MUSICAL AMERICA

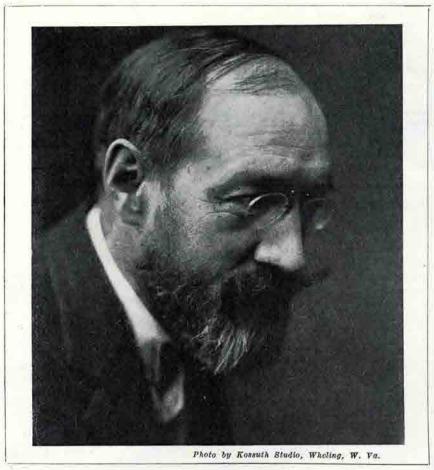
"Art in America Today Is Petty Commerce"

So Avers Georges Barrère, Chastising Businesslike Conservatories - What a National Conservatory Might Mean for America-Change of Soul an Essential Need

" $T^{\rm HAT}_{\rm not}$ be perfect is no argument against it. On the contrary, it might be counted in its favor. Perfection is impossible, and the impossible is dangerous. Art becomes possible only when the soul sits so lightly within the prisonhouse of the body that it can mistake it for a pleasure-palace. That possibility will transpire in America only when the soul breaks through the bonds of the eight-hour day and the forty-four-hour

eight-hour day and the forty-four-hour week and time-and-a-half for over-time. The soul must be free to sit up of nights, to tear itself to shreds with the strain of mighty labors, or to take its ease without reck of nine o'clock or five, or the hour off for lunch." Georges Barrère had been caught in a clear cold morning of spring, between tours as conductor of the Little Sym-phony in programs with the Bolm Ballet Intime. He was even free of pupils. He had nothing to think of but the weather, which made life in a New York apart-ment resemble camping in the Maine woods, and his own ideas of America and art.

art. "The artist, if you please," says Mr. Barrère, "cannot fulfill what the grocers would call his mission, cannot dispense would call his mission, cannot dispense honey to the crowd, until he has first sucked at every blossom by the road-side. True, some of the blossoms will be empty or will hold something more bit-ter than emptiness. But even the pru-dent business man, in his own realm, does not expect to see the big plums fall into the hands of him who always plays safe. In America to-day, music is a business, not big business,' with a feverish charm of its own, but petty commerce. Art in of its own, but petty commerce. Art in America is like a beautiful woman with all her lovers faithless. She needs a knight or two to strike a bold blow for her! "Suppose a national conservatory, once



Georges Barrère, Distinguished Flautist and Leader of the Little Symphony

it was established here, should nurse a certain amount of graft. I really can't see that that would be much worse than some of the practices which are openly

established in our present commercial conservatories. Whether a man has played violin as many years as Kreisler says nothing for his eligibility to rivalry

with Kreisler. What a teacher should always look for in a pupil is personality. It does not always, of course, in its early stages, manifest itself pleasantly. Still, I think, nothing could be much worse than the remark a conservatory official recently made: 'Musical instinct? But that is something with which we don't deal, something which we can't take into consideration.' It is, in other words, something which we can't reduce to terms of fees. of fees.

As It Is in France

"How differently these things are done in France! The Conservatoire is free to In France: The Conservatoire is free to all who can prove their ability. And those who c.n't pass the tests as stu-dents are often allowed to attend the lessons as listeners and so gradually break themselves to the technical re-quirements which it seems necessary to insist on in regular students. Restric-tions are always necessary but nection quirements which it seems necessary to insist on in regular students. Restric-tions are always necessary, but restric-tion need not involve exclusion or annihilation for some, as it has always done so far in America. The worst fea-ture about the Conservatoire, to my mind, is the large number of private pupils which some of the teachers take, obvious-ly for the sake of the fee. American art-patrons could improve on this ex-ample by emulating the Hindu monarchs who in the classical age of Hindu art who in the classical age of Hindu art assured their artists and architects of all facilities for their work and for

all facilities for their work and for teaching, with the sole proviso that they should take no money for their labors. "What I, like so many others, really desire for America artistically is rather a change of soul than the establishment of any specific institutions. But may not that change of soul be effected just through the cumulative effect of several specific efforts, which in themselves may be obviously flawed? Not to-day, but in fifty years' time something worth seeing should come out of these efforts. Why should the American public pay huge sums to hear some European whose chief claim to attention is a name that sounds claim to attention is a name that sounds like a disease? America is full of talent of her own."

A Practical Preacher

A practical preacher is Mr. Barrère. Each of his own programs contains at least one American work. And in the field of his own specialty, the flute, he

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PHOEBE CROSBY Soprano

1921

Jany. 8-Maine Fed. of Women's Clubs 15—New York Rubinstein Club 20_Montclair Glee Club 28—Colgate University Feby. 10-Boston recital 19—Philadelphia Orpheus Club Mar. 1_Montreal Welsh Soc. Concert 4-New York Criterion Club 11_Summit Glee Club April 4-Buffalo Orpheus Club 22-Hartford Choral Club May 4-Orange Mus. Art. Soc. 6—Providence Glee Club 20-Springfield Festival



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