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UNIONE TICINESE

Diamond Jubilee Banquet and Ball

PAGANI'S, APRIL 24th, 1934

The first time it falls to my lot to report on a social function of any consequence, I find I have been unwittingly deprived of the chance of doing myself justice. If it be a congratulatory eulogy, our Minister, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, has forestalled me in masterly fashion; if it be an enthusiastic review of the Society's achievements in the first six decades of existence, the Society itself has rendered my efforts vain from the start by the publication of its own excellent account of such achievements.

Indeed, the latter was the *enfant prodige* of the evening, judging by the alluring references to it in the speeches. Due to the happy knack of its leaders for originality of initiative, I think the *Unione Ticinese* has deserved well of the "Ticinese" Colony in London in compiling and distributing among the members, friends and admirers, this attractive *Souvenir* brochure, significantly entitled, "Sessant'anni di vita ticinese a Londra." To the old it will recall events, friends and glories that have been; to the young it will reveal the accomplishments of the preceding generations of "Ticinesi," and will thus be a spur to further progress.

Hardly appropriate would it be to speculate here on the motives that induce inhabitants of the sunny dales of Ticino to migrate to the foggy banks of placid Father Thames. This has been described already, ever so thoroughly, in the same booklet, and so comprehensive the same is in fact as to include an amusing poem in "dialett ticinese," needless to say, much appreciated by your reporter.

Near to 180 guests sat down to a succulent repast (the strawberry Melba virtually sent our ladies into ecstasies), prepared and served with the skill and slickness for which the House of Pagani is justly famous, true to their Dantesque motto, "Ben faranno i Pagani." Had the Florentine "Cantore Magno" partaken of the dinner, he might have found the temptation to substitute that "bene" for an "ottimamente" — at the cost of committing a metrical indiscretion well-nigh irresistible.

At the main table with the Chairman, His Excellency the Swiss Minister, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, and the President of the *Unione Ticinese*, Mr. Willie Notari, were seated the guests of honour, Monsieur W. De Bourg, Counsellor of Legation; Messrs. H. Senn and G. Marchand, of the City Swiss Club; Mr. A. F. Suter, of the *Nouvelle Société Helvétique*; Mr. J. J. Keller, of the *Union Helvétique*, and Mrs. Keller; Messrs. A. C. Baume and Roethlisberger, of the *Fonds de Secours*; Messrs. Steinmann, Boos and Schneider, of the *Swiss Mercantile Society*; Mr. A. Martin, of the *Société de Secours Mutuels*, with Mrs. Martin; Mr. Caluori, of the *Schweizerbund*, with Mrs. Caluori; Mr. Block, of the *Swiss Gymnastic Society*, and Mr. P. F. Boehringer, of the "Swiss Observer," with Mrs. Boehringer.

After the loyal toasts to the King, the President of the Swiss Confederation and the Federal Council, proposed by the Chairman, Miss Eva Cattaneo, soprano, without whom it may well be said no "Ticinese" gathering may claim to be complete, gave a faultless rendering of that charming, yet little-known, aria, "Un bel di vedremo," of Puccini's "Madame Butterfly," and, yielding to the persistent encores, she followed on with an equally well-received English tune. Then Mr. Ferruccio Dini, bass, by way of contrast to our Homeland's world-wide reputation for winter sports, sung in Italian the "cricket song," reminiscent of the impending summer. The applause it received, however, did not bear comparison with the thunderous acclamation that earned him the charming French aria, "Parlez-moi d'Amour."

Mr. W. Notari, the Society's ever-green and popular President, had a warm reception on rising to propose the toast of the *Unione Ticinese* and The Guests, as follows:—

"Monsieur le Ministre, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I feel some embarrassment at having to rise once again, this being the fifteenth consecutive occasion, to propose the toast of the *Unione Ticinese* and The Guests. Embarrassed am I because, when I look round I see faces that have attended this fête year after year, and faces of friends who have patronised our yearly feast for well over a quarter of a century, and who should know now by heart the purport of my speech, as well as the facts it is likely to consist of. With this thought in mind, I approached a short while ago the members of

my Committee, and explained to them the difficulties under which I was labouring. I must say that they listened condescendingly to my plea, and very kindly offered to relieve me of the task by putting into print the facts that it would have been my duty to communicate to you to-night, on the celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of the *Unione Ticinese*. We are indebted to Mr. Oscar Gambazzi, who has been the Society's Secretary for twenty-five years, and also to a modest and retiring young man, Mr. Eusebio, for having compiled a very interesting record of the life of the Society since it was founded.

Monsieur le Ministre, let me say to you, that the *Unione Ticinese* is proud that you have been with us on the celebration of our Diamond Jubilee.

Monsieur le Ministre, although our impetuous and fiery Italian nature may lead us at times to cross swords with you in friendly combat, I wish to assure you of our whole-hearted collaboration and loyalty to you, to your charming spouse, Madame Paravicini, to your Diplomatic Corps, more especially to Monsieur De Bourg.

Monsieur le Ministre, on perusing this booklet, I find that you were present in 1903, when the *Unione Ticinese* celebrated the Centenary of the Independence of the Canton Ticino; you were, if I may say so, the pillar of the *Unione Ticinese* when we celebrated our Golden Jubilee, and to-night on the attainment of our Diamond Jubilee, I venture to hope that you may be present at the celebration of the Centenary of the *Unione Ticinese*.

Cordial greetings of welcome to the Presidents and the Representatives of all the Swiss Societies, and last, but not least, to Mr. Paul Boehringer, of the "Swiss Observer." I know from experience that the task of the Swiss Societies is not an easy one. Immigration restrictions and unemployment make it more and more difficult as the years go by. They perform wonders in maintaining contact among the members, keeping alive the national character and traditions, relieving the sick, the poor, the orphans and widows, and last, but not least, in maintaining and instilling in the younger generation the love for the Land of their forebears. In conclusion, I wish to pay a generous tribute to our Honorary Vice-President, Mr. Arthur Meschini, and to his mother, Madame Linda Meschini, to his spouse, Madame Caterina, and to all his family, for their ever-increasing support to the cause of the *Unione Ticinese*. The history of the Society speaks of the past fifteen years of prosperity, great accomplishments and achievements as due to the power behind the throne, wielded by the Honorary Vice-President, Mr. Arthur Meschini.

With these few words I call on you to drink to the prosperity and future of the *Unione Ticinese* and their guests.

Mr. Notari then read a telegram, just handed to him, from Federal Councillor, Dr. Giuseppe Motta, our country's Foreign Minister and four times President, himself a son of picturesque Ticino:—

"Presidente *Unione Ticinese*, Londra.

"Partecipo cerimonia commemorativa vostro Sodalizio di tutto cuore bene augurandogli. —Motta."

The Chairman directed that the following reply be despatched:—

"On. Consigliere Federale, Dr. Giuseppe Motta, Berna.

"Ticinesi di Londra grati del gentile ricordo auspicano e ringraziano Figlio eletto della terra nostra. —Paravicini, Presidente Onorario, Notari, Presidente."

After a few "Ticinese" folk-songs by Miss Cattaneo and Mr. Dini, in which many an old but steady voice joined instinctively in the refrains, His Excellency the Swiss Minister, Monsieur Paravicini, rose amid thunderous applause, which clearly indicated the keen anticipation for the refreshingly witty contributions with which Monsieur Paravicini unfailingly regales us. An accomplished master of after-dinner oratory, he had his complacent audience rocking with laughter from the very start, when he benignly reproached the President for having apologised over-modestly, quite unnecessarily, for being at the helm of the Society for fifteen consecutive years. Judging by the times he had presided over the Society's functions, he, rather than Mr. Notari, was not only a corner-stone, but a pillar-box.

The sixtieth birthday, he contended, is for everyone infallibly a landmark in the course of existence, because, in his opinion, at fifty one is proud to be able to look back on half a century without loss of strength and energy. One is then at the zenith. There is not much transition from the forties into the fifties; on the attainment of the fiftieth year, one doubtless decides to step into the next decade with the firm intention of having another ten years of good time at full speed. At sixty the case is different. One has become definitely respectable; no more fooling about, but real seriousness. One is not old, by no means, only respectable. There is another ten years left before old age creeps on, and, provided one behaved, there is still a lot to be had out of life. He, the speaker, at sixty had decided to behave. He did not know what the evening's heroine, the *Unione Ticinese*, was going to decide about her life after sixty, but from his knowledge of her, he was inclined to think she will follow his example.

For well over a generation, he had known "this very charming and fascinating creature," making her acquaintance when still in his twenties, and then, growing up together, they had from the start got on like a house on fire. In 1904 he came to her thirtieth birthday celebration. It was a farewell meeting, but he had the consolation of going to a place where he could learn her language, and while in the Eternal City his memory of her was, so he said, an encouragement to his linguistic efforts, for he had a distinct feeling that they would meet again in life. However, the fact that he was again talking English to her denoted that his linguistic experiment had failed. On her fiftieth birthday, at the Restaurant Monico, he had made his last effort to speak Italian, with a rather discouraging result. Nevertheless, by conversing in English, he found that their personal and intimate relations had not materially suffered by it. Yet, feeling that something ought to be done on such a solemn occasion about this language question, he had seen to it that a greeting in the language of Dante, in the melody of its purest sounds, came to the Society from the Legation, through the medium of one of his colleagues.

Referring his hearers to the beautifully styled account of the life of the Society, written by his old friend Gambazzi, he continued, that all who knew what "a great and good lady" the *Unione Ticinese* has at all times been. Concluding what he called a well-deserved eulogy, he presented a bouquet of white and pink carnations to Madame Caterina Meschini, as the youngest of the "young ladies of sixty" present.

The renewed burst of applause that thanked Monsieur Paravicini for his brilliant effort had hardly died down when Mr. H. Senn, President of the City Swiss Club, responded to the principal toast, as follows:—

Monsieur le Ministre, Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very proud to have the honour of responding to the toast of the guests. Who would not be, when the privilege is offered by the *Unione Ticinese* on its Diamond Jubilee, in such familiar and homely surroundings?

When your excellent President asked me to oblige, he was good enough to couple his request with the qualification that my response must be short, because he pointed out quite sincerely that he had made arrangements for to-night's gathering for more attractive features than long speech-making. Now this most agreeable request reminds me of a story. Once upon a time, two criminals were being taken to execution, and on reaching the scaffold, about to suffer their fate for their crime, one of them turned to the executioner, and said, "Do you mind if I address the lookers-on?"—"By all means," said the executioner. He then turned to his fellow prisoner and said, "Do you, Sir, mind if I made a speech?"—"Not at all, not at all, but let me hang first," replied the other.

Now this prompts me not to detain you unduly, because it would really hurt me if you had to take a similar decision. All I will say, therefore, is that, on behalf of the guests and myself, I beg to offer our heartiest thanks to your charming President, who proposed the toast, and to you gentlemen for the splendid hospitality you have shown us. I am sure I am expressing the feelings of all your guests when I tell you how greatly honoured we all feel by your invitation to-night. We have enjoyed and will enjoy very much the few hours we are privileged to spend with you, and we congratulate you on the undoubted success of this gathering. The very title of the *Unione Ticinese*, recruited from the sons of our lovely Ticino, as also their motto, "Uno per tutti, tutti per uno" — which is our national motto — stands for solidarity and friendship, and without fear of contradiction I may say that no club or society in the Swiss Colony in London enjoys greater popularity, has more faith-

ful members and better leadership. In conclusion, I call upon my fellow guests to drink a bumper to the future of the Unione Ticinese on her sixtieth birthday, and wish her many happy returns.

And now Monsieur De Bourg's pleasant little speech in the "idioma gentil, sonante e puro" (Dante):—

Signor Presidente, Signore e Signori,

Come ha ben detto l'onorevole Ministro, pare strano che ad una festa puramente ticinese, i discorsi finora siano tutti in inglese, benché gli oratori siano o ticinesi o di nome italiano.

Spetta quindi ad uno Svizzero tedesco di Solothurn, città che i compatrioti al di là del Gottardo chiamano in italiano, Soletta, l'onore di parlare a questa distinta assemblea in italiano. Mi sento stasera veramente privilegiato per due ragioni. In primo luogo, per essere stato invitato a questa festa anniversaria della Colonia Ticinese, e secondariamente per avere studiato anni fa all'università di Roma, ciò che mi pone in grado di dire due parole nella bella lingua di Dante et di Francesco Chiesa. Gli oratori che mi hanno preceduto già hanno sotto ogni aspetto illustrato l'importanza nonché l'attività di questo simpatico Circolo Ticinese e dei suoi membri. Anche il significato del sessantesimo anno di fondazione dell'Unione Ticinese è vivissimamente impresso in ognuno. Mi rimangono perciò poche parole. Tutto è già stato detto, ma sono persuaso che tutti coloro i quali conoscono il Ticino, questa gemma della Confederazione Elvetica, risentiranno questa sera la lontananza di quel pezzo di paradiso in terra, all'ora attuale in pieno risveglio primaverile. Anche per noi altri Svizzeri, tedeschi e francesi, il Ticino, con la sua lingua esercita un'attrazione irresistibile e siamo altamente fieri dei ticinesi, della loro cultura così come del loro aiuto tanto nella vita artistica quanto nella vita economica, industriale e politica.

Sapendo che tutti aspettano con impazienza la seconda parte della festa devo terminare. Lo considero però mio dovere di porre le mie vive congratulazioni all'Unione Ticinese, compiente oggi sessant'anni di esistenza, che tanto si è occupata durante questo periodo di tempo del benessere dei Ticinesi a Londra.

Congratulo e ringrazio inoltre il Signor Presidente, i signori del Comitato dell'Unione e li prego di gradire i miei auguri più sinceri per la prosperità futura dell'Unione Ticinese e dei suoi membri. Evviva il Ticino. Evviva l'Unione Ticinese di Londra.

Mr. Oscar Gambazzi, a former secretary, who will now no doubt be known as the historian of the Unione Ticinese, was next called upon to address the diners.

The task of shaping into a harmonious whole the graphical, if at times ungrammatical, accounts of the notable events in the Society's life did not lack difficulty, but he had been fortunate to find ready collaboration from a colleague on the Committee, as well as valuable expert ad-

vice from Mr. Joe Delmué, who, as head of the Archer Press, was the brains behind the successful race against time in putting the much advertised opus through the printing press. After that evening, copies can be obtained on application to members of the Executive Committee and on payment of the excessively light "fine" of one shilling, which will accrue to the Fonds de Secours, on whose behalf Mr. Gambazzi made a moving appeal. Alluding to the fact that he had served under twelve of the twenty-one Presidents of the Unione Ticinese, he paid a generous, and I may add thoroughly deserved, tribute, to Mr. Willie Notari, under whose inspiring leadership the Society had prospered in the last fifteen years as never before in its history. He was happy to greet Mr. Alpino Bolla, one of the three former Presidents present, who had steered the ship through impetuous weather; Mr. Arthur Meschini, also a former President, and Mr. H. Jemini, the son of one of the founders and first trustees of the Society.

Mr. Meschini was in his happiest vein when winding up the evening's bout of eloquence. His mention of the fact that Monsieur Paravicini was "the most popular diplomat at the Court of St. James's," evoked spontaneous and enthusiastic approval, as also his description of Mr. Notari as "the President who has been in office the longest and has worked the hardest," and who, he ventured to hope, will in due course celebrate his silver jubilee as President.

Notwithstanding the special character of the occasion, stark austerity was conspicuous by its absence. It was as delightful, and at the same time as informal, an evening as one could have wished for; it kept intact that atmosphere of familiarity which is the keynote of all the Unione Ticinese functions; yet it was not devoid of brilliance.

The quiet performing by Mr. Gino Berni's Lazzaroni band of classical Italian pieces during the dinner, and of toe-teasing tunes during the dance; Miss Cattaneo's and Mr. Dini's genially warm duets, and Mr. Eric Ross's cabaret, all contributed to give the gathering an air of exclusiveness.

"Great," exclaimed my charming table companion, her slightly flushed features lit up by a most disarming smile, when I enquired after her opinion on the evening's proceedings and . . . well, need one enlarge upon such categoric appreciation?

Old and young alike enjoyed the clever numbers of Mr. Ross's clever dancers — my alert ears caught an elderly gentleman's hushed whisper of admiration when one muscular exponent of femininity was "doing the splits."

In another break of the dance, Mr. Berni's Neapolitan arias completed a commendable programme in a note of harmonious ardour.

As yet I have said nothing of the ladies; but what is there left to say, except that they were all lovely and charming in their attractive toilettes, as well as the indispensable element of the general gaiety?

The end, the fatal hour of 2 a.m., arrived all too soon, but, indeed, would all good things really be so had they no end?

Before terminating, I wish the Unione Ticinese, from the bottom of my heart, a long and happy existence of undiminished prosperity. Supposing you, kind readers, after perusing these notes, should feel magnanimously inclined towards the humble reporter, he begs he may be spared for further four decades, so that he may attend the Centenary celebration of the Unione Ticinese, if only a decrepit sexagenarian.

eusj.

Letter of M. G. Motta, Federal Councillor, to M. Notari, President of the Unione Ticinese: Preg. o signor presidente,

Le sono assai grato del telegramma da Lei indirizzatomi ieri, in unione al ministro signor Paravicini, a nome dei ticinesi di Londra. Ieri ho pure ricevuto, per posta aerea, due esemplari della pubblicazione contenente lo studio storico preparato dal sig. Gambazzi per commemorare il primo sessantennio della "Unione Ticinese." La ringrazio di cuore di questo invio. Ho dovuto ammirare la sollecitudine posta nell'inserirvi anche la lettera d'augurio da me indirizzata il 19 andante al sig. Gambazzi.

Poiché l'occasione mi è offerta, permetta ch'io rinnovi a Lei, quale presidente dell'Unione Ticinese, i migliori auguri per l'avvenire del sodalizio e per la prosperità di tutti i suoi soci, e Le rinnovi pure l'espressione della mia gratitudine per la benevolenza dimostratami.

Gradisca, signor presidente, coi miei più cordiali saluti, i sensi della mia schietta considerazione e stima.

f.to MOTTA.

ANNUAL CONCERT.

Swiss Choral Society and

Swiss Orchestral Society.

As reported in our last issue, the Annual Concert of the Swiss Choral Society is taking place on Thursday next, May the 10th, at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1.

We learn that the Societies have been fortunate enough in engaging Mademoiselle Nellie Palliser, who is no stranger to the Swiss Colony. Her beautiful voice and the charming way of rendering her songs have endeared her to no small number of concert and theatre goers.

The charge for admittance has been kept very low, and we hope that this will be a further inducement to go to Conway Hall on Thursday, the 10th of May.

Drink delicious "Ovaltine" at every meal—for Health!

THE HISTORICAL RELATIONS OF ENGLAND AND SWITZERLAND.

(Translation from a Pamphlet which appeared in the *N.Z.Z.* in March, 1919, and published in Oechsli's "History of Switzerland." — Cambridge University Press.

(Continued from Previous Number.)

In the autumn of 1814 the centre of gravity, so far as Federal affairs were concerned, was for months transferred to Vienna, so that both Capo d'Istria and Canning had to transfer their residence thither. The Five Great Powers of the Congress of Vienna set up a Swiss Committee, which named both of these statesmen as "consulting members." This Commission, which included all the wisest heads of the Congress, tried with the best intentions and absolute impartiality, to secure the lasting peace of Switzerland by regulating all territorial disputes, and would have been glad to revise the frontiers of the country, so as to assure military security in various directions. The last-named object was championed especially by the representatives of England, Russia and Prussia. A Memorial drawn up for the three Courts by Stratford Canning while still in Zurich advocated the annexation of the Valtelline, of the territories of the bishopric of Basle, and of the city of Constance to Switzerland, as well as the union of Carouge, Faucigny and Chablais with Geneva. As to the return of the Valtelline to Switzerland, all members of the Congress seemed at first to be quite agreed, save the Swiss themselves, who had neglected to come to an understanding at the right moment. The disagreement between Reinhard, the chief of the Swiss Mission in Vienna, who wished to make of the Valtelline a half-Canton of the Grisons, and the

Graubündeners themselves, who desired to include in their Canton only Chiavenna and Bormio, but were against any union with the Valtelline proper, gave Austria the opportunity of dragging out the affair. For a long time, with Russia, England had most decidedly demanded the return of the Valtelline to Switzerland. But the replacement of Castlereagh by Wellington, who, as a soldier, preferred to see this great land of passes in the strong hand of Austria rather than in the weak hand of neutral Switzerland, gave the game to the former power. Again, the Swiss Committee seemed for long to be agreed that Geneva, by the acquisition of the Pays de Gex, should be put into direction communication with Vaud, and that France should be compensated for this loss by double as big a district in the region of Porrentruy. Louis XVIII. had already given his Ambassador in Vienna, Talleyrand, full powers to carry out this exchange. But the Frenchman withdrew from this task, being disgusted by the warm interest which England displayed for Geneva. The Genevese envoys had indeed learnt from Stratford Canning that Talleyrand was secretly negotiating with Sardinia about the cession of Carouge; but they had brought this scheme to naught by invoking the aid of the Tsar Alexander to check by his protest an intrigue so dangerous for the newly-won freedom of their town. Talleyrand informed his king that the reason why he had put on the shelf this business of the exchange of Gex for Porrentruy was the clearly indicated intention of the English to strengthen their influence over Switzerland by favouring Geneva. On March 29th, 1815, Stratford Canning appeared in Zurich, with the double task of pressing, together with the other envoys, on the Diet both the acceptance of the arrangements relating to Switzerland which had been

sanctioned by the Congress, and also the adherence of Switzerland to the coalition against Napoleon, who had just returned from Elba. Canning took into account the opinion of Switzerland and its limited supply of war material, and so contented himself with the agreement of May 20th, 1815, by which Switzerland joined the "system" of the Allies without at first taking an active part in the war.

In apparent contradiction with this attempt to drive Switzerland to break with Napoleon, Canning had at the same time obtained full powers, in union with his colleagues in Zurich, to prepare the document about the permanent neutrality of Switzerland, which had been promised to it by the Congress. But the diplomatists in Zurich had not dared to draw up such a document themselves, for both the Russian and the Austrian Ministers had received from their respective Courts the order to carry out the wishes of Switzerland only when the general amnesty for the disorders of 1814-15 had been completely executed — a measure which the restored patriots of Fribourg had executed in a very cursory manner. The statesmen assembled in Paris after the victory of Waterloo neglected the matter. So Castlereagh and Capo d'Istria secretly invited the representative of Switzerland to the peace negotiations, the Genevese Pictet de Rochemont, to draft himself the aforesaid document, which then, for the sake of settling the question, Capo d'Istria put forth as his own work. So it was the pen of a Swiss which, at the request of the English and Russians, dictated to the Allies the European sanction of the principle of Swiss neutrality, which for three centuries the Swiss themselves had tried to secure.

(To be continued.)