

Our Ladies' Farewell to the Minister and Madame de torrente

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Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1955)**

Heft 1242

PDF erstellt am: **08.08.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-686860>

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OUR LADIES' FAREWELL TO THE MINISTER AND MADAME DE TORRENTE.

As the ladies were not able to attend the Dinner of the City Swiss Club, at which the Colony's illuminated farewell address was presented to the Minister, they decided at a few days notice to organise a farewell-reception of their own on Saturday, 11th, 6-7 p.m., with the support of the Anglo-Swiss Society, the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, the Swiss Mercantile Society and the Unione Ticinese. Despite the short time available the organising committee, composed of Mrs. Mariann Meier (S.M.S. and Anglo-Swiss Society), Miss Alice Gretener (N.S.H.) and Mrs. C. Berti (Unione Ticinese), achieved the fullest possible success.

The reception was held at Londonderry House in the stately library room, where a bar with refreshments and drinks had been installed for the occasion. Nearly 200 members of our Colony, both men and women, including several members of the Legation with their ladies, availed themselves of this welcome opportunity to show their attachment to the Minister and Madame de Torrenté and take leave of them personally in the intimate atmosphere of this simple gathering representative of all quarters of the Colony. It was a happy event, with the Minister and his wife moving from group to group of people to exchange a few friendly words, with old and young friends from the various societies meeting on this pleasant joint occasion.

A short official interlude opened with the presentation of a beautiful bouquet of pink roses to Madame de Torrenté by Suzannah Egli, 12 years old daughter of the president of the N.S.H. Mrs. Meier thereupon addressed the guests of honour and the company in English as chairman of the organising committee, explaining shortly how this special reception came about, how spontaneously the ladies wished to have an opportunity of personally expressing their affection to the Minister and Madame de Torrenté, how grateful they were to both of them for their devotion to the welfare of the Colony and the thousands of young Swiss girls coming to England every year, and how appreciative of Madame de Torrenté's personal interest in the latter respect especially, as also of her active participation in the collection of a Swiss contribution to the French Hospital last summer, where Swiss patients are always sure of a cordial welcome and understanding treatment. There followed a few short (really short!) addresses expressing similar sentiments each in her own language by Madame Claude Reverdin, Signora Berti, Mrs. Stuart Townend (wife of the Director of the Anglo-Swiss Society) and Miss Heidi Meier, who spoke as the youngest member of

the N.S.H. in Swiss-German. Her charmingly shy, yet faultlessly delivered compliments and adieux to the Minister and Madame de Torrenté evidently moved them particularly and received the warmest applause.

Madame de Torrenté delivered a most delightful speech in reply on behalf of her husband as well as herself, saying how much she had felt at home in our Colony, how appreciative of the cordial reception and confidence they were able to enjoy amongst us, how gladly she had joined in helping in our problems wherever she could, and how delighted she was by this special farewell party, this demonstration that the anglo-saxon concept of equality between the sexes had taken root in our Colony — may be, as she hoped, as a harbinger of more enlightenment in the home-land in this respect. It goes without saying that this spirited speech was applauded enthusiastically. The Minister added a few words of appreciation to announce the impending realisation of the Swiss Home or Hostel for girls thanks to the generosity of the Swiss Benevolent Society. An unknown gentleman present felt impelled to contribute a homily of the Minister in the fourth national language: Romantsch. Thanks to the exemplary self-discipline of the lady-speakers the official part of the function took less than a quarter of an hour, leaving plenty of time before and after for private conversation and for the Minister and Madame de Torrenté to meet everyone personally. The party lingered long after the bar had closed down, the guests of honour were amongst the last to leave. They will be much missed by all of us.

H.E.

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