

palm. According to the story a prominent agriculturist asked to lease the bed of the canal for pasture purposes! Captain Tom named a rental.

"Too much," quoth the cattleman.

"The figure quoted is reasonable," said Tom.

"You forget," supplemented the cattleman, "that I would have to draw water for the cattle."

FOR true Chesterfieldian courtesy it would appear that Mr. Speaker Sproule has something yet to learn from Mr. Speaker Hoyle, of the Ontario Legislature. Parliament is very jealous of what it

regards as its rights and privileges, and visitors to the public galleries are rigorously commanded to conduct themselves with due decorum. Last Parliament, it will be remembered, an enthusiast in the gallery undertook to applaud a particularly brilliant passage in the anti-reciprocity speech of Hon. Clifford Sifton, and was promptly ejected. On another occasion a party of visiting ladies and gentlemen, carried away by the eloquence of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, commenced clapping their hands, and, on a nod from the Speaker, the gallery was cleared. In Ontario, however, if the tale which has reached

the Capital be true, a much more elastic courtesy is displayed. The story goes that certain enthusiastic single-taxers in the Speaker's Gallery of the Legislature undertook to applaud the utterances of Opposition Leader Rowell in support of their propaganda. Instead of ruthlessly commanding their ejection, Mr. Speaker Sproule is reported to have solemnly addressed them in some such words as these: "Applause from the galleries is prohibited. But we are glad to have you with us, and hope you will enjoy yourselves." Thus democracy grows apace!

H. W. A.

## Nikisch the Necromancer

By AUGUSTUS BRIDLE

ONLY a dead man could fail to realize the necromancy of Nikisch. Even a deaf man could have got some of it. The great Gewandhaus conductor with the London Symphony Orchestra as a creator of sensation was as obvious as Ty. Cobb making a home run with enough men on bases to win the game.

If ever a conductor communed with the spirits of the mighty musical dead—Beethoven, Wagner, Tschaikovsky, Liszt, all but one of whom he knew in the flesh—it was Nikisch. The man from Leipsic made visions and wove spells for the living by an interpretation of great works, that amounted to almost creative omniscience.

On Thursday, April 25th, this great British orchestra, with its incomparable Hungarian conductor, played the first engagement in Canada

—after a tour of more than twenty performances in cities of the eastern and middle States. The engagement was followed by a concert in Ottawa and one in Montreal, after which the unprecedented aggregation wound up its tour with repeat concerts in New York and Boston.

The reason that Arthur Nikisch and the London Symphony Orchestra made such a tremendous tour was that Nikisch, twenty years ago conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, has a passion for America; and Warren P. Fales, a wealthy music-lover of Providence, R.I., has a passion for Nikisch—to the extent of paying a hundred thousand dollars or so deficit on the tour.

But it didn't really matter who was responsible.

It was a matter of no colossal moment whether Nikisch had the London Symphony or the Boston Symphony, or the Thomas Orchestra, or the Gewandhaus Band, which he regularly conducts in Leipsic. The man at the desk was the main thing. The desk was a dummy; it held no score. The man was a musical Titan; in physique impressively big, leonine black hair, lily-white hands, huge cuffs; slowly stalking upon the stage—when his men rose as though a king had come in. He bowed smilelessly to thousands of people who for years had been hearing of the world's greatest conductor, now seeing him for the first.

There have been great American orchestras in Canada. The Boston Symphony, as great as any, has been here; but it was conducted by a human metronome Gericke, just as now it is by an impersonal organism Fiedler. Thomas in his day was a great general of music, and his Chicago Orchestra has been a trail-blazer on to somewhere near the dizzy heights of Parnassus. Agreeable and popular Damrosch of the New York Symphony; Safonoff, the Russian, without a baton conducting the New York Philharmonic; Seidl, the dynamic force of twenty years ago in New York; Emil Paul—Admitting that Thomas was the greatest of all drillmasters and Seidl one of the most powerful emotional conductors—it must be conceded that Paur, who was a music-student with Nikisch in Vienna, had now and then his big episodes with the Pittsburgh Orchestra, as Nikisch has. But Nikisch epitomizes Paur and is still Nikisch the incomparable. Some New York critics have called this London Band that Nikisch has a "scratch band." There are provincials in New York. Nikisch knew better. Even at \$1,000 a night he would not conduct a "scratch" aggregation.

And with this allegedly impromptu orchestra the leonine Hungarian with the Beethovenian brows

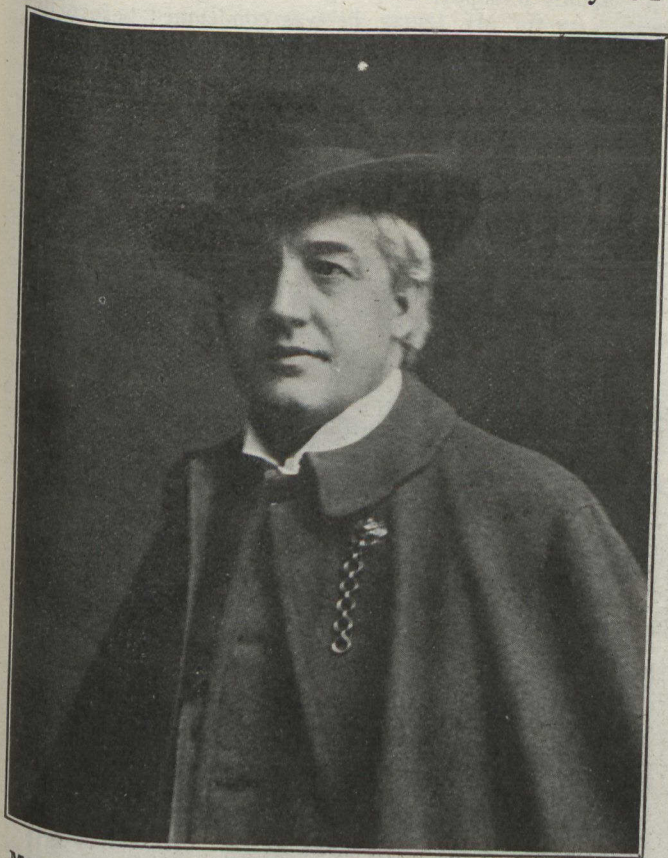
and the smileless visage, got effects such as were never heard in America. His men played old pieces: Tschaikovsky's "Pathetic" Symphony, Beethoven's Leonora Overture No. 3, the Tannhauser overture, Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No. 1—all as familiar to many music-lovers as an old song. The effects were almost revelationally novel. Nikisch knows his music in a sub-conscious way. The things he got his men to do were somehow got from the world that they originally came from in the composer's mind, before he put a pen to a score. Nikisch used no score. He read the great pieces as though he were making them up as he went along, and imparting to his men each his own particular score for the first time. You were conscious of no previous rehearsals. The men themselves played—what time and again they had played before—as though it was some new experience.

Under his baton the old things became new. He was himself a sudden, overwhelming and prodigious fact. The orchestra under him could have played "Alexander's Ragtime Band" or "Whistling Rufus" with a discovery in every bar. One eminent Canadian conductor predicted that the triumph of Nikisch would be largely a matter of rhythm. It was rhythm—plus just about everything else. There is no technical basis by which to judge Nikisch. He does not merely do. He supremely and superbly is. Egotist as much as Wagner ever was; high liver and profound musical thinker; a colossal interpreter of great works, equipped with a brain that seizes intuitively what other men study laboriously to get—he is no man to be dissected with a knife or regarded through a microscope.

The tone field over which Nikisch traveled with his orchestra ranged from the shuddering toneless zephyr just born in the tips of the grass to the screaming thunderstorm that rips the roofs from the Rockies. The colours ran through all the spectral permutations of the rainbow—oh, yes,

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## A Family of Distinction Before the Footlights



Mr. H. McD. Walters, Head of the Walters Dramatic Company, Tied With the Winner of the J. E. Dodson Ring for the Best Individual Acting at the Earl Grey Competition in Ottawa.



Miss Clare Walters, Who Cleverly Took the Role of "Varvara" in Calderone's Tragedy.

AMONG the many unusually interesting episodes at the dramatic tourney in the Earl Grey Competition a few days ago, the brilliant success of Mr. and Mrs. H. McD. Walters and Miss Clare Walters was one of the most popularly delightful. This talented family of non-professional actors are residents of Ottawa. They won their laurels in a real gripping Russian tragedy of Calderone, in which Mr. Walters, actor-manager of the company, had a leading role. Mrs. Walters, who has been only a couple of years in dramatic work, was well entitled to the Margaret Anglin bracelet. Miss Walters was immensely popular as "Varvara."



Mrs. H. McD. Walters by Her Splendid Success in Calderone's Russian Tragedy, "The Little Stone House," Fairly Won the Margaret Anglin Bracelet for Best Individual Work as an Actress.