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SUCCESSFUL BOGNOR CONCERT.

LARGE AUDIENCE AT THE QUEEN'S HALL.

BELGIAN RELIEF FUND HELPED.

Phenomenal success attended a concert held at the Queen's Hall, Bognor, on Thursday evening, in aid of the Belgian Relief Fund. The large hall was not only crowded to an uncomfortable degree, but a great many people had to be turned away owing to the lack of even standing accommodation.

The concert was provided by a choir and orchestra (under the conductorship of Mr. J. Wilson Ellis, of the "Westleigh" Studio, London Road), and several talented artistes. The organizers were disappointed in one respect, it having been intended that a young Belgian artiste, Mdlle. Richard, should appear. Owing to the death of a relative, however, Mdlle. Richard had to return to France, and left Felpham last week. In her letter to Mr. Ellis, regretting her inability to fulfil her engagement she wrote: "It is needless to say how I appreciate your efforts for the relief of my distressed compatriots, and I trust that the concert will be a great success."

And a great success it was, too. It was not only a musical treat, but from the financial point of view the result was most satisfactory, something like £20 being available after paying expenses.

The concert is to be repeated to-morrow (Thursday) evening.

The choir sang capitally. They gave the National Anthem for the opening item, and followed this with some Christmas and other choruses. The solo in "Hark! The glad Sound" was taken by Miss N. Bailey, who also took the solo part in "Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding," "O come all ye Faithful," "Soldiers of Christ arise," and "Oft in Danger," were also admirably sung, the solo in the last being taken by Mr. Muddle. The Hallelujah chorus was sung with splendid effect.

There was a delightful orchestra which accompanied the choruses and contributed greatly to the success of the programme. Mr. Wilson Ellis was an able conductor, and kept both chorus and orchestra well in hand.

The orchestra was composed of the following: Mr. R. W. Swansborough and Miss Brown, first violins; Mr. K. Tansley and Miss Carter, second violins; Mr. Smith, cornet; Mr. J. W. Hopkins, flute; Mr. C. Harwood, cello; Mr. R. Bottrill, trombone; and Miss Wright, pianist.

Songs were rendered by Miss Gertrude Samson, of Arundel, and Mdlle. A. Quinton, both of whom were well received. One of the former's successes was "Land of Hope and Glory," and she also sang "There's a Land," with great credit.

Mdlle. Quinton was loudly applauded, for, besides possessing a powerful voice, her style and expression were excellent. "Coming thro' the Rye" and Tosti's "Goodbye" were two songs she interpreted with delightful effect.

Miss N. Bailey sang very creditably, "Nearer my God to Thee" and "Angels ever bright and fair," and Mr. Molyneux Cooke's recitations, "The Dandy Fifth" and "The Day" were enthusiastically applauded.

During the evening Mr. W. H. B. Fletcher, J.P., provided "The Chairman's Remarks," and fulfilled his duty admirably. It was not the first time that he had had the opportunity of speaking about the Germans and their conduct, and in restrained and gentlemanly language, if somewhat to the point, he once again expressed himself plainly, and it is highly probable that his vigorous denunciation of the "kultured barbarians" was in a measure responsible for the liberality of the collection.

He must congratulate, he said, the promoters of the concert on such a tremendous success. He had really never seen the hall so full as he had that evening, and something like another hall full had gone away because there was no room inside. He felt sure if the promoters could see their way to repeat the concert they would be able to get the hall full again. What were the reasons for the success of the concert? One was, he thought, that it had been well advertised, and he had been asked to thank Mr. Sterk for working so hard in selling tickets, etc. The promoters wished him to express their great indebtedness to him for all he had done. (Applause.)

Continuing, the speaker said another reason for the success of the concert was he thought, the concert itself—those who had entertained them with beautiful music and songs, and he thanked them on behalf of the audience. (Applause.)

Thirdly, the success was owing to the cause for which the concert was promoted. The concert was in aid of a fund of world wide interest. He need hardly remind them it was for the Belgian Relief Fund, and probably no nation had ever in the history of the world required assistance as did the Belgian nation at the present time; probably no nation had ever had such claims on the sympathies of their allies and of all the neutrals as Belgium at the present time. (Applause.) Not only was it a great claim now, but he was afraid it would press very heavily for a long time to come. He need not remind them of the great wrong done to the Belgian nation by its invasion by hordes of Germans who he could hardly describe in any other term in spite of their "kulture" than barbarians. (Hear, hear.) They knew how homes had been destroyed, to say nothing of the Churches, Universities, and public buildings, also of those whose services were not required in the defence of the country who had been driven away to find refuge in Holland, France and our own country.

The sufferings they were undergoing led to their having a great claim upon them and those of the allies who had not undergone the horrors of invasion. It was very hard for them to realise what those horrors were, but from the pictures of results of the dropping of a few bombs on our Eastern Coast towns in the daily papers they might imagine what it must be to have been under the influence of bombs and shells and bullets and all sorts of missiles, not only for a few minutes or days, but for weeks and months, as had been the fate of some of the Belgian towns. He was afraid they had not seen the end of it yet. The war, perhaps, had only begun, and he was afraid the Belgian nation had anything but a bright time to look forward to in the future. They could not forget that at the end of the war there would be the aftermath, and he was afraid that aftermath would be second only to the war itself in the suffering and sorrow accompanying it. For some time after this the Belgian nation would require help to save their people from starvation, and they would require help after the war to enable them to rebuild their towns and to bring what was once a richly cultivated land into cultivation again. He was sure there was no people on whom there was a greater claim than the English—(applause)—and the presence of the large number of people that evening was proof that the claim was realized by the English, and would be duly honoured as time went on. (Applause.)

In announcing that the collection would then be taken on behalf of the local Branch of the Belgian Relief Fund, Mr. Fletcher mentioned that 52 Belgians were living amongst them in Bognor and the district, and said that but for the regulations which the Government had thought it necessary to enforce they would have had many more.