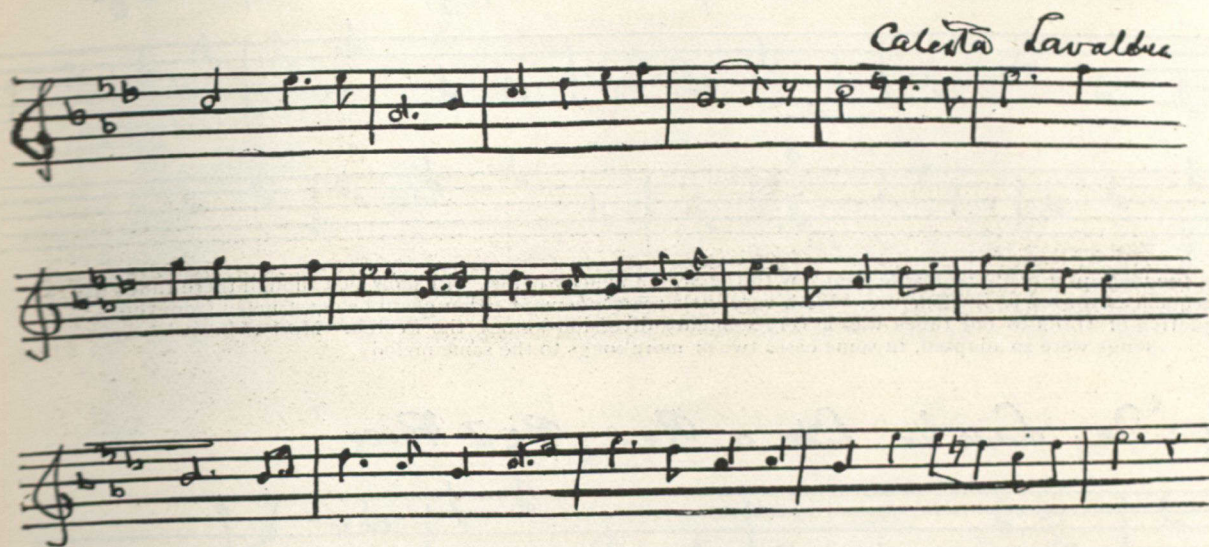


## OUR NATIONAL ANTHEMS

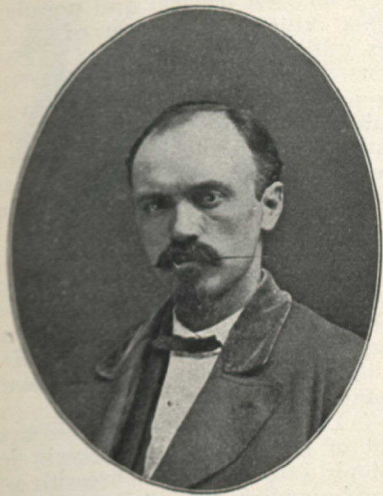


Part of the score from which the Sheriff of Bristol played "O Canada," a few weeks ago.

## More of the truth about "O Canada" and "The Maple Leaf."

By THE MUSIC EDITOR

AS a piece of editorial blue-funk it would be hard to beat the latest—but by no means the last—deliverance of the *Toronto Telegram* on the respective merits of "O Canada" and "The Maple Leaf." For several months now there has been a large tempest in a small teapot at the *Telegram* office over this matter. The editor has been quavering in his teacups for fear Canadians are beginning to prefer the dignified and noble melody of "O Canada" to that of "The Maple Leaf." He has found it necessary in his last article to scold Dr. Vogt and the *CANADIAN COURIER* both at once.



The composer of "O Canada."

This article has all the mock solemnity of Tick-Tack-Tow set to a dead march. Its chief defect is that it was written by a man who, quite unconscious of the fundamentals of music, undertakes to make and then to settle a musical controversy. From which it appears that "O Canada" is in the same "national" class with Presbyterian hymns and the songs of Charles Wesley. He says, for instance:

Dr. Vogt decides that "O Canada" is "Canadian."

Will Dr. Vogt name one element of Canadianism that is present in "O Canada" and absent from the solemnities of the equally cheerful but far grander "Dead March in Saul" and Chopin's "Funeral March"?

"O Canada" appeals to Dr. Vogt as "an expression of strong personality" and as possessing "distinction."

The "personality" and "distinction" of "O Canada" illustrate the individuality of one form of worship.

The "personality" and "distinction" of the Scottish Psalm tunes express the individuality of another form of worship.

The "personality" and "distinction" of the melodies of Wesley's hymns express the individuality of still another form of worship.

"O Canada" was designed to hymn the glories of Quebec's ideal of Church and State:

"Now and forever one and indivisible."

Then to clinch his argument and to lay the blame in a definite personal manner, he concludes thus:

"An English-speaking Canadian occasionally feels that it is time to say something equally emphatic to the *CANADIAN COURIER*, to Dr. A. S. Vogt and the other authorities who are trying to force this country's acceptance of the devout words and dirge-like music of a church and state chant that, in so far as it is eloquent at all, is eloquent of

affection for the race and creed ideal of Bourbon France."

The *Telegram* makes a bogey in order to have the pleasure of chasing it. Neither Dr. Vogt nor the *CANADIAN COURIER* has ever tried "to force this country's acceptance of the devout words" of "O Canada." It is true that the Mendelssohn Choir two years ago sang an English translation of Judge Routhier's words—because at that time no English words were available. Since that time some hundreds of perhaps as good "English-speaking Canadians" as the *Telegram* editor have written English words. The writer of this article made the first setting two years ago last spring. Whether good art or bad, national or otherwise, all the English settings were an attempt to link English Canada with French Canada by adapting English words to the French-Canadian melody. The *Telegram* evidently prefers to accentuate the discrepancy between the two great race divisions of Canada, by refusing to consider any compromise whatever. At the same time it pretends to be deeply concerned over national unity; which in the mind of the *Telegram* evidently means—down with everything French, even to "La Chant National."

Now that the "devout words" bogey is disposed of let us consider "The dirge-like music" phantom. Possibly the *Telegram*, clever enough to criticise Dr. Vogt and to make a mountain out of a molehill from the words of Dr. Williams, of the Grenadier Guards, will be consistent enough to pay attention to the testimony of another British musician equally capable of giving a sound opinion. I refer to Mr. George Riseley, of Bristol, the best-known musician in the southwest of England, who, a few weeks ago, heard, as he played it himself, "O Canada" for the first time. A life-long musician may be pardoned for giving his first impressions of a piece of music.

It was at the Lord Mayor's dinner in Bristol that Mr. Riseley, who is also High Sheriff as well as musician, announced a programme which on Sunday morning he would play to the Canadian and American press delegation on the organ in Colston Hall. The list contained two United States selections, one French, one German, one Finlandish and some English.

"But where does Canada come in?" enquired the music editor of the *CANADIAN COURIER*.

"What have you got?" said the sheriff.

"Well, there's 'O Canada.'"

"But I don't know it."

"Very well. Is there any score paper in the Lord Mayor's house? If so, I'll write you out the melody."

The organist promised to have score paper at the hotel next morning; which, however he failed to do, making it necessary to write out a very crude score of the melody on note paper. This much-blotted and hard to decipher was handed to Mr. Riseley just as he was about to begin the recital.

The last item on the programme he brought it on; harmonising it at sight; so captivated with it that he played it through again.

"And I would have played it a third time if I had dared," he added, in speaking of it afterwards.

He knew nothing of the words or of the French-Canadian origin of the piece. The music only ap-

pealed to him. He has since promised to arrange "O Canada" for festival chorus and orchestra. Which means that in time Lavallee's great tune will become more or less familiar in that part of England at least.

Is it likely that a leading British musician of forty years' experience would take such a lively fancy to "dirge-like music?" Or is it possible that the *Telegram* would put in the "dirge" class all the great national melodies and most of the world's great inspiring hymns?

Further the *Telegram* alleges that "O Canada" illustrates the individuality of one form of worship. In what respect? Manifestly the words; for the tune is neither Catholic nor Protestant, but universal. It is with the tune that English-speaking Canadians are concerned. The tune of "O Canada" was composed in Quebec by a French-Canadian—as the tune of the French-Canadian Congress in 1881, when a committee was appointed to procure a "national" hymn, which in that case of course, meant French-Canadian "national." The committee, with Judge Routhier as chairman, waited on Mr. Lavallee, now deceased, but then a pianist and composer well known all over America. Mr. Lavallee wrote five or six tunes. The one used in "La Chant National" was chosen: the others were destroyed. Judge Routhier immediately wrote religious words to the melody and the entire work was submitted to, and adopted by the congress.

From which it appears clearly that the music of the piece was the real inspiration: not the words which have nothing whatever to do with a united Canada.

Happened, however, that Mr. Lavallee was more of a musician than he was a churchman. Up to date the tune which he composed is said to resemble in spots at least four other tunes: the Scipio March of Handel, cited by Dr. Williams; a march by Mozart, mentioned by Dr. Vogt; a sea song of Sullivan, instanced by a British musician now touring Canada; and a melody of Schubert, pointed out by a Canadian composer resident in Toronto. It is a coincidence well worth the *Telegram's* while to consider—that not one of these pieces bears the slightest relation or resemblance to any music used



The High Sheriff of Bristol playing "O Canada" for the first time on the big organ in Colston Hall. Mr. George Riseley is the only man authorised to play on this organ, of which he has the key, and whenever he wishes, permits other organists to play. He is also conductor of the Festival Choir of 500 voices, the Festival Orchestra and the Royal Orpheus Glee Society.