

OBERLIN A COLLEGE OF HIGH MUSICAL IDEALS

By FREDERICK H. MARTENS

JEAN-FRÉDÉRIC OBERLIN, the German Protestant pastor and philanthropist (1740-1826), after whom Oberlin College is named, was a man whose life was devoted to improving the spiritual and æsthetic, as well as the material condition of the inhabitants of those Vosgian valleys on the borders of Alsace and Lorraine, where wonted rural quietudes now re-echo to the thunder of the guns of the world war. In his teachings he laid stress on the value of the æsthetic experience in the permanent broadening of outlook in life, which from its very inception has been a factor in Oberlin's educational mission. And in no one branch of æsthetics in the academic curriculum of the institution which bears his name have his ideals and precepts born better fruit than in music.

From the very foundation of the college, in 1833, in which year the name of the Rev. E. P. Ingersoll appears in the catalogue as Professor of Sacred Music, Oberlin has devoted attention to the art. The names of George N. Allen (1837-1864), of George W. Steele, who succeeded him, and during whose incumbency of the chair of music Oberlin Conservatory became affiliated with the college proper, and of Fenelon B. Rice, Professor Steele's successor, "to whose indefatigable efforts and remarkable executive ability it is due that Oberlin has grown to be the remarkable institution that it is," all mark mile-stones in Oberlin's progress toward its present high standing as an academic center of unusual musical importance.

Prof. Charles Walthall Morrison was appointed director of Oberlin Conservatory on the death of Professor Rice in 1901 and is its present head. His administration has been widely recognized as an ideal example of the simultaneous development of both the executive and artistic sides of a large educational system. No more convincing proof of his ability is needed than the fact that Oberlin's reputation as an academic music center has of recent years attracted so many young men and women desirous of taking advantage of its course (the college is co-educational) that it has been found necessary to limit the number of students at the conservatory to four hundred.

Professor Morrison, whose work as an educator has brought him honorary degrees from various academic institutions, is aided in his work by a faculty of some thirty-seven members, prominent among whom are Professor Carter (piano-forte), Prof. George Whitfield Andrews (organ) and his associate, Prof. Fred-eric B. Stevens; Prof. A. S. Kimball and E. George Sweet (singing), and Prof. Edward Dickinson (history and criticism of music). Professor Dickinson,

A Leader in Placing Stress on the Value of Music in General Education—Conservatory Long Affiliated with the College Proper—How the Problem of Giving Credits for Practical Work in Music Has Been Solved—The General Plan of Study

in particular, is widely known as the author of various notable works in his special field: "The History of Music in the Western Church," "The Education of a Music-Lover," "A Study in the History of Music" and "Music and the Higher Education," books which have established his reputation as a thinker,

the various departments of musical activity.

Oberlin gives its students a thorough foundation in music for further specialization in whatever branch of the musical profession they may wish to pursue. Professor Stevens says: "It is too often the case that the musician is extremely

are elective courses in instrumentation, orchestration, advanced history of music and appreciation of music.

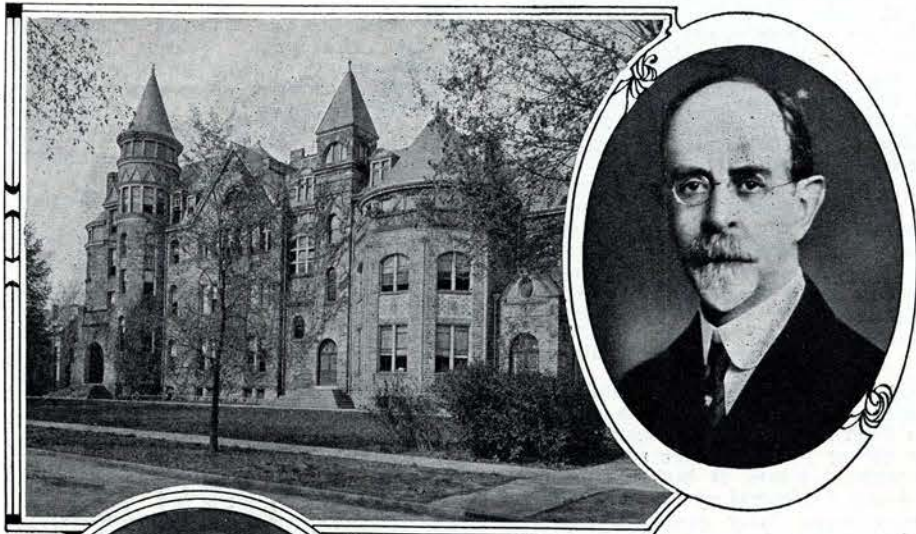
The theoretical work is practically arranged, allowing the student at least three hours a day for his major practical study and one hour for his minor practical study. Piano, organ, singing, violin, viola, 'cello, double-bass, harp and the wind instruments are all taught at Oberlin. A splendid opportunity is offered the more advanced pupils for ensemble playing, and the Conservatory Orchestra gives all students of the string and wind instruments who are proficient enough to become members a chance to do orchestral work which approaches that done by the largest symphony orchestras of the country. A library of music of more than 24,000 different pieces, including many for full orchestra, is at the disposal of the students free of charge.

For graduation three studies are obligatory—theory, history of music and piano; the fourth is chosen from among the other practical studies taught. A recital is given by the graduate in his major study during his senior year, and many students give splendid recitals in their minor study. Of far-reaching educational value is the two-year supervisor's training course in public school music, in the second year of which principles and methods of teaching are exhaustively studied. Prof. Edward Dickinson's courses in the history of music—courses which Oberlin was one of the first colleges to establish—in which four lectures are given each week, should not be forgotten. In these courses Professor Dickinson devotes much attention to the appreciation of music and the interrelation between it, the other arts and life in general. The pianola and Victrola are used in illustration; the students themselves discuss and analyze æsthetic problems. In the courses in the "History and Criticism of Music" the "whole aim is to enable the students to understand and enjoy the work of all periods and styles through a knowledge of the æsthetic and psychologic principles involved in their development."

Professor Dickinson's elective course in "The Appreciation of Music" gives a constantly increasing number of Oberlin students, young men and women who have no intention of making music their life-work, a chance to add to their general cultural fund knowledge and enjoyment of an art which fifteen years ago was taken seriously in but few academic institutions.

Of the 120 hours required for graduation, the major study must comprise not less than fifteen nor more than thirty-two hours. The regularly required sub-

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Warner Hall, Containing the Large Auditorium of Oberlin College. Above: Edward Dickinson, Professor of History and Criticism of Music. On Left, Charles Walthall Morrison, Director of the Conservatory of Music

educator and historian. Many of the individual members of the Oberlin music faculty are prominent in concert work, while others hold responsible choir and organ positions in the city of Cleveland. No applicant is eligible for an Oberlin Conservatory professorship who cannot point to at least two years of European study.

Oberlin Ideals

But what are the underlying ideals of all musical effort at Oberlin? To quote Prof. Edward Dickinson: "Oberlin is a leader in laying emphasis on the value of music in general education." To this end it offers simultaneous courses in conservatory and college and gives credit on a majoring basis, for practical work accomplished, as well as for theoretical study. The result is "that every year those who take both degrees are helping to bring into the musical profession young men and women who have a broad general education." And in this very connection Professor Dickinson points out that among the students who take both the conservatory and college courses are usually to be found the best performers.

It has been said with reason that, on the record of actual achievement, "Oberlin is probably the only institution of higher learning in the United States in which so great an opportunity is offered the student to combine in his college education music with the regular curriculum of the arts and sciences." The leading European conservatories have served as models for the general plan of the school, which aims at the production of intelligent musicians of liberal culture, in all

one-sided in his education; for this reason, and because Oberlin Conservatory ranks as a College of Music, the literary requirements for entrance are practically the same as those required by the College of Arts and Sciences. A graduate of a first-rank high school, whose course has comprised the equivalent to four years of language, is usually able to meet requirements without additional literary work. It is also the contention of the Oberlin faculty that the really good musician must have at least some knowledge of the theoretical side of music in order to grasp to the fullest the import of his own special branch. To this end each student is also expected to take piano, the one essential instrument requisite to all musicians. In order to graduate, a thorough course in theory must be completed."

The Plan of Study

The student may take Course 1, opened to gifted students who intend to take up composition; Course 2, for students for whom the organ is the major study, or Course 3, for the average student, one best calculated to give him the broadest concept of the different branches of theory. The three-year course is the shortest. It embraces a complete course in harmony, simple counterpoint, harmonic analysis and musical form. The course for organ students requires double counterpoint, canon and fugue, but omits harmonic analysis. The composition course is the same as that for organ students, but two years of composition are required in place of musical form. This last is the most extended and difficult of the theory courses. Each student before graduation must take the course offered in the history of music and the course in ear-training, and there

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