

New Things in Music

The Festival of the Mendelssohn Choir Re-awakens Public Expectation and Provides a Number of New Sensations. A Brief Outline of the Five Concerts Last Week

By THE MUSIC EDITOR

THE annual scarcity of adjectives is on again in Toronto, whose critics of music have once more been wrestling with the problem of how to describe the performances of the Mendelssohn Choir. Last year they had a chance to let some of the over-worked epithets lie on the shelf for a rest. Unfortunately in the meantime the astute and aggressive conductor had been abroad gathering new ideas and material for this year's programmes.

The audience on the first night was peculiarly unemotional. The Duke was there with a large retinue which included Sir Edmund Walker and Sir Henry Pellatt. It was his first hearing of the choir. His sensations must have been worth recording. But the audience seemed to be subdued by the Duke's presence.

It was a stupendous programme, much too climactic for a place the size of Massey Hall. It would have needed some such critically biased audience as they have in Carnegie Hall, New York, to get to the point of real tumultuous appreciation. The re-appearance of Vogt after his two years' absence was greeted with very feeble applause. Most of the audience seemed to realize that the great choir was back again as usual and would thrill them as usual. Of course it would. That's what the choir is for nowadays. It's a good while since we sat comfortably through a nice lyric evening and had our souls gently soothed and religiously stimulated by smooth, unaccompanied numbers.

No, we go to get choral climaxes and tone-rainbows and tremendous cloud-capping ensembles now. We get them and we admit it. Once in a while a shiver runs down somebody's spine and he gets goose-flesh. That's the intention. Vogt always succeeds in his intentions. There's no reason why he should be hampered by any of our old-time associations. He and his choir out-grew them long ago. This, as Mr. John R. Mott would say, is a new world.

The programme was gorgeously miscellaneous. It represented pictorially or by composers—England, Greece, Germany, Russia, Poland and Italy. It ranged over the fields of religion, patriotism, love, industrialism, war, joy and sorrow. It began with the Leonore Overture No. 3 of Beethoven, a delectable chestnut magnificently performed. We pass that. It's always good. The next thing was "Joshua," by Moussorgsky. It began with a fine full-chorded jerk, involved itself in a number of Hebrew folk-songs, and ended after a climax in a very abrupt pianissimo. It was very Slavic. In fact it was about as much at home after German Beethoven's Leonore as a Moujik would be in the Bahamas. Tchaikovsky's Cherubim Song No. 3 was done—well, not better than it has been done by the same choir on former occasions when it was regarded as a "piece de resistance," but not now.

BANTOCK, the Englishman's Greek tragedy overture, performed by the orchestra naturally contrasted itself with the Italian Casella's Rhapsody called "Italia." One was all Greek, plus Bantock, who is a Greek investigator, added to a considerable suggestion of Wagner; a fine piece of art construction, somewhat cold, like Grecian marble. The other was a Kiplingesque description, containing tone-pictures; and such pictures! No doubt modern music is marvelously realistic. This is what Casella took for his modern tone-description of Italy:

A lover angry at his mistress—not his wife.
Song of the witches in the sulphur mines of Caltanissetta.

Hymn sung on Good Friday.
Song of the marble-quarry women in Catetio.
The Neapolitan song, Funiculi-Funicula.
Two other songs.

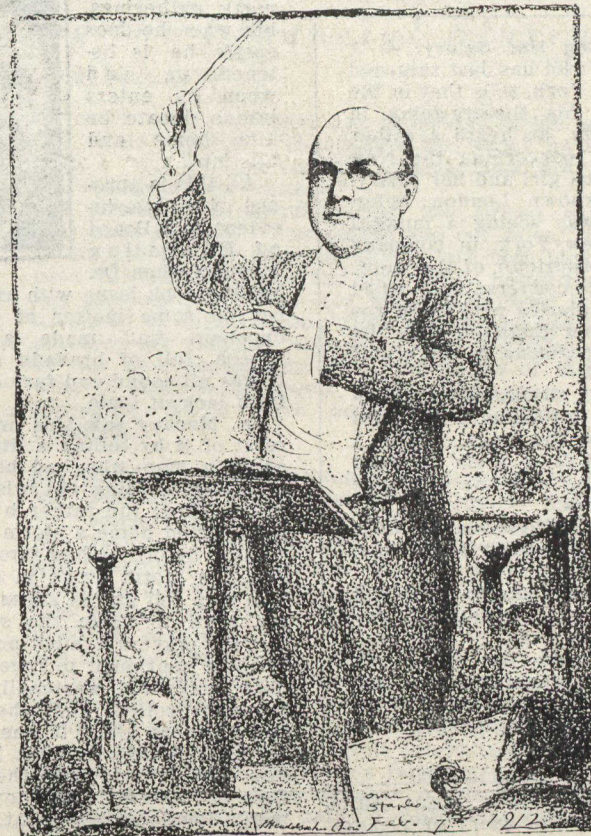
All this was painted in all the tone-colourings of all sections of the orchestra and cannot be played adequately by less than 75 instruments.

A Slavic Folk-Scene, in the form of a gorgeous vocal dance, by Nowowiejski, came exuberantly after the Italian pictorial misere. This was a magnificent outburst of pure joy—from Poland! The English words are a clever translation, by J. E. Middleton, writer of "On the Side" in the Toronto News.

The concluding section of this colossal programme of novelties and familiarities was devoted to Verdi, whose centenary came a few months ago. First the choir and orchestra gave Verdi's "Stabat Mater," a tremendously sorrowful and dramatic thing full of tonal surprises and intensive climaxes. This was followed by several extracts for solo voices, quartette and full chorus from Verdi's Manzoni Requiem. Here the choir and the four soloists and the orchestra conspired to give a series of operatic-religious sensations—a glorious and prodigious feast of solos and duets and full choruses both unaccompanied and with orchestra. The Manzoni excerpts alone would have been enough for half a programme. They were incomparably splendid. They satisfied those who want religious sensations and those who prefer

grand opera in a mass. It was prolific old Verdi, interpreted as never he was in Italy by a choir capable of anything in dramatic expression and an orchestra always equal to the demands of the choir.

Tuesday evening came a repetition of "The New Life," by Wolf-Ferrari, which the writer of this did not hear. On Wednesday evening two works only



The conductor of the Mendelssohn Choir back to more than his usual great form after a year's absence from the Canadian concert stage.

were given by the combined choir, orchestra and soloists.

These were "The Music-Makers," by Elgar, and "Tales of Old Japan," by Coleridge Taylor, who died a little over a year ago and a short while after the completion of this, one of his most beautiful works.

The "Music-Makers," written to a poem, by O'Shaughnessy, lasted nearly forty-five minutes. It was several minutes longer than its contents seemed to justify. A most admirable bit of choral writing, probably as fine a thing for a choir to sing as that particular choir ever sang, it was done as well as it is possible for a work of that kind to be done. Nothing was lacking in the performance, which was

a brilliant, masterly piece of work. The poem was very well interpreted by the music. In the form of a cantata, it was both English and modern—and Elgar. It was frankly reminiscent of themes in other of Elgar's works—by intention. It contained a large number of most grateful passages, that showed Elgar at his best, and some noisy, blatant orchestral treatments that displayed him at pretty nearly his worst. There are times when Elgar delights in sheer noise. It was so in parts of "Caractacus," which was occasionally somewhat suggested in the "Music-Makers." The chief fault in this most admirable cantata, however, is that there is not enough in it to justify forty minutes of performance. The whole musical value of the work should have been compressed into twenty or twenty-five minutes.

The reverse is true of the "Tales of Old Japan," by Coleridge Taylor. Here we missed the chorus, which did but little more than occasional commentaries on the work done by the four soloists. That is the chief defect—at least in the case of the Mendelssohn Choir. There are choirs, however, of whom it might be said—the less the better.

The story of the work is very similar to that in

(Concluded on page 22.)

The New Parcel Post

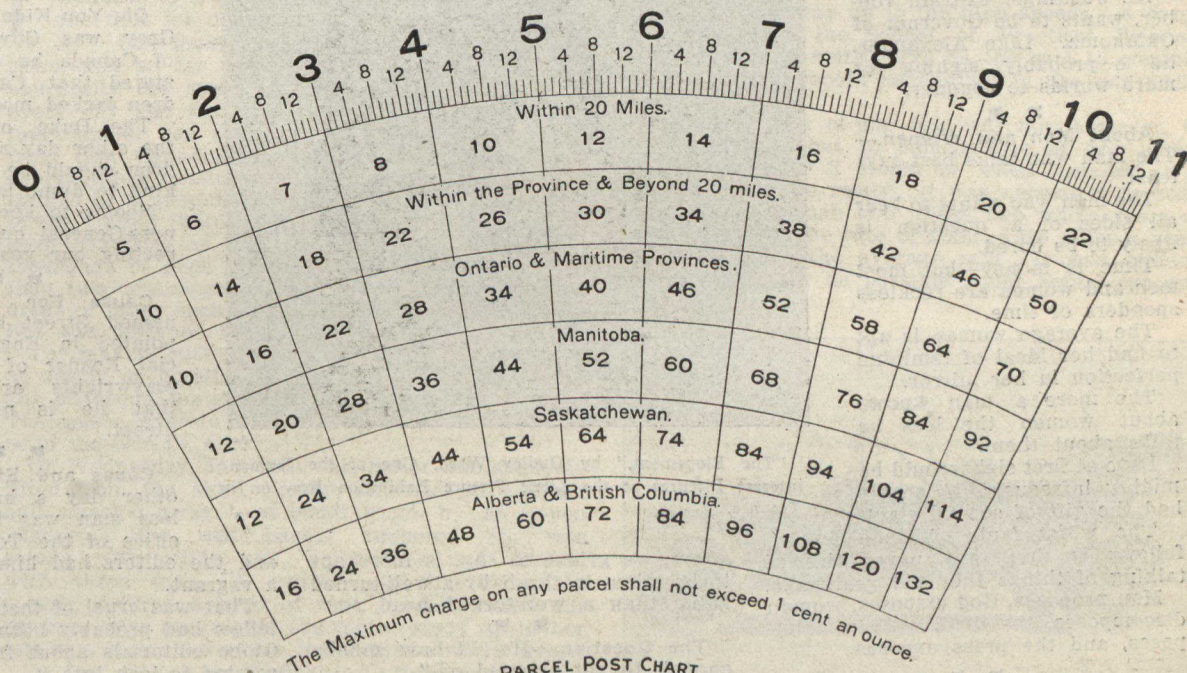
ON February 10th Canada inaugurated a parcel post system similar to that of the United States, Great Britain and Europe. Each province is treated as a unit and there is a zone system for each. The accompanying chart for the Province of Quebec may be taken as typical of all. For a parcel to be delivered within two miles there is a rate which begins with five cents for one pound, six cents for two pounds and so on up to 22 cents for eleven pounds. Over that radius and throughout the province there is a second rate which runs from ten cents for one pound, sixteen cents for two pounds up to fifty cents for eleven pounds. There are four other zones, as shown, covering the whole of Canada.

Thus a six pound parcel mailed from Montreal to Lachine would cost 12 cents, to Quebec City 30 cents, to Toronto or Halifax 40 cents, to Winnipeg 52 cents, Regina or Saskatoon 64 cents, and Edmonton or Vancouver 72 cents.

The same weight parcel, up to six pounds, mailed in Toronto for Oakville, would be 12 cents; mailed to Ottawa or Windsor, 30 cents; to Winnipeg or Quebec, 40 cents; to Regina or Halifax, 44 cents; Edmonton or Calgary, 64 cents; and Vancouver, 72 cents.

Comparing these rates, Montreal and Toronto have equal advantages within their own provinces. Montreal parcels pay the same rate to Ontario points as Toronto parcels pay to Quebec points. Montreal can ship more cheaply to the Maritime Provinces than Toronto, and Toronto can ship more cheaply to Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta than Montreal. Both pay the same rate to British Columbia.

The attached chart can be used in any province by simply changing the names on the four higher classes.



The Maximum charge on any parcel shall not exceed 1 cent an ounce.

PARCEL POST CHART

CANADA'S NEW PARCELS POST RATES.

This chart, copyrighted by Charles F. Collins, of the Toledo Scale Company, Toronto, shows at a glance the rates on parcels mailed in the Province of Quebec. The same rates prevail in each of the other provinces with the necessary changes in geographical names. For example, for Ontario rates, change "Ontario and Maritime Provinces" to "Quebec and Manitoba."