

Music Notes

BY AMATEUR.



Edith Miller

If we mistake not the little town of Portage la Prairie will some day find itself made famous, by reason of one of its young daughters. If Miss Edith Miller fulfils her exceptional promise to the full—she has already done so in fair portion—she will bestow upon the prairie town the honor of having sent forth into the musical world at large one

of its finest and most attractive vocal artists.

At the present early stage in her career, Miss Miller has accomplished much. But she gives magnificent promise of greater things, and the day is not far off when, health and study continued, she will take place beside, if not rival, Madame Van der Veer Green, who is one of the leading contraltos of to-day. These are strong words, but they are written advisedly. Miss Miller has many advantages, she is young and a remarkably handsome girl, with large, grey eyes and black arched brows, a bright expression and fine coloring. Her voice is a rarely rich contralto, resonant, deep, yet sweet. She has the power of a superb physique, and, best of all, she has temperament. Her tones are full of dramatic suggestion. She has not her equal in Toronto, I doubt whether she has her equal in Canada to-day.

The dear parents, Portage la Prairie, and the great Canadian West are good to her—very good, she says—but such a voice is God-given, and one small town may not possess it exclusively. So two years ago Miss Miller came east, and studied at the Toronto Conservatory of Music. She sang as leading voice in Bloor Street Presbyterian Church, and after a year of industry was able to go abroad for a season. She studied for six months in London and made acquaintance with many of the leaders in musical circles, then went to Paris and became a pupil first of Randegger, and afterwards of the famous Marchesi.

She remained abroad a year, and before returning was fortunate to meet Colonel Mapleson, the famous impresario.

"I did not want to return," she confesses frankly, "but expenses abroad are heavy and money will not last forever, so I have returned to Canada to earn more, and then I hope to be able to go back and continue my studies."

Miss Miller was fortunate in securing private lessons from Marchesi, which the famous teacher is not always willing to grant. She also has received several letters from Col. Mapleson, one of which she kindly permits us to copy:

DEAR MISS MILLER,—Since seeing you I have been asked to recommend a handsome young contralto, with a fine voice, for a Concert Tour of the French and English watering places, such as Trouville, Brighton, St. Leonard, etc. I immediately thought of you, and but for the fact that you are leaving Europe I should and could have got you the engagement.

However, you are going home to a certain success, for I am sure directly the Canadian and American concert managers and critics hear the immense progress which you have made by twelve months

hard work under the best teachers here, they will realize that you are the prima donna contralto of your country.

With every good wish for safe voyage.

Believe me, sincerely yours,

HENRY MAPLESON.

In another letter he says, "If you were remaining I would arrange for you to sing at some of the leading concerts in Paris and London."

This is high encouragement for our young singer. But those who have the privilege of hearing her will realize that it is honestly spoken.

Since her return to Canada, a few months ago, Miss Miller has been visiting her parents at La Prairie, and also touring through various north-western towns and cities. "They have been very good to me," she says.

Miss Miller came to Toronto a few weeks ago, and for a few months desires concert engagements. There is little doubt but that she will be in much demand. It is long since a more promising debut has been made upon the stage than that of Miss Miller at St. George's Hall, on the evening of Jan. 16th.

This Canadian girl looked faultless in her handsome gracious youth, and sang delightfully. She has been endowed by nature with many charms, not the least of which is a simple unaffected manner; and as the rich alto notes swelled from her beautiful throat, and her magnetic temperament thrilled them with life, the possibilities that await her stirred the brilliant critical audience to enthusiasm.

Miss Miller's tone and articulation show marked indications of her year abroad. She lacks only the smooth sustained touch and evenness that will come with a fuller maturity and greater self-confidence.

Voice, temperament, magnetism, plus a beautiful attractive personality, all these this young lady possesses, and it is enough to begin with.

In the many numbers upon the programme, Miss Miller gave her audience opportunity to test her voice to the full.

It is a dramatic voice, and dramatic temperament. In opera Miss Miller would be a magnificent success. But her preference at present is for the concert platform.

Her rendering of "My Heart is Weary" (Nadeschela), was, perhaps, her finest effort. Both tone and expression in this were beyond criticism.

Händel's "Hymen, Haste thy Torch Prepare," showed her ability in execution, and was also excellent.

"O, for a day in Spring," a song by Stern, was the first number on the programme, and charmingly rendered. Towards the close the young artiste sang a number of ballads, closing with Somervelt's pretty "Shepherd's Cradle Song."

Miss Miller sang twelve selections in all, and the unbroken enjoyment of the audience, their instant response to her sway, were, after all, the best evidence of the success of the recital, the best promise of the future that awaits her.

In chatting about her season abroad, Miss Miller states that she found warm friends in Mr. and Mrs. Watkin Mills, who live in a cosy home at Putney.

She also saw much of Miss Florence Brimson, who is still in Paris, and who is known by her stage name, Madam Toronto. Miss Brimson and Miss Miller were looked upon as the two leading Canadian students and prima donnas.

Madam Toronto finds Paris engagements profitable, and has no present intention of returning.

While with Marchesi, Miss Miller was also presented to Madam Melba. The superb Australian cantatrice and her former teacher are warm friends. Every day, whether at home or away on tour, Melba sends beautiful flowers to Marchesi, and they stand upon her piano.

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