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"MOUNTAIN JUBILEE"

By ARNOLD LUNN.

Since reviewing a book may be tantamount to condemning or commanding it to the prospective reader, it is not easy to know what to say to our compatriots in the present case. The book is so sincerely written that the reader cannot avoid sharing to the full the author's "Heimweh" and an attack of the blues is inevitable for any Swiss abroad who reads "Mountain Jubilee."

Those who do not mind paying such a price will be well rewarded. Mr. Lunn recreates for us the very air of the hills at home, he makes the rivers, rocks and glaciers talk and come to life and is an able master in interpreting their meaning to all who wish to see and hear.

The book is neither a story nor a guide book, nor a geographical, historical or philosophical treatise. It is all of these and more. It gives us new sidelights on the developments which brought human beings to an appreciation of the Alpine world. Its appeal is documented by nearly two dozen full page photographs which illustrate the book. Most of the pictures are the work of well-known Swiss, and names like Albert Steiner, Pedrett and Schneider are in themselves a guarantee of first-rate work.

A chapter is devoted to an analysis of Edward Whymper and his important epoch in the history of mountaineering, while others give us the history of ski-ing and downhill-racing. Ski-racing naturally plays a big part in the book; but that august body of star performers who dash across the Alps like demigods are here revealed as human beings who like all others have their joys and sorrows, their fears and triumphs. One is, however, grateful to the author for his inclusion of C. J. Lambert's plea for a return to the true art of enjoying the sport, in which "a good eye for country, a graceful kick turn and a cast-iron derrière" are all the equipment a skier needs.

Those who are so minded will derive much pleasure from the author's ever-present philosophical digressions. They may not agree with such statements as "the secret of happiness in this world is to become engrossed in something which really doesn't matter," but the book is rich in thoughts and reflections which show the author to be a man who values universals. His pen possesses in no small degree the gift to fascinate the reader and to subjugate him to the charm and cadence of its pictures. One enjoys such passages as this:

"All the high company of heavenly peaks were there to welcome the exile returning to his mountain home. Finsteraarhorn and Monte Rosa and Mont Blanc. And there was a softness somewhere behind Paradiso which could only be Italy, and in the north a Germany which had not lost her soul. A blue mist resolved itself into the waters of Lake Leman and I remembered a corner on the railway near Lausanne, where the gleam of Combin snows suddenly shows beyond the embattled turrets of the Dent du Midi, and I knew that when next I took the train from Vevey to Lausanne I should be waiting at the windows to salute, beyond the liquid distances of golden air, the beloved enemy which holds something of my past life in his possession, for the mountain which one has climbed is a bank in which one deposits the currency of memories which no inflation can diminish nor destroy."

It was one of those perfect days when the vast circumference of earth marches with a sky whose distances are unveiled even by the silver dust of unco-ordinated mist. The ground swell of the Jura melted into trembling margins of translucent and infinite blue. There is a timeless quality in such views which helps me to understand something which otherwise I could never hope to comprehend, the possibility of eternal happiness in a timeless and unchanging state. But the serene loveliness of this foretaste and preparation for the beatific vision would have meant far less to me had it not been for the foil of earlier memories, the passion and tumult of the angry dawn from the Meiten ridge, and the ordeal of the storm-tormented rocks."

Other chapters deal with the international aspect of mountain climbing and winter sport and many will be happy to observe how, in those fields, our country holds a place of respect amongst the council of the great, thanks not only to the geographical configuration of the land, but also to the stamina and fair-mindedness inherent in her people. Arnold Lunn could not have paid a greater tribute to his foster country than by telling us of the stout-heartedness of the Swiss Colony in Chile and in particular of his days spent with Elsa and Otto Pfenniger of Santiago.

There are few of us who, like the author, do not feel within their hearts the longing for the day when they will see once more — "beyond the blue dominion of the lake and beyond the green surge of sentinel hills, uncrested with snow, the power and glory of the immutable and undiminished heights."

E.M.
"Mountain Jubilee" (E. & S. 15/-).

UNIONE TICINESE THÉ DANSANT,
at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1,
on Sunday, October 31st, 1943.

One of the popular slogans at the present moment is, "Let the people sing!", and why not? Even the most optimistic people, at one time or other, need a little cheering up, it does one good to forget, if only for a few fleeting moments, the war which so deeply affects our daily life.

The Unione Ticinese, went one step further, they decided that an equally good slogan is, "Let the people dance!", and I say again, why not?, it is as good a tonic as singing. —

About 350 members and friends attended the "Thé Dansant" at the Dorchester Hotel, and a very jolly affair it was.

It is more than four years ago since I had the pleasure to attend a social function of our Ticinese, and when the Editor of the Swiss Observer, who unfortunately is indisposed at the moment, asked me to take his place, I willingly consented. I did so with the knowledge that I should not only spend a few enjoyable hours, but that I would again meet many old friends, who, during my former editorship of this paper, always extended to me their unstinted help and useful collaboration.

Our compatriots from the sunny South have the happy knack of making one feel at home; they are a united family deeply imbued with a sincere love for their beautiful canton and their country.

Some time ago, they decided to form a Ladies section, under the Presidency of that grand old Lady,

Mrs. G. Lunghi, and this "Thé Dansant" was principally arranged in honour of this section, as a reward for their splendid work on behalf of Swiss and English charities.

Punctual to the minute, Mr. C. Berti, who acted throughout the programme as Master of Ceremony, opened the official part with a short address, welcoming the company, and wishing them an enjoyable afternoon.

The Unione Ticinese could not have engaged a livelier band than the Spitfire Radio Band who did their best to entice young and old on to the dance floor. For those whose "Dancing Days" are over a varied programme was introduced, and executed by members, both of the band and the Society. A very good tea was supplied by the Dorchester Hotel, which was much enjoyed.

To give the band a well deserved rest, Messrs. Häusermann and C. Rossier from the Swiss Accordion Club, played a number of Swiss dances, amongst them some, which would now be called "hurricane waltzes", the latter soon fetched many couples on to the floor, and even made your reporter "twist and turn" like a young one. The applause with which each item was greeted must have been highly satisfactory to the performers.

Mr. Carlo Meschini, Honorary Vice-President of the Unione Ticinese gave a short address thanking the Committee for the work they have done in arranging this splendid gathering, not forgetting Mr. A. Bon for having put the ballroom of the Dorchester Hotel at their disposal. He reviewed the history of the Society, its aims and its achievements since the foundation in 1864. He paid a warm tribute to the work done by the Ladies under the leadership of Mrs. G. Lunghi, mentioning the help which his late father, Mr. Arturo Meschini, had given to the Society for many years. Mr. Meschini's speech was much appreciated and deservedly applauded.

I might recall here that the Unione Ticinese has given more than one proof of their generosity towards our less fortunate compatriots, they certainly have lived up to their Motto inscribed on their banner: "Uno per Tutti, Tutti per Uno." Well do I remember the occasion some years ago, when the then popular President, W. Notari, presented a cheque of £1,000 to the Swiss Benevolent Society, thus giving the Colony a splendid example of their useful and helpful collaboration.

A very touching ceremony then took place in honour of Mr. and Mrs. G. Lunghi, who recently celebrated their golden wedding day anniversary.

Mrs. C. Berti, addressed the following words to the wedding couple:

Mi è stato conferito il privilegio di indirizzarvi queste poche ma sincere parole a nome delle due sezioni della nostra Unione Ticinese.

Potrei parlare a lungo se volessi elencare in dettaglio i molti servizi resi dalla Signora Lunghi alla comunità Ticinese per ben mezzo secolo di indefaticabile attività. Ma questi sono ben conosciuti da tutti. Mi limiterò perciò nell'osservare che l'esempio ci ha portato e une che nessun Ticinese potrà dimenticare.

Essere moglie per ben 50 anni, madre di numerosa famiglia è compito potentoso in sè, se adempito con l'affetto e abnegazione della Signora Lunghi, pure ha mai mancato di trovare e tuttora

continua a trovare tempo per i suoi compaesani tanto in patria che nella Grande Bretagna. Abbiamo di che esserne grati.

Vi preghiamo cari Signori Lunghi accettare questo piccolo ricordo in segno della nostra ammirazione e gratitudine. Auguriamo a voi continuata felicità e lunga vita.

presenting them with a very handsome silver tea set inscribed as follows :

*Agli Sposi G. Lunghi
in ricordo
50mo Anniversario Vostre Nozze
Ticinesi Londra presentano
1893-1943
AD MULTOS ANNOS.*

Mrs. Lunghi greatly touched by this token of appreciation and friendship thanked the members of the Society in a few befitting words.

A cabaret by the Band aided by three dancing girls then followed, their scanty attire made one realise how difficult the clothing position has become. An act entitled "East goes West" by members of the band caused much amusement.

That the Unione Ticinese has a number of talented members was proved by the performance of Miss Bass who played on the violin with piano accompaniment by Mrs. Hollyman an "Allegro" by Fiocco, "Canzonetta" by d'Amorosio and Tartini's "Presto" with great feeling.

Miss C. Polti, who appeared on the platform garbed in the becoming costume of the canton Ticino, recited two poems in Ticinese dialect which evoked peals of laughter.

The *bel canto* was introduced by Madame Papacini, soprano, who sang three songs, amongst them Toselli's "Serenata" and "Ave Maria" from Gounod. Madame Papacini is the possessor of a very pleasing voice and her contribution to the programme was an enjoyable one.

To wind up the entertainment part, Mr. Tommy Duggan, the well-known B.B.C. entertainer, kept the company in shrieks of laughter.

Dancing then went on again, several spot prizes were awarded, and a raffle took place with such welcome gifts as bottles of Whiskey and Gin, Fountain pen, etc., etc.

Shortly before the end of this successful party, the young and vivacious President of the Society, Mr. C. Farrari, made a happy little speech in which he thanked all and sundry for their help in making this "Thé Dansant" such a pleasant affair.

Thus ended a very successful and entertaining afternoon, and the smiling faces of the pretty Ladies must have proved to the organisers that their labours were not in vain. I take this opportunity of thanking the Unione Ticinese, and especially Mr. Gambazzi, Hon. Vice-President of the Society, who looked so well after me, for the opportunity they have given me, to be in their midst, and to renew old friendships which will ever be treasured.

ST.

OUR NEXT ISSUE.

On account of the holidays and possible delay in postal deliveries we shall publish our next issue before the last Friday in the month, i.e., on December 23rd.