



Life, Literature and Education.

Our Music Competition.

The result of our music competition has been very gratifying, especially considering the fact that the spring is one of the busiest seasons of the year on the farm.

In regard to the prize essays, we have but few comments to make. Both were well written, and both show strong appreciation of music as an educating and refining agent. We think the point is well put that music in the home tends to create outshoots of refinement in other directions. Put a piano in a home, and see how soon other things are made to "correspond" with it. . . . In the second essay, the influence of music as a counter-influence to outside attractions, is a feature worth noticing.

"Katharine" sent us a very readable article on music, but as the greater part of it was a quotation, we could not consider it as a "winner." We mention this in order to warn others against making a similar mistake in future.

The following are the prizewinning essays, won by (1) M. W. Breese, Grey Co., Ont.; (2) Miss Mary James, York Co., Ont.

The succeeding article, on Handel, was written by an enthusiastic young musician who is interested in "The Farmer's Advocate."

Essay on Music.

The word music is taken from the Latin word "musica," and from the Greek, "mousike," or any art over which the muses presided, especially music. The muses were supposed by the Greeks to be nine nymphs, or inferior divinities, who were peculiar protectresses of poetry, art, music, etc. They were supposed to be young and beautiful, each one dressing according to the art or science over which she presided. Each had a particular name, that of music and dancing being Terpsichore. Apollo, as patron of the muses, was named Musagetes, "Leader of the Muses."

We thus find the word music through all pages of ancient, modern and biblical history, the most glorious strains of music ever heard by man being the triumphant song proclaiming the birth of Christ, "Peace on earth, goodwill toward men."

Not only is the word music connected with peace, but with that of war. The blood of the Highlander quickens at the inspiring call of the beloved bagpipes sounding over the heather-clad hills. Yet, in a secluded

valley, we read of the sweet strains of the wind-harp.

The little boy glories in the possession of a five-cent Jew's harp, while the hoary-headed grandfather forgets all in the peculiar sweetness of the violin. In all classes the love of music predominates, from the old plantation songs and the strumming of the banjo, to the glorious roll of the modern pipe-organ. The character of music is that of particular refinement. It is rapidly coming within the reach of all, the country maiden having as good an opportunity as her city cousin. In almost every country home we find an organ or piano, intermingling with the violin and "mouth organ," as it is commonly called.

So, we find the love of music is being developed on every side. From this refinement, others put forth shoots; for instance, the simple beautifying of the home inside and out, the cultivation of flowers, etc., and so those shoots gradually strengthen and twine around our country homes, till in no place can they be surpassed for beauty and refinement. This is only natural, as the country is the center of beauty and music.

For explanation of this, I merely say, if you live in town, take a day off and go to the country. If you are fortunate, you will find yourself in an old orchard among the bees and blossoms. There, I say, watch and listen, for the air will be filled by the clear, sweet notes of our native songbirds.

There are very few to whom the words of Shakespeare can apply:

"The man that hath no music in his soul
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils."

And yet we find those who have not the slightest ear for music. A child of this class may become a player in a mechanical way, but never a musician. The forcing of a musical education in this case is a mistake, as there may be some other talent lying hidden in which the child will excel if it is developed. The natural musician is easily found, and here the talent should be developed as far as means will allow.

The word music comprises so much it would take pages to say all we would like on the subject, so we will just close with a couple of lines, whose author I have forgotten:

"Music hath charms to soothe a savage breast,
To soften rocks, or bend the knotted oak."

M. W. BREESE,
Grey Co., Ont.

Essay on Music.

Music! oh! how faint, how weak
Language fades before thy spell!
Why should feeling ever speak,
When thou canst breathe her soul so well?

O! the truth of these few lines, who is there who will not vouch for it? Good music is ennobling and elevating. It brings out the best that is in us. It raises the mind above earthly things, and makes the brain

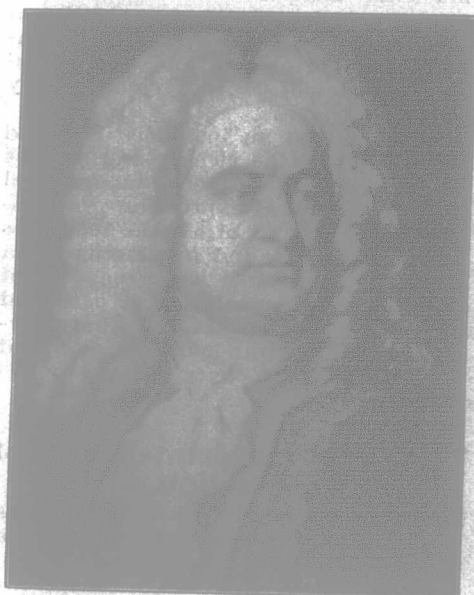
forget, for a time at least, the bustling, bustling world, with its daily routine of toil and care, and gives us higher and more ennobling ideals than the mere sustenance of the body.

How often, upon listening to the strains of some familiar old melody, we have heard an aged friend, one who has tasted of a good many of the joys and sorrows, the ups and downs of this life, remark, with tears in his eyes, "Ah! that dear old piece, how it brings old times back to me," and while our friend is thus lost in his sweet reverie, let us, through the columns of our friend, "The Farmer's Advocate," take occasion to really consider the value of music in the home.

We are all fellow-travellers on this weary journey of life. The pilgrimage starts from the time a child first opens its eyes upon the world, and continues onward, onward, through sunshine and cloud, through storm and calm, until our Guiding Star stands still and our destination is reached. Whether that journey be long or short, no man knows, and whether our passage is to be calm and peaceful or stormy, depends to a large extent—in fact, I might say almost entirely—upon our inner self, rather than upon our surroundings. And what goes to make up our character or inner self, if it is not the education we receive in childhood, not alone book education, but home training of all sorts? And certainly, music plays a very important part in this education. Take, for instance, the home of young people who have been used to music since their earliest childhood. Nature seems to create in them a want, a longing which nothing else can satisfy, and the anticipation of an evening spent in the bosom of their family, among congenial companions and simple but good music, makes a day of hard toil pass sweetly and pleasantly. Music is a magnet which attracts young people to it. Where there is music in the home, there will be less attraction outside—in the saloons, on the street-corners, and worse—and if parents would strive to cultivate the minds of their children by good music when they are young, as they grow to be young men and women they will appreciate it, and will prefer the home music and entertainment to that which is vainly sought at dancing halls and cheap theatres or "shows," and which is the ruin of so many young lives. Young people must have fun, and if they cannot find it in their homes they will seek it elsewhere. This sounds like an oft-told tale, but the truism contained in it is becoming more and more apparent every day.

Taking it from a mercenary point of view, music should, in no sense, be considered as being confined to the homes of the rich. It is a luxury no longer; it is a necessity in these days. If the parents make an effort to secure the acquirement of music for their children, they will, in nearly every case, follow their parents' example, and the money that would otherwise be foolishly spent will be utilized in beautifying the home. They will take an interest in it, and try to make it indeed "Home, Sweet Home."

York Co., Ont. MARY JAMES.



Georg Fredrick Handel.

Born, February 23, 1685.
Died, April 14, 1759.

Of all the distinguished musicians born in the month of February, Georg Fredrick Handel (with the exception of his equal—Mendelssohn) is the most prominent.

He was born Feb. 23, 1685, at Halle, Germany, but by English people he is regarded, not as a German, but as one of themselves, as he resided in their midst for forty-seven years. His father was the chamberlain and surgeon of a Saxon prince and also of the elector of Brandenburg, and was much opposed to his son's studying music, as he wished him to become a lawyer. But the little fellow would steal away to the attic, regardless of his parent's restrictions, and there practice, to his heart's delight, on an old spinet that someone, in sympathy with his talent, had ordered should be placed there for him.

When he was only seven years of age, his father took him to visit the court chapel at Weissenfels, where a grandson of the elder Handel held a position in the Duke's family. Some of the court musicians became interested in the wonderful boy, and lifted him up to the organ seat. As he was playing the Duke came along, and was so astounded at such grand music from so young a child, that he persuaded the boy's father to give up all opposition, and allow his son to add music to his daily studies.

When the child was quite young, his father died, and, in a short time after his death, he abandoned the study of Law, and went to Hanover to complete his musical education. He made good progress, and was soon at the tedious work of writing his first play, "Cleopatra." However, he received his reward, as it was successful, and he set to work to write "Almira." It also was praiseworthy, but his next one, with a most wretched text, was anything but a success. However, he was not discouraged, but worked more zealously than ever, and when he was only twenty-five, composed "Rinaldo," which cleared £1,500 for the publisher in two weeks. He wrote many more plays—all but a very few being successful—and would have become more popular than ever, had he not been stricken with paralysis,