

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK
Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom
Band: - (1931)
Heft: 530

Artikel: Noël 1931
Autor: Hoffmann, R.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-696098>

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UNION HELVETIA.

The Annual Dinner of the Union Helvetia, (Swiss Hotel Employees) took place on Thursday, December 10th, at their Headquarters, 1, Gerrard Place, W.I.

Over 150 members and guests sat down to a very sumptuous dinner, which started somewhat late, but then it must be explained, that "City" hours; to which most of our compatriots are accustomed to, are an unknown quantity amongst our friends in the Hotel profession. There were a number of guests, the majority of whom were the personal "invités" of the President, these together with a few official ones, were received previous to the dinner, by the members of the committee.

It is sometimes said, that the love of a man, starts in a certain organ of his anatomy, perhaps not a very edifying statement, but never-the-less true to a certain degree, well taking this saying as a fact, I can truly affirm that the dinner which Mr. and Mrs. Bourgeaud, the new stewards of the Union Helvetia, served on this occasion, has made everyone fall in love with them on the spot, no mean accomplishment, taking into consideration that most of the members of the U.H. are more or less experts in the "cooking" line.

The Swiss Minister, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, was unavoidably prevented from taking the Chair, and in his much regretted absence, M. Adrien Juriens, Founder and a former President of the Culinaire Society took the Chair, a very happy choice indeed, and he was ably seconded by his charming wife.

The function of Toast Master was in the able hands of M. J. Sermier, President of the London Section, the happy laughter and chatter of the company made it somehow difficult for him to execute his task. The customary toasts to H.M. the King and "La Patrie" were proposed by the Chairman and were responded to with the usual enthusiasm.

M. A. Indermaur, President of the Union Helvetia, Territorial Administration, England, then rose; amidst acclamation, he expressed his great satisfaction to see such a numerous gathering. In introducing the Chairman, he mentioned that M. Juriens, more than anybody else, deserves the honour of presiding over this distinguished gathering, in view of the great services he has and is still rendering to the Hotel community. (Cheers). We, in the Union Helvetia, he said, do not agree with the shortsighted policy which is adapted nowadays, of not holding Banquets or cutting them down, as such an undertaking not only affects the Hotel profession most cruelly, but also trades such as the butcher, fish- and poultry-mongers, the musicians, the printers, florists, taxi-drivers and last, but by no means least, the ladies' hair dressers. It is surely a wiser thing, he continued, to spend a few shillings on a nice dinner and a good glass of wine in congenial company, amongst good and old friends, than to spend an evening in a hot and stuffy cinema watching crimes of passions, etc.

He thanked the members of the various committees for the valuable and unselfish work they have rendered during the last twelve months, and especially mentioned Mr. Fred Isler, Chairman of the Board of Directors, to whose untiring efforts and great capability it is due that some of the heavy clouds, which for months hung threatening over the Club, have at last dispersed, making room for a brighter outlook into the near future and ripening the hope that the Club House will remain in the hands of the Society, he also expressed his best wishes to the new steward, wishing him success in his new and not always easy task.

The statement, that in spite of the critical times unemployment amongst the 500 members of the Union Helvetia was negligible, was received with great applause. This is greatly due, he said, to the efficient way in which Mrs. Greenfield has conducted the Employment Department. This year, up to the present, £343 9s. 1d. has been paid in Sick Relief, £20 in Death Benefit and £40 in old age pensions. M. Indermaur then specially welcomed Mr. and Mrs. A. Schmid, the former, an ex President of the U.H., Mr. and Mrs. Bieri, Mr. and Mrs. Boudry, Messrs. Widmer, Wyss and Wullschlegler, Mr. Bardet (Veteran) Mr. Krebsler, Messrs. DeBrunner and Gerber, Presidents of the Swiss Rifle Association and Swiss Choral Society, M. George Marchand, Vice-President of the City Swiss Club and M. P. F. Boehringer of the City Swiss Club, Miss Brown, representing Mr. H. Senn, M. Crausaz, President Swiss Culinaire, Pastor and Mrs. Hahn and Mr. and Mrs. Stauffer of the Swiss Observer. In conclusion he made an earnest appeal to all Swiss in Great Britain who are in one way or another connected with the hotel and catering trade, to rally round the flag, the trend of things, he said, makes it daily more apparent that the Swiss on foreign soil should not only make close contact with one another, but also support one another in whatever calling it may be. This very interesting speech was greeted with much applause.

The Chairman, M. Juriens, thanked the gathering in a few words for the kind reception

which was accorded to him, saying that he fully appreciated the great honour bestowed on him, in presiding over the Annual Banquet. M. Sermier, President of the London Section, welcomed the various guests. M. P. F. Boehringer then rose and in a very witty and able speech responded to the toast to the Guests. He mentioned that invariably in times of distress and danger the "old brigade" has come to the fore to save the sinking ship. It is now time, he said, that the younger generation should take over this inheritance, thus proving that they are animated by the same spirit to work in the interest of not only a great, but also a just cause. The speaker agreed with the President, that, to hold a function like the one to-night, was a commendable undertaking, and was a splendid medium to foster the spirit of comradeship and bring the various members of the Society and the Colony at large in still closer contact, by knowing each other, he concluded, we shall understand each other better. Loud applause greeted these words.

M. Fred Isler, proposed the Toast to the Ladies, and those, who have had the privilege to hear him eulogizing the Ladies on former occasions, will no doubt agree with me that he has lost none of his eloquence and his enthusiasm is still as fervent as ever. The only thing which puzzles me is, how he managed up to now to steer clear of the rocks of matrimony.

In the meantime the clock pointed to 11.30 p.m. and the ladies, who showed so much forbearance with all the speakers, were clamouring for the dancing to begin: the hall was soon cleared and a very efficient band suddenly started most alluring tunes, and before one was aware, one was waltzing around with one of the many sweet ladies, who graced this Banquet with their radiant beauty.

Shortly before this most enjoyable and happy evening came to an end, plates of very hot onion soup were handed around, which was greatly enjoyed, although the "trimmings" somehow worried me. After the soup there was no more dancing and for some time to come participants of this festival will like to think of these all too short happy hours spent with their friends of the Union Helvetia.

Apart from those already mentioned, the following members and friends of the Union Helvetia were present:

Mr. Arbogast and guests, Mr. and Mrs. Binggeli, Mr. Bardet and guests, Mr. and Mrs. Bartholdi, Mr. and Mrs. Bridges, Mrs. P. F. Boehringer, Mr. O. Boehringer, Mr. Boog, Mr. Clausen, Mr. and Mrs. Diethelm and Miss Diethelm, Mrs. and Mrs. Friberg, Mr. and Mrs. Pilliez, Mr. and Mrs. Geneux, Mr. and Mrs. Greenfield, Miss Grossenbacher, Mr. Glauser, Mr. Imboden and guests, Mrs. Jeannin and Miss Jeannin, Mr. Kipfer and guests, Mr. Kunzler and guest, Mr. and Mrs. Kummer, Mrs. Marugg, Mr. and Mrs. Long, Mr. Laurie, Mr. Naef and guest, Mr. Nussle, Mr. Oggier and guests, Mr. and Mrs. Oberhaensle and guests, Mr. and Mrs. Rickett, Mr. and Mrs. Rhy, Mr. and Mrs. Stutz, Mr. and Mrs. Sutter, Mr. Sermier's guests, Mr. and Mrs. Ad. Schmid,

Mr. and Mrs. Stodden, Mr. Strubin, Mr. and Mrs. Staines and guests, Mr. and Mrs. Tyrell and guest, Mrs. Voegelin, Mr. and Mrs. Widmer and guests, Mr. and Mrs. Walter, Mr. and Mrs. Wetter and guests.

ST.

NOEL 1931.

On m'a demandé de vous adresser un message de Noël... que vous dire? Jadis, les Noël's de notre enfance étaient les fêtes de la joie, de l'insouciance, du bonheur sans mélange. L'arbre tout illuminé symbolisait parfaitement la lumière qui éclairait le cœur des enfants comme celui des parents. Aujourd'hui, tout est sombre; plus ténébreux même, semble-t-il, que durant les années de guerre. Alors, il y avait encore une idée, un idéal qui soulevait les cœurs de beaucoup, qui leur permettait d'espérer, malgré leurs souffrances, malgré leurs angoisses, malgré leurs denils. Tous, nous espérions un monde meilleur fruit de la solennelle épreuve de la guerre.

N'était-ce là que pure illusion? Qui oserait trouver un sens, une idée, un idéal à la crise par laquelle nous passons? Toutes les assises même de notre civilisation semblent d'effondrer, chacun rentre dans sa coquille, fait le vide autour de soi, se barricade dans son égoïsme. Et c'est la nuit la plus dense de la peur, de la défiance, du désespoir, de la ruine, qui emplit les cœurs de plus en plus...

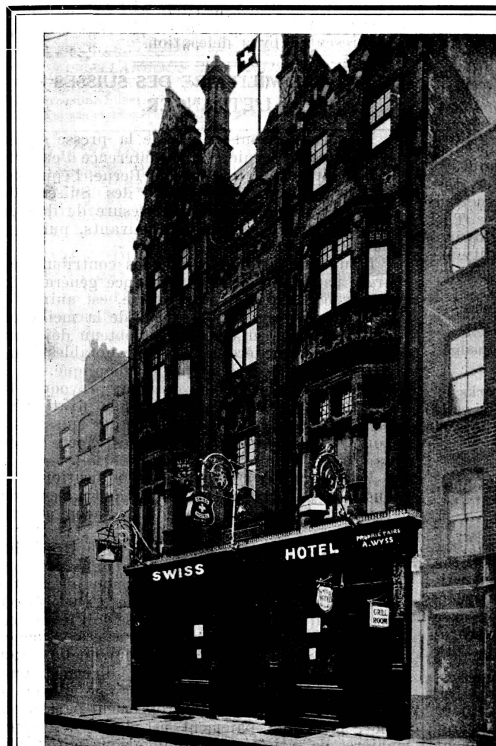
Et c'est au milieu de tout cela qu'il faudrait célébrer Noël? Eh bien oui! Nous chrétiens, nous croyons que Noël a un sens, une signification qui va s'adapter parfaitement aux circonstances de l'heure. Noël nous apporte l'idée et l'idéal qui manquent à notre pauvre monde désaxé.

L'idée: c'est que les peuples mourront s'ils prétendent se dresser les uns contre les autres dans un "égoïsme sacré" que seule la coopération et la collaboration la plus intime des uns avec les autres les sauvera. Ou ils périront tous, ou ils se sauveront tous.

Et l'idéal: celui que les anges proclamèrent dans la nuit de Bethléem et qui conditionnera le salut de l'humanité: "Paix sur la terre, bonne volonté entre les hommes." Dites si jamais mot d'ordre a été plus de saison que celui-là. C'est lui qu'il faudrait inscrire en lettres immenses sur le porche de la grande salle où se tiendra la conférence du désarmement de février prochain. C'est lui que j'aimerais voir gravé dans le cœur de tous les hommes d'Etat dont dépendent les destinées de notre pauvre humanité. C'est lui dont nous tous, nous devrions nous inspirer, nous pénétrer dans la vie de tous les jours, pour être des ouvriers de paix et pouvoir travailler au salut du monde par la seule puissance qui sauve, l'amour.

Ah, qu'on n'aille plus dire que l'Evangile n'offre rien d'utile à l'humanité... Rien si ce n'est l'Evangile et l'Evangile de Noël ne peut l'aider, ne peut la sauver dans l'impasse où elle se trouve. Plaise à Dieu qu'elle l'écoute et l'applique avant qu'il soit trop tard.

R. Hoffmann-de Visme.



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