

Music Notes.

BY AMATEUR.

IN an appreciative letter to THE CANADIAN HOME JOURNAL, Mr. Humphrey Angers writes:

It is a source of the greatest satisfaction to a conductor to know that the time and trouble which has been spent in preparing a work is at least appreciated when the public performance takes place. I have often claimed that a Toronto chorus could, if thoroughly drilled, do work equal to an old country chorus, and I am now confident that this is the case."

Mr. Angers writes with the recent excellent performance of the *Stabat Mater* in his memory. Certainly those who heard the Philharmonic's expressive rendering of this beautiful oratorio will agree with their gifted leader.

Concerning the appreciation of the public, it is a question whether the work and time spent upon the preparation of such difficult music is ever comprehended even by those who assemble to enjoy the final performance. Only the singers themselves know, with perhaps those in the audience who have the appreciative sympathy that comes of previously acquired knowledge.

I know of no better way for an outsider to learn how to appreciate than by attending a few of the earlier rehearsals and marking the patient study spent upon difficult passages, the repetitions until the time and notes are assured, finest shades of expression are brought out, smoothness, evenness, facility, and at length a triumphant certainty that carries the voices, at first so faltering, with a clear, sure ring to the closing chord.

The listener who has time or pleasure to do this, best appreciates the final rendering of the work, and the worth of it.

In view of the increasing interest taken in the performance of oratorios in Toronto, we suggest that a series of lectures on the best known works, such as the "Elijah," "Messiah," "Creation," "Judas Maccabeus," and any others under preparation by the chorus clubs, would be both entertaining and instructive.

These lectures should be explanatory rather than critical, and might be illustrated by music, vocal and instrumental. If given some time previous to the public rendition of the work, they would probably be largely attended by many music lovers who are desirous of fully appreciating the work when delivered as a whole.

The season of Christmas music is approaching, and the demand for carols authorizes a reference to some of the best.

Sir John Stainer's collection, entitled "Christmas Carols, Old and New," is invaluable for church choirs and country homes. There are three volumes costing about sixty cents each, and containing each some twenty carols. The first volume holds probably the best collection. Schirmer publishes also a good collection of carols, five in number, all of which may be recommended for simplicity and the quaint rich eastern touch of melody which seems essential to a carol. No. 3, "The Morning Star," illustrates the manner of them in music and words:

"Long our watch has been and dreary;
Long we've wandered from afar;
So the wise men, worn and weary,
Followed still the leading star,
Till the Dayspring's self they see,
Christus natus hodie."

In Christmas solo songs, three of a series may

be recommended, "The Christ Child," by Whitney Coombs; "The Infant King," by W. H. Neidlinger; and "O'er the Hills of Bethlehem," by Harry Rowe Shelley.

That dearest of Christmas hymns, "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear," is set to many melodies. That by G. W. Marston is especially worthy of mention; the music is simple, yet full of a glad expressiveness of the familiar words,

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending o'er the earth,
To touch their harps of gold,
Peace to earth, good-will to men
From Heaven's all-gracious King,
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

O ye beneath life's crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way,
With painful steps and slow,
Look now, for glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing;
O rest beside the toilsome way,
And hear the angels sing.

A favorite little song just now is Longfellow's "The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls," published by Nordheimer. It has a rhythmic time pulse that gives a dramatic effect to the words and brings before us a vivid mental picture of storming night seas and upcreeping waters. It is eminently a song for November twilights, when cheery grate and home surroundings accentuate by contrast the low and sweet greyness of music and words.

The tide rises, the tide falls,
The twilight darkens, the curlew calls,
Along the sea sands damp and brown
The traveller hastens toward the town,
And the tide rises, the tide falls.

Darkness settles on roof and walls,
But the sea, the sea in darkness calls,
The little waves with their soft white hands
Efface the footprints in the sands,
And the tide rises, the tide falls.

Morning breaks and the steeds in their stalls
Stam and neigh as the hostler calls,
The day returns, but nevermore
Returns the traveller from the shore,
And the tide rises, the tide falls.

One of simpler measure is "Snowflakes Fair," from the same publishers. The time is even, the intervals easy, and altogether the little seasonable song should prove popular for young people.

There was a time so long ago, in childhood's happy day,
I loved to hear the winds roar and watch the leaves at play,
But most I loved the snowflakes fair, so soft and pure and white,
They seemed to me like messengers from far off realms of light.

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Snowflakes, happy snowflakes, flashing thro' the air,
Robing hills and valleys with your mantle fair,
Bringing consolation for the winter's pain,
Guarding earth's fair flowers till they bloom again.

This page goes to press before the performance of the "Elijah." Between the present date of writing and Christmas Day the two oratorios most popular in the English speaking world will be given to the Toronto public.

We have rightly come to look upon the latter as standard Christmas music, as Dicken's Christmas Carol is its standard literature.

As the life history of the fiery old prophet is to the Christ life, so is the dramatic power of the "Elijah" to the lyrical beauty of the "Messiah."

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