

MUSICAL THOUGHTS

It was a crowded church, at the Musical Service, Sunday, and a quiet church, even when hymns were in order. It is said, by the way, that of so great a host of music-lovers, so few should be music-makers. Are the audience unfamiliar with "Old Hundred," or has "custom staled" its rather infinite variety? Or is there a feeling that, at a musical service, humble efforts are out of place? I own to the latter feeling. I can make a "joyful noise," but I hate to mix it with the lingering melodies of Beethoven and Mozart. I presume others feel the same. So they stand wondering while the hymn "drags its slow length along." But the spectacle seems a bit piteous.

It was a strange mingling—the music service of last Sunday—a mingling of new wine with old, of the end of the century with its inception. Yet the result pleased. It was an experience, in one concert, to run so vast a scale—music of gloom, of triumph, of sentiment, of aspiration, of dainty fancies, of barbaric conceits. It was a glimpse—if the ear can be said to catch glimpses—of a whole century of music.

The Rubinstein Andante was aggressively of the new—even from the first stolid snarl of its bass. It has the growl of the North, the spitting purr, the fitfully savage stress of the Slavonic East, mingled with the grotesque force of Ibsen, the Germanic mysticism of Wagner. It is dark music. It sighs from sombre fir-forests, from goblin-thronged wildernesses. Its gayety revels large. Its passion rages vehement, skirting brutality. Its triumph boasts un pitying. It is of the northern barbaric East, fretting in its assured fetters of civilization, striding clanking circles, snarling sullen indignation, clattering ominous chains. Behind it lie potentialities undressed, ambitions unimaginable, brutalities incomprehensible, depth on depth. It is well not to read too deeply.

And then, on the dying growls of the glorious barbarian comes the sweet, innocent tenderness of the Traumerel, the song to lull a tired child. Modern lullabies—Grieg's for example—cannot lull, they hint the terrors of the dark; they tell about the goblins that will not get you, that probably will not get you, and all so vividly that the dark becomes ten times more dreadful. The Traumerel knows nothing of goblins or of dark. It conceals them all in the delight of the dreams that shall come with sleep. It is sentimental—indeed in that lies its charm. In literature, sentiment has become a thing forbid. It is only in music that we may lapse into it, let it smooth the Rubinstein wrinkles, sing away the memory of the harsh chords that "joggle the wind." Akin to them lifts the lyric swell of Haendel, the calm confidence, simple to sameness, the long liquid message, aspiring to the utmost of content. Not the content of any one church-preached creed; it is the content to which all churches, all such calming songs alike aspire.

The little "Moment Musical" one can never tire of. It carries daintiness to the limit, even, it seems, at the close, beyond, into the domain of silence, the region of sounds sweetly inaudible. It is the music of fairyland—now caught in fact, now mere fancy—music for the airy friends of Shakespeare's Ariel, "Sweet as a singing rain of silver dew."

Mozart is a better Turk than Beethoven, Beethoven is too grandly, calmly, or playfully German, too thoroughly civilized. His "Turkish March," dainty, whimsical as it is, is capable only of fitful lapses into capricious treachery.

Mozart catches better the spirit of the southern barbarian. Turks are to him no mere natives of Turkey. They are the awful "ils" of Tartar an of Tarascon—the unspeakable "they"—they who bite, they who howl, they who scalp! Their playfulness is malignly insistant, their exultation barbaric. Not that they would really hurt anyone. They are mere midway savages, far less dangerous than those snarling Russians of Rubinstein. They will not stab, merely startle, capering in cymballed dances, flashing bewildering scimitars, only to vanish orderly from the stage at the cue of the last three chords. But while they are with us, they are very grim, very Turk, deliciously barbarian.

Miss Hattie Becker's singing at the Universalist church last Sunday afternoon, was charmingly simple, excellently sympathetic. The music that she sang, Haendel's "He Shall Lead His Flock," while easy to sing, so far as mere notes go, requires, from its simple sameness, great feeling in the singer. Like all music of its type it may be either grandly elevating or wearisomely insipid. And Miss Becker, while not, perhaps, making the most of it, so rendered it that every one could feel its beauty.

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Miss Mabel Howe went to Britt, Iowa, Wednesday.

Mrs. Ira D. Higby and children have returned from Wisconsin, where they have been visiting.

Dr. Ruth M. Wood entertained a number of her friends at her home, 336 South Thirteenth street, Wednesday afternoon. Tea was served at six o'clock.

Tonight the Sigma Chi boys will have a big reunion to top off the Kansas-Nebraska game. "Sigs" from all over the state are here and have brought their voices with them. They will attend the football game this afternoon and tonight will recuperate their wasted energies about the festal board. John Dixon will be toastmaster and he assures me that all the toasts will be entirely impromptu, and that no Sig knoweth the day nor the hour that he may be called upon nor what subject will be assigned him.

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