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Choir of Nabobs

London July 5th. London music lovers have been listening recently to what may be described as the most remarkable vocal organization in the world—the "Weiner Mannergesang Verein," or Vienna male choir, which numbers a prince and a count among its members, but which is principally composed of millionaires. Brief allusions to this extraordinary choir, which recently sang before King Edward, already have been telegraphed to the United States, but of the romance of its organization, its remarkable record, and the curious character of its entertainments practically nothing has yet been said.

It is no exaggeration, however, to describe the Vienna organization as a "choir of millionaires," for among its 300 members it numbers more men of wealth than probably any other private company in the world. There are at least fifty who claim from one to ten millions in their own right. As a matter of fact, practically every member is worth not less than half a million, the majority being nearer a million than under it.

No one—no matter how much money he might command—can become attached to the Vienna Choral society unless he is a genuine musician. Each person, before being admitted to membership, must pass a right preliminary examination and undergo the most difficult musical tests. Every prospective chorister is read music at first sight, and his vocal qualities must be of the highest order.

Even when the late Herr Krupp wished to join the choir—with which he was associated for many years—his vast wealth played little part in his acceptance by the committee of selection. He had to undergo a severe examination, and his voice, which was a rich one, was tested in every possible way. Herr Krupp was one of the most enthusiastic members of the association. He always was one of the most assiduous and hard working members of the association, and it was his splendid loyalty and enthusiasm that placed the choir where it is today.

It might be thought as most of the members of the Vienna choir are millionaires, that they would run things practically to suit themselves—taking as much time off as they felt inclined to do and not working unless the spirit moved them. This is far from being the case. As a matter of fact, members when at home are most diligent in their studies and meet regular once a week, and sometimes oftener, for practice.

A position in the famous choral society is considered a great honor on the continent and several members of the Austrian parliament are among its chief singers. Others of its members move in the highest ranks of society. And yet the inner organ-

ization of the choir is a democracy in every sense of the word.

Wherever the millionaire choristers go they have the best that the earth in its fullness supplies. They invariably stop at the swellest hotels, where their entertainments are of such lavish character that, as a rule, their sumptuous arrangements attract as much attention as their musical program.

On his last visit to London Herr Krupp gave a dinner to the members of the choir at the Savoy hotel. The lower portion of the hotel was converted, for the occasion, into a Tyrolese village. Staid Londoners were astonished to see the courtyard of the building converted by clever scenic artists into mountains and valleys. On one side of the driveway rose the deep walls of a royal castle, while real Austrian peasants, imported for the purpose, served refreshments at the village inn. Priceless statues of famous composers adorned the banquet hall. These art works were lent expressly by the municipality of Vienna.

In the center of the Tyrolese village was an elaborate and beautifully decorated fountain, which, at the signal by the master of ceremonies, spouted champagne of the finest quality, drawn from 3,800 bottles. The champagne bill in America at \$5 per bottle, would have figured out at \$19,000 for this item alone. Considering that practically the entire village was imported by Herr Krupp, and the Vienna art treasures were brought over with the uttermost care by special men, the dinner could not have cost less than \$50,000.

Historically, as well as socially, the Vienna millionaire choir has a remarkable record. It was originating with Dr. August Schmidt, one of the best known musical editors and critics in Europe. Beginning with only thirty members, the choir soon attracted the attention of musicians throughout Europe, and many famous composers joined its ranks.

So high was the standard of excellence in musical attainment that the choir soon won for itself recognition from the most distinguished composers of the day. Quite a number of famous musicians have actually dedicated certain of their compositions to the Wiener Mannergesang verein. Among these are Schumann, Meyerbeer, Mendelssohn, Lisz, Wagner, Bruckner, Johann Strauss, and others. Several of these composers were honorary members of the choir.

In the course of its travels, the choir has visited Venice, Constantinople, Egypt, Paris, London, and Athens. The question of visiting America has come up before the executive committee of the choir several times, but the long journey has been postponed from time to time. It is possible however, that the next time a universal exhibition is

held in the United States the principal members of the choir will go over.

Without doubt, the Vienna male choir is the most remarkable body of musical talent in the world, presenting, as it does, the strange spectacle of hundred of moneyed men combining their divergent interests to further the art of song. In many lines of business these men are fierce antagonists, but when traveling as members of the choir and men of music all their differences are barred. In other words, harmony prevails among them, in both senses of the term. W. B. Northrup in Sunday Tribune.

Zion City Retrenches

A new economic policy was adopted by the city council of Zion City this week for the avowed purpose of cutting expenses to a minimum. Hereafter the salaries of the mayor, chief of police, city treasurer, commissioner of public works, city attorney, fire marshal, city collector, commissioner of health and city aldermen of Zion City will be \$1 a year, the city council having passed an ordinance to that effect.

Some time ago citizens presented a petition asking that several of the high-sounding offices be dispensed with as a matter of economy, but the council took this means to accomplish the same end. The actual work of a number of the officials is done by deputies or assistants, who are paid small salaries.

W. Hurd Clendenin, mayor of Zion City, is also manager of the general store. He donates his services to the city in his official capacity.

Local firemen are greatly interested in the tournament to be held at Urbana August 7th, 8th and 9th. The event this year promises to be the biggest ever held in Illinois. Urbana is spending \$2,500 for cash prizes and besides is putting on a \$3,500 carnival for the entertainment of firemen and other guests. Seven free shows have been booked and fourteen paid attractions will have place on the grounds. Every show is high class, the best that could be secured in its line. Urbana promises to give all who attend, the time of their lives, and she will make good her word.

Notice

Whereas, my Wife, Mary, has left my bed and board, this is to give public notice that I will not be responsible for any debts of her contracting nor will I receive any moneys claimed to be due her.

FRED SILVATORE.