

THE CRITIC TALKS TO MUSIC LOVERS Weekly Comment on Things Musical in Discriminating Philadelphia

THE visit of the Vatican Choirs to Philadelphia this week brought to a direct manner the subject of religious music, especially the relative values of the old and the modern music of this time. With the exception of a good bit of modern sacred music is excellent, it is equally true that an equal if not greater amount of it is not well adapted to the uses for which it is composed.

There might well be a revival in some of our larger churches, with choirs capable of singing it and willing to devote the necessary time to rehearsals, of some of this older music. Polyphonic music is unquestionably the real music of the church. It always has dignity, often grandeur, and while capable of expressing the deepest religious feeling, does not lend itself to those elements which began to creep into church music with the rise of the opera, especially the "Stabat Mater" of Rossini, which, musically considered, can scarcely be called sacred.

THE Vatican Choirs sang without accompaniment and showed by practical demonstration what we have always known, that church music and, in fact, all concerted vocal music gains greatly by being sung a cappella. The most beautiful piece of music ever composed by a boy less than twenty years of age. This was the one novelty of the first concert. It was a setting of the "A Child's Garden of Verses" and the program concluded with the mighty Fifth Symphony of Beethoven.

There is little that need, or can be said about the Weber, Mendelssohn and Beethoven numbers. They have all been repeatedly played before by the orchestra, and Mr. Stokowski's reading of all of them was little different from that which he has given in the past. It is exceedingly difficult to follow, to many members of the average church choir, however, which usually holds only one rehearsal before the public service, the sustaining voice of the organ is a very timely and present help in time of trouble. A cappella singing is indeed the test, not only of the music, but of the singers as well.

AN INTERESTING comparison might be made of the Vatican Choirs and the choir of the Russian Cathedral in New York, which sang here a concert, but which is now, unfortunately, temporarily abandoned. These two organizations gave about the finest examples of a cappella singing that has ever been heard in Philadelphia, but the style was totally different. The outstanding feature of the Vatican Choirs was their high perfect ensemble, while that of the Russian choir was the beauty of tone, especially in the lower voices.

In the soprano section, the voices of the boys of both choirs were like the wonderful, the Italian being a freer thinker in quality, probably on account of having three or four adult male sopranos (falsetto singers), while the Russians depend entirely upon the boys' voices. While it is true that boys' voices have the delightful freshness of youth, it cannot be denied that the tone quality, even in the best, is a little strident and lacking in the liquidity and flexibility of the female soprano voice. Translated into orchestral idiom, the female voice is like the tone of the flute, and the boy's voice like that of the oboe. The combination of both voices, as was heard in the Episcopal diocesan victory festival last spring, was to many more satisfactory than either alone.

THE revival of Palestrina, even in the few motets which the Vatican Choirs sang so delightfully, showed clearly that he had the factors of religious music. He wedded out the banalities of the three Flemish schools of Ockeghem, Josquin des Pres, Gombert, Willaert and others, but he did not counterpoint had become an end and not a means, and in fifty years set Italian sacred music upon a plane to which it has never since risen. And in this connection it should not be forgotten that he lived almost a century and a half before Sebastian Bach.

It is true that Palestrina never reached the heights of the more religious music, but then, for that matter, neither has any one else. There is in Palestrina no such thrilling effects as in the beginning of the Kyrie of the B minor mass, the solemnity of the closing chorus of the St. John Passion, or the supreme beauty of the St. Matthew Passion or the Christmas Oratorio, but the religious feeling and the solemnity is present in an almost a degree as in the music of the Leipzig master.

Palestrina is more formal in his music than Bach. He was not able to break entirely the shackles of counterpoint which the Flemish composers had riveted upon the musical world, in favor of a freer expression of his ideas, as Bach did, though perhaps the musical restrictions of his church had something to do with this.

THE influence of Palestrina, even upon latter-day religious music, was shown in the music which the Russian choir sang, although it was all Russian, largely Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff. The Tchaikovsky of the Russian church is, however, not the Tchaikovsky of the Sixth (Pathetic) Symphony, nor is the Rachmaninoff of the Russian church the "Isle of the Dead," or of the C minor piano concerto. When they wrote for the church they took their models from the masters of ancient Catholic Church music, and in this the end means Palestrina.

Palestrina wrote usually in five parts. Bach generally in four, though sometimes in five, and the Russians in any where from four to eight. This was the usual procedure, though there were many cases where this number has been greatly exceeded, running, in the case of the Italians, as high as forty, and in the case of certain ambitious English and Flemish composers far beyond this. Palestrina nearly always wrote in the fifth part in the higher voices, rarely

ORCHESTRA OPENS SEASON BRILLIANTLY First Concert Consists of Old Favorites and One Novelty. Vast Audience Present

The twentieth season of the Philadelphia Orchestra opened at the Academy of Music yesterday with an enthusiastic and fair to make it the most successful of any that the Orchestra has yet experienced. Nearly every seat was occupied and the immense audience greeted the appearance of Mr. Stokowski with rapturous applause.

There was little experimental music in Mr. Stokowski's first program. It opened with the familiar "Oberon" overture of Weber, a work old in year but ever fresh and young in spirit. This was followed by three excerpts of the Midsummer Night's Dream music by Mendelssohn, the Overture, the Nocturne and the Wedding March, all of which were played by the most remarkable piece of music ever composed by a boy less than twenty years of age.

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Next week's concert by the Philadelphia Orchestra will be given at the Academy of Music, and will be conducted by the young American violinist, a talented young American violinist. A number of the orchestra will also be represented by the orchestra, and will be conducted by the young American violinist, a talented young American violinist.

The first performance in Philadelphia of the new opera, "The Bohemian Girl," will be given at the Academy of Music, and will be conducted by the young American violinist, a talented young American violinist.

Next Sunday afternoon at a school the first of a series of organ recitals will be given on the new organ of the First Presbyterian Church, and will be conducted by the young American violinist, a talented young American violinist.

At the half-hour of music which will open the regular evening service at St. Paul's Church, the organist, will be assisted by the young American violinist, a talented young American violinist.

Among the soloists who are to appear during the season with the Philadelphia Orchestra, are: Miss Thelma Helmer as Lillian, and Alfred G. Ritter as Lillian.

BIG PROBLEMS OF THE FAR EAST

ASIATIC PROBLEMS STATED FOR U. S. Three Important Books Discuss China and Japan. India and Korea

IT WILL not be for want of comprehensive books on the subject if American ignorance and indifference to the numerous problems—commercial, social and moral—of its foreign relations and obligations continue to the extent and profundity of the past. The popular mind is just waking to the important implications of Asiatic policies. They affect us deeply in the present, and they will be even more and more urgent and urgent as time goes on. An understanding of them is very much worth while establishing immediately, that our country's unconcern may not reach its climax in a new and unexpected way.

Three new books on Asiatic matters help very informally and definitely in this much to be desired comprehension. And, like Mr. Thomas Millard's recent book on China and Korea, they are very authoritative book, and one of special value, as it emphasizes the American standpoint, these three volumes are very timely and useful to our moral obligations to the nations of the East, and to our economic interests there that need cautious safeguarding; they are strongly sympathetic to the Chinese side of such matters as the Shanghai concession.

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NICHOLAS BIDDLE'S CORRESPONDENCE

It Reveals the Relations of the J. P. Morgan of His Time to Important Questions

Nicholas Biddle, who was the J. Pierpont Morgan of his time, left a vast mass of correspondence which has been deposited in the Library of Congress. He was president of the Bank of the United States from 1822 until 1836, when he was elected president of a new banking corporation organized under the laws of this state. He fought President Jackson in an attempt to prevent the destruction of the great bank and he was seriously considered as a candidate for the presidency.

There is no adequate biography of him. Reginald C. McGrane, assistant professor of history in the University of Cincinnati, has announced that he is preparing a life to be published in the near future. In preparation for writing the book he has studied the correspondence in Washington and has found it so important in its bearings on the history of American history that he has edited that part of it relating to public questions and put it into a sumptuous volume. The book is a valuable contribution to the history of the United States from 1822 until 1836, when he was elected president of a new banking corporation organized under the laws of this state.

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With Miss Alcott's Charm

His Latest Story—His Greatest Novel HAROLD BELL WRIGHT

It is given a book for girls high praise to say it is in Miss Alcott's charm, but this high praise is well deserved by "Leave It to Doris," by Ethel Hueston. There are several obvious counter-parts through the book is not at all imitative. For instance there are four girls just as there was a quartet in the March family and in age and temperament they are very human, which is what makes their domestic annals so natural, spontaneous and charming. The picture drawn of paragon life is delicately done, and, is by no means unskillful.

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CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS FIFTH AVE. AT 48th ST. NEW YORK

ROMANCE OF LINCOLN "The Soul of Ann Rutledge" Novelizes an Early Love

Abraham Lincoln has been the subject of many poems, such as, for instance, Edwin Markham's splendid blank verse, here of a play by John Drinkwater, the contrast of short stories, such as Mary Shipman Raymond's Andrews' "The Perfect Tribute" and of course the soul and substance of numerous biographies and histories of the period. It is not surprising that she has hereof as the protagonist of a full length novel. This status he attains in Mrs. Bernice Babcock's "The Soul of Ann Rutledge," the newest addition of Lincolniana.

According to tradition that is rather substantial, Ann Rutledge, a girl of sweetness of face and form and charm who contributed to the financial and moral support of the young Lincoln in the Middle West of the thirties of the last century, was the object of Lincoln's youthful romance. Doubtless her example inspired some of the nobility which pushed him from peak to peak of the career which was to leave him, martyred, among the immortals of history.

Mrs. Babcock takes this as her theme—the spiritual love of Lincoln for the girl—and his abiding faith in the soul's ability and the persistence of the spirit after death. She creates an interesting background of the time and the place—the rude, stalwart, growing yearning west of the emancipation war, the community life, the beauty of the backwoods and the towns, the humor of the people and their indomitable spirit are all incorporated in her readable pages. It is an excellent novel of the quasi-historical class, relevant in its statement of love and delicate in its every touch.

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Admiral Fiske's public service includes many important inventions, frequent authoritative essays and reports, and a large share in the progress that has made the navy the one arm of our defense ready to meet any emergency.

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War Words Defined

Prof. C. Alphonso Smith, of the Naval Academy at Annapolis, has compiled a book of the new words developed by the war and of old words used in new ways. He says that there are more and more words in the dictionary for the reason that it contains no definitions and because each word is followed by one or more questions in which it is used in such a way that its proper meaning appears. The book will be a useful supplement to the old dictionaries, for one can find in it scores of words not found in any other dictionary.

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