

For the Canadian Musician.

HOW OFTEN AND WHAT.

BY CHARLES W. LANDON.

If advice on a point of law is wanted, everybody at once goes to a lawyer. If medical advice is needed, all go to the doctor. If land is to be surveyed and boundaries fixed a professional surveyor is employed, but any and every musical question is settled by anybody as quick as thought, even if the "expert" cannot tell one tune from another. And it makes no difference what kind of a musical question is up, all persons feel competent to pronounce an infalible judgement on it off hand, and that settles it, once and for all. And no amount of opinions from professional musicians can in the least change the fixed opinion of the "layman." Our layman says: "Anybody can see that lessons and the practice passing over three years with one lesson a week is twice as good as the same number of lessons given within a year and a half, two lessons a week, because there will be but half as much time to practice; then, too, one lesson a week, gives twice as much experience as would two lessons a week." And furthermore, he continues: "If the pupil misses a lesson or two, or has not had a full amount of practice it is a dead waste of money to go and take another lesson until the lesson already taken is learned. Any fool can see that this is true. But what makes me and our folks annoyed, is, that the teacher does not like to give lessons from the same book that my girl's mother used. Why! my wife was the best player in town when I married her! And that upstart of a teacher says that the book and music that she used is of no account now. I heard him play at a musicale recently and no piece that he played had as much tune to it as a strain of what my wife used to play. He gets off some nonsense about my girl not wanting to play the old fashioned tunes that she has heard ever since she was a baby, wants something new, some of these new fangled 'jamberries,' I call them; there is no tune to one of them."

Not the least difficulty is the weak and feeble mother who lets her tender sympathy run riot, letting off her children at every trumped up and flimsy excuse, thus allowing a poor practice and irregular lessons. There is another kind, who listens to the arguments for two or three lessons a week, secures the reduced rate for the more lessons a week, and after two or three weeks drop off to one lesson a week, and then begins to miss lessons till the term over runs for three or four months. This kind of a patron thinks she is getting her "money's worth," out of her teacher. There is another kind of patron that bought a rattle trap piano, and seldom has it tuned, and never repaired. The pupils practicing on such an instrument make no headway because

playing on it is pain, not pleasure. Every child rightly thinks music must furnish him some pleasure, and when he has to practice on a piano that is out of tune and has sticking and silent keys, he finds no pleasure, and so does as little practice as he can. "What is the use of spending a lot of money in fixing the piano when lessons cost all that we can afford to pay for music?" is what our patrons of this class say. There is a "first cousin" to the latter, who strongly objects to paying for sheet music. These people want the child to keep at the old piece, to learn gospel hymns, and the pieces of all grades and qualities found in advertising sheets, fashion magazines, and the pick ups generally.

There is a growing tendency for giving beginners daily lessons, and when they become somewhat settled in methods of practice, to give them three lessons a week, and finally two a week. But where the musical public have become used to the slack ways above described, it is very slow and discouraging work to educate anyone up to the better ways of modern usage. But it can be done. The music teacher can secure one or two beginners to start the idea with, and by bringing them out at musicales, explaining how long and how they have studied, showing how they never do any incorrect practice, how every effort is in building up, and no time lost in undoing, he slowly creates a sentiment for the right way. It is a fact that teachers should be more diligent in affirming, that pupils who are somewhat advanced will learn more with the same expenditure of money with two lessons a week than with one. It makes a difference to whom the teacher talks. There are natural leaders in every circle of society, and these people are the ones to talk with. Tact and common sense are factors with which the successful teacher must often take council.

Mr. J. Lewis Brown of St. Paul, Minn., who has been appointed organist of Bond street Congregational Church, has arrived in Toronto.

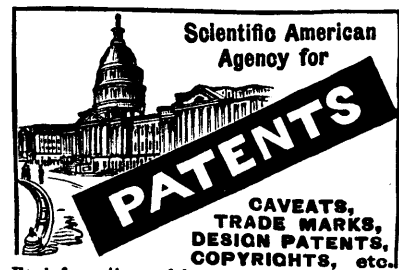
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