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OTTO: MORE FRATERNITY

A DOZEN PROVERBS.

BY CHAS. M. FILLMORE.

- Justice is impartial.
- Faith knows no horizon.
- Profits often prove losses.
- Opportunity entails obligation.
- It takes care to make a career.
- Hot arguments cool friendships.
- Morality is a practical program.
- A tiny thing is a part of destiny.
- He who does nothing, does wrong.
- The bully tries to cow other people.
- Favors given grudgingly are no favors.
- He who lives most for others lives best for himself.

For the March issue of THE MUSICAL MESSENGER Mr. Herbert L. Clarke intended furnishing us a sketch of the famous French comicist, Saint Jacome. However, the story will be postponed a month on account of delay in receiving from abroad some important information.

For lack of space Dr. J. B. Herbert's article "Theory of Music," and other good articles, have been left out of this issue.

A good start gets you half way to your goal. Begin your work with courage and cheer. Determine to like it. Be zealous for it. Before you know it, you will be through it.

HARRY L. ALFORD

BY H. A. VANDER COOK

If, at the beginning, we knew precisely how much practice, work and worry we should have to go through before becoming proficient players upon a musical instrument, few, if any of us, would care to tackle the job. It is the same with the composers and arrangers of music. The average boy from the small town seldom hears enough of the "finished product" in either of these lines and little knows of the tremendous efforts that he will be required to make before he can really compete with the experienced musicians. He but dreams of one thing and that is—success. This is all good, and as it should be. It also accounts largely for the successful men in many lines, who were originally from the country towns. The man whom the world honors as a "genius" today, has passed through an extended period of doubt, longing and despair. He has discovered many things, and, among them, the fact that no one fails—he merely quits trying.

The career of Harry L. Alford, composer and arranger, now at the head of his profession, suggests the above paragraphs. He dreamed of success, and when Miss Opportunity tapped on his door it sounded to him like hitting a bass drum with a ball bat.

In Hudson, Michigan, one day (back in 1897), there came to this town on its annual pilgrimage an excellent band, that was featured with a show company. Alford had heard of this band and had heard it play before. He dreamed of this band playing one of his compositions—and that is just where he made a good start. He dreamed and then acted. He composed and arranged as well as copied with exceeding care his then best effort—a march. Approaching the leader of this band, in a faint, high tenor voice (and with much timidity) he "mumbled" over a speech which he had rehearsed by himself (and mostly forgot when he went to use it) and tendered his favorite composition to this bandmaster for his approval.

"What's this?" asked the leader, sharply.

"March," replied Alford, faintly.

"And who wrote and arranged it?"

"I—me."

"Gee whiz, young feller—you copy a good hand. What do you want me to do with it?"

"Play it—please," said Alford, gaining courage.

"Sure thing—I'll play it," said the bandmaster. "Looks good." And he handed it out to his men.

Up the main street of the village went the band—Alford tagging along. Did they play

it? We'll say they did! Not once, but many times that day—Alford always tagging along, always hearing and in sight of the leader. When the march was finally returned to Alford, the leader said:

"Fine, young feller—fine. You got some good ideas. They need development. Hear good music and go study."

Following this Alford wrote many other marches, waltzes, etc. He "tried them on the dog"—the town band—to learn how they'd sound. Much encouragement was given him by the local tinsmith, blacksmith and the shoemaker. By and by some of them told him he was "good," as well as "the best in the state." That last assertion did settle it—and he immediately wanted to see how he stood in the adjoining states. In this he was greatly discouraged by the shoemaker, who said to him: "You'd better stay home. Don't git to roamin' around the country. A rolling stone gathers no moss." Alford retaliated with the reply that he "didn't want to be covered with moss, anyway." That "some of the people here have moss on their backs a couple of inches long, and I can't see that it improves their intellect any."

So he took his trombone under his arm and bid himself to Toledo. His first job was "subbing" for the regular trombone player in a theater. Della Fox was the star, the music went swift, and Alford wasn't experienced in that kind of work. He managed to get through the first act—though it was a nervous nightmare to him. In the second act of the comedy there was a scene where a man was supposed to have his head chopped off. Right here was a short crash—a dis-chord—for the orchestra. Alford "hit" it—but it hurt his ears. It didn't exactly "jibe" for some reason or other; so he took his pencil and tried to write in an interval on the trombone part that would "chord" with the others. When he sat in for the night show, and just before this "crash" was to occur again, the leader leaned over toward him and whispered: "All right, Mr. Trombone, look out for that discord." Whispering back Alford said: "All right—what key is it in?" This only goes to show that his acute ear demanded something besides discords, even that early in the game.

Right at this time in his career he made his best move. He went to the Dana Music School, at Warren, Ohio. Here is where he learned the "whys and wherefores" of harmony as well as to compose and arrange with intelligence. Previous to this he had been ar-

ranging his way, "because it sounded good" to do so. When he had learned the grammar of music he had ascended several rungs up the ladder towards success.

Then he went to Chicago with his trombone (and little else). He had a dream that he would, some day, establish an arranging bureau, where he could offer for sale some of the knowledge he had gained. Most of the arranging of music in Chicago in those days was done by some old musician in a dusty attic room, or the "house leader"—when he had time to do it. Alford was met with the pleasant prospect and advice from some of these men, who said: "So you are an arranger, eh? You'll do well here—not! Why, man, you'll starve to death at that game." Alford had no more faith in this assertion than he had in the old town shoemaker's advice about gathering moss. He played some jobs on the trombone, skating rinks, dances, etc., and made all the arrangements he could get hold of. Sometimes he was paid well for his work, sometimes not at all. Did he stick? You know he did. And it wasn't long before his clever arrangements came to be recognized.

Of course, you young fellows know (or you ought to), that: Anything you have a real desire to do, you have the capacity to do. Believe that, act upon your belief, and there is nothing you aspire to within your individual talents that you can not become. This was Alford's system, and it should be a soul tonic for any struggling young fellow, provided he uses the prescription sanely.

Business men and the public in general seldom (if ever) give a thought to the arranger of music. They hear a number rendered. It sounds good. They let it go at that. The average composer of popular music and popular songs as a rule "jokes out the tune with one finger" on a piano, jots the melody down after a fashion and immediately runs to the "good arranger" with it, to get the said arranger to put it in the proper form, so that it will sound well and become commercially valuable. If the arranger happens to have his name stuck off in a corner, somewhere (in parenthesis), he's in luck. They usually forget the arranger altogether while telling how "talented" the composer is. The fact of the matter is that the arranger is responsible for nearly all of the "successes," and usually none of the failures that a composition meets with. He occupies the same position in music that the milliner, designer and dressmaker occupy with the garments of the gentler sex. Much depends in each case on how they are dressed. And this man, Harry Alford, is one of those arrangers who can take an insipid, weak and meaningless melody and "dress it up" by changing an interval here and there and accompanying the whole with a progression of chords that the average arranger would overlook. Once he has the job finished, you may rest assured, it is well done.

It is an interesting visit to one who enters the splendid suite of rooms in the big theater building that Harry Alford now occupies. Here are the outer offices, the "Information"

desk, the parlors and the sound-proof trial room. Then Alford's private office and at last the big, airy, light "copying" room—where there are seated, busily at work at rows of desks, an able and schooled body of arrangers and copyists. To these offices come the people from the concert halls, opera, chautauquas, vaudeville and "movie" houses, as well as the "composer," to have their "arrangements" made. Everybody seems to know Alford. Everybody seems to call him "Harry." In comes a "team" from one of the vaudeville houses. One of them calls for "Harry," and, getting his attention, the performer will sing the usual vaudeville words in Harry's ears: "Dome—dome, domeity, dome—" Alford understands. The man has a "new tune" running in his mind and wants it arranged for his act. Inviting him into the sound-proof room, where the piano is situated, Alford seats himself, hears the "artist" hum over the melody, and takes this tune down from the voice as rapidly as the court reporter will write in shorthand. Using great diplomacy here and there, Alford will "rub out" this and "change that," and soon will make a presentable melody out of a mere nothing. "Can I have that arranged by five o'clock, Harry?" he asks of Alford. "Sure," says Harry, and he will make one of his famous shorthand scores of it all, hand it to the foreman of the copying room, and—it's done—on time.

In comes a man with a phonograph record under his arm. "Harry, put this on your phonograph and run 'er over. There's a melody along in the middle of it I wanta 'cop' for the act. . . . There, that's the beginning of it, see?" Harry listens, grabs a piece of music paper and a pencil, takes it down precisely and quickly as it is given on the record and says: "Now, let's see what key is best for you. . . . No-o-o. Sing it higher, so you can get it over. . . . There, that's it. Key of A-flat. All right, you can have the arrangement at four o'clock this afternoon." Then he makes the shorthand score, slips it to the head copyist, and, there you are; all ready at four o'clock. The real estate man, with offices on the same floor, goes to the theater with his wife that night and hears a wonderful arrangement played by the house orchestra. If you would tell this business man that "Alford, the man across the hall, arranged that," the chances are that he wouldn't know what you were talking about. He doesn't even know that music has to be "arranged." But, much of his pleasures in life would be curtailed without such men as Alford on the job. It is much like the first-class cabin passenger enjoying his sea trip without giving a passing thought to the coal "stoker" in the hold. The ship moves on, and the passenger takes everything for granted.

To some men the satisfaction of doing something well is greater to them than the glory of great publicity. This man Alford can slip mobbed into almost any theater in America, slide away down in his seat with his knees on the back of the seat ahead, and be sure that somewhere in the musical part of the program

he is going to hear several of his arrangements. In this, he takes his pleasure. His name may be in parenthesis, somewhere, on the music, or it may be left off altogether. But, he made it, and when he hears it he knows he made it well. More power to him.

Personally, Alford is of medium height and build, quick, nervous, full of "pep," and speaks rapidly, in a high, tenor voice. If he ever had a hobby outside of his love for the "concord of sweet sounds," no one has discovered it. His success should be a shining light for young musicians to steer by. Remember his definition of a failure: "A man who quits trying."

GENIUS

BY ED. CHENETTE.

A genius is born, not made. True. For we were all born, not made.

A thing made in the worldly sense is not genius, for genius is given and not required. And every man is born. Is every man, then, a genius? His birth makes that possible. But we know that every man is not a genius. This is speaking in the present tense; though lacking in the analytical perception to define the phenomena of birth we are likewise unable to state with any degree of certainty that each man was not possessed with all the nature of a genius at his origin.

Nature is the creative force, the essence of life, the power that produces the existing phenomena of life. Nature produces life. Life produces genius. Then by the law of equation nature is the progenitor of genius; or as a substance is what it produces, nature is genius. Sand for the desert; rocks for the mountain; dirt for the valley; water for the ocean, and diamonds hidden far beneath all of them. Yet one is led to inquire if the covering is not artificial, and that at one time the diamond strata was the true surface, whose flash and sparkle but reflected back the lustre of the stars.

True it is today that genius is hidden or buried far beneath a worldly acquisition of affectation and convention. And it can be uncovered only through the removal of the superficial barriers of habit and custom. All knowledge is found in nature, and genius is the fullness of knowledge, though but to few ever comes this fullness, and then it is discovered and not acquired. For what is already can not be had as an abnormal acquisition, but only by reverting to the state of normalcy. One who studies codes and systems and modes and methods, except the philosophy of life, will never find genius. That which you already have can not be located by external searchings among the so-called mysteries, for genius being the fundamental truth, is the genuine law in all about us, and an occult science. And no man need be without the pale except as he removes himself by a system of creeds and customs. That each man is imbued with true genius is vouched for by a test of actual operations in real life. For is there a living soul who, having come into contact with genius in