

64th fête suisse

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64th FETE SUISSE.

*Es lebt in jeder Schweizerbrust,
Ein unennbares Schönes, ...*

That the Annual Fête Suisse, which took place last Thursday for the 64th time, at the Central Hall, Westminster, is still as popular as ever was proved by the large attendance, which I am informed reached about last year's figure, i.e., nearly a thousand of our compatriots gave themselves Rendez-vous at the spacious Central Hall. Some of the familiar faces, it is true, were missing, perhaps a heavy thunderstorm, which broke out over London, during the afternoon might have something to do with their non-appearance, I could think of no other excuse, as no other big functions have taken place lately in the Colony. (For which I am truly thankful).

Once again the imposing staircase was ornamented by a bevy of lovely Ladies, dressed in some of the becoming national costumes of our country; they carried small trays containing the various cantonal flags; they bestowed on the numerous arrivals a most bewitching smile for which no charge was made, whilst the modest sum of 3d. was asked for the flag, an amount which cannot be called excessive when one considers that these flags were of real silk. The lady who supplied me with my cantonal flag, was certainly less slow, than the little animal on my emblem, which seemed to lazily wander nowhere in particular, because on pinning same on my imposing front, she nearly pierced my warm beating heart, I wonder whether she is a reader of the *Swiss Observer*, in which case her *fury* would furnish me with a tangible explanation for her eagerness to finish me off. —

I was just greeting one of my charming Lady acquaintances, who had post-haste returned from a far distant land to be present at this popular Fête, and was still tanned by South Africa's burning sun, when a Gentleman, carrying a large cow-bell invited all and sundry to take their seats in the spacious concert Hall. On entering the latter, one could not help but notice the artistic decorations, huge Swiss flags intermingled with the different cantonal flags, as well as with the Union Jack, gave the Hall a most festive appearance, the floral decorations too were very beautiful, and I am told that our compatriots Messrs. Godfrey, (E. Hungerbühler) and Mr. J. Scheuermeier, were responsible for these really delightful decorations and they, therefore can claim no mean share in the success of the evening.

M. E. A. Seymour, the popular conductor of the Swiss Choral Society, opened the programme with Bach's mighty Prelude in G. on the organ, it was truly a most appropriate piece of music to open a patriotic Fête, and his playing proved once again what a fine musician Mr. Seymour is.

After the audience had sung the "Schweizerpsalm" upstanding, Pasteur Hoffmann-de Visme offered a short prayer, to invoke the LORD'S blessing on this gathering, and on our homeland. He announced amongst great applause, that our popular Minister, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, had once again honoured the Fête Suisse by his presence, accompanied by Mme. Paravicini, and the almost riotous applause which greeted this announcement was an unmistakable proof, of how deeply grateful the members of the Swiss Colony were to see Madame Paravicini, after a long absence, once again in their midst, as her charming presence has been greatly missed.

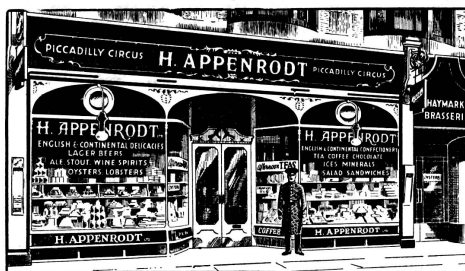
Monsieur Paravicini, on mounting the platform thanked the audience for the spontaneous reception which was accorded to him and his wife. He expressed his pleasure to be able to open again the 64th Fête Suisse, acquainting the Assembly that he has the honour to introduce three of the chief Swiss delegates to the World Economic Conference in London, namely M. Alfred Sarasin, Président du Conseil d'Administration de la Banque Nationale Suisse, Professeur Ernest Laur, Directeur de l'Union Suisse des Paysans, and M. L. Dapples, Président de la Nestlé & Anglo Swiss Condensed Milk Co. The three eminent emissaries of our country received a hearty ovation.

On behalf of the members of the delegation, Professor Laur, delivered a remarkable speech, which was finely rendered. He expressed his joy to meet in this great Metropolis not only his countrymen, but also an old school friend in the person of our Minister. "We are witnessing a mighty event in the history of the World," he exclaimed, "and the most fervent wish of our delegation is the one, to render our assistance, in the conclave of the various nations, which have assembled in London, in order to try to solve some of the tremendous problems with which the world is confronted with, so that one day once again the sun might rise on a prosperous and contented universe." He continued by saying that Switzerland could hardly expect to play "first violin" in the world's orchestra, and that accordingly the Swiss delegation has decided to speak but rarely, "we might," he said, "when occasion arises, play a few bars on the Harp, hoping that its bright and clear sounds will be a welcome addition and add to the harmony." He closed his address, which was listened to with great interest, with a wish that the "back to the land" movement might once again come to the fore, and act as a relief to the distressing economical conditions so prevalent in the big cities.

Great and well deserved applause greeted Professor Laur when he resumed his seat. — Pastor Hoffmann-de Visme, who acted throughout the concert most efficiently as announcer, declared that he would desist from addressing the gathering, as the previous speaker has said things so much better than he could have done.

The concert then continued, and on to the platform, walked a shy young Gentleman, hugging his "stradivari." Looking on the programme I saw that it was Master Toni Weil, he played Brahms' Waltz in A. Major and "Liebeslied" from Kreisler, and I wish to congratulate this young and promising artiste most heartily; both tone, technique and rendering were remarkable, and the hearty applause which was spontaneously given was richly deserved. —

He was followed by Miss Eva Cattaneo, who is no stranger to the Colony. I was delighted to see her name appear on the programme, as I have for the last two years continuously directed in the columns of the *Swiss Observer* attention to this fine artiste, and I think it is a feather in my cap that my entreaties have been successful. Miss Cattaneo, who is eminently fitted for Italian opera, gave us a fine rendering of Mimi's song from "La Bohème," and in singing Arditi's lovely "Se Saran Rose," she proved that



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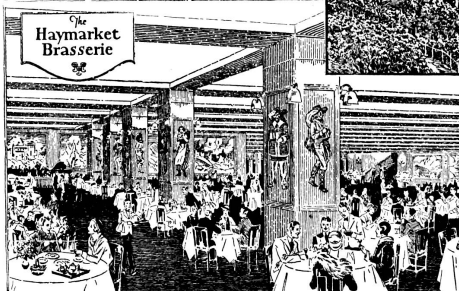
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she is an equally gifted "Lieder" singer. A large and beautiful bouquet of roses was presented to her, and only my proverbial shyness (!) prevented me from asking her for a "buttonhole."

M. Ferrari, another fine Swiss artiste, started his performance by gracefully turning round the piano "à la Pachmann." His "chansons françaises" revealed him as a true artiste, and when he sang Dalcroze's popular song "Le cœur de ma mie," he captured every single heart in the Hall. It is to be hoped that we shall hear more of this fine singer.

M. A. Gandon next carried his beautiful accordion on to the platform, he played some popular tunes, and when he started an alluring Valse tune, my legs started to get restless, and only the severe looks of my two lady companions prevented me having "a swing round" there and then. He