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HARTLAND BRANCH



Ralph Dunbar's Bell **Ringers**

Ringers

It is doubtful if any musical feature has ever been presented to the American public which has won greater favor or obtained a wider following than that of musical beliringing. The art was brought to America first in the forties by the late P. T. Barnum. While touring England, he heard a group of a dozen church bell-ringers practicing upon hand bells, and he conceived the idea of using a larger peal of bells and playing more elaborate music. These bells were made in England, as the world's best bells always have been; but in conformity with his unfalling originality as an advertiser, he dressed the players, both men and women, inality as an advertiser, he dressed the players, both men and women, in the costumes of Swiss peasants, and called the company "The Swiss Bell Ringers." For many years this company toured the United States in wagons before railroads were at all general. The art at that time was so successful that our grandfathers recall most vividly the visit of the Swiss Bell Ringers to their native towns.

ly the visit of the Swiss Bell Ring-ers to their native towns.

It seems that thereafter the art fell into disuse, and it was not really perfected or revived in any worthy way until 1898, when Ralph Dunbar and his brother founded the famous Dunbar Bell Ringer's at St. Joseph, Mo. These brothers went to Europe, and, seeing the really artistic possibilities. they went to Europe, and, seeing the really artistic possibilities, they went to England and had made under their personal supervision a peal of 200 bells, which are undoubtedly the most complete and most perfect set of bells which were ever cast. These bells were made under their own personal supervision by the same bell founders that cast the great bells of Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral in London, as well as practically all of the well-known church bells of the world. The peal embraces more than five octaves chromatic, and through the middle register there are as many as six bells of the same note. The vogue of the Dunbar Bell Ringers is the most notable of any similar commany which has anneared on the

American concert platform. They gave more than 2800 concerts up to 1912, when both Harry and Ralph Dunbar resigned their places in the quartet to others. The company up to then had traveled 490,000 miles in America and Europe. The Dunbar brothers have collected hundreds of pages of newspaper material published regarding their tours, but the patrons of this Chautauqua system are sufficiently familiar with this widely known concert company to recall the marvelous musical effects which this quartet of players obtains from this splendid peal of bells.

It may be interesting to know that the largest of these bells weighs twenty-five pounds and measures sixteen inches in diameter. The size of those proceeding upward in the scale, diminishing until the tiny bells of the upper registers are reached. In selecting the repertoire due attention is paid to the selection of music which is really appropriate for bells. There is none of us but what has thought of the important place which bells play in our mental activities due to their association with so many epoch-marking events in our lives. Perhaps no contributor to our literature has so vividly brought out this fanciful use of bells as has Edgar Allen Poe in his poem entitled "The Bells."

The feature which characterizes the programs of the Dunbar Quartet is the absolute blending of their moorgams into the complete whole

the programs of the Dunbar Quartet is the absolute blending of their programs into the complete whole. There is a consistency in these programs which have distinguished them among all Chautauqua attractions of the last double decade. No feature will be remembered longer than the beautiful chimes and harmonies which are introduced in their sacred selections.

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lover as well as the layman.

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through more than two centuries
of musical development, beginning
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and poetry, the romantic achool of
the nineteenth century, when Schumann, Schubert and Mendelssohn
gave to the world their immortal
works.

One of the acknowledged works
of a great master, representing a

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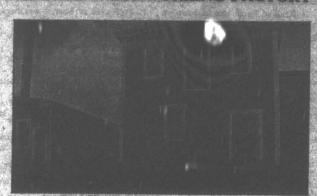
One of the acknowledged works of a great master, representing a certain musical period, is performed on every program, which in the latter part includes compositions of the modern and futuristic school of today. In these latter is disclosed the trend toward tone coloring, painting, fantastic description and vivid impression.

Many of the quaint old-fashioned and charming melodies with which we are all familiar have been arranged for the quartet of strings, demonstrating in a delightful manner the beauties of the four instruments.

ments.
Although the program is of the highest artistic essence it is primarily planned to reach the heart

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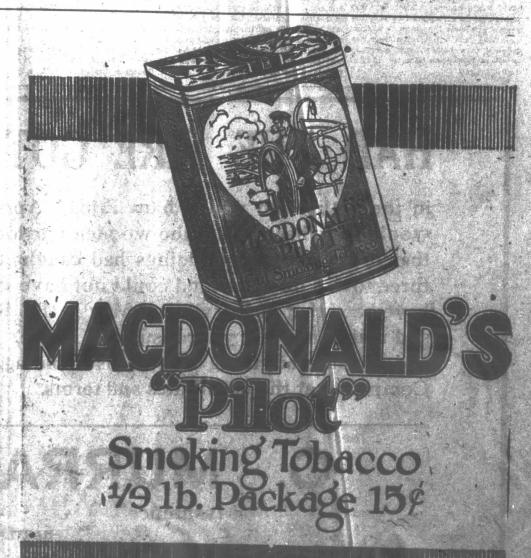
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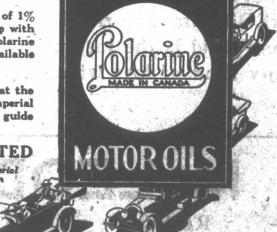
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