

(Continued from previous page.)

Mr. Crooks, after leaving the Army, sang in the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, then went over to study in Munich, under Rauehelsen, Kreisler's accompanist. He was there at a tragic time of German's history—when the mark smashed and the country, in the throes of its disastrous inflation, hung on the brink of starvation. Americans, protected by their travellers' cheques, were out of the starvation zone themselves, but the misery, far too severe for individuals to cope with, was appalling. It was in Hamburg that he made his debut, in 1927. "Tosca" was the opera, and there was never any doubt as to his success. He went straight to Berlin, to sing in "Tosca" and "Faust." He had travelled in France and Italy, learning in the latter country the whole of two Italian operas before he returned to the United States.

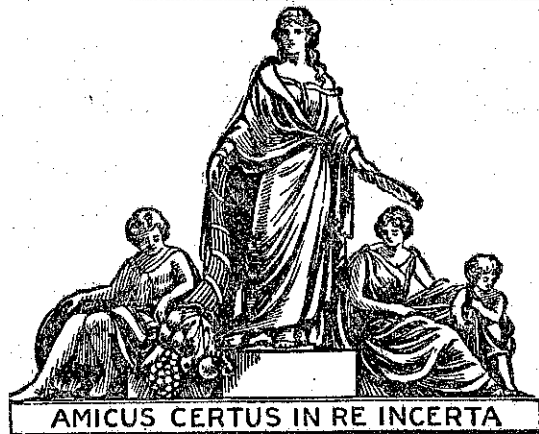
Unlike the boys in fairy tales, Richard Crooks never had to fight his way from failure to success. Before he made his debut in Hamburg; the Metropolitan Opera Company had yearly made him offers of contracts, but he very wisely refused, preferring to get experience before he tackled the great opera house where most of the singers have been from 10 to 15 years the idols of the public, and where an inexperienced newcomer feels like an amateur suddenly let loose among professionals.

"Experience" might almost be called a fetish with Richard Crooks. Unlike his friend Mr. Tibbett, he doesn't feel much inclined to bother about Hollywood and singing for the talkies. There's only one great musical talkie to date, he says—Grace Moore was the lady—and after that, every bonehead producer in Hollywood imitated story and star so closely that you couldn't walk into a musical show without feeling bored in advance. Besides, he doesn't think that singers are handsome enough. "Look at Barrymore," he said, "or Ronald Colman, in 'A Tale of Two Cities.' When I came out of that I thought, 'Gee, you'll go a long way before you get a tenor who can act like that.'"

Nevertheless, in the States, and increasingly in other countries, he thinks the future of good music and of operatic singing is brilliant. The public has been helped to a knowledge of real music by the radio. When, in America, firms like Ford and General Motors rival one another by hurling Heffetz after John Charles Thomas, Lily Pons after Tibbett (all the artists receiving very large salaries), music cannot be said to lack encouragement. Radio and screen producers who don't appreciate the value of the very best singing he regards as just dumb.

Last year Mr. and Mrs. Crooks and their two children—Patricia, aged thirteen, and Dicky—went to Russia. "I like America better," said Mr. Crooks, candidly. There is, he thinks, a new music in Russia, but no signs of new operatic form. "Traviata" in a modern setting, clothes and all, was tried in Germany last year, but flopped. "No new thing" seems also the rule in America, as far as opera is concerned. "Peter Ibbetson," Deems Taylor's opera, was the first real hit, and other Taylor operas

(Continued on page 58.)



AS announced at the Annual Meeting of Members on 1st May, the Society grows from strength to strength. Its assets and the number of members increase from day to day. Last year the number of new policies issued reached 135,200, or 433 new policies every working day.

433 New Policies every working day

Such figures indicate the public's faith in the Society's strength and in its capacity to husband and develop that strength in its members' interests. The extraordinary growth in the Society's assets is further evidence. In 1922 the Society's assets were worth £50,000,000. To-day, 14 years later, they are worth £101,869,000.

Assets now £101,869,000

At the Annual Meeting the Members approved of the Principal Board's recommendation that £5,100,000 be allotted as Reversionary Bonuses for the year, and Bonus Certificates will be issued in due course to participating policy holders.

£5,100,000 in bonus additions

Membership in the A.M.P. is open to men and women in good health. The wise citizen will ask the nearest office of the Society to send an experienced adviser to talk the matter over with him or her.

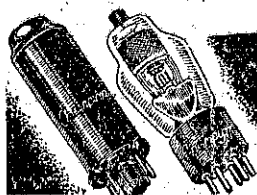
Write to-day. Even to-morrow may be too late.



Largest Mutual Life Office in the Empire

Established in Australia in 1849.

Head Office for New Zealand: Customhouse Quay, Wellington. W. T. IKIN, Manager.



Every
CHAMPION
must pass 6 gruelling factory tests before O.K.
ASK FOR CHAMPION VALVES
your dealer has them