

inherent in Leipsic, Berlin, Munich and Vienna. Montreal has transplanted the provincialism of Paris and Liege and Brussels. Music, the most universal language, thrives on provincialism. Europe musically is divided into a number of camps. Even German cities quarrel for prestige in music. Less so in Paris—which to many German cities, as well as Italian and Vienna, has been somewhat the envy of Europe. Similar, if not more so, in Great Britain. London, the greatest city in the world, thinks Covent Garden is greater than the Gewandhaus of Leipsic and Elgar the equal of Strauss.

What more can be expected in Canada? The chief cities of Canada will never be more in unison than are New York, Boston and Chicago, each of which considers itself the musical hub of America. We may achieve nationalism in music by the art of composition. The patriotic hymn, "O Canada," by the French-Canadian, Lavallee, has come near uniting the English and the French. This is well. But there is no need of worry that our musical centres do not amalgamate. We need individualism

in music as in other forms of art.

In this connection a few lines from the Musical Red Book of Montreal, edited by B. K. Sandevell, once a Toronto journalist, are appropriate:

"The musical activities of the 'nineties in Montreal were in character those of the great English provincial towns; the musical life of the 'seventies, 'eighties and 'nineties was that of a provincial town; and neither will ever be duplicated in the Montreal of the future.

"In Montreal the collapse of the provincial period was accentuated by several local conditions. It is characteristic of provincial towns that their musical activities almost always depend on one or two persons; but it is seldom that even there the responsibility is monopolized so completely as it was in Montreal by Mr. Gould and Prof. Couture. It was not the general collapse that ended Mr. Gould's good works, for when he laid down the baton his Mendelssohn Choir was probably as strong as it had ever been both musically and financially, but it was assuredly the general collapse that prevented

the rise of even the most modest successor to carry on the work. *A capella* singing may be said not to have existed in Montreal for the last ten years. The Philharmonic, conducted by Prof. Couture, came to an end in consequence of the persistence of its deficits. The Philharmonic was an extremely strong society with an extremely strong conductor, and it seems as if with a different business management, one that should have known how to adapt itself to the new requirements of the time, it might have been tided over into the new era, and have provided a starting-point for fresh endeavours.

"These two great organizations, which divided among themselves not only all the choral music given in the city, but also the greater part of the visiting soloists and orchestras, and provided most of the work for the local orchestra players, traced their foundation and their traditions back to an epoch which the present day Montrealer would scarcely be able to recognize, could he be precipitated into it for a day or two, as belonging to his own city.

## Four Fathers of Music

**F.** H. TORRINGTON is writing the story of his life. Which will be worth any Canadian's while to read, because it will tell the story of nearly sixty years' labour in this country in the cause of music.

The best-known of all the fathers of music in Canada was born the year Queen Victoria was crowned. When he was a lad of ten in "Brumagen," across the street from his father's home was a tavern where once there was a raffle for a fiddle. Herbert wanted the fiddle. He got it.

"Now, my lad," said his father, "you learn to play six tunes on that and I'll buy you a watch."

He got the watch also; a huge "turnip."

This was the beginning of F. H. Torrington's career as a musician. His first love was the fiddle. Now and then he still uses it over at the College of Music on Pembroke St., Toronto, when he rehearses his orchestra.

His next passion was oratorio. He attended some miners' classes in Handel—now and then stopping the notes as they went by. Then he got studying organ; as a mere lad played in St. Anne's Church, Bewdley. As a young man of nineteen he migrated to Canada. He landed at Montreal. That was in 1856. Surprised at the absence of wolves and Indians and at the size of the sleepy stone city, he wondered what he should do for a living—till he noticed that a large number of the inhabitants had pianos.

He began by tuning pianos. He taught piano, sometimes tramping over the mountain, at fifty cents a lesson. He became organist and choirmaster of St. James Methodist Church, first fiddler in the Montreal orchestra, and he studied band instrumentation with the bandmaster of the King's Borderers' band—for in those days British troops were barracksed in Montreal. He taught the bandmaster theory. For three years he was bandmaster. But all the while he played in the orchestra. Once set down to play a violin solo with the orchestra he was suddenly asked by the conductor—

"Look here—a very celebrated violinist has just come to town. I'd like him to play that solo. Do you mind?"

"I should be delighted," said the concert-master.

The violinist was the Belgian Jehin-Prume, who left the impress of a big life work on Montreal and Quebec, as Torrington has on most of Canada.

Those were the days when Torrington hobnobbed with Dominique Ducharme, Paul Letondal, the blind 'cellist; Charles Labelle and Octave Pelletier; now and then meeting Ernest Gagnon, the father of music in Quebec; casually associating with young Guillaume Couture, one of the two fathers of music in Montreal, where he still is. When D'Arcy McGee was shot it was Torrington who played the funeral service in St. Patrick's Church. He was an ambitious and able organist; though in those days, long before Casavant Freres began to build, the organs of Montreal were a bit wheezy.

One day Torrington read about a marvelous organ built in the Boston Music Hall. This organ had 91 stops. He got a hankering to play such an organ and wrote down asking to be allowed to give a recital. He was permitted. When he got to the Boston organ he was amazed to find it much different from the description he had read. But at the try-out in the afternoon he made marginal notes on his scores of the combinations he intended to use. And that was the prelude to Torrington's four years in Boston.

In Montreal he met Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore,

who went up there selling band instruments. The great bandmaster was beginning to revolutionize choral and band music in Maine and the New England States, about the time that Theodore Thomas was pioneering in Chicago. It was Gilmore who had charge of the great Peace Jubilee Music Festival in Boston, when twenty thousand singers and a thousand of an orchestra performed to seventy-five thousand people in a huge building between the river and the hills. He asked Torrington to send him down a Canadian contingent—since Canadians had fought in the Civil War. Torrington took down a corps of bandsmen.

It was Pat Gilmore who advised Torrington to try for the organ of King's Chapel, Boston. Something of the old story then just beginning; he could get more money in Boston than in Montreal. And in 1869 he decided to pull stakes. His choir in the Methodist Church got wind of it. One Friday evening, just as he was about to dismiss the choir, the lion voice of Dr. Douglas boomed out from under the gallery—

"Mr. Torrington!"

The sequel was the presentation of a massive diamond ring, which Torrington has worn ever since.

So Torrington went to Boston, where in the four years from 1869 to 1873 he was organist in King's Chapel and played in the Boston Orchestra; professor of piano in the New England Conservatory



Almost as vigorous as the day he went to Toronto in 1873: Montreal, 1856-1869; Boston, 1869-1873; Toronto, 1873—and, we hope, for many years to come.

and solo organist in Boston Music Hall; conducted six choral societies in the environs of Boston; and at the second Peace Jubilee was assistant choral trainer to Gilmore.

In 1873 he came up to Hamilton to give an organ recital. There he was met by two prominent Methodists of the Metropolitan Church, Toronto, then a new church, built in 1867 through the efforts of Rev. Dr. Punshon. He was offered the position of organist and choir leader. He accepted—not without misgivings, for Toronto, which had known considerable good music since the days of old Dr. Frank and the queer orchestra of bassoons and such in old St. James, was badly in need of an organizer like Torrington.

For a dozen years he laboured with choir and organ—building up the best choir in Canada and giving organ recitals, whose huge red and blue tickets you may see sticking in his stack of scrap books at the College of Music. His first concert was on behalf of the Lacrosse Club in the old Public Library. There also he gave the first performance of "Elijah"—when the Scotch door-keeper tried to keep him out because he hadn't a ticket. He was building up for his subsequent Philharmonic, which for many years was the main thing in choral singing in Toronto.

In 1886 Torrington's desire for more room than a choir gallery or a library hall led him into the first great festival held in this part of the country. He got together seven hundred voices to sing Handel's "Israel in Egypt," and Gounod's "Mors et Vita."

But there was no hall. The only place big enough was the Caledonia Skating Rink, which stood just where the new Arena is now. It cost a couple of thousand dollars to rig the barn up; but the place was packed at all performances and considerable money was made.

That began the Philharmonic, which, with its own orchestra, gave a long list of oratorios in the Horticultural Pavilion. Those were the days of Gilmore's Band. Then came Massey Hall, which was first intended by Hart A. Massey to give Torrington more room for his choral concerts. That was opened by a week's festival in 1894.

Seventeen years after that event Torrington kept his oratorio society together—except for two seasons. Most of that time he kept his place at the Metropolitan organ, which, during his last year in the church, was replaced by the present great organ of Warren build, which he supervised in construction. He is still head of the Toronto College of Music, which he himself founded in 1886.

**A** VERY mild, benign man, is Professor Guillaume Couture, whose big, square studio is in the Fraser Institute, Montreal. He is a teacher of singing; choirmaster in St. James Cathedral, associated with Mr. Octave Pelletier, organist; formerly when a young man in Paris *maitre de chapelle* of the Church of Ste. Clothilde, when the great Cesar Franck was organist there. Two years Guillaume Couture, then the scholarly young Canadian, was the close friend of "Le bon Pere Franck." It was a great honour; and to Guillaume Couture, now beginning to let go of strenuous activities in Montreal, a very great pleasure in recollection. There has always been a close connection between the music of Montreal and of Belgium. The confrereship of the great Belgian composer-organist and the scholarly student of singing born in Montreal is one of the finest examples of this connection. The Professor also recalls Jehin-Prume, the great