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UNIONE TICINESE



ANNUAL BANQUET & BALL

at "Paganis" on Monday, April 1st.

Oscar GAMBAZZI, President.

"Originality must be the keynote of the report," said the Editor and, kind readers, need one dwell on the fact that you are fortunate in possessing an Editor of progressive ideas? With this request your humble reporter felt an imaginary, yet far from indifferent burden sliding on to his capacious shoulders whilst, momentarily deserted by his self-confidence, he could with difficulty muster words of acknowledgment befitting such contingency.

Shortly before the event about to be described, while endeavouring tactfully to ensure the best of company for the occasion, a question cropped up that commanded immediate explanation. The fair interlocutor wished to know whether the gathering would be composed of gentlemen having jet black curls, even darker whiskers and moustaches, who in company with their Junoesque better halves, would give a loquacious demonstration on the correct style for consuming spaghetti. Few words made it plain, however, that participants to the function diverged fundamentally from a cartoonist's favourite conception of a Latin exponent of the human species.

Continuing the reduction to absurdity, one may add that it was no stately function; no imposing display of either wealth or might; no noisy political event; no, not even a social dinner; it was the sixty-first annual Banquet and Ball of the Unione Ticinese, true to its predecessors in its informal ways, pervaded by an atmosphere of warm cordiality and infectious friendliness, that prevailed from the moment one entered the reception hall until the final desperate search for the elusive cloak-room ticket.

Close upon 175 members and guests sat down to enjoy a succulent repast which not only confirmed everyone in the conviction of the House of Paganis' culinary wisdom, but left all perplexed before such a rapid succession of wonders.

Enthusiastic cheering greeted Miss Eva Cattaneo, soprano, whose fine vocal contributions are an indispensable feature of all Unione Ticinese functions. The more she gives us of her repertoire of classic as well as popular arias, the more we appreciate her as the clever artiste she undoubtedly is. Her "Mi chiamano Mimi" possessed colour and individuality, but greater applause earned her the captivating song "Ciribiribin" executed with exquisite verve and graceful abandon.

After the loyal toasts to H.M. the King, The President of the Swiss Confederation and The Federal Council, the Society's newly elected President, Mr. Oscar Gambazzi, rose to propose the toast, "The Unione Ticinese and the Guests."

Beginning in his native tongue, he said:

"Monsieur De Bourg, gentili Signore e Signori, cari consoci. In occasione dell'ultima festa il nostro Ministro ci muoveva amichevole rimprovero perchè la lingua italiana non è sovente nei discorsi pronunciati alle nostre feste. Interpretandolo come un suggerimento per future occasioni, mi pregio, Sig. De Bourg, porgerLe nella lingua che Lei l'anno scorso chiamava lingua di Dante e di Francesco Chiesa, un saluto sincero, patriottico e leale a nome dell'Unione Ticinese. Siamo altamente onorati d'averLa fra di noi e ci diciamo felici della coincidenza che Lei sia stata scelta a fare le veci del nostro Signor Ministro in quanto che Lei, più d'ogni altro, sa interpretare il carattere del Ticinese e le sue caratteristiche. Nel mentre Le esprimo il più vivo ringraziamento per l'onore rescio, sono a pregarLa di voler rendersi interprete presso il Signor Ministro dei sensi del nostro più vivo attaccamento e della nostra fervente lealtà. Personalmente provo un vivo rammarico per questa sua assenza, dato che avrei avuto caro, ricorrendo per la prima volta l'alta carica di Presidente, di salutarlo — La prego quindi di rendersi interprete pure di questo mio sentimento.

Ho il piacere di dare il benvenuto ai Rappresentanti delle Società Svizzere che ci onorano della loro presenza; il che dimostra i legami di profonda amicizia che stringono le Società Svizzere di Londra, formandone un'unica famiglia. Nominerò in primo luogo la Società più vecchia, la Société des Secours Mutuels des Suisses à Londres che conta oltre due secoli d'esistenza, rappresentata dal Sig.

C. Campart. E' accompagnato dalla sua figlia, Signorina Adrienne Campart alla quale auguriamo ulteriori allori nella carriera brillantemente incominciata. I Sigg. R. Dupraz e A. C. Baume rappresentano il Fonds Suisse de Secours la cui generosa attività a pro dei connazionali meno fortunati è ben nota. La Nuova Società Elvetica che prodiga cure speciali al mantenimento dello spirito svizzero in tutte le parti del mondo ci ha inviato il Sig. A. F. Suter, accompagnato dalla sua figlia. I Sigg. H. Senn e G. Marchand rappresentano il Club svizzero 'par excellence', lo City Swiss Club; i Sigg. Steinmann e Boos la Swiss Mercantile Society; i Sigg. E. S. Block e C. Ferrari la Swiss Gymnastic Society; il Sig. Hediger dello Schweizerbund e Signora. Devo menzionare in fine il Sig. A. Stauffer, editore del giornale "Swiss Observer" interessante tanto per le notizie della Patria quanto per i suoi cenni letterari.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,

If I have given you a shock in forcing upon you a speech rather unconventional in nature, you may rest assured that the day ceased officially at twelve o'clock noon, and am giving another shock now to you all who have come to hear my predecessor's flowery language. While it is an ordeal for me to speak to you, it is an even greater ordeal for you in having to listen to me. It is very gratifying to see so many familiar faces and I venture to hope that you will continue your support to the Society for many years to come. When Mr. Notari hinted that he could not accept re-election as president, it came as a bombshell to us all. We tried hard to convince him to stay, but he was adamant. Pressure was then brought to bear on me to succeed him. In accepting from such worthy predecessor the responsibilities of office, I decided like Julius Caesar at the Rubicon "Alea jacta est." My pleasant duty it is to pay the homage due to Mr. Willie Notari who was for sixteen years at the head of the Society. To record the good work Mr. Notari has done would take up too much of your time, but permit me, dear Willie, to thank you most sincerely on behalf of the whole Society for your untiring efforts for the welfare of the Unione Ticinese. All present and past members of the Committee can bear witness to the unselfish devotion Mr. Notari has brought to the performance of his many duties. I, myself, shall endeavour to follow in his footsteps to the best of my ability and must consider myself lucky in having such a splendid example before me. I expect before long to give Willie a more tangible proof of our esteem on behalf of all the members. Meantime I hope and trust he will enjoy his one year of rest and make the best of it, before returning to the chair he only is worthy to occupy.

The Unione Ticinese is primarily a mutual help Society, but we also try to instil into our members the spirit of that patriotism which is famous all over the globe, Swiss patriotism. I wish to mention a recent date which, when modern history will be written, will figure as an important one in the annals of our Country, the 24th February last. On that day with a handsome majority the Swiss people accepted the new military reorganization law. If it be true that coming events cast their shadow before them, we may yet be convinced of the foresight of our statesmen. Of course, it is open to criticism that on an evening like this I should have introduced a subject which is the prerogative of our diplomatic representatives: I did so merely to emphasize the spirit of patriotism alive in our country. In joy or in sorrow, in sorrow or in danger it stands forth as a shining example of national solidarity; to wit — in joy, our national shooting competitions, our national singing festivals or our national gymnastic displays — in sorrow, the generous response that goes forth even from the remotest hamlet when the unruly elements have stricken some of our people — in danger, the call to arms of 1914, when Swiss all over the world cast aside their occupations to assemble under our historic banner. The oath our forefathers took on 1st August 1291 — so stirringly phrased by Schiller:

"Wir wollen sein ein einzig Volk von

Brüdern,

In keiner Not uns trennen und Gefahr.
Wir wollen frei sein, wie die Väter waren,
Eher den Tod, als in der Knechtschaft leben.

Wir wollen trauen auf den höchsten Gott,
Und uns nicht fürchten vor der Macht
der Menschen."

is still binding on us and our best guarantee of Swiss freedom and democracy.

As mentioned before ours is a mutual help Society and in the present difficult times we are going through our members are the chief sufferers. Membership has considerably diminished, but in view of the immigration restrictions that have closed the doors of this hospitable country we cannot hold out any hopes in this respect. Falling off in our revenue, I regret to say, left us last year with an adverse balance, but our members need not be alarmed because of this temporary setback as ample funds, gathered in previous more prosperous years, enable us to fulfil our obligations towards needy members.

Amongst our old members were the Paganis and the Paganis were the founders of this establishment. It is a symbolic coincidence that the Unione Ticinese should hold its annual festival under this very roof. Mr. Meschini has not only maintained the reputation of "Paganis's," but enhanced it, and we wish Mr. and Mrs. Arturo Meschini all the success in the future. Mr. Meschini, as you all know, is our honorary Vice-President, and the prosperity of our Society is due to him.

There is one point that gives me food for thought — to address thanks to those charming ladies who adorn this festival — no festival would be a success without their presence — I thank them for having listened to my prolonged oration without a murmur and wish to mention especially Miss Eva Cattaneo whose presence here to-night brings the atmosphere of Ticinese spring in our midst.

I now call on you to drink to the prosperity of the Unione Ticinese and their Guests."

Spontaneous applause greeted Mr. Gambazzi's sincere exposition into which he had introduced a note of patriotic fervour that characterized the Colony's activities in olden days.

Prefacing his speech with the remark that his being in the chair was not a "Poisson d'Avril," but due to the unavoidable absence of our Minister, who had left Croydon by air for Basle with his two daughters shortly after noon, Mr. W. De Bourg, Councillor of the Swiss Legation, went on to say that he felt greatly honoured to take the Minister's place on such an occasion as the Unione Ticinese Annual Banquet, particularly so in view of the fact that the Society was celebrating two jubilees, namely Mr. W. Notari's record in having been President for sixteen consecutive years, and the advent of Mr. Oscar Gambazzi to the presidential chair. Although the Society suffered a loss through Mr. Notari's withdrawal from the Presidency, they were nevertheless fortunate to call on Mr. Gambazzi whose connection with the Unione Ticinese extended over nearly half a century. Mr. Paravicini had asked him to convey to Mr. Notari a special message of gratitude and to the new President hearty congratulations and good wishes.

To emphasize the patriotic qualities of the Ticinesi at home, he too referred to the majority of assenting votes cast in the Ticino for the recent Swiss Army Referendum. The Ticinesi in London, he said, also showed their devoted and unbroken patriotism through their hard work, their thrift as well as through the support they invariably gave their country.

Reviewing events at home, M. De Bourg, first mentioned the recent resignation of Federal Councillor E. Schulthess who, with M. Motta, was one of the two veterans of the Federal Council. The proof of the great services M. Schulthess rendered our Country for the last twenty-three years lay in the difficulty experienced in replacing him and of finding a person prepared to carry on one of the most responsible and hard-worked Government Departments. An-

other event which occupied the minds of people in Switzerland was the proposed crisis initiative which attempted to inflict new and heavy sacrifices on the various classes. Reassuring, though partly so, his reference to the intentions of financial and banking authorities at home with regard to their monetary policy. Far from doubting the determination with which all efforts to adhere to the gold standard will be pursued we are, nevertheless, alive to the fact that the odds look tremendous.

With a passing allusion to the diplomatic talks carried on by British Statesmen abroad, which he hoped would lead to general understanding and peace, M. De Bourg, concluded his interesting speech amid enthusiastic approval. He then read the following telegram from our Minister, just handed to him:

"Thoroughly disappointed not to be with you to-night to greet the members of the Unione Ticinese and to welcome my old friend Gambazzi

PARAVICINI."

The popular President of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, Mr. A. F. Suter, responding to the principal toast, found so many good qualities in the Ticinesi as to lead one to believe that, had the earth been peopled exclusively with them, Utopia would be a reality, not a dream. His refreshing wit kept his amused audience bubbling over with mirth, he said:

Monsieur De Bourg, Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

When your genial President asked me to respond to the toast of the guests, I confess I accepted this honour with alacrity. Having been favoured with an invitation to your annual banquets for some years past, I have been itching for a long time to pay your Society a few well deserved compliments. I fear only one thing and that is that I might have to repeat what Mr. de Bourg has already said so well and so wittily, but I must not really miss this wonderful opportunity, in spite of your eagerness for the dance.

All who know the Unione Ticinese are agreed upon this fundamental truth:— that the Ticinesi are great patriots and have fine qualities. They are a hospitable race and amazingly generous in their benevolence; they have a keen sense of solidarity; they are earnest and thrifty workers and they all have a natural understanding for the fine arts. Out of a great profusion of historical proof of these qualities I would only mention two:— The famous architects and builders and stone workers of the middle ages, and so-called guilds of the "Comacini," whose genius has produced some of the most wonderful cathedrals and churches in Italy, Spain and elsewhere in Europe; and in our own times the vast fraternity of the great Restaurateurs, restorers of a different but no less pleasant type, spread all over the globe, wherever people can afford to eat rich foods and call in the doctor afterwards to correct any slight irregularity. Surely these are indications enough of the constructive and useful character of our friends, of so much greater benefit to the world than the genius of the destructive soldier. A telling proof of their exceptional thrift lies in the fact that of the total deposits of 45 million francs in the savings banks of the Canton Ticino in 1913, no less than nine tenths had been sent home by Ticinesi living abroad. An unexpected lesson for our Scotch friends!

Since that time, I fear, things have got worse and we all have become poorer, but you Ticinesi of London, you have not lost your quality. You follow instinctively the traditions of your forebears:— You stick together, you look after your sick and needy, you go on with the work and are bright and cheerful during the worst of times, you have big families and know how to bring them up in devotion and discipline, in fact, you are the best type of citizen Switzerland could desire. We transalpine, whom you have at times been tempted to call forestieri, as if we were the wild men of Borneo, have a tremendous admiration for you.

Now, after all these compliments, I hope you will not feel like the young widow whose husband had not been exactly all that a model husband ought to be. But he was dead now, and at the funeral service the parson painted him in purest white, extolling his high-mindedness, his devotion and his self-sacrifice. The widow listened for some time, then she turned to her young son in confusion and said:— "Johnny, I'm afraid we have come to the wrong funeral."

There is a toast that lives in the hearts of all of us, man, woman and child born in Switzerland, a toast that is an ineradicable part of our blood; happy the Swiss for whom this toast comes true after a useful life:—

Ai nostri monti ritorneremo,
L'antica pace ivi godremo.

Mr. President, I am delighted to express to you, on behalf of all the guests present, our grateful thanks for your magnificent hospitality and good-fellowship and I raise my glass to the long, happy and prosperous life of all those who constitute your splendid *Unione Ticinese di Londra*.

Mr. Arturo Meschini was then next called upon for his traditional "one minute speech" as he himself humourously described it, and was followed by Mr. Styles Allan, the prospective Mayor of the Borough of Marylebone, who said a few words on behalf of the English guests.

But the evening could not have been complete had not the retiring President, Mr. W. Notari, yielded to the persistent calls to address the diners. He candidly admitted that for the first time after sixteen years he had been able to enjoy the food and wine, entirely carefree.

Eloquence having completed its exceptionally long course, itching feet finally came into their due, spurred on by the quiet rhythm of an unobtrusive orchestra.

In an interval during the dance, Miss Maisie Griffiths executed a fan dance with efficiency and no lack of grace. Mr. Robert Harbin, on the other hand, proved himself a resourceful entertainer in convincing his audience that a lighted cigarette could be carried in one's waist-coat pocket with no evil consequences; that a cut piece of rope was really uncut, and that he knew by heart the first thousand pages of the London Telephone Directory, Whittaker's Almanac and English Dictionary; no mean feat at that.

In another break in the dance Mr. Gino Berni, propitiously turned up to regale us with Neapolitan "romanze." Sung with his wonted vigour, their languid rhythm conveyed the illusion of more idyllic life rustic surroundings—a "Grotto" lost in the shade of the chestnut trees, the cooling breezes rising from the lake below, and on the granite table, roughly hewn, the gaily decorated "quintini" filled to overflowing with the host's most treasured produce, the "nostrano"; to the eye an intense crimson, but slightly acrid to the palate.

To describe the ladies in any detail other than in such a general term as ravishing may be considered a piece of unmitigated churlishness. This will not be attempted. Their garrulous gaiety, rapturous charm and colourful toilettes gave the function an air of distinction, the hours unforgettable enjoyment.

The newly appointed Entertainment Committee, on whom this time the full responsibility for the organization fell, acquitted themselves of their arduous task in a commendable manner; the evening was an unqualified success and no higher praise was ever better deserved.

cusj.

PAGINE DI STORIA TICINESE.

Un nostro egregio collaboratore ci ha fatto gentile omaggio di un breve sunto della storia del Canton Ticino.

Ci lusinghiamo di fare cosa gradita ai nostri lettori riportandolo a puntate nelle nostre colonne. Le prima puntata apparirà in un prossimo numero.

Ed.

LEMBO TICINESE.

Voce fatta di mille voci, quella del lago infrangentesi contro la riva, spruzzando le alghe, le felci e le svelte imbarcazioni, civettuole, così come sono tutte gaianamente dipinte a nuovo. Anch'esse, le barche, aspettano che il tepore primaverile faccia comparire a Lugano i forestieri— questi benedetti forestieri che rappresentano il pane quotidiano per molti. Gli alberghi pure aprono i loro battenti, spalancano i portoni dove sono lì impalati i portieri in livrea. Ma gli alberghi sono numerosi, troppi anzi, si può dire che è tutto il lungo-lago un susseguirsi di alberghie ristoranti. Tutti belli. Tutti con ogni comodità. E quel forestiere che tarda ad accorgersi che a Lugano il clima è ora mite, l'aria balsamica, la natura invitante! S'accorgerà, invece forse che il suo borsellino è verdeggianti (come si sa, il verde è il colore preferito dei borsellini, delle tasche vuote!). Qualcuno c'è, ma non basta! Ed ora anche il vicino Campione è chiuso. Intendiamoci bene, non il borgo di Campione, ma il suo Casinò che lo rendeva famoso e che attirava così tanta gente, ammassandola con la speranza di una grossa vincita! Per riflesso, Lugano, ne guadagnava. Chi, dal vicino Regno andava a Campione, faceva pure una visita alla Regina del Ceresio, facendo scorta di sigarette e cioccolatta, e cercando poi d'evadere quel cerbero d'una dogana italiana! Ma, veramente, la stagione è ancora molto giovane, e c'è tempo ancora per i forestieri d'arrivare, verranno con le rondini anch'essi! Intanto ci sono i cigni che cercano un posto calmo e sereno per crearsi il loro nido, e le autorità a raccomandare di non disturbarli. Chi pare prosperi mica male sono le cliniche— ne sorgono numerose in questi tempi, vastissime,

eleganti e frequentatissime, a volte sono più che al gran completo— quella di S. Anna, di S. Rocco, di Monucco, di Viaretto, tutte in posizioni incantevoli, però... meglio ammirarle standosene all'esterno! Internamente è da preferirsi visitare il Museo Villa Ciani, anch'esso appena riaperto o il famoso Castello di Trevano, che rappresenta l'eterna questione luganese; cosa farne di questo castello con tanto terreno intorno, con tanto sfarzo, con tanta storia (un po' romanzata anche!)? Meglio visitare Via Nassa con i suoi negozi che sfoggiano ogni ben di Dio; eleganti e civettuoli— meglio salire sul S. Salvatore, sul Monte Bré, le cui funiculari da qualche giorno ripresero le corse, e dalle rispettive vette spaziare lo sguardo laggiù, lontano... sorvolare le cose terrene, le piccinerie umane, respirare tra cielo e monte, l'aria pura, monda d'ogni male... dimenticare di vivere, per sognare; dimenticare la crisi economica che si fa sentire anche nel Ticino, per quanto in tono minore che negli altri cantoni svizzeri; dimenticare certe marachelle che capitano a palazzo governativo, ove alcuni impiegati con le loro malefatte gettano un'ombra nera su quelle mura che dovrebbero racchiudere un'atmosfera quasi impeccabile. Anche nel nostro piccolo cantone purtroppo succedano truffe in grande stile degne delle lontane cosmopolite metropoli, e qualche furto è perpetrato anche da noi, che ha in se quasi i caratteri di quelli di New York e Chicago... ma meglio non parlare di questo, meglio tuffarsi nel sereno del lago anche se il tuffo è semplicemente fatto con il pensiero!

E.G.L.

THE ICE-HOCKEY CLUB DAVOS IN ENGLAND.

After having played a beautiful draw against Wembley Canadians, as reported in the last No. of the Swiss Observer, the Ice Hockey Club Davos met last Wednesday the British League champions Streatham, on their home rink. The game was from the start to the end terrific. Our countrymen, who had, before this match, a few days' rest, were in a shape where nothing could go wrong. The British champions pushed the pace from the very beginning, hoping to tire out Davos, who were playing only with two spares instead of a complete forward line of three, but Davos responded to this without ever slacking down at all. The combination between Torriani and the two brothers Cattini was as good as anything demonstrated by Canadian representatives in the last few years. The defence was very efficient too, and the goalkeeper saved many dangerous situations. The play in the opponents' camp was worthy of their title as British League champions. The smart work of the goalkeeper gained special admiration. Davos scored first and they could manage to keep one goal ahead of Streatham until the end. The final score being 3:2 for Davos.

The following day, Thursday, Davos faced their last opponents the Wembley Lions at Wembley. Some 10,000 spectators filled the arena, amongst them Madame Paravicini with a party of distinguished sportsmen including the Olympic champion Lord Burleigh, the Air Minister, Lord Londonderry with Lady Londonderry and daughter, and the man who flew over Mount Everest, Lord Clydesdale. I would like to express to Madame Paravicini herewith the warmest thanks on behalf of the Ice-Hockey Club Davos for having them thus honoured. The play was, using the words of a daily paper, one of the most hectic of all Ice-Hockey matches of this season. The pace was top speed throughout, bringing additional thrills every second. Davos took over an early lead and towards the end of the second period they were leading 3 goals to 1. An additional goal by Davos was cancelled, with the explanation that it touched the player's hand. The protest of the scorer, Torriani, was of no use. This, with a few other well justified disagreements with the referee, broke the spirits of our National champions, and from here onwards everything went wrong. The game finished with 5 to 9 goals for Wembley Lions. Eberle, the Davos goalkeeper, was not in good shape, but considering that he played with a broken thumb, one has to make him great allowances. The Davos forward line, with Cattini I centre, and Torriani and Cattini II on the wings, has been declared by a Canadian authority as the best forward line on this side of the Atlantic, equal to any Canadian line. Even in their defeat I think that they gave us ample proof for this compliment. On defence were Geromini I, the eldest Swiss player, who will be 40 years old on his next birthday, and Badrutt, a youngster who did very useful work for Switzerland in the recent World Championships. As spares were present Buchli, young in years but a veteran in experience, and Geromini II, a promising young player. It may be interesting to know that the Swiss National Team which gained the European Championships and was placed 2nd to Canada in the World Championships at the beginning of this year, is made up principally of players mentioned above.

So ended the Tournee of the Ice-Hockey Club Davos in England. One draw, one win and one