

SUPERANNUATED MUSICIANS

What Shall Be Done to Take Care of Them—Practically Alone Among the Trades and Professions, Musicians of This Country Make No Provisions for Their Aged Colleagues—A Problem and Its Most Practicable Solution

By ALFRED HUMAN

IS it possible that the votaries of the "purest of arts" are so immured in their profession that they cannot hear the plaints of the army of their distressed, aged colleagues in this country? The question occurs even after a casual investigation at the headquarters of the Musical Union of New York, Boston or Chicago. Musicians of this country are suffering to exist a condition that has been stamped out in nearly every other civilized country. In the nations where governmental systems of protection do not provide for aged and indigent citizens, the members of various professions and trades band together for the purpose. The stage profession in America works for the relief of unfortunate and superannuated members; the actors of Germany have their Genossenschaft, which provides for a modest monthly pension; trade workers of England are cared for by the compulsory old age insurance system; school teachers, policemen, seamen and numerous industrial organizations have devised means that they may, in Goldsmith's words, be blessed with "a youth of labor and an age of ease."

Fortune is far from favoring the aging man in any circumstances. Witness the thinning out of the New York orchestras a few years ago and the filling of the chairs with younger men. Modern orchestral programs are taxing; brass fingers, an agile wrist, sure wind and sterling virility are demanded. The old player must yield his seat to the newcomer, who probably fails to read in his usurpation his own coming doom. And not only are there orchestral players to be considered, but there is the unnumbered body of discarded singers and teachers, men and women.

Can the old man who has been forced out of his place in the orchestra join another orchestra? Whispers of his discharge for the crime of age usually settle his effort, even if he is still physically fit to handle his fiddle or horn. He finds himself, with a large company, in competition with the world of youth. If he is one of the affiliated, rigid rules circumscribe his efforts to exercise his profession. It may be suggested that he can teach. But teaching requires time and capital. The old musician knows as no one else the amazingly small number within the charmed circle of successful teachers.

As a last resort to turn to, there is the country farm of the Union (if the unfortunate is a member) and the Philadelphia home provided by the philanthropy of Theodore Presser. But his family? And institutional life, no matter how benevolently conducted, is crushing even to a person not so finely organized as the one whose life has been spent in music. If the musician can resign himself to await his end within strange walls, all the better for him. But, even then, the number of such re-

treats for the superannuated musician is strangely few. There is something of irony in the fact that \$100 rests in the treasury of the Union promptly available for burial expenses (if he be a member) upon official information of his death.

Of course, the ideal solution of the problem thus briefly outlined would be a universal system of old-age pensions by the government, as in other countries. Failing this, the remedy seems to be to follow the methods of other professional and trade bodies. School teachers, for example, in many places have a humane retirement plan, patterned on a system of compulsory insurance. The instability of employment in the musical profession would possibly militate against a similar plan of regular contributions from the workers. But, doubtless, this system might be modified so as to afford complete protection for the incapacitated and infirm musicians, including, of course, singers and teachers in all branches of the profession.

The most sensible way would be to provide the means first and allow the technical methods of administration be

worked out later. The Actors' Fund is extending relief to the amount of about \$70,000 a year (this figure is taken from published announcement). A Musicians' Fund should be created at once, it would seem, to provide for the immediate relief of needy professional persons, while competent heads are devising a permanent old-age pension plan. Such a pension would help to attract talent to the music profession and would hold those already in and be an encouragement for unhampered work. Certification of all recruits to music would be required and this would mean a gradual uplifting of the standard. No great complications stand in the way of a retirement pension; there is the tested experience of years to build upon.

Another feature should be a national agency to serve as a clearing-house for musical engagements. Many a worthy musician past the age of vigorous muscular activity could fill a responsible place in some conservatory or school.

A glance into a lexicon tells of the immortal work of many "superannuated" musicians.

TURN AWAY THRONGS AT ROCHESTER O. ERA

Theater Not Large Enough to Hold Crowds at San Carlo Production

ROCHESTER, N. Y., Oct. 8—The musical season was opened this last week by the San Carlo Grand Opera Company, Fortune Gallo, managing director, in some excellent productions of old opera favorites. According to schedule, the operas to be given were "Rigoletto" on Thursday night, Oct. 5; "Lohengrin" on Friday evening, "Martha" on Saturday afternoon and "Il Trovatore" on Saturday night. "Lohengrin," however, was not given and a double bill of "Cavalleria" and "Pagliacci" was substituted. All the casts were good and received well merited appreciation from large audiences. Most of the voices were excellent in quality.

Emanuel Salazar, tenor, was one of the brightest stars of the company, and shared honors with Marie Kaestner and Edvige Vaccari. "Il Trovatore" was given to a full house on Saturday evening, scores being turned away from the box office and Mr. Gallo, the manager, expressed himself as being much pleased with the reception given to the company by the Rochester public. M. E. W.

Myrtle Moses's First New York Recital Nov. 2

Myrtle Moses, the mezzo-soprano of the Chicago Opera Company, will make her first New York appearance in song recital at the Cort Theater, the afternoon of Nov. 2. Miss Moses will sing

three songs of Beethoven, songs of Haydn, Brahms, Grieg, a new manuscript song of Heinrich Pfitzner, as well as a group of modern French and new American songs. William Reddick, who is also playing for Miss Moses on tour, will play her accompaniments in New York. Miss Moses is under the exclusive management of Maurice & Gordon Fulcher, the New York managers.

CONCERT AT MOHONK LAKE

Heinrich Meyn Aids Customary Givers of Concerts at Resort

A delightful program was given at the Lake Mohonk Mountain House, Mohonk Lake, N. Y., on Saturday evening, Oct. 7. The artists were Margaret Graham, soprano; Clara Kloberg, violinist; Marion Richardson, tenor; Heinrich Meyn, baritone; Mrs. W. W. Ames, pianist, and Alice Fortin at the Choralcello.

These artists, excepting Mr. Meyn, have been giving weekly concerts at this summer resort. Mr. Meyn was stopping at the hotel and kindly assisted in the concert, giving songs by Weingartner, Homer, Haile, Messenger and Bizet. Miss Kloberg offered a Sarasate "Spanish Dance" and the first movement of Beethoven's G Major Sonata, both of which she played admirably. Miss Graham won favor in songs by Tchaikowsky, Ronald, Schubert and Ardit. Mr. Richardson pleased his hearers in a group by Rummel, Metcalfe, Godard and the aria from Puccini's "Bohème."

Kathryn Platt Gunn Plays in Brooklyn Church

At the musical service given at St. James Church, Brooklyn, on Sunday afternoon, Oct. 15, when William C. Bridgeman, organist and choirmaster of the church, produced Spohr's "God, Thou Art Great" and d'Indy's "Mary Magdalene," Kathryn Platt Gunn, the brilliant violinist, assisted by Marion T. Marsh, harpist, played Godard's "Adagio Pathétique," Massenet's Meditation from "Thais" and the Adagio from Ries's Suite, Op. 34. She was in excellent form and distinguished herself in all three numbers.

Mme. Buckhout Sings in Brooklyn Institute and New York Church

An enjoyable recital was given on Thursday evening, Oct. 12, by Mme. Buckhout, the soprano, at the Kellerman Institute of Musical Art, Brooklyn, with Lawrence J. Munson at the piano.

Mme. Buckhout, in excellent voice, sang numbers by Schumann, Bohm, Curschmann, Tchaikowsky, two Grieg songs in Norwegian and a folk-song by Ole Bull and songs by Kriens, Tosti, Blazejewicz and the familiar arias from "Tosca" and "Louise." The soprano was received with much applause. On Sunday afternoon, Oct. 15, she appeared at the Young Women's Christian Association in New York and sang Marsh's "The Lord Is My Strength" and Holden's "Nearer, My God, to Thee." At the morning services the same day at Holy Trinity Church, Harlem, New York, she sang with Henriette Turrell, contralto, Harry Rowe Shelley's duet, "Hark, Hark My Soul."

Christine Miller has been engaged by the Apollo Club of Janesville, Wis., for a recital Jan. 5. The Ladies' Society of the Congregational Church, Owatonna, Minn., has also engaged Christine Miller for a recital on Feb. 14.

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