

Music

Songs Fit Every Phase of Life

Back in 1914 when we were working peacefully along without thought of war, we sang the ordinary ballads of the day—romantic, sacred and humorous. Then the storm burst upon the world. Men were the first need. There came into existence several good recruiting songs that proved great aids in securing voluntary enlistments. By the time the armies were in the field and settled down to the routine of trench warfare, people were singing patriotic songs and new songs of army life, navy life and of flying in the air. As battle followed battle, as the armies advanced here and retreated there, there arose the need of keeping up the home morale lest the spirit behind the lines would waver and break. But again the songs of sticking to it, of world freedom beyond the horizon, of proving worthy of our men at the front had their influence on the nation helping us to stick it out. During this period the national songs of our Allies cemented those ties in the minds of the masses that were so necessary.

The end came. And with it went the songs of home-coming and songs of praise. Yet the need for singing and inclination to sing is greater than ever. Everyone feels like singing. Interest in the songs that were forgotten for the time being came back. So that the whole field of general songs is re-opened. The war gave English songs a new meaning. Canadians who have been in England or whose friends have been, take readily to the songs of Sussex, Somerset and Devon. Thus our whole attitude towards music is altered and Canada is on her way to becoming a singing nation.

The Church Organist

To become a good church organist is no small achievement, for it sometimes seems as if the church organist begins where the recitalist leaves off. The former needs all the execution of the latter, but the latter has never been compelled as a recitalist to consider "beginnings" or "endings" or "smoothness." Reactions are outside his sphere of activity, except as they arise in moving from piece to piece in his program or as they may be a factor in the general impression made by his personality on his audience. Many things the concert player must learn when he sits on the bench Sundays. To be a good church player is to be an artist in a field little known to the ordinary musician and often little appreciated.

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Music's Part in Reconstruction

The maintenance of discipline through the use of singing has been found an important feature in the army and navy hospitals, while in surgical cases it has been learned that men go under anesthetics much easier while listening to music. So it is not an infrequent thing now to hear nurses singing the army songs for wounded men while preparing them for the surgeon's ministrations. Another part that music will play in the work of reconstruction is the scientific restoration of articulation for patients suffering from injuries to the mouth and throat, and some interesting experiments in this field are now being carried on by vocal teachers in the convalescent hospitals.

All Roads Lead to Singing

When people are deeply moved, they usually sing. Immense audiences give way to great patriotic fervor in song. Religious zeal always requires a hymn for one of its main outlets. The longing for freedom by a subjugated people has ever been the cradle of many of the world's enduring songs. Men, who as individuals, never sing and scarcely ever whistle, who know not one note from another, when in a crowd, join lustily in the singing. The mass-spirit has been termed the most responsive thing in the world. Our armies went into battle singing. Autocracy died in Britain, France, Italy, Russia, Austria and now Germany at the hands of a singing people.

If men and women were called by the government to build ships, produce munitions, save food, recruit regiments, buy bonds, forget politics, carry on, they did it—and sang. Perhaps now and again the burdens felt too heavy, the clouds seemed too thick, the heart was too sad to sing, the voice was not steady enough, and when we could not speak, the muffled drum, the soft chords, the sweet organ notes or the inspiring symphony said our innermost feelings for us. Our own silence made the instrument's influence the more deeply felt. Then as a result in some peculiar fashion our hearts were encouraged. The clouds were not gone; but they seemed far beneath us. We felt, at least for the time being like saying with Longfellow:

"I stood upon the hills, when heaven's wide arch
Was glorious with the sun's returning march,

And woods were brightened and soft gales
Went forth to kiss the sun-clad vales,
The clouds were far beneath me; bathed in light,
They gathered mid-way round the wooded height,

And, in their fading glory, shone
Like hosts in battle overthrown,
As many a pinnacle with shifting glance,
Through the grey mist thrust up its shattered lance,

And rocking on the cliff was left
The dark pine, blasted, bare and cleft.
The veil of cloud was lifted, and below
Glowed the rich valley, and the river's flow

Was darkened by the forest's shade,
Or glistened in the white cascade,"

Then the impulse to sing returned.
With hearts strengthened and souls
refreshed we were ready to "be up and doing,
with a heart for any fate." Music was God's messenger.

Making Valentines

By Alice T. Curtis

All the year we save up things
Cut from papers, hearts and rings,
Little boys called Cupids, too;
And all sorts of flowers will do.

Then we take some paper white,
And we scallop it just right, and
across the top we write
Some nice line that reads like this:
"To my sweetheart, with a kiss."

Now we're ready to begin,
And we paste a Cupid in,
And perhaps a wreath and dove,
With a scroll which says, "True love."

We pick out from all the rest
One for mother that is best;
And we write, "Our hearts are true,
Dearest Valentine, to you."

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