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Dr. Vogt in Europe

SOME musicians go back to Europe for a second sight. Such a traveller is Dr. A. S. Vogt, who left a few months ago to spend a year ransacking Europe from Rome to Moscow and Stockholm—for art's sake. Twenty-five years ago he went first to Leipsic; returning as a young man to Canada, his birthplace, to begin the foundations of the greatest choir in America. While aboard a steamer on his way back he was engaged by a church music committee in Toronto—without his knowledge or consent. In Jarvis Street Baptist Church he began to commence the practice of real expressional unaccompanied singing, such as made is possible to evolve the Mendelssohn Choir. Having since that time succeeded in thrilling the most critical centres of America by his great choir, he takes it into his head to make another pilgrimage through Europe.

What will he find—or bring back?

An odd parallel is to be found in a similar journey made in the year 1770, by Dr. Charles Burney, the English music-litterateur and student of art; himself a musician and a man of the world, much of a traveller, and a great observer, of whom says Vernon Lee in "Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy":

"In all these characteristics Dr. Burney was a perfect representative of the educated traveller of the eighteenth century: he was never surprised, entranced or horrified by anything he saw, he never imagined he saw what there was not; he looked about him coolly and complacently."

If Dr. Burney were alive again he might find something of a prototype in Dr. Vogt. The characterization, while not identical, is close enough for a parallel. The Canadian conductor ransacking the remote crannies of Europe for further illuminations on the art of music production will not be likely to suffer from illusions. Europe is a storehouse of musical lore which can only be discovered by a pilgrimage. The most ambitious choral conductor in the world is sure to find enough in the musical performances, the perpetuated traditions and novelties of Europe, to be of service in the furthest cosmopolitan development of his great choir. The journey will occupy twelve months. The choir-masters and orchestra-meisters of the most musical continent in the world had better beware. Once upon a time this Canadian made a practice of listening to the St. Thomas Kirche Choir in Leipsic. Saturday afternoon, when the church was cold as a barn, he sat there making records. The present Mendelssohn Choir has its roots in the choir of the St. Thomas Kirche; which when he hears it in 1912 may sound much different from what it did in 1888. Yet it may be the same or even a better choir. Such is evolution. "Travelling is a fool's paradise," said Emerson; somewhat chiding the essential ego he took with him on his travels through Europe.

But even Emerson was probably a better philosopher when he got back to Concord.

A Canadian Singer Abroad

MUSICAL progress in Canada of late years seems to be somewhat concerned with getting some musicians into the country and a few others out. The imports show an unfavourable balance of trade as against the exports. But among the illustrious minority of singers and players that Canada has sent to Europe to study and over the world again to perform, the West lays claim to at least two of commanding eminence. One is Kathleen Parlow, the violinist, born and schooled in Calgary. The other is Percy Redferne Hollinshead, who spent a good part of his young life in Manitoba and a few years in Winnipeg before going to Toronto.

When Percy Hollinshead gets back from his three years in Europe he will be in time to succeed to some of the laurels that Caruso and McCormack and Selezak may be dropping. In spite of all probable opinions to the contrary, it seems inevitable that this young Canadian is destined to rank as one of the greatest tenors of this age, and surely the greatest that ever went out from Canada.

At the present time, mainly from self study, observation, and a mere semblance of tuition, Hollinshead is in some respects a more satisfactory singer

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