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Music in the Home

Something For Nothing. There is a church in a modern Ontario town that pays its pianist \$1,500 a year and its organist and choir \$100 a year. Despite the fact it has reasonably good music. The organist is a young girl of some talent and the choristers like her. When the sum of appreciation in a congregation is measured by two dollars a week there is something decadent in the State of Canada. Churches and church people are too enthusiastic about securing something for nothing. The young woman above mentioned has spent much money and some of the best years of her life to become a competent musician. She has capabilities which, with proper encouragement, would make her an art leader in her community. Yet the people she serves do not realize that she is helping to civilize their children.

We in Canada do not yet understand that religion and music are co-workers both designed to elevate the standard of living. They know it in England. Take, for example, the Cathedral schools. Boys from eight to twelve years of age are admitted as pupils. Not only do they receive a thorough grounding in the ordinary educational branches of learning, but they are given a musical education. They get a singing lesson and, perhaps, a piano lesson every day. They rehearse for choir work every day. And they get a monthly salary for what they do. The City Churches in Canada provide annual appropriations from their music, but large salaries are exceptional.

Music a Language

How can music be expressive of mental moods? The question is asked often enough, particularly by persons whose knowledge of the art is rudimentary, though sometimes by persons who have had some training. It cannot be denied that some tunes have a joyous sound, and others a sad or pensive effect. Why is that the case? There are many reasons. The chief one and perhaps the one most easily understood is that every note of the scale, even when taken alone, has its own effect upon the ordinary human mind. Bugles play only the notes of the common chord, for example, in the Natural Key, they play C, E, G, and C, the four ribs of the diatonic scale. It will be found

that those "calls" which have to do with activity and ardor, such as Boots and Saddles dwell mostly upon the key-note and the Fifth tones which give the notion of decision and enthusiasm. One call, "Taps" is always considered as mournful and even sad. Yet the average person does not know the cause for its effect upon his mind. If the "Taps" Call is examined, we shall find that it dwells insistently upon the third of the scale. No one can explain the psychological cause for the impression that the third tone makes. It is one of the mysteries—like the souring of milk in a thunderstorm. Perhaps there is no more lugubrious Gospel Song than "Where is My Wandering Boy To-night." It has come to be considered as the last word in religious "sob-stuff," and many people have been afflicted with the shudders by its performance. Look at the first line, as expressed by the convenient Tonic-sol-fa symbol:

MI. MI. MI. Fa—MI. MI.—fa Do. Out of eight notes, five are the Third of the Scale.

To a truly musical ear, not only does each note of the scale convey its own impression, but all the varied almost infinite chords and discords are specifically expressional in their sound. Add to this the variations of time and rhythm as expressional agents, and it should appear immediately to the non-musical intelligence that music is a language a universal means of stimulating the mind to thought.

A Blunt Man's Protest.

"Now I'm just a plain blunt man" said a gentleman to the writer on the street car the other day, "and maybe I wouldn't be considered a fit subject to express my views on musical subjects. But just the same, I enjoy good music, have lots of it in my home, and there's one thing I am a crank on, that is clear enunciation.

"My wife told me off to a recital one evening. It was given by the pupils of X—, the vocal teacher. The technique, rhythm, and accentuation and all that sort of it were I suppose hunky-dory, but out of the ten singers there was only one whose enunciation was worth the snap of your finger. Perhaps I expect too much but if I cannot follow the words reasonably well, a song only analyses about fifty per cent. pure to me.

"Perhaps you had a poorly located seat, or again your hearing may not be as acute as it once was," suggested the writer.

"Oh," he replied, "you cannot fasten the blame on me that way. I had as good a seat as there was in the hall and my hearing is as good as anybody's. If you don't believe me just whisper something you don't want me to hear and see. No siree, it was no fault of my ear drums, it was the singer's fault. Say, if you are not willing to take my word for it, what does Clara Butt say? She said: 'Singers should study the art of clear enunciation. English is not a difficult language it is our own. And singers who take pains in their pronunciation of the words of a song in a foreign language, are too often apt to slur English words, so that each a friend of mine once put it, his chief entertainment at a concert was trying to guess what language the singer was singing.'

Now, how could you answer an argument like that?

Our Musical Future.

It seems that last year after Melba's return to Australia from America, she made some statements on the musical stagnation of Melbourne that set some people thinking. These remarks made certain interested parties determine to study the musical situation to get at the root of the trouble. "While the sitting has been in progress," says the Australian Musical News, "the question has arisen as to whether the school children of the country are being trained correctly from a musical standpoint. That they receive certain tuition has been well known, but whether this is the best tuition possible remains to be seen. The people who go into this matter thoroughly are at a loss to understand why these children are not heard in public more frequently, why they are not used to aid in the musical education of the general public, and why they are not made to realize that they are the material from which the different musical societies and choirs of the future are to be built up.

While this question is receiving the attention of our Australian brethren, a Mr. Stetson Humphrey has been writing a series of articles in the United States on the musical training of children especially the teaching of singing to school children.

After studying the work done in more than seventy American schools, this gentleman came to the conclusion that only a fractional proportion were teaching any fundamentals whatsoever of voice production. As a result of his investigations, he considers "that nothing of practical value is given to the child, either in simplified tone production or breath control." Whilst realizing the impossibility of expecting grade teachers to be voice specialists, Mr. Humphrey insists "that they could impart a few elementary principles, which not only would be applicable to study, but would develop better tone qualities, pronunciation, and enunciation in the American speech."

Another thing which comes in for a share of criticism from Mr. Humphrey is the lack of the sense of rhythm in the school music. "Children," he says, "are taught to count, rather than to feel the pulse and swing, which would be the source of stimulation for the counting."

Against the use of the old Italian system of do, re, mi, etc., instead of the correct staff names of the notes, Mr. Humphrey wages war. He says: "This method brings the result that the written note on the staff bears no mental relation whatsoever to the syllable sung, and the note on the pianoforte keyboard. If from the



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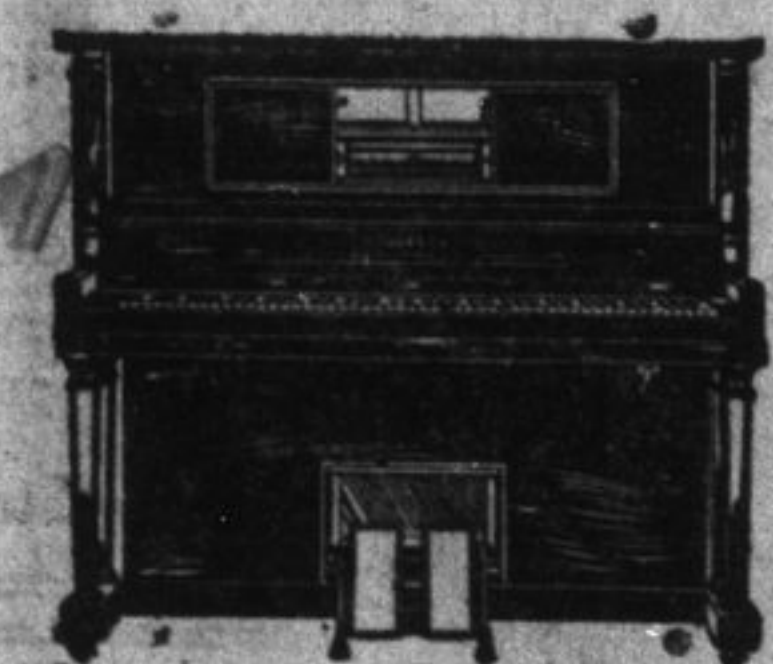
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beginning the child learns that C below the staff always sounds the same and never any other sound, the brain accepts these sounds, becomes acquainted with them, and in due time recognizes the sounded note which the eye appreciates the printed note on the page.

The Belfry at Bruges. Belgium has many accounts against the Germans. One of them is the destruction of many sets of bell-chimes, or, to be more accurate, carillons. In England church chimes seldom go beyond the octave. Eight bells are considered as sufficient for playing the stately old hymn tunes which sing in mellow beauty over the hills and vales on a Sunday morning. But in Belgium the carillon had some of the characteristics of an organ, and indeed was played in the same way. The



HARRY LAUDER Who is seen visiting the sick soldiers at the front.

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carillon at Bruges was the pride of the Low Countries. Who knows what time. At least a dozen of the famous Belgian churches and cathedrals had carillons of varying excellence.

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