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UNIONE TICINESE.

Not believing in unlucky numbers, this Society held its 54th Annual Banquet and Ball on the 13th inst. at the Monico Restaurant, Piccadilly Circus, and about 320 guests, members and friends, attended.

After an informal reception in the Salon Renaissance the dinner was served at 8 p.m. in the International Hall and proved, as usual, an excellent meal and a happy and bright entertainment. Monsieur Borsinger, First Secretary of Legation, took the Chair in the absence of the Swiss Minister, Monsieur Paravicini, and at the outset of the banquet Madame Arturo Meschini was presented with a bouquet of red and white carnations.

In due course the Loyal Toast and the Toast to the President of the Swiss Confederation and Switzerland were proposed by the Chairman and responded to with enthusiasm. On rising again M. Borsinger was received with hearty applause and expressed the regrets of Monsieur Paravicini at being unable to take the Chair on that occasion. He had only returned to London the day before and, finding a good deal of important work and engagements, he was unavoidably prevented from fulfilling his desire to be present. The Chairman, however, warned those present not to think that while the Minister was away those left behind at the Legation had just accumulated the work until his return. There are, however, many things which are attended to to better purpose by the Minister himself than by others.

M. Borsinger explained that he himself was no stranger to the Unione Ticinese and was pleased to have the opportunity of renewing his acquaintance on this auspicious occasion. He went on to mention that the Swiss Confederation can be compared to the human body, being made up of so many dissimilar parts, and the various cantons are fond of comparing themselves to some vital part of it. All Swiss present, he gave as his opinion, would undoubtedly agree that Ticino was the heart of Switzerland, and this might be the reason why the Ticinesi are usually so happy.

Mr. Notari, as President of the Unione Ticinese, then rose to speak, and it was quite some time before the thunderous applause abated and he could proceed. He expressed his gladness at having the honour, for the 9th year in succession, to rise to propose the principal toast of the evening. He was naturally disappointed at the inability of our esteemed Minister to attend the function, but heartily welcomed M. Borsinger, second in command at the Swiss Legation in London, in his stead.

THE SMALL 1st AUGUST BEACON.

(Conclusion).

"The Alpenrösli," not being built in the brook itself, lost half of its customers, the left-bankers could not sit any more in the same inn as the right-bankers, and it was even talked about that another inn be opened facing the "Alpenrösli" on the other side of the brook, to be called the "Edelweiss."

As the farmers could not meet any more on the beloved Rutlimeadow of the inn, so of course it was obvious that they could not agree about a common beacon, and as the road was so much in their thoughts that they could not think any more about the Fatherland, in spite of the young school-teacher's remarks that just now, by a judicious arrangement of the road and the voluntary sacrifice of individual interests for the benefit of the community, they could prove, in the most beautiful manner their love for the Fatherland.

It must be admitted to the honour of the old President of the Communal Council that he was very cross that they should not have a beacon, and to console himself he climbed up to the poor peasant, who had nothing to do with the road, and would therefore as usual light his bonfire, however small.

To his surprise, he found no arrangements for a bonfire up there of any kind, however much he looked for it, and it only showed him that even here the Fatherland was forgotten, though for a reason which perhaps could pass as a justification.

"I could not think of a bonfire," said the peasant. "Look here! You, no doubt, have heard that my wife was suddenly taken terribly ill and that the doctor said that she must be taken down to the hospital, and that very quickly but in God's name carefully, for only the knife could help her, as it was appendicitis. And so we took her down, which was no easy matter, not to speak of all the other worries."

The President nodded. Truly, someone had spoken about it, but he had forgotten it all again, what with the road in front and the road at the back and left-bankers and right-bankers and quarrels and arguments.

"And of course that has cost a tremendous lot of money," continued the peasant, "but I have her back again, only to-day have I fetched her. Yes, the money, God bless us, was a difficult matter. I have sold all I had, first of all the wood. Not a log left in the house, not one log! It must go for

The President said it was not his intention to take up valuable time with one of his fiery perorations, as they had listened to in previous years. He did not want to curtail the time for enjoyment, and would only say that "All the aims and aspirations the Unione Ticinese set out to achieve have been more than realised." In proceeding to greet and welcome the official guests he mentioned, besides M. Borsinger, also Monsieur de Bourg, M. Micheli and Signor Rezonico, of the Swiss Legation, and the representatives of the various Swiss Societies, viz.: *Secours Mutuels*, Mr. and Mrs. Campart; *Fonds de Secours*, Mr. Dupraz; *City Swiss Club*, Mr. and Mrs. Jobin; *Union Helvetia*, Mr. Borgeaud and Mr. Gallo; *Schweizerbund*, Mr. Tresch and Mr. L. Pache; *Swiss Mercantile Society*, Mr. and Mrs. R. Chappuis; *Nouvelle Société Helvétique*, Mr. Hausermann; *Swiss Choral Society*, Mr. Manzoni; *Swiss Gymnastic Society*, Mr. Block; *Swiss Rifle Association*, Mr. Krucker; *Swiss Observer*, Mr. and Mrs. Boehringer.

He also referred to our old friend Mr. Charles Benham, of the *Daily Mail*, and expressed the great pleasure of the Society that our compatriots, the brothers Monico, were this year also attending the banquet. He then addressed the special thanks of the Society to Mr. Arturo Meschini for the constant inspiration and valuable assistance he gives the Unione Ticinese, and proceeded to welcome the ladies in a few but suitable and well appreciated words.

The toast was honoured with warmth and a few moments later M. Jobin, President of the City Swiss Club rose to reply for the guests and said:

"It is with a feeling of deep gratitude that I rise to respond to the toast which has just been proposed and honoured with such enthusiasm. I am perfectly certain to speak on behalf of every one of my fellow guests when I say that the hospitality of the Unione Ticinese has become a kind of ideal amongst your sister Societies in London. From year to year one looks forward to having an opportunity of renewing one's acquaintance with you all in the radiant atmosphere of your Annual Banquet. Looking around this hall I notice the presence of so many friends of your Society who are not qualified to be members of the Unione Ticinese that my opinion is more than confirmed that your Annual Banquet is now more than ever one of the functions of the Swiss Colony in London.

After mentioning that, on being asked to speak he was specially requested to be short, he related that at a banquet in America the speeches were printed in advance and handed to the guests at the dinner in an envelope, which was promptly

once without my bonfire; I hope Mother Helvetia will not be cross with me!" And he looked at his wife happily and put his heavy, brawny arm carefully and slowly around her frail neck.

The President nodded again and said, with a sympathetic look at the wife, who was still very pale but could already smile again, that he could quite understand, and that Mother Helvetia very likely would not be cross, but that it was a pity, all the same, for in the valley it would be a coal-black 1st of August evening and he had never experienced such a thing in all his seventy-five years. That this, however, could not be altered in any way he could see quite clearly. "God be with you all!"

Then came the evening. The farmers in the valley below were in a peculiar mood, they had a bad conscience, whether they admitted it or not; it was a shame all the same. One after the other strolled about on the old stony way, here and there, none knew why and wherefore, each with an uncertain hope that somewhere or other a spark would light up, to save the honour of the valley, however fruitless this hope was after the report from the President. For the first time for a long while the road was forgotten.

Already here and there far out over the land a fire began to flare up and each one that started gave the farmers a fright in their hearts and they already thought of hiding themselves and pulling their nightcaps over their ears, so that one could see, how much they were ashamed of themselves, when the miracle occurred. The dear, accustomed little bonfire up on the rock flamed up! Yes, it seems to be quite large, larger than ever before! How this gripped the hearts of the farmers cannot be expressed.

They stared, and wondered, and unconsciously took off their old felt hats, stood close together, without noticing it, the left-bankers and the right-bankers, and looked and wondered even more, and then began to march, the left and right-bankers all mixed up, towards the bonfire, without anyone having given directions or a command.

So with their heavy tread they arrived at the beacon, which was nearly burnt down, and found the poor peasant, his wife and his boys all holding each other's hands. The President blew his nose, which he always did when he had something to say of importance; he said that they all would like to thank the peasant, for with his beacon he had given the Fatherland a sign that they were still alive and were still Swiss in spite of the 'damned road.' They were, however, still wondering where he so suddenly found such a lot of wood. Yes, that is what they were wondering...

pocketed without being opened. The originator of the idea, the speaker said, had certainly never attended a banquet of the Unione Ticinese where the Presidential address was delivered by a *Notari*.

Mr. Jobin then proposed the health, prosperity and happiness of the Unione Ticinese, and the toast was responded to enthusiastically.

Mr. Meschini, on being requested to address a few words to the gathering, was received with loud cheers, but said he consented with reluctance as he did not want to curtail the time for enjoyment nor his speech to be like the proverbial bad cigar after a good dinner. He thanked the people who so readily answered the personal appeal he made on that annual occasion, and congratulated the brothers Monico, sitting at the next table, for the splendid way in which they were treating the Society and for the fine banquet provided. He added also a vote of thanks to Mr. Notari, President, for the good work he is doing on behalf of the Unione Ticinese, hoping that he will remain at the helm for many more years to come. Needless to say, this drew thunderous applause from all present.

Before adjourning for the dance, Mr. Notari expressed deep regret that Mr. O. Gambazzi, for over 30 years our Secretary, had this time been prevented by illness from attending the banquet, but hoped he would make a speedy and complete recovery. He read out the following exchange of telegrams:—

To *Notari*, *Monico Restaurant*:

"Greatly regret forced absence from this evening festival. With you in thoughts I send patriotic greetings; sincere wishes for renewed success.—*Gambazzi*."

To *Oscar Gambazzi*, *St. George's Road*:

"Riuniti celebrazione 54mo anniversario mandiamo plauso sincero apprezzamento fervidi auguri pronta perfetta guarigione. Fraternali patriottici saluti.—*Notari*."

also a telephoned message from Madame Linda Meschini, as follows:

"Madame Meschini is very touched by the compliment paid here by the Unione Ticinese. She wishes all guests assembled a very happy evening."

and a telegram from Madame Reggiori, of the Committee of one of the hospitals to which the Society contributes in the Ticino, in the following words:

"Comitato Bleniese bambini gracili riconoscente alla benefica società brinda vostra prosperità.—*Reggiori*."

The peasant stood there, his arms hanging somewhat helplessly at his sides, and he did not open his mouth, but looked at his wife. Only after she encouragingly smiled at him, did he take courage and say: "Yes, I do believe that you are wondering about it, and I am wondering, too, and a remarkable thing it is, that it has come to it—the bonfire I mean." He scratched his head. "But it is the boys' fault, the thundering boys, which now do as if they could not count up to five. It worried me what the President said, that we should not have a bonfire, and I said to the boys that I did not feel comfortable for the people out in the land would think that we had become unfaithful to the union. That I said to the boys and they said nothing, the rascals, only looked funny like, and then they began to whisper to each other and eventually the fourteen-year-old one opened his mouth and said—yes, but you must not laugh at me!—that we had sufficient wood to light a bonfire. 'What sort of wood,' I asked. 'Well, that which we sleep on,' he said, 'we can sleep on the floor.' Now you understand what the rascals meant? The boards of the bed they meant, on which lies the leafsack and the boards which are round about it. I did not at first know if I should laugh or be cross, but then I thought of Mother Helvetia, and then I felt so that I said to the wife: 'Perhaps we also could lay the leafsack on the floor?' And she nodded—yes, nodded and nodded again. Then the boys cheered and we started with saws and axe, and I swear I have not a single board left in the back room." He stood there contentedly and smiled.

The others were quiet. Then the President went up to the poor peasant and shook him by the hand. And after that he shook the wife's and the boys', even the little one's. And all the others did the same as he did.

How after that they all sat together in the "Alpenrösli," the left-bankers and the right-bankers, elbow to elbow until the early morning, is a story by itself. It begins, to cut it short, with the farmers from the valley going up to the rock again the following morning, accompanied by their women, boys and girls, each and all with a board, some small, some large, just as it came (even hardwood was not missing) the happiest procession one can think of.

And it ended that the farmers from above, seeing their valley and their brook and their homesteads, could unanimously agree upon the planning of the new road, for if one of them could offer up even his bed, the others wanted to show that they were not carved of worse wood when it was a matter of the real union and for the good of dear Helvetia and a question of patriotic fire.