



AUGUST is the quietest of quiet seasons in musical circles; and the recent hot wave has proved unusually subduing. To feel like singing with the thermometer in the nineties, one should be more or less than human.

August finds the theatres closed, the concert halls silent, the church choirs slim and dragging. Only the roof garden and the bandstand vocalist endures.

Toronto is especially blest in this respect; inasmuch as not a few American vocalists find our pretty city a cool retreat from their own great Gothams, and throughout the cool, inexpensive watering places of Ontario and Quebec many a sweet-voiced singer enjoys his or her vacation; their whereabouts being only discovered perchance when they good-naturedly contribute to the pleasure of camping party or the al fresco concert of the summer resort.

Mr. Harold Jarvis, of Detroit, has a summer home in South Parkdale; and, in as far as numerous engagements will permit, takes pleasure in Toronto lake breezes. He and his family return to Detroit early in September.

Planquette, the composer of that old-time favourite, dear to the heart of amateur companies, "The Chimes of Normandy," is under engagement to write a new ballet for the Alhambra in London. He has chosen as his subject the legend of Rip Van Winkle. The ballet seems to be booming itself in London just at present. There is talk of Sir Arthur Sullivan and a host of the smaller musical composers turning their attention to this pleasing form of musical composition.

The pianiste had finished dusting the piano keys with his abundant hair, and his fingers hung with languid grace like branches that had not yet recovered from the onslaught of a fierce storm. A throng pressed around him, and told him the pleasant things that make life worth living. The relation from the country was there.

"There's no use in talkin'," he said, "ye done fine."

"Thank you."

"An' I must say thet the man thet made the pianny deserves praise, too. Ye couldn't pick up an insterment anywhere 'tall thet 'ud stand the pace you put it through."

"Perhaps not."

"I'll never fergit the way ye got yer fingers all twisted up an' then untangled again. It's a sight ter tell the neighbours about, that is."

"I—I'm glad you enjoyed it."

"Wall,—I admired it more'n I eng'yed it. There's jest one thing yer order do."

"What's that?"

"Yer order come up to Higginsville some time an' git Mirandy Slocum to teach ye 'The Monastery Bells' an' the 'Fisher's Hornpipe.' They take practice, but you could git 'em purty soon, an' then ye'd have a couple o' pieces thet was worth layin' yerself out on."

"I've heard of nerve," said a piano dealer, "but the worst case I ever had in my business was that of a man who bought a piano on instalments, and though he has never paid a dollar, threatens to sue me because I refuse to send a tuner for the fourth time within a year."

"Oh, that's nothing," said another dealer. "I have a man on our books who has had a piano two years, and has renewed every note in payment, and who called this morning to know how much we'd allow him for his old piano on a new one to be paid for on the same terms as before."

Patti is said to choose her servants for Craig-y-nos with an eye to their vocal powers rather than their domestic attainments. The castle is always full of company, and as operatic performances in the theatre of the castle are of constant occurrence, Mme. Patti must recruit her troops from the servants' hall. Patti is reported to be such an admirable manager that the double avocations of her servants never clash. She pays them very large wages.

Her little opera house costs her about \$50,000 a year.

Clerk—Mme. Belleanto wishes to endorse our pianos.

Piano man—But she has endorsed them, and she has endorsed all the leading pianos.

Clerk—But she is willing to state that ours is the best piano she has ever endorsed.

A curious story is related in a recent number of the *Musical Times* concerning a Christian Scientist, a locomotive engineer of Kalamazoo, Mich., who asserts that he has learned by Divine communication the secret of making a Stradivarius violin.

He relates that for many years he was a great admirer of violin music, and that he had many times wished that he could be a violin-maker and be able to make a violin like the old Italian masters were able to do. And he made one, he says, and the story of how he did it has been secured from his own lips. While what he says seems almost incredible to non-believers in his doctrine, his truthfulness has never been doubted in anything.

"Believing that I might accomplish this result," said Mr. Potter, "I put myself into communication with the Deity in the almost vain hope that I might gain the secret of the great masters, for I believed it could be accomplished. After repeated efforts, which were fruitless, one day, while earnestly praying that I might gain some knowledge, it was suddenly communicated to me while sitting on the floor. I at once got some pasteboard and shears and right there, directed by the universal mind, I cut out the pattern for the violin," handing the correspondent a beautifully finished instrument.

"No," said he, in a reply to a question, "I never made a violin before, nor did I ever see an instrument made by any of the old masters."

"Soon after making it I showed it to some friends, and I was at once questioned as to where I got the instrument, and, replying that I made it, they wanted to know the source of the pattern. I replied that its origin was in the universal mind, and told them the incident. I had not until this time discovered the fact that my desire had been gratified and that I had turned

out an exact model, in its most minute details, of the instruments made by that famous Italian master, Stradivarius. But later I was privileged to see a production of this famous master, and, upon comparing mine with it, found the two to be identical in every detail.

"Being strengthened by this victory over self, I then longed to be able to master the secret of making the varnish which was used upon these old instruments, and which gave them that tone and finish which was almost unknown to to-day. In this, too, I believe that I have succeeded."

At this Mr. Potter called attention to the finish on the violin, which was certainly beautiful. He exhibited two bottles which contained a quantity of the varnish, of which the method of making, he claims, is a secret with him. He showed a piece of what he said was pure amber, which he claimed was the base of the varnish, but the method of "cutting" the amber he refused to divulge.

"My instruments have been tested by competent musicians," he said, "and are pronounced equal to those of Stradivarius. That one there," pointing to an instrument hanging on the wall, "is well worth \$250."

Another feature noticeable was that by rubbing the varnish used on the violin electricity was generated and sparks easily produced, a feature which Mr. Potter claims is not to be found in the finish of any instrument except those of the old masters. This, he says, is another evidence that he has discovered the finish used by them.

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