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NEWS FROM THE COLONY.

UNION HELVETIA.

ANNUAL BANQUET AND BALL.

Last Monday, the Annual Banquet and Ball of the Union Helvética took place at their Headquarters, 1, Gerrard Place, W.1. In accordance with the difficult times through which everybody is passing just now, the Society decided for once, not to send out any official invitation to their various sister Societies, and I feel sure, that this decision, which was taken not without some heart burning, will be fully understood. The Union Helvética, like so many of its sister Societies, is badly hit by adverse circumstances, and strict and wise economy has become a necessity in order to weather the storm.—

About 150 members and friends assembled to spend a few care free hours; the very pleasant Hall, which harbours for me so many sweet remembrances, was artistically decorated, which added greatly to create that "Stimmung" which makes all the functions of this Society such a success.

Mr. and Mrs. Buchi, the popular stewards of the Club provided an excellent dinner, which was enjoyed by all the participants, and the compliments which were paid by the Chairman for their stewardship were well merited.

Mr. A. Wyss, accompanied by his charming wife, was in the Chair, and I feel sure no better choice could have been made. Mr. Wyss, I am informed, has been a member of the U.H. for about 33 years. He has held many offices with great distinction, and his services rendered to this institution are innumerable; thus the honour bestowed on him to preside over this happy gathering was a befitting tribute for valuable work done.—

After the loyal toasts were duly proposed by the Chairman, and honoured by the company, M. A. Indermaur, President of the Territorial Administration addressed the gathering. He paid a great tribute to the Chairman, who has been for many years a faithful and valuable member of the U.H. "The Union Helvética, which 40 years ago was called the Winkelried Society, has passed through many stages, prosperous and less prosperous ones," he said, "but by sheer perseverance, and love for a good and noble cause, the Society has been able to create and build up an organisation in all parts of the world, and which is to-day the pride of every member." M. Indermaur expressed the wish and hope that the various sections would get in closer touch, and thus enable the work to be carried a step further, towards the aim which the founders set themselves some forty years ago. He thanked the Secretary, M. Keller, and his assistant, Mrs. Greenfield, as well as Mr. and Mrs. Buchi, for their untiring work; he also acquainted the company of the appointment of M. P. Brun, President of the Swiss Club Birmingham, as a member of the Territorial Administration. "I am glad to say," he continued, "that unemployment amongst our members is practically non-existent." In conclusion M. Indermaur mentioned that nearly £1000 were distributed from the Sick Benevolent Fund, and his remark that the Club Accounts showed a small profit, was greeted with much applause.—

M. J. Sermier, the energetic President of the London section, acted efficiently as toastmaster, and he called on the Chairman for a speech. Whereupon M. A. Wyss, amidst general cheering, thanked the Committee for the honour which they had bestowed on him, by asking him to take the Chair on this occasion.

"I am proud," he said, "to be in the Chair to-night, I have been a faithful member of the U.H. for nearly 33 years, and I hope to remain one, to the end of my days." He urged the members to work together in unity for the welfare of this Society, which has had such a glorious past. "Whatever happens" he exclaimed, "we must keep this Society going," a statement which literally brought the house down. The Chairman then, amidst applause, paid a touching tribute to Messrs. Indermaur and Sermier, President of the Territorial Administration and President of the London Section respectively.

M. A. Juriens, President of the Swiss Culinary Society, and also an old member of the Society, enlivened the ladies with his usual proficiency. I was delighted to note that for this special task a "married" man was chosen, after all who knows better what great treasures we have in our ladies, and I particularly noticed that he even made his charming wife blush, could a greater tribute be paid to a speaker?

M. Brun, was then called upon, and said, that soldiers may fade away, but not the U. H.

The Chairman then read out the following names of members, who will receive the customary gold pin for 25 years membership:

S. Beer, (Birmingham).
A. Bachmann.
F. Erné.
L. Kocher.
W. Kunzler.
Ch. Loretan.
Ch. Schmitz.

Unfortunately none of the recipients were able to be present, which was rather a pity.

Mrs. Wyss then said a few words on behalf of the ladies, relating at the same time a story, the gist of which I could not get, no doubt due to my proverbial slowness, but I laughed all the same, as I was sure that it was a good one.

She also acquainted the company that on that very day, Mrs. Indermaur was celebrating her birthday, and everybody most heartily joined her in wishing her very many happy returns of the day. I could not see whether she also presented her with a birthday cake, but anyhow she would have well deserved one.

M. Sermier concluded the speech-making by thanking all and sundry for their support.

The Hall was then cleared and soon after dancing started to the accompaniment of a lively band. At 2 o'clock a.m., delicious onion soup was served, and a very enjoyable evening came to an end.

THE EDITOR'S POST-BAG.

*The Editor,
The Swiss Observer, London.*

Dear Sir,

As a sincere admirer of the gallant little nation, which, in so many vital ways, can set a shining example to other leading countries, may I thank ST. for the very excellent reply to the Cockle-Parson. Further, may I ask whether it is not possible to bring this clever and witty retort to the notice of the British public, as so many who do not know Switzerland, were undoubtedly prejudiced by the scurrilous attack in the *Daily Sketch*.

It was only by chance that I happened to see the copy of the Swiss Observer refuting the slur, for which the *Daily Sketch* certainly augmented the purse of the Rev. Gentleman. Knowing the wide reach of this paper, I pointed out this Cockle-puff to a Swiss friend, who in turn has just shown me ST's reply.

The unfairness of the attack made me want to take up the cudgels for the land I know and love, but I knew only too well that an Editor who would pass the parson's article would not dare to publish any criticism from a journalist known only in provincial papers.

That this diatribe has done harm is proved by my own small circle of acquaintances, who, well aware of my admiration for Switzerland, have specially drawn my attention to the words of wisdom from the parson's pen. I feel strongly about this because I have been instrumental in persuading many English people to visit Switzerland and thus enabling them to have for ever a memory of your glorious country which has to be seen to be believed. But then my friends are humble folk — cocktails are outside their ken, and "Splendide" Hotels are to them as the Ritz or the Berkeley. They stayed in the smaller pensions where the proprietor and his good lady were their hosts in the true sense of the word, and who treated them as friends. They did not find there the tip knee-bowing kowtowing sycophants which are to be found in the palatial hotels in every country, yes, even here in England, *mirabile dictu!*

Further they took their pipes with them, their razors were well primed before departure, their hair was cut, and they did not wallow in shaving creams, shampoos and the like. On the other hand they were delighted to get their favourite "Gold Flake" and similar brands so reasonably, with matches thrown in as well!

They knew beforehand how much tea costs per lb. in Switzerland, and so they were satisfied to indulge in milk (which there is the equal of cream in other lands) and they took every advantage of the wonderful fruit, which is not a luxury there.

It is a great pity that the lady who improved the Rev. Gentleman's French did not know some of his choice opinions about her country, otherwise he would probably have learnt something more than the fact that "légumes" are cheaper, and personally I do not think he would have staggered home with his gift of rock-plants to improve his English garden. In spite of the fact that I am not a parson, I pray that I might one day be allowed to improve his knowledge of Switzerland.

However, I must apologise for having taken up so much of your valuable time, but I know Switzerland so well, her beauty, her people, her history, and her tradition, that I could go into "volumes" with actual fact, based not on a single trip, but from living amongst the people themselves.

My "Maiden's Prayer" is to the people who work for their living, and who indeed earn their pleasure, and I pray them to cut out cinemas and cockles, and the like, and so put a little extra to the holiday money they would ordinarily spend (this to cover the additional travelling expenses) and if only once try Switzerland from my angle, the angle of a light purse, "légumes" fruit, milk and "Gold Flake" to say nothing of the other material delights this land can offer within the reach of all. They will, I am certain, never regret the small sacrifice for glimpse of the unsurpassing beauties of a land, so lovely throughout.

Yours truly,
Josephine Davies.

Drinking delicious "Ovaltine"
at every meal—for Health!

NOUVELLE SOCIETE HELVETIQUE
GROUPE LONDONIEN.

Le groupe de Londres de la N.S.H., qui en sa séance du 19 Avril 1933, a entendu le Dr. H. W. Egli lui faire un exposé sur la taxe militaire et son application aux Suisses à l'étranger, a voté à l'unanimité la résolution suivante:

"Il serait hautement désirable que, si vraiment cette taxe ne peut être entièrement abolie, au moins les Suisses nés à l'étranger en soient dispensés.

Du fait de leur naissance, ils possèdent déjà pour la plupart la nationalité du pays où ils sont nés, et les contraindre à payer un impôt suisse est le plus sûr moyen de les éloigner définitivement de la patrie de leur père et de faire perdre à celle-ci des forces qui pourraient lui être très utiles.

L'assemblée insiste aussi pour que soient abolies les inégalités flagrantes dans le mode de perception de la taxe, suivant les cantons, et qu'un office fédéral soit chargé de percevoir et de répartir ladite taxe aux cantons.

A report on Dr. Egli's lecture, will appear in our next week's issue. Ed.