

Swiss Male Choir : Gemütlicher Abend

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AMONGST THE "NIGHTINGALES" OF THE COLONY.

SWISS MALE CHOIR. GEMUETLICHER ABEND.

Within quite short intervals I have been the guest of the Swiss Rifle Association (I can't shoot), the London Swiss Philatelic Society (I don't collect stamps), and now the Swiss Male Choir (I don't sing — anymore).

Yes, I used to sing at one time, with this very same Society, which was then known under the name "Swiss Choral Society", (mischievous tongues used to call it the "Swiss Quarrel Society"), in fact I held the office of Vice-President for one year, not because I was a gifted singer, but because no one could be found to occupy this post. I do still sing occasionally, principally when shaving or when having a bath, but I must admit that nobody seems to be much impressed by my performance.

The circular which was sent by the choir, spoke of a "Gemütlicher Abend", one could have hardly chosen a better title to tempt people to come to a "Do". "Gemütlich" means "genial", and certainly the evening on the 4th of this month was genial, and I am not surprised that about 80 people gathered at 74, Charlotte Street to be "gemütlich".

Were they disappointed?, not a bit of it, quite the contrary, they hugely enjoyed themselves, forgotten were all the little and big worries, and even the atom bomb slipped their memory.

The dinner, which was an excellent one, for which the stewards of the "Schweizerbund", Mr. and Mrs. Caluori deserve credit, started soon after 7 o'clock, and whilst the temperature in the banqueting hall was not much above freezing point at the beginning, it later on, thanks to the "liquid" part of the dinner, greatly improved.

The Swiss Male Choir at their "socials" does not believe in making long speeches, so Mr. F. G. Sommer, their popular President confined himself to greeting the company and thanking them for the numerous attendance. He mentioned that the choir had invited as guests Mr. and Mrs. A. Stauffer, Editor of the "Swiss Observer", and Mr. and Mrs. A. Gandon, leader of the Swiss Accordion Group; he also welcomed the many Passive Members present, saying that without their support the finances of the Society would be in a sorry plight, not forgetting to pay a tribute to the Ladies who adorned the gathering.

The main purpose of a choir is, of course, to sing, so after coffee was served its members rendered three songs, namely "Mon Hameau", by Jaques-Dalcroze, "Wenn am Walde die Rosen blüh'n" by G. Weber, and E. Lauber's "Chant du Printemps". Rarely have I heard the choir sing better, they were really and truly in splendid form; the song "Wenn am Walde die Rosen blüh'n" was especially beautifully rendered, and the "Chant du Printemps" sung with much feeling, made us all long for better and "warmer" times to come.

Mr. E. P. Dick, the conductor of this choir, had every reason to acknowledge the applause which greeted each item with a huge smile, the performers deserved it — and so did he.

Then followed a very enjoyable monologue in broad Yorkshire dialect by the popular comedian of the choir, Mr. Anguish, who recited a skit on the signing of Magna Charta. He would, no doubt, have a big success on any Music Hall stage, should he decide to change his occupation.

Afterwards a few talky films in Technicolor depicting the Bernese Oberland were shown, which were greatly enjoyed. These films were produced by courtesy of the Swiss National Tourist Office, and therefore obviously flavoured somewhat with touristic propaganda. Having seen lately coloured films taken by amateur photographers, who can follow their own fancies, without being hampered by any propaganda schemes, I have become rather a little spoilt, but as everybody seemed to have enjoyed the performance, I will refrain from criticism.

Having listened to some yodelling in one of the films, the company clamoured for more, and our old friend, Mr. E. Luterbacher, obliged with a few items, which, as always, brought the "house down". In his short address after the dinner the President had eulogised the Ladies, by saying how pleased everyone was at seeing them present. It struck me as being somehow odd, when Mr. Luterbacher sang, that they are made of "Stroh und Huddle", not a very nice compliment, I am sure. Is this the reason why our women folk at home are deprived of the right of voting?

This finished the entertainment part of the evening, and then dancing started to the accompaniment of Mr. Gandon's accordionists. Waltzes, "Ländlers" and Polkas followed each other in bewildering succession, and although the musicians seemed well-nigh exhausted the revellers still clamoured for more. Mr. Gandon, obliging fellow as he is played on and on.

This "Gemütlicher Abend", which had been jolly and invigorating came to a close soon after midnight, and everyone departed with the happy feeling of having spent a few hours in really good and pleasant company.

Thank you "Nightingales" of the Colony!

ST.

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