

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

**Herausgeber:** Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

**Band:** - (1956)

**Heft:** 1270

**Rubrik:** Swiss Male Choir

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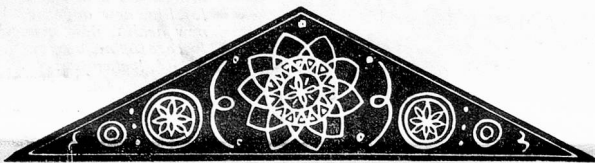
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## SWISS MALE CHOIR. "GEMUETLICHER ABEND."

For the last few weeks I have attended a number of Annual General Meetings of various Swiss Societies, where with hardly any exception, the respective Treasurers have announced small or large deficits, and much to my amazement these reports seem to have caused but little alarm, in fact on two occasions the announcement that the balance is on the "wrong side" had even been greeted with applause from those who were present at the meeting. This seems to me an extraordinary state of affairs, and I only wish I could brush away with a smile, my occasional deficits in my personal account, which often causes me sleepless nights. But to crown it all, these valiant keepers of the purse are invariably thanked for their efficient stewardship. However, one must be fair, it is, of course, not their fault that incomes of Swiss Societies dwindle year by year most alarmingly, the cause being in most cases through loss of membership for various reasons, and not counter-balanced by new influx.

Some of these meetings were, at least to me, rather depressing, and I was therefore glad of having an opportunity to attend a function in the Colony where the topic of the evening was not finances, and where throughout the proceedings a spirit of gaiety and congeniality was prominent.

The occasion was the "Gemütlicher Abend" of the Swiss Male Choir, which took place on Friday, March 9th, at the "Schweizerbund", 74, Charlotte Street, W.1.

There is a saying, "Wo man singt da lass dich ruhig nieder, böse Menschen singen keine Lieder" (Where people sing you may dwell without fear, There is no wickedness where songs you hear), this, however, is only partly true, as I have heard even wicked people sing; true enough their singing was less melodious than that heard at the "Gemütlicher Abend".

\* \* \*

About 120 members and friends gathered at 74, Charlotte Street to spend a few hours in good comradeship, forgetting the worries and cares which assail us all in these times of political and economic strife.

To foster the feeling of congeniality the participants assembled in the homely "Bündnerstube" for an aphéritif, after which they adjourned to the Dining Hall where dinner was served. The designer of the Menu cover, Mr. H. Michel, is to be congratulated for his artistic flair.

Some of our Swiss Societies engage for their dinner parties a red-coated Toastmaster, who "bellows", with the help of a nasty little hammer, out the announcements, not so the Male Choir, this task was entrusted to Mr. E. Luterbacher, one of their members, who did it extremely well.

With little respite and untiring persistence he invited the President to "take wine" with various members of the company, thus putting a heavy strain on the drinking capacities of the Chairman, who however, I am glad to say, survived the ordeal remarkably well.

After the usual Toasts to H.M. the Queen, and Switzerland, Mr. F. G. Sommer, the popular President of the Swiss Male Choir, welcomed the numerous company, including the official guests, Mr. & Mrs.

A. Stauffer, Editor of the "Swiss Observer", and Mr. & Mrs. A. Gandon, leader of the Swiss Accordeon Group, expressing special pleasure at having on this occasion the company of the ladies. He also thanked the stewards, chef and staff of the "Schweizerbund" for their efforts to satisfy the material needs of the gathering, and last but not least expressed the gratitude of the members of the choir to their painstaking conductor, Mr. E. P. Dick (Applause).

The main *raison d'être* of a choir being singing, they without further ado gathered and sang three songs, "Le vieux chalet", "La Youtse" by J. Bovet, the well-known composer and exponent of Swiss folk lore, and the lovely and always appreciated song "Mein Dörflein", by H. Ackermann, which I sincerely hope we shall hear again at the forthcoming "Fête Suisse" at Central Hall. All the songs were well rendered with perfect harmony. The Swiss Male Choir, like wine, seems to improve with age.

Mr. Anguish, a member of the choir who is an accomplished comedian, gave a monologue in broad Lancashire dialect which was much enjoyed.

No performance at a choir function would be complete without some "yodelling", this was done by Mr. E. Luterbacher, who enjoys the reputation of being the star "Yodler" of the Colony. The applause which his performance earned proved how much his hearers liked it.

The lights then were lowered, and the younger couples in the audience got closer to each other to watch the showing of films in Technicolor, depicting principally views of the Valais and the Bernese Oberland, provided by the courtesy of the Swiss National Tourist Office. These were much enjoyed, though for my part they rather savoured too much of "tourist propoganda". We have seen in the past some films taken by amateurs, making a more intimate appeal to the real beauty of our beloved country, but as the performance was loudly cheered, and obviously appreciated, I will leave it at that. At the conclusion of the show, Mr. Sommer thanked the operator, as well as the Management of the Swiss National Tourist Office for having so kindly lent these films.

When the lights were switched on again, and the young couples separated, dancing began, Mr. A. Gandon providing the music.

All to soon this entertaining and merry evening came to a close, an evening which was enjoyed by young and old. I would have liked to leave the Colony's "nightingales" on "wings of song", but instead travelled home by tube. *ST.*

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