

Five weeks in America [continued]

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of the young artist struggling to make his or her way, are interesting.

The most striking difference arises from psychological reasons. The young British student has, I am sure, more courage than the Continental. On all sides I see young students imagining themselves to be finished artists long before they are. The young birds leave the nest before they can fly. They begin to give recitals long before they ought, apparently urged to do so by the people surrounding them. Consequently, your recital halls are places to be wary of. Whereas in such cities as I have known from Geneva to the Hague, the amateur recitalist is far less frequent. But in England you are individualists, if you take lessons in singing, then you have got to sing, and nothing except the price of the hire of a Concert Hall is going to stop you! Ah, I can just imagine what my first master would have said to me, if I had wanted to sing my little songs at recitals when I was twenty-one!

In Europe, too, our Conservatories and State Operas have a standing which your own private institutions cannot have. I have no doubt that your schools are technically as good as ours for the body of students. I merely mean that if a young medal winner from a great London school and a medal winner from, say, the Vienna Conservatory both sought the same appointment at, say, Amsterdam—I know which would get it! I know nothing about the great English schools, but I meet their students. The only thing that amazes me about them is that they do not seem to go to Concerts! At Basel we never missed a big orchestral rehearsal, for it is at such rehearsals as these, under some great *gastspiel* conductor with ideas of his own, that the student learns most.

I heard a young English tenor still at one of your great schools of music, and so highly thought of that he is assisting his master in giving lessons. He has a good voice; he sang well. He thought he sang in French, but he was mistaken. "Did you go to Croiza's concert the other day?" I asked him. "No," he replied. "Why not?" I asked. And he was surprised because he did not even see what I meant. He had sung French vilely, yet he did not even know how vilely he had pronounced the words. It had not even occurred to him that if he listened to the work of such a great mistress of French song as Croiza, he would at any rate have learned something of the right approach to this music. It amazes me that there should ever be empty seats at the recitals of the great singers in German and French. We Continentals never let such opportunities pass. We knew enough to know that concert going was of the first importance. Furthermore, I have heard many of these students speak disparagingly of the B.B.C. This astonishes me. For every week the programmes contain something that every student of the art should hear.

Five Weeks in America.

By DR. K. E. ECKENSTEIN.

CONTINUED.

V. INTER ALIA.

In America hotels are run on a different system and undoubtedly have many advantages over those in Europe and especially in this country. Of course they are very much bigger, and on each floor is a floor manager who is responsible for the service.

Bells are conspicuous by their absence but each room is provided with a telephone both for outside communication and for internal use. Each room has also a bathroom attached and this is usual even in hotels in the smaller towns.

In New York we stayed at the Pennsylvania Hotel and I understand that although it is not considered to be a luxury hotel, it is very up-to-date in its equipment and service. Among numerous interesting features may be mentioned the doors to the rooms. These consist of two panels with a space between. The visitor who desires his clothes pressed or linen sent to the laundry, opens the inner panel with his door key, places the articles inside and telephones to the 'floor-valet' who then opens the outer panel, removes the articles and when the work has been done the process is repeated in the reverse order.

On opening the table by one's bedside, a loud speaker is discovered with a two-way switch giving the use of the programme from two stations. The hotel also caters for its patrons in other directions as in each room is generally to be found a guide book and a Bible. In the Pennsylvania Hotel there is an iced water supply in each room, but I think this must be exceptional, as in the other hotels at which I stayed, an iced water apparatus was provided in the corridor for general use.

The dryness of the atmosphere is shown by the following phenomenon. As one attempts to put the key into the lock of the door of a room, as

But to turn from the class of musical student to the crowded ranks of the younger professionals. I take off my hat to them! They have a harder time than those in a similar position in Mid-Europe. There are no town orchestras and operas to offer permanent and life-long posts. They mostly give lessons, and even so the percentage of people who want to take music lessons is smaller here than in Europe. We Swiss are never quite happy unless we are taking lessons at something or other, and, fortunately for musicians, it is generally music. Also your own capital, which from the musical point of view is not a great capital at all but a provincial city, is over-run by the great ones of the earth, who all pass through London every year and give "an only recital this season" in passing. They keep the musical crowd of London "on the run," as you say, and we lesser lights can find little more than our own friends to fill our recitals in London . . . which tends to drive us into the Provinces.

Here again we are in trouble more than is our kind abroad. For there the orchestral Society and the Choral Society are generally conducted in an autocratic fashion by men, themselves professionals, who know what they want in artists and see they get it. Englishmen apparently refuse to sit on these committees. They leave it to the ladies, and ladies will choose friends or friends' friends. I have seen a few such committee meetings. They do not say: "Let us have somebody who can give a first Beethoven sonata"; or: "Let us have someone who specializes in modern German music—someone who can show us what Schoenberg is driving at."

No, it is: "I hear the dear Vicar's nephew is such a nice man, and such a clever pianist."

But your audiences are charming. And if they are too kind to us at times, there is always the Press, which looks upon artistes with jealous eye, as if to say:

"I'm the *Daily Tribune*. You won't get past me as perfect!" But that matters little, while your audiences are so kind, so happy. . .

ST. GALL COMMERCIAL HIGH SCHOOL.

Application for Professor of English required.

We are informed by the Swiss Legation that the post of professor of English at the St. Gall Commercial High School is now vacant.

A notice to this effect has been published in all the leading Swiss newspapers, and we are naturally anxious to call the attention of any Swiss teacher now resident in England to this vacancy.

Further information as to qualifications—other of course that the usual Swiss degree—can be obtained from the Swiss Legation, 32, Queen Anne Street, London, W.1.

soon as the key touches the metal an electrical spark is obtained. The first time this happened I thought it was some new and mysterious form of burglar alarm but after I had learnt the reason I used to amuse myself by touching all the locks of the different doors on my way down the corridor so as to see how many sparks I could obtain. I was told that the pile of the carpet in the Pennsylvania Hotel had something to do with the production of this charge of static electricity but I doubt very much if it would occur in a damp climate. The keys are left at the desk on each floor instead of being taken downstairs to the porter's desk as is done here. I suppose everyone knows that it is unwise to put one's shoes outside the door at night if one wishes to find them in the morning. Shoes are either cleaned by their owner or a visit is made to a shoe-shine station where a coloured gentleman performs the required task.

The ground floor of the Pennsylvania Hotel is a great and wonderful place, the main portion consisting of a vast hall in which are the offices of the Manager on duty, an office for checking in and checking out, mail office, bank, theatre ticket office, telephone service, cablegram service, bookstore, cigar store, candy store, flower store and three restaurants.

Naturally in such a big concern as a New York hotel the lift or elevator service is very efficient and there are fast cars for those who reside on the upper floors and wish to arrive at their destination quickly and slow cars which stop at each floor. A good idea of the size of the hotel will be gained when I say that my room was situated on the fourteenth floor and was No. 1,482 and was not by any means on the top floor.

Restaurants I suppose are very similar all over the world although there is such a big difference in what is known as the "cuisine." America is a great and wonderful country, but however much ahead of Europe it may be in some things the art of cooking is not among them. I sadly fear that Brillat-Savarin would have melted away in anguish if he could have seen what the

SWISS PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION.

It may interest our compatriots in Great Britain to read a few words regarding the visit of seven National Councillors to London on the occasion of the 26th Inter-Parliamentary Union Meeting.

To be able to fully appreciate the various feelings and impressions, which these distinguished fellow citizens experienced during their sojourn in the Capital of the British Empire, one had to be in daily contact with one or the other of the party. Some of the Delegates had already a knowledge of England through previous visits, whereas with others it was the first occasion, which brought them in contact with the pulsation of life in English surroundings.

For a reporter, who had the honour of daily intercourse with the Delegation, the task is rather onerous to arrive at the right conclusion of the many expressions of thought, which he had the opportunity to hear. However we may justly gauge the general run of sentiments by basing ourselves on the opinion and views of the members of the Delegation, who had not been in London previously, opinions and views identical with those of the other Delegates.

Whereas London has the reputation of fogs clouded sky and rain, making life dreary, the Delegation was fortunate enough to encounter comparatively nice weather, which naturally contributed largely to the joy of life. The perfect control of traffic, its safety, punctuality in every respect and the extreme cleanliness to be found everywhere, were striking examples of the efficiency of the guiding spirits of London. The serene calm in parliamentary circles, in spite of daily political battles in the House of Commons and disturbing news from India and Egypt, struck the Delegation forcibly.

The Swiss Delegation was highly pleased with the great politeness of people in general and officials and policemen in particular, with whom they came into contact. It impressed them most favourably that, as soon as they revealed themselves as Swiss, they obtained special attention, a proof, in their eyes, that not only our country, but also the Swiss who represent Helvetia in London, are appreciated. They attribute such experience to the reputation gained by the Swiss, through their hard work and exemplary conduct in the Metropolis.

The Swiss Delegation, as well as all the other representatives of the 32 Nations who sent members of Parliament to the Royal Gallery, House of Lords, were overwhelmed with hospitality by authorities and private individuals. These invitations, which were readily accepted, gave them great insight into English life and customs.

One of the most impressive evenings was the one at the Guildhall, where the Delegation could actually feel the pulse of the City of London.

Americans are pleased to call food and he would no doubt have propounded a twenty-first aphorism for the special benefit of America. Some people have suggested that good cooking went out when prohibition came in but I doubt very much if it ever existed. However one must be fair and, as I have already said, I was only a short time in America and then only on the Eastern Seaboard, so that sweeping statements are best avoided and it is quite possible that in other parts of America, such as the wild and woolly west, a cuisine prevails which can take its place among the best traditions of the noble art.

I endeavoured to sample as many American dishes as possible during my stay. Naturally the question of personal taste must be taken into account but I do not like clams and still less do I like clam broth. The less said about the odour of the latter the better. Clams are a kind of oyster but the flesh is tougher and has an orange tinge. Pumpkin pie is a kind of custard and is quite nice. One of the ingredients which frequently makes its appearance on the menu is "spice" but this is not what is usually meant by the word in England but means cinnamon and makes its appearance in jam, preserved fruits, apple or cranberry pie and various pastries to such an extent that I shall not want to taste cinnamon again for some time. In an American Restaurant the usual procedure is to surround one's plate with a series of small dishes in which are placed the various things which one is going to eat and from these they are transferred to the plate. An American mixes up his food in a way which is astonishing to an European, but probably he knows what is best for himself. The correct way to eat meat is to cut it up with a knife and fork in the usual manner, then to lay down one's knife, transfer the fork from the left hand to the right, convey a morsel to the mouth and recommence. I never understood the rationale of this performance but it certainly does take more time and therefore conduces to slower eating and the Americans do have beautiful teeth.

TO BE CONTINUED.