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# UNION HELVETIA

## Golden Jubilee Dinner & Dance

At  
1, GERRARD PLACE, W.I.

President : Mr. P. LEHRIAN.



In spite of devaluation and departing from Gold standards, — Gold —, and whatever is connected with it, still seems to have a lustre attached to it.

This was proved last Friday, November 13th, when the Union Helvetia celebrated the Golden Jubilee of their Mother Society in Lucerne. Those people, who are of a superstitious disposition might have gravely shaken their heads, that such a festival should take place on a Friday (it is said that no real sailor will venture on a sea voyage on a Friday) and then remember, it was the 13th of November too.

But as the Swiss are not a seafaring people, the Friday proved to be no obstacle, and those who frown at the figure 13, must have been converted for all times, because Friday the 13th of November, 1936 was undoubtedly one of the most successful ones in the history of the Union Helvetia. —

Nearly 200 members and guests assembled in the gaily decorated Hall at 1, Gerrard Place, W.I. to spend a few happy hours in congenial company. I understand that the attendance nearly proved to be a record.

A reception was held previous to the dinner, which gave everyone a chance to re-new old acquaintances; it was a happy idea of the committee to allow the participants to have a "chin-wag" together, especially as so many members and friends from the Provinces turned up.

Long before the revellers sat down to dinner, great animation reigned throughout the various reception rooms, and promised well for what was to follow.

The dinner started punctually at 9.30 p.m., and the Swiss Minister, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, who honoured the gathering by presiding over it, received a very hearty and cordial reception on taking the Chair. —

Although perhaps not in the best of taste, it is nevertheless true to say, that one of the most important factors at a dinner, is the food, and I have not the slightest hesitation in declaring that part of the programme as successful as the other. Mr. and Mrs. Wymann, the stewards of the Club fully deserved the compliments which were later passed on to them by the President.

During the dinner, a small and efficient orchestra played some agreeable music, and let it be said to their credit, not too forcibly; unfortunately of late, some of the orchestra's who supply the necessary musical fare during dinners, have played as if they were engaged to summon the diners to their last judgment. —

The toast to H.M. the King and to Switzerland were given by the Swiss Minister; both toasts were accompanied by the respective National Anthems. A friend of mine, in the vicinity sang the Swiss Anthem with such fervour and patriotic inspiration, that I was in deadly fear lest his shirt studs would fly out, causing havoc to his vis-à-vis.

The speech for the Union Helvetia was given by M. Lehrian, the President of the Society. Before, I give a *résumé* of his excellent oration, I would say, how disappointed I was, and a disappointment which was undoubtedly shared by all, that my old friend Mr. A. Indermaur, was, owing to illness, prevented from presiding over this festival. Those who know with what zeal and enthusiasm Mr. Indermaur works and has worked for the Society, can well imagine the disappointment he must have felt to be absent on such a conspicuous occasion; but it might be of some consolation to him to hear, that the whole company enthusiastically acknowledged the services he had so faithfully rendered to the Society for over a quarter of a century. —

Mr. Lehrian, after having thanked the Swiss Minister for his presence, gave a short *résumé* of the history of the Union Helvetia from which could be gathered that the Union Helvetia was founded in 1886 in Lucerne, and the London section one year later (1887) by the late Mr. Senn. He reiterated that at the beginning, the Hotel staff was considered to be far from skilled and that their social standard was somehow not much higher than the servant class. It was only after Mr. Aschwanden, the Founder of the Society,

started his by now famous hotel school in Lucerne, that the hotel profession started on their upward journey.

The speaker mentioned some figures, which were highly significant; i.e., in the year 1890 a sum of 1,600 frs. was distributed from the sick Fund amongst the members, in 1935 the distribution reached the amount of nearly 200,000 frs. To-day the Pension Fund, stands at the remarkable total of 3,068,000 frs. The total membership of the Union Helvetia family exceeds 6,000 members.

M. Lehrian then mentioned, amongst applause, that the London section has been foremost in having the pensions for old members of the Society increased.

"It is to be regretted" Mr. Lehrian said, "that the membership of the London Section has rather decreased than increased during the last few years, which is to be attributed to the still very stringent immigration policy of the British authorities."

He thanked the Minister on behalf of the Society, for the efforts he has made to get the authorities to agree to the interchanging of Swiss and English Hotel employees, which is the only way for young Swiss Hotel employees to make a stay here.

On terminating his speech, Mr. Lehrian warmly thanked his committee members, past Presidents and veterans for the work they are rendering and have rendered to the Union Helvetia, singling out Mr. A. Indermaur who has presided over the "Landesverwaltung" for more than ten years. He also paid a compliment to the steward, stewardess and staff of the Club-house. Various telegrams of good wishes from members in England and abroad were read out. M. Lehrian was heartily cheered when he resumed his seat.

The Swiss Minister, who was the next speaker, received a very hearty reception, and the congenial atmosphere which was such a feature during the evening, must have infected him, because I noticed that he entirely dispensed with his notes, (which have often considerably lightened my task), and spoke in that easy witty after-dinner vein of which he is such a past master.

Monsieur Paravicini mentioned that, although he was supposed to represent our country at another function that very evening, he was successful in making such arrangements, which enabled him to be present at this most important festival.

Having at some length referred to the Jubilee festivities which took place last month at Lucerne, and on which occasion he had addressed a letter to the Swiss Administration, he said that the relations between the Legation and the Union Helvetia during the last fifty years, have remained uninterrupted and fruitful. The Minister then said, amongst much applause "the head and the staff of the official Swiss representation will continue to do their best to maintain this common work. I have come here tonight to confirm these friendly and, I hope, helpful intentions, and it would gratify me to know that we shall always find the same dispositions on the part of the leaders and members of this Society."

Monsieur Paravicini then paid a high tribute to Mr. Indermaur's work and also to the services which M. Lehrian, the President of the London Section, is so ably rendering.

The speech of the Minister, which was interwoven with many witty repartees was long and heartily cheered by the entire company.

Mr. A. Boog, extended a very hearty welcome to the many veterans present, and voiced his regret that unfortunately not all were present to receive their diploma and medal for 25 years membership.

The speaker especially mentioned Mr. J. Sermier, a former President of the Union Helvetia, who entered that evening the distinguished band of veterans. He said that many have in the past felt the sting of his criticism, but there was never any doubt that M. Sermier was heart and soul in his work to make the

Society what it is to-day. He thanked all the veterans on behalf of the U.H. for their services and faithful membership. —

Perhaps I am allowed to sympathise with all those, who have at one time or other "felt the sting" of Mr. Sermier's critical mind, because I have been "stung" too some years ago, but although it was rather unpleasant while the pain lasted, I have long ago forgotten it, because I knew that he had at all times the interest, and the welfare of his beloved Union Helvetia at heart, and even amongst best friends temporary misunderstandings can occur.

As one, who has known the newly fledged veteran for over twenty years, I was glad of having had an opportunity to be present on the occasion, when the long standing merits of friend Sermier received such a fine tribute and sincere acknowledgement. —

Mr. Sermier, greatly moved by the honour bestowed on him, thanked the company in a few words, he also expressed his appreciation to the Society on behalf of his fellow veterans for the invitation extended to them.

The Minister then presented the diplomas and medals to nearly ten new veterans, most of them looking far from what one expects a veteran to look like. The last toast was reserved for the official and unofficial guests and the Ladies.

Mr. Juriens who, I am glad to say, has recovered from his long illness, was once again entrusted with this task, a task which he as usual, accomplished with great efficiency. He mentioned that amongst the official guests were present, apart from the Swiss Minister:

- Pasteur R. Hoffmann-de Visme;
- Pastor C. Th. Hahn and Mrs. Hahn;
- The Chairman of the Food and Cookery Association;
- Mr. A. Stauffer and Mrs. Stauffer, Swiss Observer;
- Mr. Hediger, President Swiss Club (Schweizerbund);
- Mr. P. Brun, President Swiss Club Birmingham;
- Mr. G. De Brunner, Hon. President Swiss Culinary Society;
- Mr. and Mrs. Kummer, President Swiss Culinary Society.

Mr. Juriens also paid some flattering remarks to the Ladies present. Thus the first part of the evening concluded just as the clock struck midnight. The dancing then started, unfortunately, having had previously some late nights in the service of the Swiss Observer, I was unable to stay, but I have not the slightest doubt, that the 2nd part of the evening was as successful as the first.

The Union Helvetia has every reason to look back on this memorable evening with pride and satisfaction, it was a fine evening, which once more proved that the spirit of comradeship remains as cordial as it always has been, and now a hearty "Glückauf" for the

75th Jubilee.

ST.

### CARMEN HAGMANN.

On Thursday last week the London public and the Swiss Colony had an opportunity of making the acquaintance of a talented and promising Swiss singer, Madame Carmen Hagmann, at the Grotian Hall. It is a pleasure to hail this newcomer, of whom nothing was known here before this concert, as a serious and ambitious artist. Her programme, with which she introduced herself in London, was in fact rather too ambitious for a young singer whose qualities cannot, in the nature of things, have had opportunity and experience enough to develop fully in every direction as required by the choice of her songs. But her recital was none-the-less an encouraging all-round performance with many high lights very pleasing to the audience and also appreciated by the few English critics who were present.

Madame Hagmann's interesting selection of songs comprised a delightful Scarlatti, two song groups by Schubert and Alban Berg, a song each

of Debussy and Honegger (unfortunately the only Swiss composer represented!), two songs of Cairati and a number of Spanish compositions by Granados and de Falla. The latter songs were unquestionably the most successful in the programme, where the singer's personality and emotions came to the fore with a greater certainty and warmth than in some other parts. We discovered after the concert that Madame Hagmann, though of purely Swiss descent, grew up in Spain. That, of course, helps to explain the intimacy of understanding of the peculiar terse yet resonant quality of these Spanish composers and the sure triumphant touch of interpretation exhibited by Madame Hagmann. But her excellence is in no way confined to the milieu of her youth. Almost equally successful, in our opinion, was her rendering of the cycle of Alban Berg songs, may be because this modernist composer has a quality of tenseness a little akin to the Spanish air, although he chooses the most lovely lyrics for his compositions. The Schubert songs which require quite different tonal qualities, above all a sustained vocal resonance to fill the emotion-laden notes, seemed to come off least satisfactory. Schubert tends to tire the modern audience a little by the longeurs of some of his lyrical ecstasies. To overcome this danger the singer needs a personality and sure mastery of interpretation as well as technique, such as perhaps only long experience and maturity can assure. Irma Schaichet's accompaniment was admirable.

We reproduce two notices of the concert which appeared in the English press. They are in our opinion both very complimentary just because they combine some apt critical observations with a sense of appreciation.

*D. E.*

The "Sunday Times" writes:

Grotian Hall: Miss Carmen Hagmann. This singer is a stylist. Moreover, recognition of the niceties of vocal control brought a pleasure all too uncommon. The natural tone may not have all the limpidity ideal for Scarlatti, but becoming shades of colour were deftly used in Schubert and Debussy songs. What was sung was meant, and the meanings won acceptance. Irma Schaichet's accompaniments were judiciously regulated.

The "Daily Telegraph" writes:

A NEW SWISS SINGER.

A Swiss singer, Carmen Hagmann, had made an unhackneyed choice of music for her first appearance here at Grotian Hall on Thursday. Beginning with some unfamiliar Scarlatti (arranged by Cairati, who was also represented by a couple of thoughtful lyrics in Straussian vein), she went on to Schubert, Debussy, Alban Berg, and two groups of modern Spanish songs.

It was a programme calling for qualities of a more positive kind than the singer had always at her command. A stronger rhythmic pulse would have done much to tauten a vocal line apt to sag when attention was divided between the conflicting claims of technique and interpretation. At the moment, Miss Hagmann is too much concerned with surmounting problems of production to allow much scope for personal comments on moods and manners. Irma Schaichet accompanied.

*C. D. G.*

#### PERSONAL.

The many friends of Mr. Ferdinand Huber, late Managing Director of Messrs. Georges Meyer & Co., Ltd., will regret to hear of his death at Ruschlikon at the age of 67. Mr. Huber resided in this country for over 30 years and was a member of the City Swiss Club. — He returned to his native Switzerland in 1927.

#### EDITOR'S POST-BAG.

16th November, 1936.

The Editor of the Swiss Observer,  
23, Leonard Street, E.C.2.

Dear Sir,

May I be allowed to refer to an exceptionally good article on mountaineering in Switzerland in the Christmas number of the Geographical Magazine.

Prof. Dr. Rudolf Zeller (director of the Swiss Alpine Museum) gives a most fascinating and enlightening account entitled "The Development of 'Alpinism' in Switzerland." This is a careful survey of historical and literary interest, enriched by a selection of very charming 18th century colour prints and engravings.

Perhaps some of your readers may like to turn their thoughts on this delightful subject, if they get to hear of it.

Yours respectfully,

*T. H. Finsler.*

*Drink delicious "Ovaltine"  
at every meal—for Health!*

#### EDITOR'S POST-BAG.

London, 17th November, 1936.

The Editor,  
Swiss Observer.

Dear Sir,

As you may know I have for many years been advocating Winter Sports in Switzerland. After my lectures, I have often been requested to organise parties, and the present rate of exchange makes it exceptionally favourable this season.

I have therefore arranged to take a private party to *Adelboden* for two weeks. We start on the 26th December, travelling via Folkestone-Boulogne-Laon-Berne, and I have already reserved suitable accommodation at this Winter Sport resort. There are still a few vacancies, and it is possible that some of the readers of the Swiss Observer might be interested. If so, they should apply to me at 114, Fore Street, E.C.2, for further details. (Telephone No. Met.4027).

Yours faithfully,

*C. BERTSCHINGER.*

#### FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESTRICTIONS.

The Swiss Bank Corporation, 99, Gresham Street, E.C.2, has prepared a fifth edition of its most useful publication describing the foreign exchange restrictions existing in various countries.

This survey of the position fulfils a valuable service in providing those who have occasion to deal with foreign countries with some general indication of the conditions which govern business there. It has been found possible to include brief references to the clearing and similar agreements which exist between various countries, though the nature of these agreements varies considerably and it has not been possible to draw a careful distinction between one type and another.

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##### ORDRE DU JOUR:

Procès-verbal.  
Admissions.

Divers.  
Démissions.

Pour faciliter les arrangements, les participants  
sont priés de bien vouloir s'inscrire au plus tôt  
auprès de Monsieur P. F. Boehringer, 23, Leonard  
Street, E.C.2. (Téléphone: Clerkenwell 9595)

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#### FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Friday, November 27th — City Swiss Club — Annual Banquet and Ball — at the Grosvenor House, Park Lane, W.1.

Thursday, December 10th, at 8.15 p.m. — Concert — followed by dancing till 1 a.m., at Pagani's Restaurant, 42, Great Portland Street, W.1 (tickets 2/6). (The proceeds will be devoted to "the Society of Swiss Poor in London").

Friday, December 18th, from 7 p.m.-2 a.m. — Students (S.M.S.) Christmas Banquet and Ball, at the Princes Galleries, Piccadilly, W.1.

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mann-de Visme.

11h. — Ecole du Dimanche.

6h.30 — Prédication. M. R. Hoffmann-de  
Visme.

7h.30 — Choeur mixte.

#### MARIAGES.

William Worpe de Sonceboz (Berne) et Marta  
Schatzmann de Windisch (Argovie) le 14 Nov.  
1936.

James André Vuille-Bille de Tramelan (Berne) et  
Irène Aimée Roulet, de la Sagne (Neuchâtel)  
le 14 Nov. 1936.

M. R. Hoffmann-de Visme reçoit à l'église, 79,  
Endell Street, W.C.2, le mercredi de 11h. à  
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8 Uhr, Chorprobe.

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