

# A CONCERT THERE WAS

**J**UST one. Last week, for the first time in twenty seasons of evolution in music, America's greatest choir gave—just one concert. Lucky to get it. But we recollect that in 1894-95, its first season, the Mendelssohn Choir gave two concerts; season before last it was two—minus orchestra; the year Vogt was away in Europe it was none; last year it was two; five years ago it was five; ten years ago it was three.

One is an absolute novelty, even for the Mendelssohn Choir, which built itself up on new things.

Another novelty. Never before did the Choir sing with a local orchestra. An even bigger experiment. Symphony standards in choral music has been the Choir slogan for several seasons now. None but a first-calibre orchestra could be chosen to illustrate the idea. But people are so uneven in their musical tastes. Hundreds of people used to rave about the lovely unaccompanied work of the Choir. To them the orchestra was always a distraction. But when the no orchestra year came, they all grumbled. The price had gone up to make a big orchestra possible. When the band was taken off—because somebody suspected that German players might carry bombs in their music cases—the same people discovered that “a cappella” was not the sort of delicacy they liked in large doses. Last season the Russian orchestra came. More critiques. The Slavs were not up to standard. The Choir outshone, outpointed, outclassed them in every way.

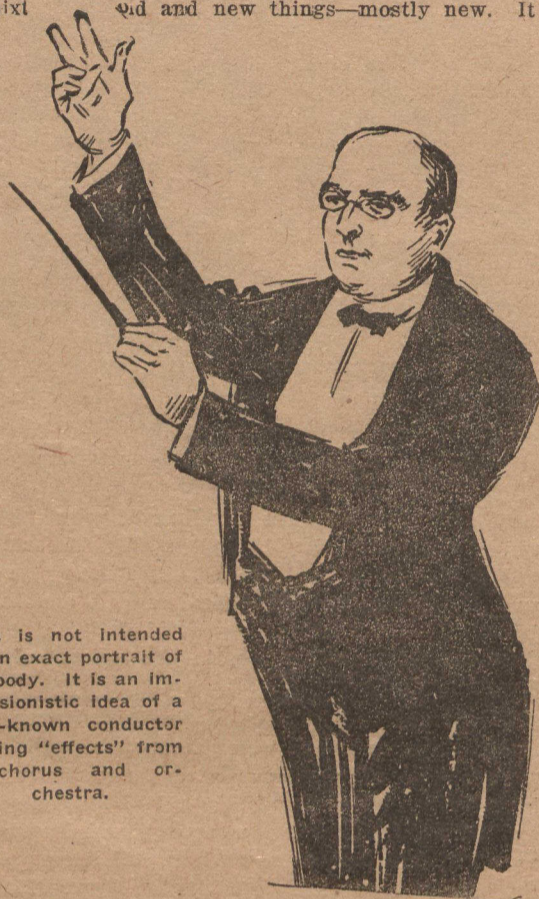
Not to be beaten in his effort to please popular taste, Vogt this year decided upon a local orchestra. This happens to have been a recommendation of the Canadian Courier two years ago, though we claim no credit for its having been adopted now, because Vogt usually manages to hit on the thing best for all parties concerned, and as a rule knows more about his own problems than anybody else does. It was freely said at the time that if he wanted to put on some big patriotic thing—say of Elgar—no player of any instrument or of any consequence in Toronto would decline to work under his baton. And with a few exceptions it turned out so. The orchestra that worked under the joint batons of Vogt and Welsman last week was in most essentials a band of first-class potentialities. To be sure it was sometimes hopelessly submerged by the Choir. But it proved a mighty effective complement to that great organization, and in its own concert numbers stood up to a good critical level of sterling art performance.

However, that's not the Choir, which, as always, was the main thing. To begin with, it must be confessed that the one programme of last week proved

## Heights and Depths of a Great Artistic Performance Analyzed

By THE MUSIC EDITOR

a rather disconcerting affair. It was totally unlike any other concert ever given by the Choir. It was a mixt of old and new things—mostly new. It



This is not intended as an exact portrait of anybody. It is an impressionistic idea of a well-known conductor getting “effects” from a chorus and orchestra.

was a combination of tragedy and near comedy and refined burlesque. It was ensemble and “a cappella.” It was international and cosmopolitan—British, Russian, American, Italian. It was a procession of lovely tone, superb artifice, super-climaxes and near-frivolities. But it was, after all, much of a post-impressionistic mirage. When it was all over nobody had a definite powerful impression, such as one always got from a big concert of the Mendelssohn Choir. We recall in this connection the Choral Symphony, the Deutsche Requiem, the Manzoni Requiem, the Vita Nuova and the Children's Crusade. These works always left an overpowering impression. They haunted people day after day. For the week of

choral performances de luxe, nothing else really seemed to be going on. The air was charmed with music. The town was lifted. The talk was of Beethoven and Verdi and Brahms and Bach, as in Irving's day it used to be of Shakespeare—and Irving.

None of this in 1917. This is, of course, a strange year in all art. The one reason is, war. More than half of the Vogt effectives in the male section are in khaki. One hundred per cent. of the Mendelssohn Choir clientele are for the third season under the cloud of war. People do not rise to the full height of musical enjoyment under these circumstances. They may flock to musical comedy, light opera, vaudeville, movies, even spectacular drama. But they do not respond to the highest provocations of great music, because that sort of music naturally creates a feeling of triumph and exaltation which must not be disturbed by any background spectre of—

Well, whatever the war is to all of us. When the Choir sang that small masterpiece of Elgar, the Elegy for the Fallen, it was all too presently real. The fallen were right over the way. We remember that Brahms' Deutsche Requiem was composed in memory of those who fell in war. But it was no war like this, and it was not until war was over and the natural feelings had a chance to get expression. Some other day, when the war is done, we may rise to the feeling of this master-work as the Choir and orchestra did to its performance. Not yet. Similarly in the same composer's Death on the Hills; a psychic bit of plaintiveness as poignant as a poem of Keats. We admired it—as art. We did not respond to its sentiments because no imagination was required to do so. The highest enjoyment of art must always make some call on the imagination. In the three humoresques of Grainger, Bantock and Dutt, there was an altogether different quality of appreciation. These were further from the reality. The Gaelic Song of Bantock was the best of the three. In the Hymns from the Church, Russian—Tchaikowsky's and Gretchaninoff's—there was no lack of charm and tonal beauty. But the Hymn of Requiem, How Blest Are They, an old Choir repertoire piece, was again too close to the facts of the case.

It is not necessary to harp on this psychic side of the Choir's work. Neither is it possible to ignore it. We observe that when Vogt interjected his own setting of Rule Britannia the audience came back to its historic form of other years. We might have had rather more of this kind to buck up our sentiments. Of course some brave soul will remark, “Poppycock! We can't always be singing bravado.” (Concluded on page 23.)

## WHEN AND WHY TO GAMBLE

By INVESTICUS

**F**AR be it from the editor of this department to slander the gentle art of gambling. A certain man writes to this paper and says we are doing nothing but knock speculation and boost the selling of sure-thing securities. He says he is a gambler and proud of it. He says he has made money gambling and intends to make some more—and if we don't give the gambling end of the game a fair show he will lose all faith in Investicus.

Thus challenged, we say again what we said to begin with: far be it from us to slander gambling. It is not the oldest vice in the world but it is, in a sense, the most aristocratic. It is intellectual rather than sensual. A good gambler is a philosopher, whereas a glutton, or a drunkard—well, leave them alone. Gambling has in it an element of courage and of imagination—too much imagination as a rule. It is a sport. It is—but there comes an end to its praises.

If in the realm of investment there were no gamblers, there would be no silver mines in Northern Ontario, no copper mines in British Columbia and

no Canadian Pacific Railway. Many of the best industrial concerns in Canada would never have started work and the hands they employ would have been without work in this country.

Nevertheless gambling in investments is on the whole a bad thing, simply because so many men and women allow their gambling instinct to be played upon by unscrupulous promoters, and because so many people gamble who can't afford to gamble. That is why Investicus has no hesitation in harping on the anti-gambling string.

If you have fifty dollars or a hundred or five hundred dollars to spare you are perhaps justified in buying a highly speculative stock. If you don't owe that money to your creditors or to your family. If you have good prospects for being able to replace that fifty in case you lose it outright—then there is an excuse for putting it up on some transaction where you stand to make a very high profit in a very

short time. The man who protested against our anti-gambling attacks, tells us that he has made big “killings” in mining shares from time to time. Once he made three hundred per cent. on his original investment in a very few weeks. Other people, who have not taken the trouble to write to this paper about it, have made even more than that on “war baby” deals. And there is no use denying that strokes of good fortune like that are sometimes worth trying for.

The trouble is, however, that it is usually the man or the woman who is hard-up who is most tempted to gamble. They say to themselves that if such and such a stock only goes up so many points—it will give them the money they need to meet the next mortgage payment, or the doctor's bill. Their imaginations conspire with their desires to upset their judgment. They buy what looks well in prospectus. Their great need, their great appetite for an easy solution to their financial

difficulties, is their undoing. They are the people to whom the protests of Investicus are addressed.

But if you will gamble, and if you can spare a little cash—don't gamble on the far-from-home prospect. Look up something near home, or something that is managed by some one whose standing cannot be doubted. Or if there is nothing near home that tempts you, and if you can't get a line on the men who are trying to get you to invest, then make diligent inquiry before you buy: very often your bank manager can find out something about the men behind a certain deal, or you may be able to write to the city and get the information.

Be sure of one thing. In making a speculative investment you are far more likely to do well if the man who solicits your advice owns-up that it IS a gamble. If he offers you guarantees—don't bite, unless they are that unheard of kind which is backed up by actual cash in the bank. Guaranteed speculations are in themselves a contradiction. If you must gamble be honest with yourself about it. Prepare