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## UNIONE TICINESE.

## Tea Dance.

Exactly sixteen hours after I had left the Dorchester Hotel, having been the guest of the "Vaudois" at their 150th Independence anniversary, I was back at the "Orchyd" rooms, this time to be *ospite* of the Unione Ticinese at their Tea Dance in aid of their Benevolent Fund.

The Ticinese are practical people; whilst other Societies, whenever they wish to collect money for some charitable purpose, send out circulars, which very few ever read, or send somebody round to relate a tale of woe, the Ticinese simply ask their members and friends to take part in a "hop" during which they painlessly extract a few shillings from each pocket without making the giver feel uncomfortable, and curiously enough nearly 600 people flock to these entertainments to be relieved of their money.

It is a marvellous idea, and I would recommend some of our other Swiss Societies to imitate our brethren from the sunny Ticino, but to make it a "paying" proposition, they should endeavour to get a similar attendance, not a mere hundred or two.

What is the secret of the success which accompanies every function of the Ticinese? I will tell you: firstly they have an unbounded spirit of joviality, there is no stiffness about them, they give themselves without restraint and get a kick out of simple things, secondly: they have a deep rooted attachment to their native land, and a sense of responsibility towards their own Society. No slackers are tolerated, everyone has to pull their weight.

Five-hundred and seventy-five people to be exact attended last Sunday's function, which started, as announced, punctually at 4 p.m. On the fourth stroke of four, the Harry Vardon band called the dancers on to the floor, they did so in a lively manner, a little bit too noisily for my liking, but *chacun a son goût*.

My style of dancing being somewhat old fashioned I had some difficulty in "getting going;" some of the steps being beyond my reach, but by "sitting out" I had the pleasure of watching our young Ticinese ladies, and what a jolly lot they are and how pretty they looked; were I still "unattached" I am afraid I should have been "caught," but I must not get frivolous and must confine myself to reporting what actually took place.

Shortly after a very good tea had been served, it was announced that the Cabaret would start, and on

to the platform came "Julio" a boy accordionist who played very cleverly a number of enticing tunes on his instrument. He was followed by Jack Crosby, a cartoonist, who ended up his amusing performance by sketching the portrait of the President of the Unione Ticinese, which turned out to be a very good likeness, and I hope Mr. Berti will hang this portrait near his bed-side, reminding him each morning of what a fine looking fellow he really is.

And then we were taken into the realm of *bel canto* by Madame Giaconda Papacini, who for many years has embellished the social functions of the Unione Ticinese by her fine singing. She rendered, to begin with, an Aria from Cavalleria Rusticana, followed by an Irish Lullaby and ended up with Toselli's well-known "Serenata," an enjoyable and creditable performance.

Doran and Duval, acrobatic ball-room dancers, did some hair-raising stunts which, after having partaken of some stimulants generously supplied by the Society, I tried to imitate, but I am sorry to say, without much success.

The pianist, Leslie James, showed the audience how different people would play Rubinstein's Melody in F, a most amusing entertainment.

Then came the *clou* of the programme; the Corale of the Unione Ticinese, dressed in their picturesque national costumes appeared on the platform, and sang very lustily those seductive tunes which we all have heard, at one time or other, when visiting our beautiful little canton Ticino. They brought back to me treasured memories of my last year's holiday on the shores of the lovely Lago Maggiore.

Mr. Valchera, the vivacious conductor of this little mixed choir is to be heartily congratulated on his achievements; it was a fine performance which richly deserved the thunderous applause which was accorded.

A Swiss affair without a speech is unthinkable, and therefore, Mr. Berti, the ever young President of the London Ticinese, climbed on to the platform to greet the official guests and the large gathering. His address was "short and sweet" and ended up with expressions of thanks to his co-workers, who had assured the success of this fine afternoon and evening's entertainment.

Dancing then continued until 10 p.m. when everyone left the Dorchester Hotel with the feeling of having spent a few happy hours in congenial company.

Grazia mille tante, cari Ticinese!

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