

Editor's post-bag

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inscribed painting and a silver cup, which he handed over to the President for safekeeping, but before doing so, he invited the members, who were present at that occasion, to come forward and drink from the "loving cup".

The room was then cleared ready for dancing, the music for which being provided by some of the members of Mr. Gandon's Accordeon Group under his able direction.

The Programme of the 2nd part of the evening was no less enjoyable than that of the first. The Choir sang further songs, with great *eclat* and spirit, no doubt, due in no small measure to the excellent vintages of Fendant, Clos du Mont, Neuchâtel, etc., inbibed earlier in the evening.

Mr. E. Luterbacher, "yodelled" to his heart's content, and Mr. Weiss played on his Zither, with great efficiency, melodies which recalled many a sweet memory of happy days spent in our homeland.

A cartoonist, Miss Peggy Cavell, entertained with chalk drawings of well-known personalities, for this purpose she found it necessary to dress in ballet garb and I for one, did not know whether to admire the skill of her drawings or the fine pair of legs exhibited for the benefit of the audience.

This really pleasant and very "Gemütlicher Abend" of the nightingales of our Colony, came to a close at midnight, and the memory of these all too short and happy hours, will always be remembered with pleasure and gratitude.

ST.

EDITOR'S POST-BAG.

The Editor,
"Swiss Observer",
London, E.C.2.

February 26th, 1951.

Dear Sir,

EXIT UNION HELVETIA CLUB.

It is to be regretted, that in his admirably written article, Mr. P. Lehrian, should omit datas which surely deserve to be mentioned. He passes through 50 years of history and finds no time to relate who were the founders, and the pioneers, who created the Union Helvetia Club; what sort of men were they? Well, they were just ordinary men. Clerks, Cooks, Waiters and Porters, but were possessed of an ideal and had the courage with only small financial means to make this ideal a reality. Surely first honours should go to those men, namely:—H. Wenger, J. Barati, J. Anderhub, Gretener, E. Geel, H. Brüschi, J. Hasler, E. Dubs, J. Heggli, J. Grunenfelder, C. Walther, Neuschwander and Däppen, but the moving spirit behind the whole conception, undoubtedly, was the late H. Bieder, the then General Secretary of the Union Helvetia Mother Society in Switzerland and his colleagues in the G.D. Those were also the men who prepared the ground to give the Swiss Hotel Employees, especially the Cooks, a place in the sun in the U.K. Without exaggerating things, the present Union Helvetia, which is to-day one of the most powerful and respected organisations in Switzerland, was built up round that pioneer work which originated in London.

The Club was not exactly a financial success, but these kind of Clubs very seldom are, and are, to my mind, not created for material benefit, the moral and spiritual ends far outweigh the material ends. This conception, however, was not shared by the present G.D., of the Mother Society. True to Swiss tradition, they kept to the motto "pas d'argent, pas de Suisses". Their behaviour can, however, be excused when one considers the heavy financial commitments that were at stake. It is true that the Club became, and was, very useful to the Swiss Colony up to the first world war. Unfortunately, from then on, circumstances willed it otherwise. Restrictions stopped the inflow of young Swiss and left a wide gap which had, in order to be able to carry on to be filled by other nationalities. Consequently the Club lost to some extent its pure Swiss characteristics and became more cosmopolitan.

A great effort was made to interest the Swiss Societies in the property for the purpose of creating a long overdue Swiss centre. After nearly two years of strenuous negotiations, the plan fell through, not through lack of goodwill and energy on the part of the Action Committee, but rather for lack of support from the Colony as a whole. The spirit that moved men to action 50 years ago is missing to-day, the fear of putting a heavy millstone around our necks lays like a horrible nightmare on our chests. It is a great pity, because it is doubtful whether such an opportunity comes our way again.

In conclusion, let us give thanks to the men who formed the various Committees during all these years. They did all the work and received all the kicks. Although the Club is closed, the Union Helvetia Benefit Society carries on its good work. Finally we wish to thank all our compatriots who so loyally supported us to the end.

A.B.

Fly

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