

Unione Ticinese : Tea Dance

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UNIONE TICINESE. TEA DANCE.

Early this year when considering holiday plans for Switzerland, it was a "toss up" whether I should again go to the sunny south where in the past I had spent vacations either at lovely Ascona or Lugano, or whether once again the mountain parts of our country should provide me with a much needed rest.

This time the "mountains" won, but as a small recompensation for missing the canton of Ticino, I had the pleasure of being once more in the midst of our Ticinesi, on the occasion of their Tea Dance on Sunday, October 2nd at the Dorchester Hotel.

These periodical Tea Dances are by now a regular feature in the Colony, enjoying great popularity, the attendance usually numbering between 500 and 600 visitors.

On numerous occasions I have reported these gatherings of our brethren from the sunny south in these columns, and so as not to repeat myself, I will this time only mention one or two features.

Apart from dancing, which is the main object, there are usually speeches, and a few cabaret turns.

Shortly before tea was served, Mr. Peter Jacomelli, the young and vivacious President of the Unione Ticinese, extended a cordial welcome to the company, and to the following guests: Monsieur Armin Daeniker, the Swiss Minister, M. and Mme. A. Albertini, of the Swiss Legation, Mr. and Mrs. F. Streit, Mr. and Mrs. A. Gandon, and Mr. A. Stauffer, Editor of the "Swiss Observer".

He was followed by Monsieur A. Albertini, who spoke in Italian. He said:

"I am extremely happy to have once again the opportunity of addressing one of the gatherings of the Unione Ticinese, which are always honoured too by the presence of many friends and sympathisers. Yet, I am sorry to be interrupting the dance, just to bow to the tradition of the official speech, which unfortunately is everywhere obstinately upheld. In circumstances such as these, and in an atmosphere so full of liveliness and gaiety, an official speech seemed to me rather out of place. However, the fact remains that usage must be respected and that this above all is an occasion on which we, Ticinese, can hear the Italian tongue.

It often happens that strangers, after observing Ticinesi and their manner of speech, wonder why the Tessin is Swiss. To this question one can only answer with a reply compounded of interpretation and consciousness of history, that is to say of such enduring reasons as are rooted in man and in the mind to form a way of thought and a "raison d'être". The Tessin is Swiss because, in the course of the centuries, was born in her sons a Helvetic soul. Identity of ancestry, of language or dialect is not enough to create community of feelings, safety of outlook or pride in the fatherland.

Switzerland embraces three races, four languages, a diversity of education and culture, as well as of religion. But, underlying all that, there is a moral idea, which is common to all Swiss citizens. A political nation animated by the will to remain united, Switzerland is conscious of representing one history, one right, one faith.

The Swiss spirit of the Ticinesi springs directly from this belief. It is the love of liberty, the pride in independence and in individual and collective uprightness, the respect for human dignity and for its value, which enables the humblest citizen to stand up and be heard at public meetings. It is also the love for the mountains and the instinctive taste for mountaineering; the same common taste in the practice of gymnastics, rifle shooting and singing. All that the Ticinesi have learnt through their history, from nature and through the innate inclinations of the people. And when Ticinesi leave their country to seek elsewhere the material well-being that their land, although so rich in natural beauty and in inspiration of sentimental values, cannot offer them they take away with them, as their most precious possession, their devotion and loyalty to the fatherland. These feelings of dedication and pride, blended with filial love for the dear land of Tessin, are rooted in the souls of all members of the London Unione Ticinese, in the old as in the young, in those who know the Tessin as in those who have seen it only in dreams. And it is to do homage to these sentiments, of which Switzerland is very proud, that I have accepted to interrupt your dance for a moment." (Applause.)

When the speech-making was concluded, the "Cabaret" was announced. This time, however, that term was hardly appropriate, as under cabaret I understand items such as conjuring, ballroom dancing, acrobatics, etc. The entertainment was provided by a couple of singers—soprano and tenor—who apart from rendering English songs, sang in Italian very efficiently, and a "Jodel" choir.

This latter turn was quite a surprise and a new feature, the "Corale" which always forms the main part of the entertainment, did not perform owing to the recent death of one of their members, Mr. Ernest Berti, and although their appearance was greatly missed, the reason for their absence was understandable.

By a lucky chance the organisers were able to obtain the collaboration of the "Jodlerklub Edelweiss" from Lucerne, which choir, consisting of seventeen members, happened to be on a visit to the

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Metropolis, so instead of listening to the "canzonette" of the "Corale" we were treated to songs from the other side of the St. Gotthard, and I am sure the audience for once did not begrudge the change.

Before they started to sing, Mr. Wellenreiter, who I understand is the leader of this choir, introduced in very good English — for which he hardly needed to apologise — the members and each particular item. Jodelling has by now reached a high standard, and this Lucerne choir did not disappoint us. Their singing was faultless and harmonious, and their diction remarkable. Solo Jodler was Paul Stalder, who is the possessor of a fine voice.

The "Edelweiss" club brought with them a young maiden, Fräulein Fricker, who looked very charming in her Swiss costume, she was not only "good to look at", but turned out to be an accomplished accordeon player. Especially applauded was a medley of Ticinese songs. In addition a flag thrower (Fahnenschwinger) and "Alphorn" blower performer with great efficiency.

Dancing then was resumed and lasted without interruption until past 10 o'clock when this jolly and successful Tea Dance drew to its close hugely enjoyed by all those who attended it.

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**COMMITTEE OF SWISS CATHOLICS
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We draw your attention to the 'advert.' in today's issue of the Bazaar and Sale of Work on Saturday, October 29th, at Westminster Cathedral Hall, at the side of Westminster Cathedral, commencing at 2 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Three years have elapsed since Father A. Lanfranchi has been in charge of St. Ann's Church. The work for the Parish and the Swiss Catholic Community has considerably increased and now that the Chaplain has been firmly established, the tenancy of the Church assured for many years to come, it has been found necessary to effect considerable building alterations to give the Chaplain suitable residence and room for a possible future help.

The bazaar arranged in conjunction with the Parishioners is intended to raise funds for the considerable expenses occurred, the Chaplain and Committee ask for your whole-hearted support of this function.

You can help by sending a donation in cash, suitable goods in kind for sale at the stalls, and above all by attending with your family and friends at the bazaar.

The Bazaar Committee, under the Chairmanship of Mr. A. L. Gandon, is arranging an interesting programme and there will be light refreshments at moderate prices.

Do please assist the Committee and support this function the best way you can and thus help the Chaplain to carry on the work for the Swiss Catholics in the Colony.

Chairman.

Lindt

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