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Max Henius

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# Independent Associations

by

Max Henius

(Translated by Rudolf Jensen)

In addition to the nationally-connected associations listed in the previous chapters, in some cities and towns where Danish-Americans live in large numbers, there are many scattered associations that have no structured national connection.

By far, the majority of these associations are for the administering of sick and burial funds, and therefore as the funds determine the nature of the benefits, they are completely based on a sound economic foundation. Almost everywhere social life consists of light comedies, dances, and walks in the woods. In addition, there are individual gymnastics clubs, and a fairly large number of singing groups, many of which are quite successful. In some of the larger towns, one can find a Danish Odd Fellows Lodge, a Masonic Lodge, a Danish Veterans organization and/or discussion clubs; some of these latter clubs are Socialist and may not be specifically Danish; and draw their members from all the Scandinavian countries.

Many associations include Danish libraries, which vary a lot in both quality and quantity. In almost all associations (also the larger organizations) there is the requirement for members to be able to speak and read Danish and for all meetings to be conducted in the Danish language. In this way the associations help to maintain the Danish language, in addition to providing for the performance of Danish comedies and the singing of Danish songs at times of celebration. It would be wrong to say that there are no exceptions. Here and there are associations, which are not satisfied with more or less empty sociability, but where public speeches, lectures, and discussions are conducted in Danish with seriousness and interest. Most significantly are youth associations, which accomplish important national Danish and popular education.

A statistical overview of the various associations with description of their goals can be found in this book's next to the last section, "Tabulated Overview."