

MUSIC

By JOHN P. DUFFIELD.

To illustrate the difference of opinion to which a musical performance may give rise in the minds of qualified judges, the following passages are cited from two London papers relative to Walter Damrosch's recent visit there in the capacity of orchestral conductor.

The "Telegraph" critic finds everything lovely. Says he: "But there was no doubting the perfect control of Mr. Damrosch over his orchestra. And the last climax in the overture was admirable in its intensity and able preparation. Praise must also be given to orchestra and conductor for the tactful—and, indeed, flawless—manner in which they accompanied the concerto."

But now give ear to the oracular pronouncements of the "Times" reviewer as he passes judgment on the same affair: "Mr. Damrosch, one feels, knows what he wants, but does not give his players the lead just when they require it. He is indefatigable in pointing out details which they know already. In the symphony chords were not together, rhythm was heavy and inflexible, slowest movement was the third, when the changes of time were so clumsily managed that at the return to the first theme the pizzicato of the fiddles actually went astray."

Both critics were doubtless faithfully recording what they heard and saw, but the circumstance that they heard and saw differently renders their collective comment valueless to the reader.

However, one does not need to travel to London in order to find instances of widely divergent opinion. The Musical Courier conducts a weekly column under the caption "What the Jury Thinks," where conflicting critical comments are printed side by side, with results often as amusing as they are accurate.

A recital by Emma Calve, given in New York on January 8, brought forth the following from the "Tribune": "Time has dealt gently with her voice. In fact, most of the former color is still present and the enchanting timbre of her tones is still preserved."

In the light of this it comes as a rather severe jolt to read in the "Herald": "The voice long ago lost its marvelous pliancy, its voluptuous tints, its subtle shades, and acquired a hardness and brittleness which robbed it of much of its pristine eloquence."

Again both writers are giving an honest transcript of their feelings on hearing Calve sing. The fact that one feels one way and the other an entirely different way simply leads to the conclusion that criticism is an expression of individual opinion and nothing more. If you have faith in the individual you confide in the opinion.

This column "What the Jury Thinks" is very entertaining and at the same time enlightening as a means for showing what contrary conclusions may be reached by the erudite, the cognoscenti. If our critic singles out a pianist's tone for special praise, another will be certain to visit upon it his particular condemnation, finding it hard, dry, metallic. Of one singer it was recently written: "Her extraordinary art was at its finest and most comprehensive; whereas another writer's report of the artist in the same performance was to the effect that: "It was very evident, once she had begun to sing, that she was suffering from a bad throat."

Of course, both could not be right. The singer was either suffering from a bad throat or she was not, and if she was her art could hardly have been at its finest and most comprehensive. But there is no reason for doubting the sincerity of the two reviewers whose reports were so pointedly at variance. They gave evidence concerning what they heard, or thought they heard, and people do not hear alike.

To come still nearer home in this record of conflicting estimates, it is to be noted that Margaret Matzenauer, who appeared here recently in recital, left behind her no small dissent as to her artistic status. There are those who would place her on a pedestal along with the greatest of the great, and others, including the writer of these lines, deny that she possesses the essential attributes of true artistic greatness. She has, it is true, a superlatively beautiful voice, and has brought to a state of splendid efficiency the mechanism means concerned in producing it. But great singing, as we fondly believe, is more than these things, though it necessarily includes them. We are still of the opinion that high social art transcends the correct use

of the breathing apparatus, the proper placing of tones, intelligent employment of the principles of resonance, the meticulous enunciation of words. Singing, to be great, must carry a spiritual message. It must be able to plumb the emotional depths or to wing its way to the starry heights of mental exaltation. It should experience each moment of calm serenity, of dark and tragic passion. When we sit under the spell of truly great art, "Some chord in unison with what we hear is touching within us, and the heart replies."

There are those whose hearts must have replied to Madame Matzenauer's song. They are more fortunate than we. The mind admitted, but the chord within failed to be touched. We have experienced more thrill from one song by Schumann-Heink than from Matzenauer's entire program. When Schumann-Heink sang Schumann's "Wanderung" and "Love and Life" cycle every song became charged with deep spiritual significance, every line was searched for its inner message. Moments of ecstatic joy, quiet contemplation, tenderness, anticipation and dark despair followed each other in bewildering succession. Here, indeed, was feeling made vocal, and the heart leaped in response.

Louise Homer is another whose art in our humble estimation has power to reach the soul's recesses. In recital or in opera her singing always has seemed a marvelous mingling of mind, musicianship and emotion.

To Miss Matzenauer's polished and admirable singing we have no desire to render anything but full justice.

The review of her recital published in these columns paid tribute to the "rich and lustrous beauty" of her voice and did homage to her art as being "many-sided, vivacious and of radiant charm." No mention was made of sublimated grandeur of conception or depth of swelling emotion for the reason that these were not apprehended.

We admired the artist exceedingly and think the Tuesday Musical Club did a fine thing for the city in bringing her for a recital. But we heard nothing in the performance that might entitle the performer to rank with the really great recitalists of the past and present.

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The second day will bring a morning musical by the Bel Canto men's chorus and the Chadron Normal trio, whose members are Vivien Bard, pianist; Roy Peterson, violinist, and Richard Yardley, cellist. The several students' contests are scheduled for both the morning and afternoon. Luncheon will be tendered by the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce. There will be demonstrations in piano, voice and violin teaching conducted respectively by Hazel Kinsella of Lincoln, Florence Basler Palmer of Omaha, and Carl F. Streckelberg of Lincoln. Tuesday evening will be devoted

to a piano recital by E. Robert Schmitz.

The third day will begin with a short musical program, followed by the annual business meeting and election of officers. The afternoon program provides an address by Hester Bronson Copper of this city, who will give interesting data regarding the local City Concert club. There will also be a special musical program and an automobile ride around the city.

Chicago Organist Comes to World

After negotiations of several months the World Realty company announces the engagement of Arthur F. Hays as chief organist for their new World theater, which will open next Saturday.

Mr. Hays is recognized as one of the foremost artists on the organ and comes to the World from the Tivoli theater, Chicago.