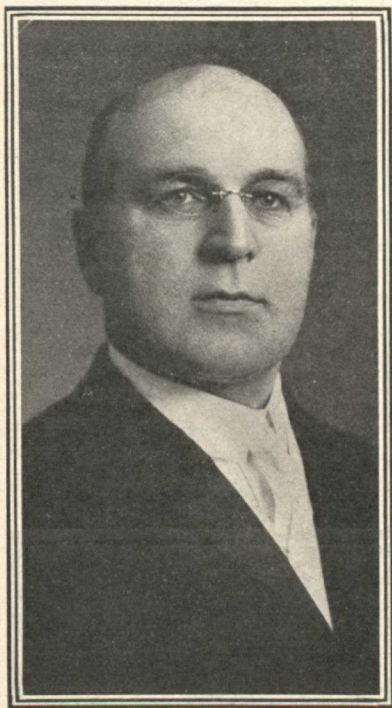


# The Career of a Choir

By CANADIENNE



Mr. A. S. Vogt,  
Conductor of Mendelssohn Choir.

WE do well as Canadians to take pride in our harvests and our railways, our forests and our mines. Our material development is obvious and encouraging. But we are occasionally reminded that a nation does not live by wheat alone and that the arts and literature must find recognition and devotion if we are to be something better than a big country. There was organised in Toronto in 1895 a body of musicians which has reached an artistic excellence more satisfying to the craving for ideal expression than any other asso-

ciation. Let it not be counted unto Toronto alone for righteousness that the Mendelssohn Choir holds to-day its unquestioned supremacy. The majority of the members are not natives of the capital of Ontario while the conductor of them all comes from the famous German settlement of Waterloo County, which has sent forth keen financiers and level-headed leaders—men with Teutonic reserve force united to such nervous energy as develops best in the bracing air of this western world. The Mendelssohn Choir is truly national and its triumphs are a matter of Canadian pride.

The history of the concerts has been one of early recognition and continuous progress. For one year the choir disbanded, owing to the conductor having pressure of work. But so great was the place it had held in the popular regard that it was re-organised in 1900 and has made such a record during the last six years that it has won an abiding place in the gratitude and esteem of those who are moved by concord of sweet sounds.

One of its greatest educative effects has been the creating and fostering of a taste for good orchestral performances. The Pittsburg Symphony Orchestra is generally regarded as its harmonious comrade and the thousands who have been gratified by the magnificent combined work would doubtless echo the remark of an enthusiastic auditor: "They were intended for each other." The association began in 1902 when Mr. Victor Herbert was leader of the Pittsburg organisation; and when Mr. Emil Paur succeeded to the command in 1904, the union stood firm and is now stronger than ever.

Mr. Paur is now greeted in Toronto on his annual appearance with an enthusiasm such as only a master in his art can evoke. He is over fifty years of age, having been born in Czernowitz, Austria, in 1855. His early musical training was received in that city of inspiration, Vienna. In Vienna, Berlin, Mannheim and Leipsic, he won high honours and finally was induced in 1892 to come to Boston for a five years' engagement as conductor of the great Symphony Orchestra. Then he went to conduct the Philharmonic Society of New York and the German operas in the Metropolitan Opera House. He returned to Europe for a season where he won repeated triumphs in Vienna,

the city where, as a young man he had shared his violin desk with Arthur Nikisch. But the call of America was imperative and he came at last to Pittsburg to conduct the Symphony Orchestra. His warmth of temperament and austere fastidiousness of artistic ideals have resulted in such productions as this continent seldom hears in orchestral performance. His orchestration of Brahms' "Variations on a Theme by Schumann, Op. 23," heard for the first time in Buffalo last Monday showed his original force in treatment of a pro-

foundly poetic composition. He always brings to Canada something that widens and enkindles the musical horizon, his most unusual work this year being the Tschaiikowski "Symphony No. 4, in F Minor."

The repertory of the Mendelssohn Choir has included the great choral compositions of the masters, with and without accompaniment. Catholicity has marked the choice of the conductor and the result has been an education of the music-loving public in whatever work is of good report. Slav or Scandinavian, Teuton, Celt, Saxon or Magyar—it matters not, so long as the composition belongs to the universal realm of true art. When it was announced in the autumn of 1905 that the Beethoven Choral Symphony would be given in the following February, the youngest critic almost died of fright lest the Mendelssohn choir were about to attempt the impossible. But this flower of choral and orchestral achievement bloomed right gloriously in last year's cycle and was even more splendid in the week that has closed. What it meant in months of patient training and indomitable effort was somewhat realised by the thousands who sat spell-bound on the night of February fifth as that unequalled finale soared to empyrean heights as were

"The starry threshold of Jove's court  
... where those immortal shapes  
Of bright aerial spirits live inspired  
In regions mild of calm and serene air  
Above the smoke and stir of this  
dim spot which men call Earth."

To speak in terms, adequate to his ability and not offensive to his modesty, of the work of Mr. A. S. Vogt is a delicate task indeed. But there has grown up through the years such an appreciation of this one man's superb leadership, of the personality that makes more than two hundred singers the instrument of his unifying genius, of his unwavering loyalty to the best in musical art, of his unceasing effort towards the superlative in execution, that it is the merest justice to say that he is one of our most valuable and inspiring citizens. The members of his choir give him the devoted service that a regiment offers the born commander, for they know the manner of man and artist who wields the baton. The best work is never paid for in coin with Caesar's inscription



Mr. Emil Paur,  
Conductor of Pittsburg Orchestra.