

Spohr; "Midsummer Night's Dream," Mendelssohn; "Pastoral Symphony" by Beethoven. This is of wonderful beauty: the music so characteristic that in the "Tempest" you can see the wind rending the trees, showing the backs of the leaves, while the air is all a dull gray. "May Day," by G. A. MacFarren, is very bright and taking; some of the orchestral effects in it being especially beautiful.

Montreal owes Professor Couture a debt of thanks for the conscientious work he does, and must also be grateful that it has in its midst one who so thoroughly knows music to the smallest details, which are yet so great.

"THE MIKADO," which was to have been given on the 20th of this month, in aid of the "St. Margaret's Nursery," has, owing to the fire at Nordheimer's Hall, been postponed to the 10th of January. The amateur company was rehearsing in the Hall when the alarm of "fire" was given, but fortunately all escaped without difficulty or danger.

CHRISTMAS has again come upon us, and passed us, or rather, we have passed it.

Time stays, alas! we go!

The world is always fresh and fair; it is we who grow old and weary, falling away from childhood's faith and purpose, till nature's purity touches us as a reproach, and gives us a heartache for all the possible things we have made impossible. Christmas is undoubtedly the children's time: it is marked to older people by so many memories. Youth is so happy, because youth is always expecting something. The ills of to-day are extinguished by the hopes of to-morrow. When we grow older this expectancy leaves us, and we know the future holds but simply echoes of the past.

TOBOGGANNING is in full fling now, and, wherever you look you may see blanket-coated figures hurrying off for a slide. What glorious sport it is, and what a grand climate is this, which gives us such enjoyment.

Canada's cold, clear, crisp air  
Defies all dread and dark despair.

Montreal, December 25th, 1886.

FERRARS.

### MUSIC.

It would hardly be practicable to condense into the columns of a weekly journal the proceedings of the second annual convention of the Ontario Music Teachers' Association, held last week in this city. As the daily press has already noticed the concerts and recitals given by various well-known professionals and amateurs, it may be perhaps more in order for us to review the objects of the Society, its aims, characteristics, and virtues or faults of organisation, than to indulge in criticism of performances more or less excellent in themselves, though secondary in importance to the essays, discussions, and business meetings occupying so prominent and significant a place on the programmes.

The Association certainly deserves the co-operation of all genuine professors of music as well as the toleration of the critic, and the intelligent and appreciative sympathy of the public. In the first place it creates, or tends to create, a national spirit. It creates, or tends to create, a standard, which, though variable, and at first uncertain, is still a standard, and as such of untold benefit to the large class of provincial teachers present at the meetings.

It serves also as an incentive to many in the musical profession who are limp and inert, disheartened and cold, or old-fashioned and dogmatic, stimulating them to fresh study and renewed endeavours. And lastly it creates, or should create, a spirit of kindly good fellowship and tolerant criticism which may yet go hand-in-hand with the spirit of healthy antagonism and honest inquiry. For there are "inquirers" in music as well as in religion, and that question of standard is to be greatly helped, it is hoped, by these meetings. The fashionable teacher in the large town may take a concert at the Gewandhaus or a Monday Popular Concert for his standard, travel and foreign study may so empower and permit him; but the cheap teacher in the small village or the public school can alone look to the fashionable professor in the city for guidance and instruction, following his example and imitating his caprices either to everlasting weal or woe. Let then the Society's programmes be drawn up as carefully as possible; inferior performances rigorously excluded, and perfect execution insisted upon. Let there be but two concertos in the whole week, but let them be performed just as perfectly as it is possible in Canada to have them performed. By avoiding multiplicity of details, and unnecessary crowding of items, infinite good will be done. Cranks must be suppressed, and individuals with grievances ignored. The "encouragement of Canadian composition" is not yet so important a matter as some would insist upon; at any rate it is not so important as the fundamental aim of the Association, i.e., the examination, certification, and limitation of teachers.

This triple object will, if attained by judicious co-operation and legislation, materially affect the interests of music, and, it may be said, of music teachers themselves. For, although it may be a comparatively easy matter to summon provincial teachers for examination into the town, and having made them study a little harmony and a little fugue, write a

little part song and play a little sonata, thereby turn them out first-class certificated teachers, it will be a very difficult matter for the examiners themselves.

Who is going to examine them? Will they be referred to the University degrees, in England, or must they sit in judgment upon one another? Supposing a "first-class man" is imported from England, or abroad, for the post of chief examiner, or head of the conservatory or association, how his coming will dwarf the prominent—and deservedly prominent—conductors of our local philharmonic societies and church choirs. "What!" say some of these gentlemen, "have I taught for years, turning out good pupils, reading the complicated scores of the modern masters, contributing in thousands of ways to the formation of a correct musical taste in the Dominion, and all for very little money, only to be turned out by the newly certificated fledgling of a local institution, or made to walk up for my examination like a school-boy before his elders and betters?"

Such a problem will be answered soon enough. No innovation is ever made, it is quite certain, without offending some and bewildering many. This much seems clear, that if the standard of our local musicians is to be that of Oxford and Dublin, very few of them will ever attain it, and the majority of them had better hasten to make their hay while the sun is shining, before the advent of the brilliant foreign constellations that may soon appear above the colonial horizon.

Nothing was said at any of the meetings about the limitation of pupils. It is an open question whether a music master is justified or not in accepting every pupil that comes to him. As music is now held to be an important factor in general education, it will be conceded that he is right in so doing, and yet, it is pitiful to think of the days and hours actually wasted, thrown away, wilfully and wantonly sacrificed, by dozens of country girls at our colleges and schools, in the pursuit of an art for which they have no aptitude.

As regards the scope of the Association, it might be a little broader. In fact, to merit the new name, "Canadian," which is, we understand, to replace "Ontario" in the prospectus, it must include the other Provinces, and especially the towns in Quebec, which are so highly musical. Just so in music as in art, literature, commerce, the professions, the trades, and the crafts, what is so badly needed in Canada is a Canadian spirit—that national spirit which we cannot too strongly urge upon our people to cultivate. Why is it that books published in Montreal never find their way here; that concerts given here are never heard of there; that the citizen of Winnipeg is ignorant of the ways of the *habitant* of Quebec; that there is no reciprocity between the different cities, but that each lives its only single life, self-existent and self-sufficient?

Let the Music Teachers' Association be the first to take a step in the only wise direction by opening its doors to the French-Canadians, clever, highly gifted, enthusiastic, and creative, as well as to the resident professors of German origin, or those occasional Americans who settle (very wisely) in Canada, and make such splendid citizens.

SERANUS.

### HAMILTON.

THERE have been a few changes in choirs here of late. Mrs. George Hamilton has been engaged as solo soprano of Centenary Church, while Mr. F. W. Wodell, who has held the position of solo baritone and assistant leader in that choir for some years, announces his resignation after Jan. 1. Mr. W. E. Fairclough, who has been studying the organ and church music in London, England, and passed brilliant examinations, spent Christmas at his home here. He leaves immediately to take charge of the music in St. George's Church, Montreal. While here he played in Christ Church Cathedral, and showed a mastery of the true English style of church organ playing. Mr. J. H. Stuart, one of the best bassos in Canada, a member of St. Mary's Cathedral Choir, and second basso of the Imperial Quartette, leaves the city to take charge of an agency of the Bank of Hamilton at Cayuga on January 1. He will be greatly missed in musical circles, especially in connection with the Philharmonic Society, of which he is Vice-President.

On December 14 a very good concert was given in the James Street Baptist Church, at which Miss Laura McLaren, a young violiniste of Guelph, made her *début* before a Hamilton audience. She is of the true artistic temperament, has so far been well taught, and, with continued study and ripper judgment, should prove a really artistic player. Mrs. Wigmore, pianist; the Littlehales family, instrumentalists; Mrs. Martin-Murphy, soprano; Miss Armstrong, contralto, and the Imperial Quartette also assisted at this concert.

THE commercial travellers deserve the thanks of the musical public of this city for engaging such first-class talent as they secured for their conversation at the Opera House, December 23. Mrs. Gertrude Luther, the eminent Buffalo soprano, and Miss Barnes, contralto, of the same city, were the special attractions, delighting their hearers, and, with the assistance of the Imperial Male Quartette, the members of which are all capable soloists, giving a most enjoyable programme. Mrs. Luther's songs were "Because of Thee," by Tours; "The Dream," by Rubenstein, and "My Star," by Hackh. Miss Barnes sang "The Tear," by Stigelli, and "O Loving Heart," by Gottschalk, and joined Mrs. Luther in the duet, "Venezia," by Pinsuti.

C. MAJOR.

"STRANGE," said one author to another, "your works are only to be met with in your library!" "And in your works," was the reply, "one meets with nothing but your library!"