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SWISS CHORAL SOCIETY.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1921.

Gentlemen,—The year under review is "number one" in the chronicles of our Society. To judge the extent of our activity, successes or failures, we cannot be guided by convenient comparisons with parallel circumstances of a preceding year or years. We can only throw the facts and result of a year's—the first year's—existence into the balance with our power of judgment and, unbiassed by their position in relation to the Society, the Committee think that the Swiss Choral Society may well be proud and satisfied with its record of achievements.

It is with the utmost pleasure that we would first allude here to the splendid comradeship that has prevailed amongst the members of our circle, drawn together almost in equal proportions from the Union Helvetia Club, Swiss Club "Schweizerbund" and Swiss Mercantile Society. It is to be mentioned that in fact this spirit, which remained untroubled from the beginning of the year to the end, often tended to make a wide circle of our members apt to forget the main purpose of our Friday gatherings, reserved exclusively for the Society's regular rehearsals and practising of songs.

Practically without recess the members in satisfactory numbers (as the attendance lists show) appeared every Friday evening alternately at the Union Helvetia Club and "Schweizerbund" for the purpose of holding practices under the direction of Mr. L. Pestou. At most of these rehearsals conductor and singers showed great efforts to teach, learn and master to perfection the songs that had been selected. Whilst on repeated occasions the majority expressed the wish that these practices should be commenced at 9.30 p.m. latest, the exception invariably became the rule, inasmuch as singing seldom began before 10 p.m., an hour which is certainly to be considered as too late. Having regard to those of the members who cannot see their way to stay much beyond 11 o'clock, the habit of beginning so late leaves insufficient time for rehearsing. Whilst certain of our friends, unfortunately, could not be present earlier, it is expedient to impress upon the succeeding administrators the necessity of beginning earlier.

The choir, as has already been remarked, on the average enjoyed a good attendance, and the membership, it is gratifying to note, has increased. We count to-day:—45 Active Members, 18 Passive Members, 11 Hon. Members.

The Committee was elected at our Constituent Assembly on the 19th November, 1920, as follows:—President, J. Manzoni; Vice-President, W. Hausermann; Secretary, F. Eggenberger; Asst. Secretary, J. Gabi; Cashier, E. Bommer; Asst. Cashier, Lüscher; 1st Storekeeper, G. B. Gerber; 2nd Storekeeper, Th. Michel; Assessor, J. Haesler.

Mr. Gabi's departure necessitated a by-election, and his post as Asst. Secretary was refilled by Mr. Buess.

Due respect is to be paid to the members of the Committee and in particular to their able President, Mr. Manzoni, for their untiring efforts, for it must be borne in mind that their year of office was the Society's first, and for that reason the number of tasks to be undertaken and of obvious difficulties to be overcome was undoubtedly greater than will be likely to occur in succeeding years. The Committee, it is true, were always able to count on the ready support of the members generally, and this co-operation is mainly responsible for the rapid development of the Society as such.

It is a pleasure to report that the Society's relationship

with several of her sister-societies in the Swiss Colony was of the most agreeable nature. That this should be the case with the three societies already referred to above is only natural. The Society has furthermore been represented through its delegate to the Nouvelle Société Helvétique Council, and has therefore through that channel become interested in the affairs of the Colony as a whole. That we have not been and are not lacking in efforts to cultivate good relations with the various Swiss societies, and in consequence to prove of useful service to the life of the Colony, is evidenced by our readiness to appear on occasions where our help is asked for, by way of contributing a song or two at any social gathering.

In support of this statement we have on record in respect of the past year:—(1) A Social Evening and Free Concert for the benefit of, and held at, the Swiss Club "Schweizerbund" on the 18th December, 1920; (2) A Social Evening on last New Year's Eve, held at the Union Helvetia Club; (3) A contribution to the programme of two songs on the occasion of a Smoking Concert of the Swiss Mercantile Society on the 18th March, 1921; (4) A contribution to the programme of two songs at the Fête Suisse, given under the auspices of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique at the King George's Hall, Y.M.C.A., on the 18th June, 1921; (5) Two numbers on the programme of the Fête Nationale Suisse, held at Steinway Hall on the 28th July, 1921.

As a social gathering exclusively for our members we would allude to the "Gemütlichen Obet" of the 11th February, 1921, which undoubtedly is still remembered by most of our members for its undisputed success.

Lastly, as the crowning feature, let us refer to the Charity Concert which we gave in quite a grand style on the 28th October, 1921, at King George's Hall, Y.M.C.A. Central. A splendid selection of songs, which were the subject of a great number of rehearsals, and a few numbers produced by private artists, but all under the direction of Mr. L. Pestou, were thoroughly enjoyed by an audience which, we regret to have to say, might well have been twice as large. The proceeds of the concert, a matter of about £30, were equally divided and presented to the French and German Hospitals.

With this we conclude our review, and would reserve to the last the expression of our heartiest thanks to our able conductor, Mr. L. Pestou, our hon. ex-president, Mr. A. Wyss, administrators, friends, active and passive members alike. We venture to hope that the achievements of the year just concluded have fully justified the generous help, sympathy and interest they all have shown, and that the young Society may reckon on their continued support. If that is assured, the choir may be confident of a rapid development and an ever-increasing success.

As to the active members, those who are primarily responsible for the pleasing picture we have been able to paint, we sincerely trust that they, likewise satisfied with last year's labour and corresponding results, will not relax their interest in the Society's welfare; that, on the contrary, they, together with their friends, will always appear in full number to cultivate song, and that they, under the inspiring influence of music and song, will continue to adhere to the principles of comradeship and live inspired by that ideal, that is to say, in harmony with the moral which the following quotation conveys:—

"Wo ist Gesang, da lasst euch ruhig nieder,
"Denn böse Menschen kennen keine Lieder."

J. MANZONI, F. EGGENBERGER,
President. Secretary.