

Cringan and Holt were questioned by the teachers present on many points, in every case giving satisfactory answers. The utmost good humor prevailed throughout; no vote was taken, and the large audience dispersed with, doubtless, many new ideas gained by the supporters of both methods, but each apparently firm in the faith in which he had been educated. One thing, however, was clearly demonstrated—both Mr. Holt and Mr. Cringan are men of no mean attainments.

WRONGING COMPOSERS.

A PRACTICAL turn has been given to the question involved in the custom among singing societies of producing cantatas with the accompaniments transferred from an orchestra to pianoforte, through a controversy between Mr. Dudley Buck and the Choral Society of Washington. The society had begun the study of Mr. Buck's *The Light of Asia*, when, learning that it was purposed to give the work with organ accompaniment, Mr. Buck wrote a respectful protest against the proposed misrepresentation, argued the essential character of its instrumental part, and urged a postponement until circumstances should admit of a proper performance, saying: "I do not exaggerate in the least when I say that I had rather that *The Light of Asia* should never be publicly given than that it should be given without an orchestra." The secretary replied setting forth the difficulties in the way of such a performance as Mr. Buck desired, but the composer remained virtuously obdurate; and gave expression to words which deserve to be read by everybody devoted to the advancement of American music, as follows: "At this time in our musical history the first public performance of a large American work is of more than merely local significance. I am now speaking, not of my work only, but of the American cause, of the hopes of the future, and for younger men. By not giving a work its adequate and proper rendering at the outset you hinder, not advance, the progress of American musical art. Had my work already been given in its completeness, had it been judged by a fairly adequate performance for what it is, not for what it is not, I should, in your case, simply confine myself to an expression of regret, partially consoled by the compliment the Washington Choral Society propose to give me. As it is, I owe it to myself to protest against such a first performance. I appreciate your courtesy in offering to make any public statement which I may desire. I am anxious to go on record in this matter, for, to my mind, it involves far more than the personal interest of the undersigned. I look at it from the standpoint of a principle affecting many American works yet to come, and believe for myself and my colleagues that our motto and our true interest is found in the American line: 'Learn to labour and to wait.'" Efforts were made to secure an orchestra, but they failed, and *The Light of Asia* was performed with pianoforte and organ accompaniment. — *Musical Record*.

GOUNOD'S ADVICE.

SOME few weeks ago, Mr. St. Saëns requested Mr. Charles Gounod to say how much time daily, in his opinion, young ladies should devote to piano practice.

Mr. Gounod's reply, subsequently cabled to a New York daily, was short and positive: "The less time the better, unless the young lady studies for the profession," briefly concluding, "*Voilà mon opinion, je vous la livre*," which translated, means, "Here you have my opinion; I give it you freely."

The reader who receives impressions without caring to reason much may quite likely approve the great musician's verdict, and those who are not particularly musical, or are the victims of continued piano drumming in their immediate neighborhood at home, may likewise endorse expressions condemnatory of noisy practice.

It is true, music, when not wanted, is burdensome, and still more annoying when of poor quality. The thinker, the writer, the educated musician, or the tired and sick, all execrate and denounce noise, musical or otherwise, when quiet and rest are needed. In fact, instrumental and vocal practice is rarely agreeable to others, and it is to be hoped that the time is very near, in this ingenious age, when the sound of instruments can be sufficiently reduced by simple contrivance to prevent its travelling much beyond the room, yet have it retain enough good tone quality to preserve utility of practice. Reading over Gounod's letter a second time, and thinking it over carefully, the musician who has the progress of music at heart must come to the conclusion that it is an exceedingly superficial and thoughtless document. Concerning its intended effect, that of checking piano practice, I do not believe the young lady could be found willing to give up the pleasure of occupying herself with music, or lessen the time usually given to it, because a great musician has bidden her to do so.

Much better would it have been to pass word along the line of the grand army of teachers to urge and induce a more serious and careful study of the art, condemning all frivolous and superficial tampering with things holy. Such an opinion delivered by a Gounod to a Saint Saëns might have done much good! To recommend "as little practice as possible," is to encourage the superficial dallying and trifling, so degrading to the person and injurious to the art. The progress of music is, in a very large measure, if not wholly, dependent upon the manner in which the most complete and popular instrument, the piano, is studied. The piano plays an important part in almost every attempt to produce music (be it by amateur or professional) where an orchestra is not employed.

What would be the future of great musicians like Mr. Gounod, what the beneficial influences of their music, were the advice of the master just named carried into its last logical consequence?

To stop all amateurs from making good music (the "least possible practice" cannot produce it) would be to consign it to the professional student or graduated musician—equivalent to a speedy return to the middle ages, when the arts and the sciences were cultivated almost exclusively in monasteries.