

Helvetica Lodge

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HELVETICA LODGE.**Ladies' Festival,**

at the Park Lane Hotel, Piccadilly, W.1, on
Friday, April 24th.

Perhaps no Foreign Colony in this great Metropolis is as versatile as the Swiss Colony; it represents almost every activity in the different walks of life.

It is therefore hardly surprising that there also exists a Masonic Lodge, the Helvetica Lodge, which is the Swiss Lodge under the English Constitution.

Although not being a member of the Fraternity, I have had the good luck to receive an invitation to attend their Ladies' Festival on at least three occasions; this is a function to which I always look forward with great pleasure, as the hospitality of Freemasons has become almost proverbial.

This year the invitation was doubly welcome, because the Festival was presided over, by a very old and good friend of mine, Mr. Ernest Werner, who holds the high office of Master of the Lodge. —

Shortly before 7 o'clock a reception was held by the President and his charming wife, — the latter carried a beautiful bouquet of wine coloured carnations, which was previously presented to her by one of the officers of the lodge. — It was a charming picture, and one lady of my acquaintance whispered to me that they looked almost like bride and bridegroom. (What would the twins say?) —

After the reception the company sat down to dinner, at tables which were prettily decorated with red carnation and yellow daffodils.

A Ladies orchestra played some rather alluring music during the dinner, perhaps just a little too forcibly for my liking, but then one must not forget that we are living in an age of noise and hustle.

The dinner was nearly as attractive as the Ladies who sat round the tables; there was a delicious *hors d'oeuvre* followed by a fine *consommé*, the *Sole champêtre* was, as marked on the menu, really *suprême*.

A *tournefos sauté au médoo* nearly melted in one's mouth, and a *neige au kummel* allowed the revellers some breathing space. Before the second part of the menu was served, which was as excellent as the first part, the toasts to the King and to the President of the Swiss Confederation and the Federal Council, were proposed by the President, and honoured with great enthusiasm.

These toasts were followed by a great many more, amongst them, perhaps the most important one on this occasion, namely the one to the Ladies. It fell to the lot of my good friend Mr. A. C. Stahelin, to eulogize the fair sex. It has been my privilege to have heard him propose this toast at many functions in the Colony, and it seems to me that he must now hold the monopoly for this particular toast. Needless to say, that he has acquired in this special branch great efficiency, and if he could have seen the shining eyes and the blushes of the Ladies who sat in my vicinity, he would have been well satisfied with his oration which was, as it always is, excellent. He also spoke a few words, to the guests present who belong to the craft, and a very few to those guests who do not belong to it, thus making me feel a terrible "outsider," and I had to fortify myself with a substantial gulp from my glass in order to soothe my shattered nerves.

It goes without saying that compliments so lavishly bestowed on the Ladies, should find a befitting acknowledgement. Mrs. J. J. Pfandler, was delegated by her "sisters" to say "thank you very much," and she did it, as the Americans would say, "right well."

She really went out of her way, to say what a splendid set of men the masons were; and when she described the kindness, the goodness and the consideration which these wives received from their respective husbands, I nearly shed tears and felt still more of an outsider. I noticed that her husband gave her more than one grateful glance, and some of the shirt fronts of my table neighbours swelled with manly pride.

M. E. J. Colberg, a P.M. of the America Lodge in London, voiced the thanks of the guests, some of his jokes caused great hilarity and not a few blushes.

I quite forgot that all these toasts were heralded in with a little hammer; having, on previous occasions, devoted a special paragraph to this special instrument, I will not enlarge further on it. It is certainly a most useful "gadget" to keep the company awake, and even the village blacksmith could not have done it more efficiently than the three gentlemen who lustily swung the aforesaid hammer.

I was just going to reflect on the subject, "Do non-masons treat their womanfolk properly," when a mighty knock, brought me back to my senses, the deliverer of this blow, which nearly made the glasses jump, was another good friend of mine, Mr. W. Notari, who as,

predecessor to the President gave the toast to the "Worshipful Master."

Mr. Notari has the reputation in the colony of being a fine orator, which he certainly is, as an example of his great wit, I might mention, that some years ago, at a Swiss function over which he presided, he called me a "jovial monk," a name which has since stuck to me. I had some strong misgivings, whether I would ever be allowed to enter into holy matrimony, because I understand that monks usually do not do these things, still I did it, and he will have to find a new name for me.

Of course, he did not get quite so familiar with his successor, but he gave a glowing account of the Master, of his qualities and of his work, and the esteem in which he is held in the fraternity. I could substantiate every word he said about the Master, I still remember what kindness he showed to me some years ago, whilst walking with me to the Church, where I was to be married, and where he was to act as my "best man." He told me, on hearing the place of what some people foolishly call the "doom," that if I wished to do a "bunk," there was still time to do so. I did not do so, however, with the result that my partner in life was sitting next to me on Friday last.

These are things one remembers a whole life time and are a proof that the Master of the Helvetica Lodge has a great heart and an equally great understanding for his fellow creatures.

It must have been a great moment for his wife, to hear such testimonies of affection, and as a mere man, I can only hope that "she took it in," she, of course, should know best.

Amongst great applause M. Werner then rose to address the company. He modestly declined to accept the compliments which were bestowed on him, leaving it to his good Lady to judge whether they were merited, a very wise and noble thing to do. He continued his speech by saying:

"It has become a custom, to my mind, one that could usefully be dispensed with, to try and explain why Masonic Lodges are in the habit of holding Ladies nights.

The usual explanation is that we Masons arrange Ladies' Nights as a sort of recompense for the many long winter evenings during which our Ladies are deprived of our precious company; in other words that we make an annual peace offering.

I believe that even my highly esteemed predecessor stuck to this popular explanation.

Being a bachelor he naturally got away with it. But what chance do married men stand to get away with such an excuse? Who are we to presume that it means hardship to our wives to be deprived of our company?

Now whatever explanation we may try to offer, the Ladies, or at least 90 per cent of them, will probably think that we have an ulterior motif, in other words a selfish interest.

So we married men might just as well tell the truth. And telling the truth in this case means admitting, without blushing, that we have a selfish motive, that we arrange Ladies' Nights as much for our own benefit as that of the Ladies because we enjoy them. In fact it is the only opportunity, in the course of our masonic activities, when we can arrange to have the Ladies present. We are therefore very grateful that they have come in such large numbers to adorn our to-night's gathering."

Before he concluded his oration he thanked Messrs. Stahelin and Ch. Chapuis for the trouble they had taken in arranging this Festival. A large number of telegrams were then read out, and a letter from Mr. Gerig, a great friend of the Master and a former Master of the Helvetica Lodge.

This speech was the last one mentioned on the Menu, but there followed another touching ceremony, when Mr. R. Marchand, presented to Mrs. Werner a fine present on behalf of the members of the Lodge. It really shows that masons are indeed a large hearted community.

Mrs. Werner, the honoured recipient of this attention, thanked the members for their generosity in a little speech which was both short and sweet; and so that the other Ladies should not feel pangs of jealousy they too were presented with a very nice gift.

There used to be a slogan current some years ago saying: "It pays to advertise," I feel inclined to alter it as follows: It pays to be a mason-ette."

This concluded the official part, and I wish to mention how much I enjoyed the speech-making, the speeches were witty and short, two features which makes listening to after dinner orations a real pleasure.

A cabaret was provided for by the Silver Wings Cabaret, which contained a few young Ladies who were not exactly over-dressed, but why should a nice pair of legs not be shown, especially when it carries an equally pleasant

"upper story," they danced and sang, whilst a number of young men tried to make love to them. Not being versed enough in "cabaret" acts I somehow failed to see why later on these same young Ladies dressed in leopard skins should be kept in order by a man handling a whip in a most threatening manner, but I was informed that this act was supposed to feature the Ladies as wild beasts (as if they could ever be thus) and the man was the tamer.

One outstanding feature of the dancing in which the company indulged after this, was a Polonaise headed by Mr. Ch. Chapuis, and which ended by the lady partner kissing her companion. I was lucky enough to "keep company" in this with the Master's wife and if she can cook as well as she kisses then my friend has nothing to grumble at.

Revisualising the evening on my arrival at home, I was just going to remove the furniture from my drawing room to re-perform some of the dancing stunts of the Silver Wings cabaret, but my good lady positively refused to be hurled through the ether at 50 miles per hour, with the result that I went to bed to dream instead of the wonderful evening spent with the Swiss Masons.

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EVENING PROGRAMS OF THE SWISS BROADCASTING STATIONS.

MAY 3rd — MAY 9th.

BEROMUNSTER. (Principal items).

SUNDAY, May 3rd.

(Greenwich Time).

- 7 p.m. Sportresultate v. Sonntag.
- 7.30 p.m. Dialekthörspiel v. Basel.
- 9.10 p.m. Bunttes Programm v. Basel.
- MONDAY, May 4th.
- 8 p.m. Alt Italienische Klaviermusik.
- 9.10 p.m. Für die Schweizer im Ausland.
- TUESDAY, May 5th.
- 8 p.m. Konzert Radio Orchester.
- 8.30 p.m. Schweiz. Landesverteidigung Vortr. Oberst-Div. H. Frey.
- 9.40 p.m. Mailieder, Quartett Radio-Bern.
- 9.55 p.m. Altenglische Musik.
- WEDNESDAY, May 6th.
- 8.20 p.m. Orchesterkonzert (Basel).
- 9.15 p.m. Fortsetzung Orchesterkonzert.
- 10.5 p.m. Wochenrückblick f.d. Schweizer im Ausland, Dr. H. Büchi.
- THURSDAY, May 7th.
- 8.10 p.m. Vortr. über C. F. Meyer.
- 9.10 p.m. Konzert Radio-Orchester Zürich.
- FRIDAY, May 8th.
- 7.30 p.m. Uebertragung aus Wien: Genoveva.
- SATURDAY, May 9th.
- 7 p.m. Gelächte der Zürcher Kirchen.
- 7.20 p.m. Die Zukunft der Freiheit, Vortr. H. Steinhäuser.
- 10.45 p.m. Die Woche im Bundeshaus.

SOTTENS.

SUNDAY, May 3rd.

(Greenwich Time).

- 7.45 p.m. Nouvelle sportives.
- 8 p.m. Concert par l'Orchestre Radio Suisse Romande.
- 8.30 p.m. Mignon, Opera d'Ambros Thomas (Relais du Théâtre municipal).
- MONDAY, May 4th.
- 8.25 p.m. Les chefs-d'oeuvre de la littérature: Ainsi parla Zarathoustra, de Nietzsche
- 9.10 p.m. Emission pour les Suisses à l'Etranger
- TUESDAY, May 5th.
- 8.30 p.m. Une grande personnalité du monde moderne: Freud.
- 9.20 p.m. (Relais de la Salle du Conservatoire): Concert au bénéfice de l'Union pour l'Art social.
- WEDNESDAY, May 6th.
- 8.20 p.m. (Basle) Concert de la Philharmonique de Berlin, sous la direction du Dr. Furtwängler.
- THURSDAY, May 7th.
- 8 p.m. Concert par l'Estudiantina lausannoise "Choralla".
- 8.30 p.m. La Vie de Bohème de Puccini, (Relais du Théâtre Municipal.)
- FRIDAY, May 8th.
- 8.30 p.m. "Le Caveau genevois" causerie par M. P. Chaponière.
- SATURDAY, May 9th.
- 8.15 p.m. Festival Dvorak, orchestre Radio Suisse Romande.

MONTE CENERI.

SUNDAY, May 3rd.

(Greenwich Time).

- 8 p.m. UNA VELA SUL LAGO, commedia musicale in due tempi, Parole di E. Ludwig, musica di vicenzo Saputo.
- 10 p.m. Lo Sport della Domenica.
- MONDAY, May 4th.
- 9.10 p.m. EMISSIONE NAZIONALE PER GLI SVIZZERI ALL'ESTERO.
- TUESDAY, May 5th.
- 8 p.m. SERATA POPOLARE.
- 9 p.m. Canta la Corale Santa Cecilia di Lugano.
- 9.50 p.m. Concerto Bandistico.