

STRIKING A FEW OCTAVES!

By O. O. McINTYRE

I have recently been taking piano lessons by mail. I had high hopes of being able to offer something in the way of a parlor trick when invited out for the evening. I am one of those mental zeros to be found in almost any gathering where everybody else is merry and bright.

I somehow manage to find the most uncomfortable chair in the place and while the others exchange what is known in New York as gossip and in Hollywood as dirt I just twiddle my thumbs.

There comes a time when the hostess usually has a pang of sympathy for me and tries to brighten my evening by showing me a hand-painted miniature of grandpop. Whenever they begin showing you miniatures it means that if you ever had an idea there was a wild strain in you and that you might become the life of the party you were being kidded.

You are just a social dud. So that is why I fell for the lure of a music-by-mail ad. The trouble with those birds is that they never give a sucker an even break. I thought in two weeks I would be able to play one of those dashing tunes they play at the movies. You know—"Launching of the S. S. Colorado"—and then the close-up, "The Governor's Daughter."

But after a month I can't even play "Blue Bells of Scotland" and I will be willing to trade all my music lessons for a couple of animal crackers. I don't even know how to put on the loud pedal and the second instalment on the piano is due Tuesday.

Defeated by the Villain.

There was a time when I was something of a mandolin player. I used to sit out on the front porches with the girls, play, "I Guess I'll Have to Telegraph My Baby," be served with one of those medicated bandage things known as a jelly roll and a glass of milk and go home imagining I was a cat's cuff.

About that time a new hotel clerk arrived from the city with an accordion and left us mandolin players high and dry. How we hated that fellow.

There is something about a fellow who plays the piano the girls like. They cluster about him, fix



"Cake eaters are now known as sax hounds."

his tie, and pick fluff of his shoulder. He seems to wear a halo of romance. It might be—and often is—the only thing he can do, but he manages to have a dinner suit and be invited everywhere.

I'm not knocking the music-by-mail idea. There may be those who can master it in this fashion, but I'm not one of them. It was rather disconcerting to be at the daily practice just as a bellboy at my hotel came to deliver a package. I did a two finger exercise for his benefit and he said it was rather good.

It's Just a Gift.

"I play a little myself," he ventured and I gave over the piano

stool to him. He sat down and made the piano luff. He had never taken a music lesson in his life and played entirely by ear.

He even did some of those pieces where you cross your hands and run a few scales by ripping process, with the index finger. If he had been a good strong boy I would have given him the piano to carry away with him.

I wonder why it is you rarely find a real fat man who plays the piano. As a rule piano players are thin, rangey and have to stand twice to make a shadow. I suppose if the fingers are pudgy you can't reach the octaves. Also you never find a fat pickpocket. If I

can't learn to play the piano I can at least sneer at those who do.

Piano players should be started on their career early in life. I got away to a bad start. I took three lessons from the piano professor in our town. He charged 25 cents a lesson and made \$20 a month extra by being the depot agent. After the third lesson he got a regular job as a brakeman and left all the piano fledglings in town flat.

Turning Back the Pages.

I used to make quite a study of piano players in the old days of the saloon back room. Just a sociological study, of course. They were good tough lads who gave freely of their art for pitched nickels and free drinks. They had a way of throwing one leg across the other sitting half sideways and permitting a rolled cigarette to hang loosely from their lips.

They "improvised" things and about the only exercise they got was shortly before the last round when they plopped off the stool to the floor in a sort of haze. Sometimes they slept on the pool table and other times where they happened to fall. The barkeeps spoke of them as "piano artists" and most of them had gold teeth and wore careless looking flannel shirts.

I remember in the days when "Over the Rhine" in Cincinnati was a flourishing row of beer concert halls and the piano player was quite a fellow. If he looked over at your table and bowed a greeting you got about the same reaction that some people get when Belasco greets them in the lobby.

Important, Yet Democratic.

The beer hall pianist seemed to us in those days as a personage. When the girl with the pale taffy hair sang her sentimental songs she had a way of flashing him a smile that rather made you envious. And the cross table comedians with green whiskers would speak to him familiarly as Eddie or Jimmie. Still, at that, he was democratic and easy to meet. The offer to buy him a beer made him your friend.

But that type of pianist passed out with the saloon. Today they take their cue from Paderewski—wear flowing locks, flowing ties and handkerchiefs in their cuffs. They

seem far above mundane things and go in for atmosphere.

The juvenile phenoms wear Lord Fauntleroy suits and are as carefully guarded as a dauphin. When the seeds of genius were planted they appear to have garnered the entire crop.

In one of the great concert halls not long ago the pianist was rendering one of those intricate pieces. A woman in the balcony happened to cough. He stopped, snapped into a spell of hysteria and went shrieking into the wings and it took several doctors to bring him around to his normal self. Of course, it was all right. After all, there are tricks in all trades but you cannot help but think the lad lived for years in a tenement flat on the level with the elevated railroad where you have to close the windows to carry an ordinary conversation.

And then for one suppressed little cough to upset him so. Well, it is daubing it on a bit thick.

Girls who have to be coaxed to play the piano are a nuisance. After persuading them you generally find they have brought their music along and expected to play anyway and would have been hurt if they hadn't been asked.

Sax Hounds Hold Sway.

Just now the saxophone business is putting a crimp in the popularity of the pianist. The fellow who can play a saxophone has the edge, especially in New York.

And while I started talking about pianos there is no reason why a few paragraphs may not be devoted to the saxophone. There is, in the metropolis, an army of 16,000 saxophone players.

Every boy going to college now equips himself with one. Even old men, daunted by the chill indifference that comes with years, are learning to give forth the moaning arias.

And young girls carry them instead of the uke. You can stir up a duplicate of the Six Brown Brothers in almost any gathering. In one night cafe there is a sign: "Patrons are not permitted to bring saxophones to the table."

Cake eaters are being referred to as "sax hounds." And they must be seen and heard to be appreciated.

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Latest Developments Research and Invention Throughout World

According to steam engineers, it takes 10 tons of black coal, turned into steam, to make one horsepower.

An all-metal electric incubator has been invented, to hold from 60 to 100 eggs. It is heated automatically.

A pitchfork with removable prongs, which can be replaced if broken, has been invented by a Canadian.

A substitute for wool is being manufactured from cork in Spain. The cork is first treated with chemicals to remove any resinous substances and to make it flexible.

The new anesthetic, made up of ethylene gas, is a derivative of coal tar, and is said to be non-nauseating and quicker in effect than any other gaseous anesthetic now in use.

Scientific engineers at work in the bureau of standards in Washington are paid from \$1,400 to \$4,000 a year. At the age of 70, the head of a bureau receives a pension of \$1,000 a year.

To record the speed of racing cars, an electrical timing device, costing \$6,000, is used. The time is recorded as the front wheels of the speeding machine touch a wire which is stretched across the track.

A new tire inflating safety device, has been patented. It is an air gauge which automatically cuts off the flow after the pressure has risen to a point previously set on an indicator attached to the regular hose connection.

The Prussian state library in Berlin, Germany, has a "talking department," which collection contains actual sounds of all languages and dialects of the world. The records were made with the aid of a talking machine.

The new Don Pedro dam on the Tuolumne river, near Modesto, Cal., is the highest dam in the world. It rises 233 feet. With appurtenances it cost about \$4,000,000. The wall is 1,040 feet long and 176 feet thick at base. The arch has a radius of 675 feet.

The most famous rug in the world, worth about \$250,000, is in the South Kensington museum, in England. It is known as the Arbatil dug, as it was made in a little town by that name. This wonderful carpet measures 34 by 17 feet, and contains 30,000,000 knots. It took 16 years to make.

A process has been discovered in England whereby skimmed milk can be made into a substitute for ivory, ebony, amber, tortoise shell, horn and other similar materials. The composition is non-inflammable, odorless and can be drilled, glued and dyed.

Prof. W. Lee Lewis of Northwestern university, inventor of Lewisite and other high explosives and deadly gases used in the world war, has equipped his home with

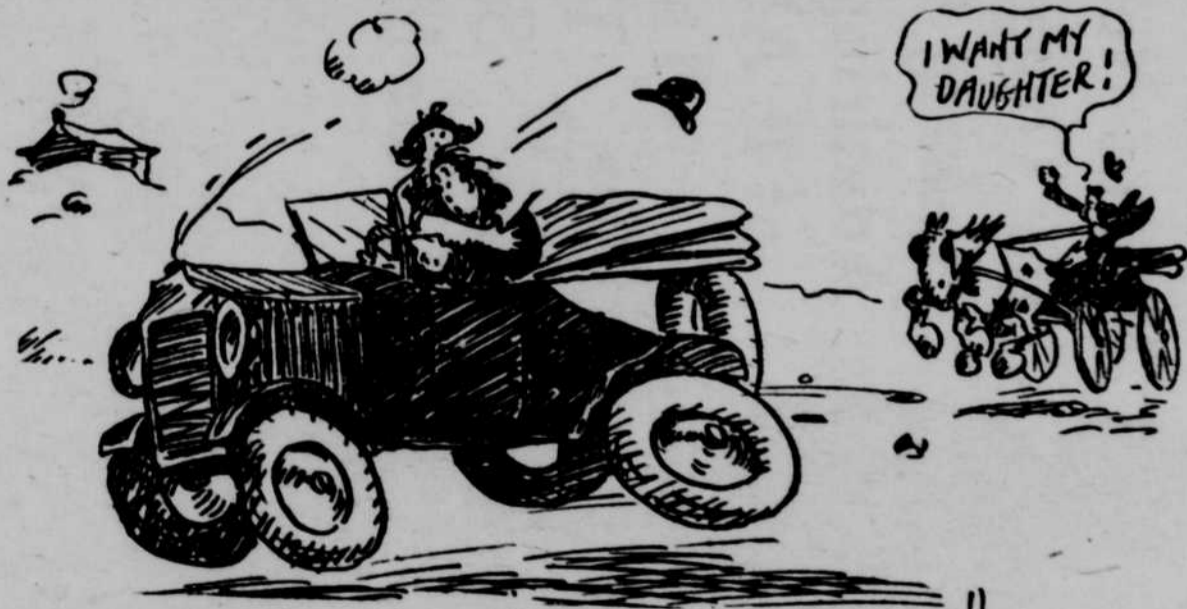
a burglar alarm attached to a tear-gas bomb. All he has to do when the bomb goes off is to call the police and tell them to bring an ambulance.

Through a new process of steel tempering, a cold crowbar can be chopped into chunks with an ax, and a steel rod can be whittled into shavings with a pocketknife. The process consists of the use of certain chemicals in water or oil in the tempering vessel. It is declared

that any kind of tool—from a blunt hammer head to a keen-edged razor—can be tempered to a perfection never before attained.

According to students of ethnology, 10 great fundamental factors have influenced the evolution of civilized man. They are: Fire, the bow and arrow, pottery, domestic animals, iron smelting, writing, gunpowder, printing, steam and electricity.

ABE MARTIN On What the Auto Is Doing



Our Idea of a Futile Case.

We do not deny that th' automobile is a great invention an' a great blessin' to mankind when properly used, an' we might in all truthfulness say th' same thing about alcohol. But how is th' automobile bein' used? We don't believe no invented contrivance in all history, not barrin' th' shotgun, or pistol, th' golf stick, th' automatic plunger, th' distillin' coil, th' bathin' suit, or even th' roller skate, has done so much toward th' general demoralization of a nation as th' automobile. Th' automobile is used t' negotiate ever' sort o' deviltry under th' sun, 'cept prob'ly poison pen letter writin'. Nine-tenths of our crimes an' calamities are made possible by th' automobile. It has unleashed all th' pent-up criminal tendencies o' th' ages. It's th' central figure in murders, holdups, burglaries, accidents, eiopements, failures an' abscondments. It retards th' realization o' th' prohibi-

tion amendment, an' it has wigh-nigh jimmed th' American home. No crime story is complete without she or he or they tore out in a high-powered car, no robbery has th' true ring unless th' bandits jumped in a waitin' car an' made good ther escape. No girl is missin' that wuzn' last seen steppin' in a strange automobile. It didn' used t' be so blamed easy t' rob a bank, or murder somebody, an' git away in a buggy, or on a hand car. In th' ole days criminals occasionally grabbed a passin' freight train, an' sometimes they had t' hide in swamps an' thickets for weeks. High brow defaulters used t' have t' cover ther tracks till they could climb in a Pullman an' start fer Mexico, but they nearly allus got caught. But t'day most any kind of a criminal is a couple o' hundred miles t' th' good before a sheriff kin find his hat, an' a daughter kin

elope an' be married an' settled in Erie, Pennsylvania, before her parents miss her. Ever' day marks some new an' disgraceful automobile escapade, some awful automobile calamity, or some sensational escape in an automobile. An' ever' minute in th' day somebody is stealin' an automobile. An' ther hain't a day rolls by that somebody hain't sellin' ther sewin' machine, or ther home, or somethin' on account of an automobile. An' it's too bad that anything as grand an' comfortable and useful as th' automobile must be constantly mixed up in shady transactions o' ever' sort, fer it must be admitted that it's th' leadin' figure in all th' mischief that's goin' on. Maybe th' jails an' workhouses are empty, but that's not because th' world is gittin' better. It's because all th' criminals escape in automobiles.

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Mars Nearer Earth in 1924 Than Any Time During This Century

By PROF. W. H. PICKERING.

Mandeville, Jamaica, Oct. 6.—At midnight (London time) on August 22, 1924, the planet Mars will be nearer the earth than has been the case for over 120 years, and nearer than it will be again during the present century.

It will appear brighter than Jupiter, and during the whole of the months of August and September will hang like a great red lantern in our southern skies.

Regarding possible communication with Mars little can be said.

Two expert observers have, however, in different years, independently seen what appeared to be minute bright flashes coming from the planet.

One of these observers was so explicit as to say that they came from the region of the Mare Acidalium, and that he saw three in rapid succession early in the evening and then, later, three more. He has seen none since.

(The Mare Acidalium is one of those dark patches on the surface of the planet which, following the same reasoning as that adopted in the case of the moon, the 16th century astronomers thought to be seas. Hence the name. Their precise nature is still unknown.)

Both observers agreed, however, that what they saw were probably simply optical illusions, due to fatigue of the eye, and could not possibly have been real.

We have satisfactory evidence of intelligent life on the planet.

As to the "canals," they certainly are not water channels, nor vegetation growing along water channels.

What the "Canals" Are.

They are either bands of moistened soil or vegetation growing on moistened soil. They cannot be anything else, for we know of no solid in the mineral world that darkens and then fades out again in the sunlight.

Nor is it likely that they are strings of animals. If there are nocturnal showers on Mars these as they traveled along would leave narrow bands of moistened surface along which vegetation could spring up.

If we assume Martians, on the other hand, with intelligence at least as great as that of ants, they might, for some reason, choose to plant their vegetation in long bands.