which that person reacts, such reaction again varying with the individual's mood.

Be this as it may, it is interesting to note the difference between two lakes which are only a few kilometres distant one from the other. Thus the lake of Annecy is totally different from the lake of Bourget and one feels that the melancholy of the romance of Lamartine and Elvire is almost an integral part of the latter, whereas it would have lost much of its charm if referred to Annecy.

In like manner, the lake of Brienz differs from Thun for the latter has an intangible charm which varies not only with the place from which one gazes upon it but also with the effect produced by light and shade. Thus, on a sunny day, the verdant slopes and pine trees, the vivid colours of flowers and fruit trees, the villages and hamlets dotted round its edge produce a picture unlike that obtained on a cloudy day when its contour is more vaguely outlined through the mist and the colour of the water remains a dull olive green.

The colour of the water is a mysterious quality which is difficult to explain. The intense blue of the Blausee, that little gem on the Kandersteg road, is not the same as the blue of the lake of Geneva. This deep sapphire blue is rendered more startling by the clearness of the water and although the colour may be explained by the presence of a species of mould, yet the transparency of the water is a phenomenon peculiar to this and a few other lakes. A similar condition is seen in Florida at Silver Springs, a description of which is to be found in "Five weeks in America," though apparently in this case the water is not blue but clear white, and this tint is said to be due to the silvery white sand of which the bed is formed.

The lake of Lucerne has another aspect and perhaps its charm lies in its shape which, by reason of the numerous bays, produces various effects as the steamer turns round and thus changes the angle of vision.

The lake of Geneva at times has some resemblance to the Mediterranean and this is most striking when the Montreux-Vevy coast is seen from the French side.

One of the most interesting things on this lake is the castle of Chillon which reminds me in many ways of the castle of Loches. Both Chillon and Loches are full of history and romance and if the story of Bonivard tramping round his pillar has made the former famous, so has the story of Cardinal de la Balue, minister of Louis XI, in the case of the latter. We are told that the Cardinal was enclosed in a wooden cage, which he himself is said to have invented for the benefit of others, and that this cage was hauled up to the roof of a large vaulted dungeon by means of a rope and pulley. Each day the cage was let down to the ground for a short time and the king would come, by a subterranean corridor which led from his private oratory to this dungeon, to see how his Eminence was progressing. And to this day the visitor can see this vaulted dungeon and the entrance to the passage.

And so one's imagination can have free play and bring before one those strenuous days when Dukes and Kings were all powerful. Thus at Chillon, we can see the beam from which men were hanged and the door opposite through which their bodies were flung into the lake, and the subterranean chapel into which prisoners were taken on the eve of their execution, and the Hall of Justice decorated with the escutcheons of the Dukes of Savoy from which we go into that small chamber containing the pillar and stone weight by means of which unwilling witnesses might be encouraged to tell the truth or otherwise, and the trap door in the floor which would be useful should the efforts of the ministers of the Duke's justice prove too efficacious; so, at Loches, we are shown the dungeon in which Sforza was confined for eleven years, and the still grimmer dungeon beneath in which two bishops who had offended the King, passed many years of their existence and in which we can still see the tiny altar which they carved in the rock wall of their prison, and leading out

of this dungeon a smaller one, into which no ray of light ever penetrated, containing an oubliette so that the King might be absolved of any act of violence or vengeance and the Governor of the Castle only obliged to report to his Majesty that a prisoner had disappeared.

Still deeper down in the lowest dungeon of all, an inscription is carved on the wall:

Nous détruirois ces hautes murailles
Nous briserions ces chaînes
Nous abolirions ces tortures
Inventées par les Roys trop faibles
Pour empêcher un peuple qui veut sa liberté.
1781.

And because they bring back the past so vividly, I have a great liking for these two castles as well as for the castle of Coucy which stands on a spur of ground overlooking the valley of the Ailette, so that the Lord of the Castle controlled the coming and the going of wayfarers and could levy toll upon them. So proud was he that he cared for no man but had as his motto "Roi ne suys, ne prince, ne duc, ne comte aussi; je suys le sire de Coucy." And so strong was the Keep of his castle, that the Germans were unable completely to destroy it even with modern explosives.

UNION HELVETIA CLUB.

Contrary to rumours this Club is carrying on, and with the Winter Season now approaching the Management hopes to see members, and old friends more frequently.

The Board of Directors regrets, however, to notify the patrons of the Club of the resignation of Mr. and Mrs. Rossier, who have acted as stewards for over five years and during that time have made many friends.

Negotiations for a suitable successor are in progress, and a further notice will appear in the Swiss Observer, as soon as arrangements are completed.

* * *

Steward

for the

Union Helvetia Club

1, Gerrard Place, W.1.

Owing to resignation of present Holder the position of Steward in the Union Helvetia Club will become vacant shortly. Applicants desirous to secure the post are invited to state qualifications in writing with full particulars regarding experience, references, etc. Terms will be stated to selected applicants at personal interview. Address letters to the Chairman, Board of Directors, Union Helvetia Club, 1, Gerrard Place, W.1.

DIE LETZTE ROSE.

Der letzten Rose am Spalier
Will ich es heute bringen,
Des alten Strauches einz'ger Zier,
Wo jüngst noch viele hingen.

Schön: Suschen soll heut' stecken dich
In's jugendliche Mieder,
Da sollst du prangen wonniglich,
Bis welk du sinkst danieder.

O Röslein rot, wie du mich mahnst,
Dass alles muss vergehen,
Dass, ach, vielleicht du's selber ahnst
Dein Duft auch wird verwehen!

Weih ihr den Wohlgeruch mit Lust,
Und gib dich hold zum Friede,
Dir ist ja an schön Suschens Brust
Ein schöner Tod beschieden.

Mutz.

Lettera aperta al Signor C. Rezzonico,
1st Segretario alla Legazione Svizzera di Londra

Mi si permetta, da queste colonne, a nome mio e come eco, ne sono certa, di tutta la colonia ticinese di Londra, di mandare un cordiale "arrivederci" e dire al Signor Rezzonico, quanto rincresce a noi ticinesi di vederlo a partire di Londra, di abbandonare il suo posto distinto nella nostra Legazione e recarsi a quella di Roma.

Come il nostro Ticino riposa fiducioso nel vedersi ben rappresentato e protetto in seno alla Madre Confederazione dal distinto ed illustre concittadino Signor Giuseppe Motta, noi qui, ticinesi, spersi in questa immensa Metropoli come un branco di pecore, pochi, relativamente, fra i numerosi confederati, ci sentivamo come protetti, guidati, fidati e fieri di avere un figlio del patrio Ticino in seno alla Legazione di Londra.

Gli Svizzeri di lingua tedesca e francese, posseggono numerose e diverse società: Società commerciale, letteraria, Sociale, artistica, sportiva, di beneficenza; persino nella religione diversa, hanno le loro Chiese di lingua tedesca e francese. Hanno quindi ogni occasione di trovarsi spesso, di stringere amicizie; sì che, quando noi ticinesi, li vediamo assieme in qualche radunanza, o festa sociale, ci danno l'aspetto d'una sola, grande famiglia e ci sentiamo, fra loro, come un po' intrusi.

Noi ticinesi, siamo più sbandati; pochi in numero, raccolti sotto l'unica, amata bandiera della beneficenza: l'"Unione Ticinese," ci si trovano riuniti poche volte all'anno, in occasione appunto di qualche festa per far del bene... allora sono strette di mano, sorrisi, promesse, ci sentiamo come trasportati "a casa" viviamo un'ora d'illusione, brillante come il bel sole delle nostre valli... poi si ritorna alla quiete casalinga o alla vita febbrile, immersi nella lotta per l'esistenza, sparpagliati ai quattro angoli di questa interminabile città...

La vita economica del ticinese in generale, non gli permette di accettare gli inviti cordiali, di partecipare alle feste sociali date dalle diverse società sorelle confederate.

Da questa vita economica differente, nasce la ragione del nostro trovarsi separati quasi, certo con poco contatto coi fratelli d'altra lingua e costumi.

Il signor Rezzonico era il tratto d'unione fra noi ticinesi e la massa superiore della colonia Svizzera.

La sua squisita cortesia appianava difficoltà al bisogno; gentilissimo sempre, pieno di vita, portava il briò e vivacità in seno alle società diverse; per lui, intuivano i nostri fratelli, la nostra nativa suscettibilità, i nostri "foggetti" subito spenti... il nostro gran cuore, i nostri difetti; tutti sintomi della razza latina, del bel sole, dei bei laghi, del nostro buon vino.....

Partecipando ad una qualche festa data dalle diverse società svizzere, fra un ducento o trecento fratelli di lingua tedesca e francese, quell'uno, o due, o tre ticinesi si sentivano un po' fuori di posto, titubanti, come isolati dapprima, nella bella adunanza, ma quando alla tavola d'onore, a fianco del riverito Ministro Signor Paravicini, scorgevamo il "nostro" Signor Rezzonico il cuore sussultava, non ci sentivamo allora più soli, ma protetti, con quella soddisfazione interna d'aver il diritto d'essere lì e di far parte della grande famiglia.

Poi, in mezzo a tutto quella bella compagnia, quando sentivamo a parlare il dolce idioma, cara lingua natia, quando univamo, con ogni fibra vibrante del cuore ticinese, i nostri, agli applausi comuni, ai battimani per il "nostro" oratore, ne gioivamo come, se in lui, lodassero noi pure!!!!

Ed ora parte, lascia Londra e noi, il signor Rezzonico! noi ticinesi gli siamo riconoscenti per tutto quanto fece di bene a noi; direttamente od indirettamente; lo seguiremo nella capitale d'Italia con ogni nostro cordiale e vivo augurio e lo preghiamo di non dimenticarci del tutto dalla città Eterna!

T. Lunghi—Rezzonico.

Londra, 12 Ottobre 1931.

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