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A MEMORABLE FIRST OF AUGUST CELEBRATION AT WIMBLEDON

There was quite a thrilling Swiss atmosphere in Wimbledon last Tuesday week. First of all, in a local pub, we were met by a large poster announcing the forthcoming Great Britain - Switzerland athletics match which will take place on Saturday, 12th August, at Wimbledon Park Track; then there was the figure of our national flag displayed on the door of the Town Hall, where many of our compatriots were gathering to celebrate National Day.

This particular First of August celebration will remain in the hearts of each of us a truly memorable day, thanks to Mr. Streit, president of the organizing committee, who has, so I have just learned, become a grandfather, and still has kept all the enthusiasm of his youth. Thus, the whole joyful evening was placed under the influence of youth. It was the gay, numerous youthful singing, dancing and laughing which contributed enormously to the success of our national fête.

*Vo Luzern uf Weggis zue, tra-lai-due di ral-lai-due
brucht mer weder Struempf noch Schueh, tral-lai-due a-ho
Holdi trilaudo di-ral-lai-due di-ral-ai-due
holdi trilaudo di-ral-lai-due- a-ho*

After the Opening March and the prayer led by the Rev. P. K. Wipf, the Swiss Ambassador, Monsieur Armin Daeniker, offered a patriotic address, which we are honoured to be able to reproduce integrally in this issue. Afterwards came the Rev. Joseph Scherer reading, in German, French and Italian, extracts from the Swiss Pact.

A most appropriate and evocative Swiss sound film in colour followed, tremendously appreciated by our young compatriots, who were strikingly happy, in this rather formal-looking Town Hall, to be able to admire enchanting

*Et chantons en choeur
Le pays romand
De tout notre coeur
Et tout simplement*

pictures of their cherished homeland where, that same evening, burning in unison were the traditional bonfires.

Succeeding the film was the Anglo-Continental School of English Choir, conducted by Mr. O. Lanng, singing delightful pieces by Bach and Mozart. Our young compatriots from that renowned school of Bournemouth were greatly applauded, and so later was the ever talented Mr. Albert Ferber, who gave us a remarkable piano recital composed of works by Chopin, Smetana and Chabrier.

By this time the audience had really brightened up and were full of good humour. However, the facetious Fritz Widmer contributed further to the gaiety of the evening with his sketch, "The Spoken Word", which gave us the opportunity to laugh at several typical good old European characters.

*L'inverno è passato, l'aprile non c' è più
è ritornato il maggio col canto del cucu
cucu, cucu l'aprile non c' è più
è ritornato il maggio col canto del cucu*

The Choir came back on the stage again, and their singing was soon joined by the entire audience, who, by then, were forming one unique big happy Swiss family voicing with energy the beautiful "Schweizerpsalm". The second part of the evening was spent dancing to the music of Harry Vardon's Band, and so it went on until past midnight, when our National Anthem brought to a close a most happy, enjoyable and memorable First of August celebration.

P.H.

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