

British ambassadress of song

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1932)**

Heft 558

PDF erstellt am: **20.09.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-693817>

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63rd "FÊTE SUISSE."

"Allüberall ist Firnelicht,
Das grosse stille Leuchten."

The meaning of these lovely lines by our celebrated national poet Conrad, Ferdinand Meyer, were vividly brought back to me, when I visited the 63rd "Fête Suisse" at the Central Hall, on June 23rd.

The gleam was written on nearly a thousand faces, — the gleam hovered over the beautifully decorated Hall; it was as if a golden breeze swept over from our beloved country, lighting up the faces and gladdening the hearts of Helvetia's children across the sea.

On entering the spacious vestibule, sweet maidens in National costumes, greeted the arrivals with a sunny smile, "can I sell you a flag?" a pretty *caudoise* enquired, and when she pinned it on to my coat, I could almost hear my heart beat, I felt that I was once again amongst my own folk, familiar sounds of our native dialects reached my ears, and forgotten were all troubles, I felt myself back home again, days of a happy childhood were remembered, days amongst the beauties of my native land came back to me, and I imagined I could hear the bells ring once more, those bells which awaken in so many of us sweet, unforgettable memories.

This is just the glory of the "Fête Suisse," it is so entirely different from any other functions in the colony, it is really and truly a big family party, where all Swiss meet, rich and poor, humble and prominent, to testify to their unswerving attachment to the land of their fathers.

The concert hall itself was wonderfully decorated, the large platform was one mass of flowers, and Mr. Scheuermeier, who was responsible for this artistic display, deserves the thanks of everyone present. In addition, huge Swiss Flags intermingled with the different cantonal flags, and the Union Jack, gave the Hall a most festive appearance, and here again, Messrs. Godfrey (E. Hungerbühler) must be heartily congratulated, both our countrymen can claim a big share in the success of the evening, they added greatly in creating the real "Stimmung."

At 7 o'clock sharp, the programme was started with the "Grand Choeur," by Salomé, huge applause greeted the fine rendering of this imposing piece of music by the clever organist, M. E. A. Seymour, F.R.C.O. Each item as it appeared on the programme was announced by our esteemed Pastor Hoffmann-de Vismé, carrying various cowbells, which were sounded on several occasions before each announcement.

After the audience had sung the Swiss Hymn, "Sur nos monts, quand le soleil" — M. Hoffmann-de Vismé offered a short prayer.

Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, the Swiss Minister, then literally "climbed" on to the platform in order to give the official blessing to this impressive gathering, he did this with a few well chosen words, finishing his address by assuring the organizers of this splendid fête, how pleased he was to be amongst his countrymen, and hoping that all those present will take home an unforgettable impression.

M. Hoffmann-de Vismé then addressed the audience, and his sincere and patriotic oration created a deep impression, he explained just why the Fête Suisse has become such a splendid institution, and what the aims were, saying that one of the principal aims was, *Pour retrouver l'esprit du Pays*.

The applause which greeted the words of our Pastor had hardly died down, when a group of little girls and boys, dressed as nurses and doctors appeared on the stage; they were the children of the Sunday school, and their acting and singing in Jaques-Daleroze's "Le Docteur," was sweet and charming.

Mme. Mina Kling played four pianoforte pieces in an exquisite manner, proving that she has a fund of poetic imagination, which was obvious from her playing of such things as Felix Swinstead's "Oh dear! What can the matter be?" and "Moods" by Raie da Costa.

Mlle. Nellie Palliser is no stranger to the colony, and her appearance was heralded with great applause. It is gratifying to see that her voice is still gaining in volume and strength, her rendering of Richard Strauss's "Zueignung" showed great feeling and delicacy, and the singing of "Dich teure Halle" from "Tannhauser" convinced me, and I feel sure, also those present that Mlle. Nellie Palliser is a very fine artiste.

An address in "Züritütsch" followed, by M. A. F. Suter, not hailing from the same canton, it would be impertinent on my part to make any comments, especially as to the "Accent."

The first part of the programme finished with two songs, rendered by a "choeur mixte" under the efficient conductorship of Mme. Weber.

Then the cow-bell was sounded again, and it was announced that an interval of an hour was to take place, in order to allow the artistes and their audience to look after their more material requirements. The "Foyer" was filled with

tables containing the most tempting delicacies, such as strawberries and cream, delicious pastries, ices, sandwiches, coffee bar, but undoubtedly the biggest attraction proved to be the "kitchen," where most appetizing hot sausages were cooked, each purchaser received his "Pärli" in a piece of paper, no knives and forks, were given nor required, clumsy as usual, I dropped about six pairs on the way to the consumers, but I wiped and polished them carefully with a clean handkerchief, and a sigh of relief left my bosom, when I was assured, that never before had they tasted such nice sausages. (If only they had known).

Once again the catering was entrusted to Mr. and Mrs. A. Schmid from the Glendower Hotel, and the organizers must be congratulated on having made such a happy choice, everything went off without a hitch; the staff was most courteous and obliging, no mean achievement, considering that they had to serve close on a thousand people within an hour's time, and some of the visitors seemed to be in a mighty hurry to stay their hunger and quench their thirst. I am glad to say that none of those impatient ones were decorated with the Bernese flag. To Mr. and Mrs. A. Schmid I would say "well done, and I feel sure that, to be exact, 952 visitors, will say "hear, hear!"

After the interval, the Swiss Institute Orchestral Society, under the able conductorship of M. E. P. Dick, royally entertained the audience with a number of popular Swiss Folk tunes, and I especially wish to thank the orchestra for this much appreciated item, everyone joined in singing, and it was to me one of the most enjoyable community singing I have ever attended. I saw many eyes wet, and when I passed on my handkerchief, (not the one with which I wiped the sausages) to one sweet maiden nearby, so that she could wipe away her tears, she violently blushed, but surely one need not be ashamed over such tears, many a tear has been shed over less deserving things. When the "Bärnermarsch" was played, my old friend Dick gave me a "wink," I could see from the swinging of his baton, how deeply he felt, as he, as well as I, hail from the "Mutzstadt," and I feel sure that they could not have played this tune better in our home town.

Then followed the "Raymond" Overture from Thomas, played by the Orchestra, which was rendered in a masterly manner, and received an applause which was well merited.

The next number on the programme was entitled "Fragments," and Mlle. Adrienne Campart, entertained the audience in a character study called "Er upstairs," which was much applauded, but also in a more serious vein, Mlle. Campart proved that she is a capital young artiste.

A number of "goodlooking" gentlemen now arrived on the stage, and when I saw M. Seymour appearing, it dawned on me that this might be the famous Swiss Choral Society, which is often known in the colony as the "Swiss Nightingales," well certainly, sing they can; I personally liked best "Am Brünnelein," which was sung with much feeling, without getting too sentimental; "Das Weisse Kreuz in roten Feld" was sung with much fervour, and really rose to a climax. The diction was excellent throughout, and Mr. Seymour must be congratulated on the results of his coaching.

Mr. R. D. Wallace is the fortunate possessor of a lyrical tenor voice, he was at his best in Schumann's Trinklied, but why oh why, choose "O sole mio," from di Capua? — Frühlingsfahrt" from Schumann was finely rendered, and I wish to congratulate Mr. Wallace especially on his remarkably fine diction.

The Swiss Gymnastic Society gave a display which was interesting, in as much as it showed the entirely new method now employed in comparison to execution 10-20 years ago. Alas, they did not always seem to agree together, but neither do they at Lausanne, and that is excuse enough.

M. Seymour then played on the organ Saint Saens famous "Marche Heroïque," and shortly before 11 o'clock the singing of the National Anthem brought the 63rd "Fête Suisse" to a close.

I noticed that many of the performing artists were presented with beautiful bouquets, which they certainly richly deserved, but thanks are especially due to the gentlemen who have organized this "Fête," and if they have perhaps not received appreciation in a more tangible way, they can rest assured, that the gratitude is inscribed in the hearts of the many, to whom they have given a few hours of never-to-be forgotten joy. The waves of patriotism ran high: — it has often been mentioned to me, that patriotism does not pay, — it might be so, but then, really, do we want to drag these most sacred feelings down to a "business proposition?" let us, and God grant us this, still cherish and treasure the feelings of love and gratitude to our country which has given us so much, in fact, given us all that is worth living for. But it must not remain a patriotism which is conveniently displayed on some festive occasion, it must be a patriotism

which is based on a deep conviction to help all those, who are now, through no fault of theirs, in dire distress.

If we live up truly and faithfully to our motto, *Un pour tous, tous pour un*, then we have proved to be worthy sons of our beloved homeland, and the darkness will be lifted and "Das stille Leuchten" will be apparent on many faces which are darkened with sorrow and despair.

This 63rd Fête Suisse has once again reminded us of our duties towards our brethren, and I hope it will bear golden fruits, this is my most fervent wish.

ST.

OBSERVATIONS OF AN OUTSIDER.

If, when at Hampton Court, you've tried the Maze and found its turnings drive you to a frenzy, do not despond, but give three loud Hoorays for Myrtle Cottage — Owner P. Godenzi.

Or, if at Richmond, when you're homeward bound you get that sinking feeling in your — well, I know that near the station will be found a special welcome from A. Jacomelli.

And that's that. I'm very sorry about it because I know that it will have given most of you a pain in the neck to read such stuff, but there you are — I felt like it, and so had to get it off my chest.

Next, please, I want to say how very grateful I am to all those kind readers who have written, wired and telephoned to inform me that the inhabitants of Switzerland call themselves — and, indeed, are called — The Swiss. It is such little acts of human kindness that bind the nations together more tightly than a hundred Conferences of Statesmen. In time, I hope to be able to write a personal letter of thanks to each of you — including the one who wrote — "Such Colossal ignorance is amazing, and I wonder that you care to make it so public."

And now turning to the latest Local News from Zurich, Berne and — but no! On second thoughts it were best to draw the veil over such a dark picture — indeed my pen refuses to write of such horrors. I cannot refrain from remarking, however, that to me these dreadful goings-on are très shocking (French for "very shocking.") But what is this I see?

Everyone is going to the SWISS RALLY at WHIPSNADE. Here, at last, is a theme worthy of the pen of a great writer. This, if I may say so, is the stuff to give them. There on a lovely Summer's afternoon you will mingle once more in its natural surroundings with the fauna of your native land. There at close quarters and in perfect safety you will see the fierce Chamois leaping from crag to crag, recalling to some of you, no doubt, the days of your youth, and to others, perhaps, that it is time you bought a new pair of gloves.

And there also you will see — but enough! you are eager to be gone. Unpack, then, your luges and skis, and burnish up your alpenstocks. Allons, mes braves, à Whipsnade.

Vaughan Owen.

BRITISH AMBASSADRESS OF SONG.

We learn that Mme. Sophie Wyss goes to Switzerland for a holiday shortly, not that it will be much of a holiday, for she is to be something of a British Ambassadors of song in her own country.

On July 13th she will sing at a Broadcast concert from Geneva, a recital of old and modern English songs. The "old" songs are quite three quarters of the programme, for the British composers of to-day, although they have achieved something of a renaissance in song, cannot compare with those of the times of Elisabeth and the Charles. She will probably also sing at Berne and Basle, but the dates are not yet fixed.

Such English as there are on holiday in the mountain stations will have the English programmes as something of a compliment, and to the Swiss public as a whole the beauty of this English music will come as something of a surprise. The programme will contain the air from Rutland Boughton's opera "The Immortal Hour."

SWISS MILITARY MISSION IN LONDON.

On the occasion of the Royal Air Force Display at Hendon, on Saturday, June 25th, the following officers of the Swiss Army, witnessed the performance from the Royal Enclosure:

Colonel Fierz, Chef du Service technique du Dept. Militaire, Lieutenant Colonel Lang, Adjoint du Service technique du Dept. Militaire, Colonel Bardet, commandant de l'Aviation militaire.

These gentlemen were accompanied by Monsieur Charles de Jenner, Councillor of Legation, and Monsieur and Madame W. A. de Botrug.

On Monday, June the 27th they also attended a Flying Display arranged by the Society of British Aircraft Constructors at Hendon.