

BRIEF MUSICAL BIOGRAPHIES

Written in the Major Mode

By VOX HUMANA



Dr. A. S. Vogt
Conductor Mendelssohn Choir



Mr. Frank Welsman
Cond. Toronto Symphony Orchestra



Dr. Albert Ham
Conductor National Chorus



Mr. W. O. Forsyth
Teacher of Piano

so far as Mr. Welsman was concerned, on one condition only—that he be allowed to organise an orchestra in the Conservatory and with such other talent as he might draft in. The present Toronto Symphony Orchestra under the effective business management of Mr. H. C. Cox, is the result. The story of that orchestra is one of the most encouraging things in the history of Canadian music. Its success is due primarily to Mr. Welsman; scarcely less to the ambitious and courageous backing of Mr. Cox, who has done more for music than any other layman in Canada.

Dr. Charles A. E. Harriss is the foremost musical promoter in Canada. He is an Englishman who has been in Canada long enough to know what Canada is like as a field for music, and in Montreal most of the time. He has brought out more big things from England than any other man in Canada. He toured Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Sir Frederick Bridge and the Sheffield Choir. He is now engaged in an Empire tour for a big Glasgow chorus. He has composed some rather notable works; most ambitious of which is the cantata "Pan," performed under his own direction and in presence of the late King Edward at Covent Garden. Dr. Harriss is a wealthy man who does not need to depend on music for a living. He has purchased Earncliffe, the baronial home of Sir John Macdonald in Ottawa. Exceedingly ambitious, there is little in the way

THE conductor of the Mendelssohn Choir and the most eminent choral conductor in America was born in Washington, near Elmira, in the German-Canadian county of Waterloo, Ont., where almost as soon as he was able to talk he gave evidence of great musical talent. As a lad he played a church organ in Berlin. When a mere boy he went to Boston to study music. Returning to Canada he went to St. Thomas, Ont., as organist and choirmaster of the First Methodist Church there. Then he went to Germany; not having as yet any ambition to organise a Mendelssohn Choir. In Leipsic he studied keenly everything in a musical way he could get his hands on; for he expected to do some big work in Canada—just what he scarcely knew till he heard the St. Thomas Kirche Choir in Leipsic and decided that if anything he would prefer to reproduce with Canadian voices some of the exquisite effects heard in the Kirche. He came back to Canada without any particular prospect as to a situation; except that while he was on board ship a member of the Jarvis Street Baptist music committee in Toronto designated him as the best available man to take the organ and choir in that church. When he arrived in Toronto the position was offered him. He took it and went also into conjunction with Dr. Torrington in the College of Music. His work in the Jarvis Street Choir was the most beautiful unaccompanied work ever done in Canada and it laid the real foundation for the present Mendelssohn Choir which, organised in 1894, has been for some years setting the pace for all American choral societies for all kinds of choral work from the simplest madrigal to the profoundest work of a Brahms, a Beethoven or a Gabriel Piere. The triumphs of this great choir have been heralded abroad in a hundred newspapers. New York is hungry to hear the choir again; also Chicago and Cleveland. The story of this choir is in many respects the most remarkable choral history ever known in the world.

Frank Welsman, conductor of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and known as perhaps the most brilliant piano player in Canada, was born in Toronto—not very many years ago. He was always bent upon music. At the Model School he was playing the piano. As a mere lad in knickers he went to the College of Music, studying under Dr. Torrington. Here he learned both piano and violin and some theory. When seventeen years of age he went to Germany, at first quite undecided as to whether he would study violin or piano. His teachers soon settled it—that he must study the piano. Krause, the celebrated teacher of the Liszt method of playing the piano, was his first teacher. He studied theory with Schrenck and orchestration with some of the best masters; intending when he got back to Canada to start an orchestra—which, however, he did not do till after some years of teaching piano at the College of Music. Then he was got by Dr. Fisher to go to the Conservatory;

of sheer music promotion in Canada or the Empire that Dr. Harriss would not attempt.

One of the leaders in the Winnipeg musical world is Mr. Fred Warrington, who is the conductor of the choral society there and who has been the pioneer in really modern musical work in the wheat city. Mr. Warrington was known for many years as the leading Canadian baritone. That was during his residence in Toronto, where for many years he was leader of the Sherbourne Street Methodist choir. In the old Philharmonic days under Dr. Torrington he distinguished himself by taking at a day's notice the difficult solo part in an oratorio assigned to a United States baritone who failed to arrive. After leaving Toronto he went to Detroit, where for some years he did vocal teaching both there and across the border. But in Winnipeg he is doing a work which in the east he would have missed altogether—and did it after middle age.

Dr. Edward Fisher is the most capable musical administrator in Canada. Some say that he is more of a business man and an organiser than a musician—which is, however, not the case. Dr. Fisher has got to where he is as the head of the largest musical school in Canada and one of the very largest in America primarily because he is a musician. He came to Canada from New England; about thirty years ago—first as a private teacher and as organist of St. Andrew's on King Street, where on a memorable Sunday morning the present editor of the *Globe*, then a country preacher and a "theolog" down to Toronto for a Knox College exam., heard in one service his first "heretic," Rev. D. J. Macdonnell, and his first "kist o' whistles" played by Dr. Fisher. It was only after some years of teaching and studying the ground that Mr. Fisher decided to open a conservatory of music, which was at first a very small affair; afterwards moving to a building at the corner of Yonge Street and Wilton Avenue, now occupied by a hotel. But Dr. Fisher had a strong faculty of organisation and of getting round him good men. He so built up the reputation of the conservatory for efficiency and business administration that some twelve years ago it became necessary to move—to the present premises at the corner of University Avenue and College Street, where nearly two thousand pupils a year are enrolled and taught by a corps of specialists in various departments not excelled by those of any other similar institution in America.

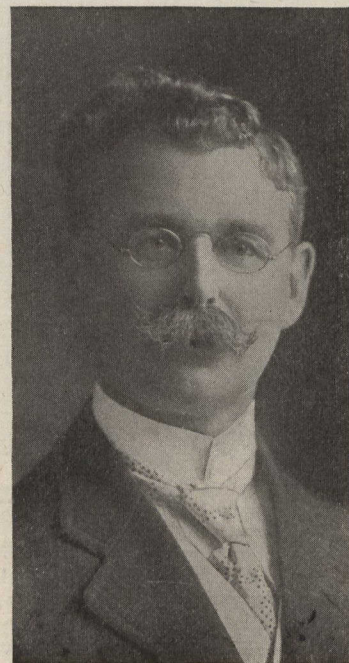
Few of the younger musicians in this country have achieved so much in a few years as Mr. Frank Blachford, the concert-master of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the leader of the well-known Toronto String Quartette. Mr. Blachford was born in Toronto; but he has long since become a well-known figure in various parts of Canada. When quite young he went to Germany to perfect his knowledge of the violin which he has chosen as his special medium of expression. He spent four years, 1897 to 1901,

on the Continent and came back to Canada to do in violin work something what his senior, Mr. Welsman, has been doing in piano and Dr. Vogt in choral work. As a violin player he exhibits a rare combination of virtuosity and restraint; somewhat conservative in style but always temperamental. Mr. Blachford is a hard worker and considerable of an organiser. He was the first to see the practical possibilities of chamber music, in middle Canada at least, and his organisation of the Toronto String Quartette is a good proof that he was not wrong. These players are the Kneisels of Canada, and much of the credit is due Mr. Blachford for so wisely picking his associates and his programmes, and working up his clientele.

The conductor of the Elgar Choir in Hamilton is one of the rising musicians of the younger sort—who has already to his credit a distinctive achievement in a choir which does work of a remarkably fine character. The Elgar Choir is in a minor sense the Mendelssohn Choir of Hamilton. It grew out of the choir which Mr. Carey had under his direction at Knox Church in Hamilton. Mr. Carey was born near Hamilton. He was a pupil of J. E. P. Aldous in piano and theory and in voice culture under Elliott Haslam. In 1900 he spent some time in Europe where he made a special feature of voice production and song interpretation. He has had a wide experience as a



Mr. Bruce Anderson Carey
Conductor of the Elgar Choir in
Hamilton, Ont.



Mr. H. M. Fletcher
Conductor of the Schubert Choir and of
the People's Choral Union; initiator
in Canada of the Damsch
method of teaching
choral music to
inexperienced
people.



Dr. Charles A. E. Harriss
Montreal and Ottawa; promoter of Music
in Canada; composer and conductor
of his own works.



Dr. Edward Fisher, Director Conservatory.