

## MUSIC IN CANADA

## THE ART OF CLASSIC DANCING.

THE art of Miss Isadora Duncan, who danced in Toronto last week, has been the subject of a great deal of discussion. Canadians are particularly interested in stage and concert dancing, since one of the most famous of the world's danseuses is a Canadian—Miss Maud Allan—who has been the rage of London for some time. Maud Allan has given her views about the historic, rhythmic art. She has high ideals and a few theories. She considers herself an apostle. So also does Miss Duncan. Both go back to the Greeks for their models. Each considers herself the superior of the other.

Which is entitled to the palm I don't know, for I have never seen Miss Allan dance. But I have seen Miss Duncan, of whom much had been said before she came to Canada. A New York musician assured me not long ago that Miss Duncan was queen of the art.

"Oh! In a class with Maud Allan, I suppose?"

"Shoo! Maud Allan is not to be mentioned in the same day—with Miss Duncan. Don't fail to see her. She is to the art of the dance the whole idea of Keats' 'Ode to a Grecian Urn.'"

So when Walter Damrosch brought his orchestra, with Miss Duncan as a soloist—curious term!—three thousand Torontonians went to see. Many said the audience would be a medley. It turned out to be very largely a musical audience. Some may have gone expecting to be scandalised. They were disappointed. Miss Duncan did nothing that would shock the most modest Priscilla. She danced to music; divinely and poetically. She interpreted Gluck's *Iphigenia* after the manner of a master. She was the real baton of the orchestra. Attired in Grecian robes she did a variety of dances, none of which were sensational, but all highly delightful.

Indeed she was the soul and poetry of motion. The dance—well you were not so much conscious of her dancing, as of the fact that by rhythm of the body she expressed first of all the joy of life such as may be seen in the paintings of the Spaniard Sorolla; second the spirit and meaning of the music, with which she was in perfect sympathy and which she must have known by heart. It was a revelation of visible music. Of course not all music can be danced to successfully—though I have vivid recollections of a man in Edmonton who on the floor of a warehouse did a tremendous jig to the playing of the Hallelujah chorus—*prestissimo!* He also was interpreting the feeling of the piece, and I don't know yet whether he was irreverent. I don't believe he was. Listen to the glorious sonorities of the Bach mass in B Minor and see if you don't feel that the marvelous interweavings and figurations of the melodic harmonies are a huge stately dance of the sounds.

I believe Miss Duncan could dance Bach, and do it reverently. As to Chopin's *Marche Funebre*, done so wonderfully by Maud Allan, there may be some doubt. Certainly it would be a *risque* thing to do the Dead March in Saul; yet the dance is at bottom almost anything you have a mind to make it. It may be sombre and solemn and religious—such as the dancing of Miriam at the Red Sea. It may be rollicking and Bacchanalian, as some of Miss Duncan's was; sprightly and elfish, as much of it was. It may be classic and stately—as were the minuets of our ancestors done to Haydn and Mozart. It may be obscene and disgusting—but then it ceases to be dance and becomes Salomic contortions, which had their origin in the heathenries of such as "Little Egypt."

Dancing is a universal art. One thing is certain even on the basis of ordinary common sense: if women who saw Miss Duncan dance would begin to realise that a graceful carriage is so poetic and convincing, perhaps they would begin to cultivate natural grace more than they do. Properly considered the walk is a dance; that is—it is rhythm. Most of us walk in mighty bad rhythm. We need to cultivate natural and poetic expression even in our gait. Less attention to clothes and more to the poetry of motion would make the poetry of life more obvious. There is room for vast improvement along this line. Many of our women who should embody the rhythm of life in walk and in carriage, move as though they were sawing wood or sparring in a prize ring.

This of course may not be truly musical in subject. Yet at the root all the arts are one. The dance has been neglected. It has been relegated to foolish modern notions that to dance makes you frivolous. Certainly it is not necessary in dancing to have sex considerations. Dancing is absolute. It is not sexual but natural. But of course almost anything may be done with it.

Another practical point about Miss Duncan's art is that her feet are by no means *petit*. She has good, honestly large feet which she does not crimp and coddle and high-heel, but uses in freedom in the most natural way and with marvelous artistic ease.

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## THE ART OF EXPRESSION.

This suggests the consideration of a still more obvious subject and one perhaps more truly musical. That is the art of expression by means of music; expression in speech and in song. A musical gentleman called at the COURIER office the other day who gave vent to some valuable opinions on this subject. He said so many wise things that we have decided to follow him up. There is a great deal to be said and done on behalf of natural music. We in Canada are very prone to think ourselves musical because we have heard some music. As yet we are not a musical people. Perhaps it will be long after your time and mine when we are a musical people. We never shall be such merely by spending money on music. Choral societies and church choirs, conservatories of music and orchestras are all necessary and all good so far as they go. But on them alone no people ever became truly musical.

The art of natural music; how people can be musical without indulging in fol-de-rols that cost papa a large sum of money for fees; how the common man and woman in everyday life may discover a joy in life that belongs to music and comes from music and costs nothing except the most ordinary personal effort and cultivation—that is the thing we intend to take up on this page of the CANADIAN COURIER for the next few weeks. We shall be tempted to hit somebody; probably ourselves to begin with. But there is a possibility here which as a young people we have the privilege to consider. When we have said a few things that we think we shall be glad to hear from our readers to see what they think—on this highly practical subject.

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St. John, N. B., along with other eastern cities, has been visited by Mdme. Schumann-Heinke who, though one of the greatest stage singers in the world, is not quite the equal in concert work of Mdme. Galski. This great soprano will appear with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra on October 25th. A. B.

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## Magazine Literature

¶ The long Autumn evenings are here and with them comes leisure for reading. Lord Bacon's remark that "reading maketh a full man" must have been prophetic of the days of the Magazine Club List. We are living in those days. It is certain that means must be found to meet the growing demand for current literature of the highest sort. To place some tempting propositions before the reading public is the purpose of this announcement. It concerns principally American periodicals; a Canadian list will follow later.

¶ Following are eight clubbing propositions. The publisher's price is given and below is given our combination price. As well as new subscribers to the Canadian Courier renewal subscriptions will be allowed in the club. You may choose any one of the eight.

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Harper's Bazaar	-	-	1.35
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¶ They certainly are interesting, are they not? Looks as if one of the combinations should be in your home. Should the combination not strike your fancy write us and we will provide you with what you want. We can suit all varieties of taste.

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