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UNION HELVETIA

FIFTY-SECOND

Annual Dinner & Dance

MONDAY, MAY 30th 1938.

at 1, Gerrard Place, W.I.

I am somehow in a quandry; not so long ago I announced in the columns of this paper, that the Social season of the Colony had come to a close, and that I could now look forward to a little respite, and try out some of the recipes for slimming, which a number of my friends have so kindly showered upon me. The latest recommendation sent on to me, by a very old friend of mine, was a "Hay" diet, I have not yet found time to study this "proposal," and not being used to "grazing," I am not tremendously impressed; — still one can but try. —

I am not quite sure whether the Annual Dinner of the Union Helvetia, (London Section) is really and truly the last of the Swiss Colony's function, or the first of the 1938/39 festive season.

Hailing from the old fashioned proud city of Berne, I never exactly know where I am with regard to time.

Hardly a week goes by without a "Jubilee" being mentioned in this paper, and I feel, therefore, quite entitled to add one more Jubilee to the long list. By attending the Dinner and Ball on Monday, May 30th, I have completed, during the last 9 years my 150th "full dress" function. By "full dress" I mean that I had to wear a "boiled" shirt, look very "official" and make polite table conversation.

Whether my conversation always came up to scratch on this occasion, I must leave to my table companions, one being an old President of at least two well-known Swiss Societies in London, and the other one, the charming wife of one of the official guests to whom I was much obliged for passing me on her share of oysters at the last Unione Ticinese Annual Banquet.

I have given up grumbling about the delay in starting some of the Dinners in the Swiss Colony, and I therefore will not enlarge further on this subject, may it be said, however, that we did not start in time.

After a prolonged "lubrication" at the Bar, the company was ushered into the Banqueting Hall where a really enjoyable meal was served, to which the credit should go to the stewards of the Union Helvetia, Mr. and Mrs. Wymann.

I remember that some years ago the Union Helvetia used to bid to their tables a large number of guests, but this was during the "boom" period, and as times are not what they used to be, only a few "official" guests were asked. Monsieur C. R. Paravicini being unable to attend, Monsieur de Rham, first Secretary of Legation, took the Chair; amongst the other guests, were Mr. De Brunner, an old and trusted friend of the Society and a well-known personality in the Swiss Colony, Pastor C. Th. Hahn of the "Schweizerkirche," Mr. and Mrs. Caluori, representatives of the Swiss Club (Schweizerbund) and Mr. A. Stauffer, Editor of the Swiss Observer. —

If you ask me what impressed me most at this function, I have no hesitation in saying that first of all, the shortness of the speeches, in fact the four Gentlemen and one Lady who addressed the gathering took exactly 7 minutes to inform the company what it was "all about;" a remarkable feat, when I consider how I have had to listen on numerous occasions to long speeches telling me and the company what marvellous specimens of the human race we really are; secondly I was impressed by the friendly, and may I add, "homely" atmosphere which prevailed throughout the evening.

The usual toast to H. M. the King and the President of the Swiss Confederation were proposed by Monsieur de Rham; a printer's error on the toast list mentioned "The President of the Swiss Federation," but with the usual understanding with which Swiss are credited in this country, no one took an exception to it, least of all your reporter, who full well knows what havoc printers errors can cause.

The toast to the "Union Helvetia" was proposed by Mr. L. Rey, President of the London Section; he very shortly referred to the work of the London section, and the branches in the Provinces, he also mentioned the various Funds, such as old age and sick fund.

The response to this toast was entrusted to Monsieur de Rham, who represented the Swiss Minister at this function.

Monsieur de Rham extended to the company the greetings of Monsieur Paravicini, he expressed his thanks to Mr. A. Indermaur, President of the "Landesverwaltung" for the long and efficient services which he has and is still rendering to the Society. He assured the officials of the Union Helvetia of the untiring collaboration of the Legation in trying to mitigate the stringent immigration laws of the Home Office. M. de Rham also congratulated Mr. Wymann, steward of the Club for the auspicious part he played in making the evening a success.

Mr. Lorian, who was entrusted with the toast on behalf of the guests and ladies, was unfortunately unable to attend and instead, the popular President of the "Landesverwaltung," Mr. A. Indermaur took charge of this toast. He extended a hearty welcome to the representative of the Swiss Minister, Monsieur de Rham, he greeted Pastor C. Th. Hahn as a "dear old friend" visiting the sick and distressed members of the Society, he extended a sincere welcome to Mr. De Brunner, saying, "we are very proud to have you amongst us, and we thank you for services rendered;" an equally hearty tribute was extended to Mr. and Mrs. Caluori, of the "Schweizerbund," and Mr. and Mrs. Kummer, President of the Swiss Culinary Society. In greeting the Editor of the Swiss Observer, Mr. Indermaur made the flattering remark that what "he puts in the Swiss Observer, goes." I am not so sure whether he has not "overstated" the case, and I would rather leave it to my readers to judge. I am always rather nervous of these very generous compliments paid at official dinners. — A really hearty tribute was also paid to the Ladies present.

Mr. Indermaur in addition mentioned the presence of very old friends and supporters of the Society, such as Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Schmid, Messrs. Wyss, Barth, Bruschweiler, Wetter, Weideli, etc., etc.

The Gold Medal for 25 years membership was then presented to Mr. Mathys on behalf of the Society by Monsieur de Rham.

This time, and quite rightly too, a lady responded to the toast to the Ladies; on so many occasions this toast is proposed by a bachelor, which always makes me wild, because first of all he knows nothing, or ought to know little of the fair sex, who he usually praises "sky-high," and secondly if he really honestly believes that the Ladies are the last word in God's creation, why on earth does he not take the "plunge" and be happy "ever after!" Mrs. Sybill Mulluck was singled out for this task, I understand that she is a married Lady, and therefore must know how much man's praise to the "weaker" sex can be taken at its "face value." I am afraid she was not highly impressed by Mr. Indermaur's eulogy to the Ladies, it took her exactly 6 seconds to say "thank you," and she did not even blush in maidenly modesty, such is womanhood in the 20th century!!!

That finished the official part of the evening, apart from a very welcome interlude by Miss Sanford, who gave us a very spirited rendering of Schubert's Serenade, "Birri birri be," and "One Night of Love."

Dancing then followed, and judging from the gaiety and mirth which surrounded me, everyone was as happy as a "sand boy."

Whilst the couples were turning round in maddening speed, I had the pleasure of indulging in a very interesting conversation with a young Lady, who has taken to the "Air" of late, and I hope she will not forget the promise she made to take me up "half way" to the moon, providing, of course, I get the permission "to go," and she knows how to get "me down" safely.

ST.

PERSONAL

We extend heartfelt congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. H. Buser, of "Weggis," Sea Lane, Goring-by Sea (Sussex), on the occasion of their 25th wedding anniversary.

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