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"UNIONE TICINESE" TEA DANCE.

After a most fleeting glimpse of summer some 400 members, friends and guests were glad to repair from the fast dropping temperature to the sumptuous surroundings of the Dorchester Hotel ballroom on Sunday evening, May 16 last, for the Spring Tea Dance of the Unione Ticinese. As usual on these occasions proceedings were cordial but informal. There was, it is true, an M.C., Mr. Virgil Berti, but despite his resplendent "tails", white bow tie and composite Helveto-Ticinese badge he was the most benevolent of tyrants.

Through the absence on leave in the Home Country of the President — who sent greetings by telegram — the gathering was presided over by the Vice-President, socio benemerito Carlo Berti, but he lacked the moral support of his spouse who is at present convalescing at Guildford and to whom we send our best wishes for a speedy recovery. The Swiss Minister was represented by Mr. Guido Lepori, secretary of Legation. With a shy curtsy youthful Maureen Berti handed Madame Lepori a bouquet of blue and red flowers as the principal guests entered the ballroom.

The welcome absence of speechmaking was broken only by the Vice-President who in a short address extended greetings, excused the President's non-attendance and closed with a few words in his mother tongue so that a little group of Ticinese young ladies newly arrived from Switzerland's sunny balcony should feel at home.

Then for the cabaret. The audience were highly amused with the dance floor antics of Philip and Christine Mead, comedy dancers, who gave a demonstration of a 1954 Saturday night at the Palais, and contrasted it later in an uproariously funny manner with a 1924 version. Well-liked too, were Arthur and Linda Cornwell, Australian champion ballroom dancers who left us with the illusion that perfect dancing is quite easy really.

With some trepidation we awaited the last turn, the Corale of the Unione Ticinese. They had not performed in public for some time, and owing to defections several untried members had to be included and finally the new conductor, Mr. Louis Bruni, was making his débüt. After an uncertain start, the choir warmed to their task and gave us some excellent renderings of a few of the well-known arias. We particularly noticed some bold innovations such as two-voice singing and the background effect in the tune "Aveva gli occhi neri, neri". An enthusiastic ovation at the end told the Corale and Mr. Bruni that their pains had not been in vain, for in the all too brief space of time they carried us away to the Southern slopes of the Alps where the sun shines brightly and the sky is a deep blue.

Thereupon dancing resumed to the toe-teasing tunes of Harry Vardon's band with occasional interruptions for spot prizes and raffle draw, until 10.30 p.m. We are grateful to the organizers for a most enjoyable evening.

J.E.



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