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Music in the Home

False View of Music Ousted.

Seeing ourselves as others see us, is usually a profitable occupation. It will have one of two results either to kindle anger and resentment and indignation, or to teach us something.

The oftener it produces the latter effect—the better. Clara Butt, who knows Canada as well as Britain, is quoted as saying: "The ordinary English view of music is that it is merely something to pass an idle hour, like cards or any other game. Not exactly blameworthy, perhaps, but quite unworthy of the serious attention of serious people. Our girls are taught to look upon music as an accomplishment; of its lofty purpose and its divine mission they are taught nothing. It is merely an idle diversion. With our boys it is even worse. At the public schools, a boy with leanings to music is looked upon as a milk-sop and gradually drops his study of the art and does his best to hide his love for it."

If that is true, if we think there is nothing more in music than a solution to the problem of how to kill time, which is only another way of saying to pass an idle hour, if musical leanings are smothered or hidden away, then there is something rotten in the state of Denmark. But that is not quite true of Canada; not generally. The thousands that are having more music in their homes for the sake of the young folks are believers in the fact that there are deep underlying advantages in having music to make and keep the home what the home should be. It becomes a question of character, and health, and education and the parents' duty, and not a passing pleasure as a game of cards.

It cannot be denied, though, that Clara Butt's accusation is true in some cases. There are those—though let it be said to Canada's credit they are growing fewer in number all the time—whose idea of music is something akin to the "game of cards" thought or even of less importance. People in that category are now considered to be leading an earthly existence that is considerably overdue. Their ideas would have been up-to-date a generation ago.

is above referred to, point out certain details about the rendering of music as exemplified in the orchestra's playing and then ask the pupil to strive for similar results in her practicing.

Another great advantage to be derived from such series of recitals, though perhaps more indirect, is surrounding the children with this musical environment, the good and far-reaching influence of which requires no dwelling upon.

A Favorite of Lloyd George.

As is well known Britain's Welsh Prime Minister is a lover of music and a staunch advocate of music even in war times. Some of the splendid Welsh hymns are difficult to translate, but Lloyd George himself has given the Strand Magazine his English version of a favorite hymn. This is of course a literal translation line by line—

"If e'er I cross the wilderness,
I shall forever marvel at Thy grace:
My soul brought to tranquility
After a hundred times losing the day;
And the fetters all shattered,
And my feet completely free,
If ever I am seen thus,
Eternal will be the praise.

"If e'er I am seen, a sinner
One day at the end of my march
Wonderful will be the singing
And new will be the song,
Sounding 'Victory!'
For a full salvation
Without fear of losing the battle,
Neither in the morn nor yet at eve."

Back to Gregory.

Healey Willan, organist of St. Paul's Church, Toronto, is giving a series of addresses to organists and clergymen on the principles and practice of Plain Song, that remarkable system of religious music devised or revised by Gregory the Great. Of late years a better understanding of the devotional staidness has grown up, and while there is no likelihood of any Low Church leaning towards a fuller ritualism, the meaning and origin of Plain Song has special interest to all persons interested in the development of music.

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Mr. G. C. Inman, 339 Harcourt street, Sturgeon Creek, Winnipeg, says: "I was in a very weak, run-down condition. I ate little, frequently missed meals because I had no appetite and suffered if I forced myself to eat. My nerves were in a bad way and my sleep very disturbed. Everything pointed to nervous breakdown. Then I got Dr. Cassell's Tablets, and it was astonishing how my health came back. Mr. Inman is now in England as manager of A. W. Inman and Son, printers, Leeds."

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is above referred to, point out certain details about the rendering of music as exemplified in the orchestra's playing and then ask the pupil to strive for similar results in her practicing.

The subject abounds in technicalities, but there are a few general principles which guided the development, and these are understandable of all men. In the first five hundred years of the Christian Era church music was probably derived in the main from the Jewish Temple ritual, with accretions of heathen festival hymns "adjusted or adapted" for sacred purposes. It became the custom for the singers to seize on the words Hallelujah or Amen whenever they occurred and improvise "fancy music" on them, greatly to the distress of the devout. Gregory devised a system of free recitative to be employed in the singing of the service and pinned down the "Hallelujah" to a more seemly length. In time the portions of the mass specially suited for singing, such as the Te Deum or the Sanctus got entangled with the mathematics of counterpoint and singers and composers used secular tunes until another scandal arose. Then came Palestrina, who, with a basis of the semi-Greek "modes" or scales adopted by Gregory, wrote a Mass setting that was the beginning of modern ritual music as we know it. Even in late years a new tendency towards florid and "expressional" music was rebuked by the Vatican and musicians were sent back to Gregory to learn their principles.

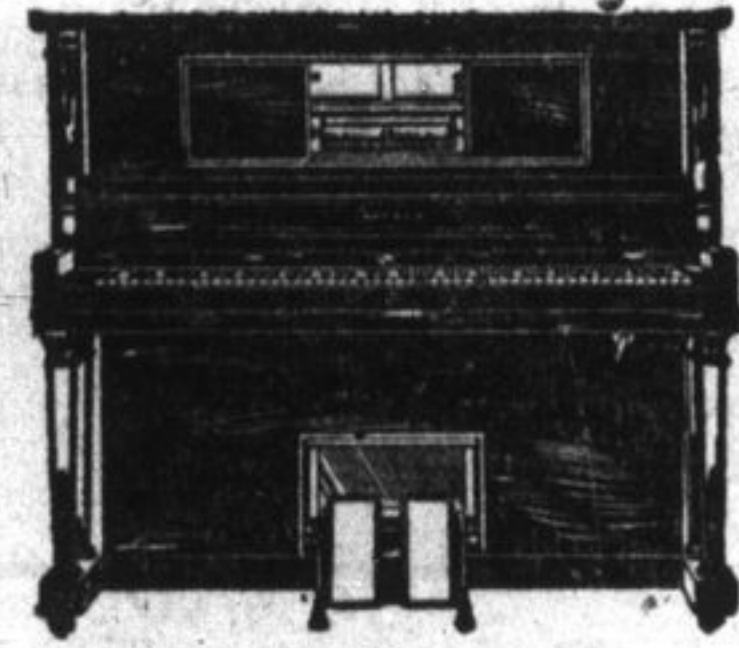
From Known to Unknown.

In one respect the vogue of rag-time amongst the frivolous and for gospel hymns among the devout is not without value in the process of civilization. It is better to have trifling music than none at all, and frequently enough a musical education has been raised from such an unstable foundation as this. Take, for example, the case of a young Toronto man who had almost an insane passion for the ditties of the vaudeville stage. He compelled his friends to the piano at all times to play these melodies. To such an extent did he make use of the piano-playing ability of his fiancée that she was driven to a state of boredom with the music that pleased him. None the less she married him, being a young woman of infinite kindness and forbearance. The young couple had a photograph, and for a time the husband brought home rag-time and popular records to no end. On one occasion his wife did the choosing. She picked up an operatic number sung by a distinguished soloist. She found a violin record of the Bach-Gounod Ave Maria and a piano record of the Eleventh Liza Rhapsody. These she brought home and played several times in the hearing of her husband. At first he paid but little attention. On the third repetition he began to get interested. To shorten a long story, it is necessary only to say that to-day the best and finest records are none too good for this young husband, and all the popular stuff is stowed away.

In like manner, a "song service" enthusiast belonging to a city church became a member of the choir, the organist being a man of taste and discretion. He was accustomed to set forth in brief comment the musical merits of the anthems studied by the members. Thus the Gospel hymn "fan" got a new vision of the meaning and the power of music, and had his whole outlook readjusted.

Duties of other people are always duly clear to us.

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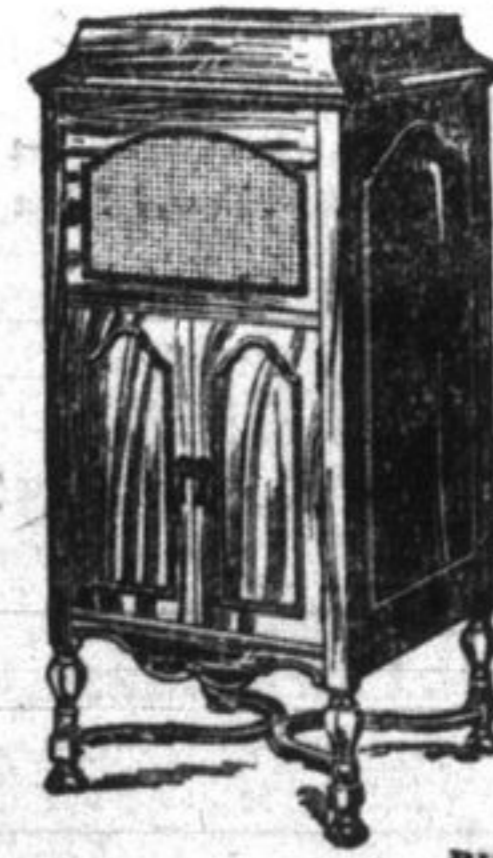
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