

LETTERS - AND - ART

ART AND LIFE STILL HOLDING SWAY IN MADRID

THE ONLY CAPITAL IN EUROPE where the peaceful arts find uninterrupted exercise to-day appears to be Madrid. The northern neutrals, from what we hear, can not be much less concerned over food-shortage than the combatant nations, and art does not flourish on hunger. At least the arts of life need plenitude. Mr. Hamilton Fyfe, who

quarter-past nine. The opera begins to fill up about half-past ten. Not much before one does the performance end. Then it is still possible to find restaurants open, tho it is not the custom to eat supper. Chocolate is more in the Spanish tradition, and if a Spaniard feels hungry in the night he has a provision ready near his hand. At least I assume this is so from seeing in shops dainty little ham rolls called *medias noches* (for the middle of the night).

"The theaters are, almost without exception, run on the two-houses-a-night plan. They give one performance at six or half-past, and another, which begins somewhere about ten. An excellent idea this for London, it seems to me. Those who have trains to catch to the suburbs or the country could catch them comfortably after the first performance. Those who work late could dress and dine comfortably before going to the theater instead of scrambling into their clothes and bolting their food as they must do in order to be in their places at eight or half-past.

"Spanish drama is looking up. The new vigor which has been noticeable in the life of the country in recent years has had a striking effect upon the arts. In painting, Spaniards have reconquered some of the glories of their past. They have many writers of distinguished talent. Musically they have developed very fast. I saw an orchestral concert advertised for the unusual hour of eleven o'clock on a Sunday morning. I went to it and heard the 'Peer Gynt' suite of Grieg exquisitely played. The whole program was on a high level of artistic value and the theater was almost full. I find that there are several orchestras giving regular concerts of the best kind. These also are given at a very convenient hour, half-past five or six."

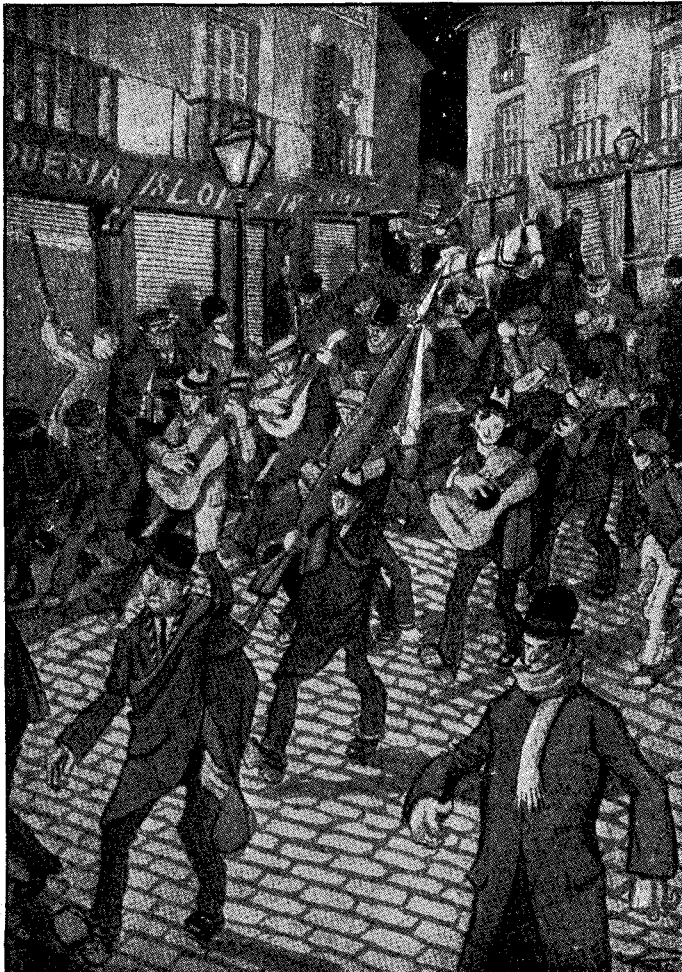
The picture is one that impresses this writer after an interval of twelve years—the time since his last previous visit to Madrid. During that time, he declares, the city has "changed almost beyond recognition." We read:

"It was then mean, dirty, undistinguished. It had not the air of a capital. Its people matched it. They were shabby, unkempt. Now, instead of narrow alleys there are fine, wide streets. Gloomy, dilapidated buildings have given place to handsome blocks of shops, offices, and flats. Whole new quarters have sprung up, airy and attractive. Tree-bordered boulevards make the place gay and green.

"The Prado, which before disappointed me wofully, now delights me. It is one of the pleasantest strolling-spots I know. It has a good driving-road on either side, with broad walks down the center, divided by plantations of evergreens and palms and shaded by avenues of trees. It now lives up to its reputation as a very famous promenade; and it has been continued for about a mile as far as the race-course on the edge of the city. This continuation, called first the Paseo de Recoletes and then the Paseo de la Castellana, is the most fashionable residence quarter. The houses are large and white; they stand back among gardens. The air is fresh and clear.

"It is an immense advantage to Madrid to stand so high. The climate is grumbled at—what climate is not?—but the atmosphere is pure and invigorating. Drive out of the city in almost any direction and you find yourself in wild, romantic scenery. The golf-links, on the road to Segovia, are most picturesque. From every green there is a view of the mountains. The dwarf pines and flex-trees lend the spot a welcome touch of poetry which not even hoarse cries of 'Fore!' can expel. I do not know that the Spaniards are likely to take very kindly to golf, but they have enthusiastically adopted football.

"This new-born liking for open-air exercise seems to me to be part of a change which has come over the *Madridenses* as well as over their city. The Spanish type has altered a good deal. The men have become smarter, well set up, more athletic-looking. The university students might many of them be



From "Blanco e Negro," Madrid.

AN EVENING IN CARNIVAL TIME.

Sketch of a students' revel in Madrid, the only capital of Europe that has the heart to keep up its gaieties in war-time.

has been taking a sort of survey of European society as the war affects it, tells us that the spectacle of life in Madrid is more varied than in any other European capital, and while watching it he felt, he confesses, that "the war was very far off." "Plenty of young men about; plenty of people to render one unnecessary services, such as pushing open doors; no sign of food scarcity in the shops." Yet we are told that "the only thing that is talked about and written about in the newspapers with fervid interest is the fighting on the Western front and the effect of the war on Spain." War-prices also prevail. "This city for the visitor is dearer than Bucharest was before Roumania made war; and Bucharest was reckoned the dearest place in the world." Here is the pageant of life as Mr. Fyfe observed it for the *London Daily Mail*:

"Madrid is a city of late hours. The usual time for dinner is a

American boys. It is rarely that one sees the bristly cheeks, the slovenly dress, the listless manner that used to be common among them. Who is responsible? It must be the active, sportsmanlike, thoroughly modern young King. Under his influence Madrid has been 'Haussmannized,' so that it is now, like Paris, a city of imposing vistas, no longer a city of tortuous, narrow lanes."

DETHRONING THE GERMAN APOLLO

FRANCE AND RUSSIA have never fully grasped the dynamic power of national music as factors in political propaganda. These two countries are further along the way than England and Italy, however, who in the past have been "too deeply entangled in the meshes of Gretchen to regain their freedom at once." But even they show an eagerness to breathe the air of liberty, we are told in *Le Correspondant* (Paris), by Mr. G. Jean-Aubry, the famous French composer and musical critic. He notes a musical renaissance within the Allied nations, but this he thinks can be crowned with the success it deserves only "if the various forces are properly organized into one strong musical alliance whose principal dogma must be the abandonment of all traditional esthetics and the recognition of new currents within the broad streams of the national musical lives of the individual nationalities." This, indeed, is not musical jingoism, for Mr. Jean-Aubry cautions against injustice toward the real merits of "our former brethren in Apollo"—meaning German composers. But he insists that the Latin world overvalued the classics of German music, and "music-teachers, composers, and virtuosi drove our French masters to the background, yielding to the Teutons the place of honor." There are perhaps even worse things, he adds, such as—

"Our ignorance of the musical achievements of our present Allies, the Italians and English. How many among the Italian composers from Monteverde to Pergolesi have appeared on our concert programs or on the bills of our opera-houses? What do we know of the English 'madrigalists' and 'virginalists' of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries?"

"Have the fine arts stopt at Raffael and Michelangelo? Well, as little has musical evolution been arrested with Haydn, Mozart, and Wagner. No doubt, in the first half of the nineteenth century Italy was in a state of musical decadence; our own position was not a whit better, and Russia and England cut a still poorer figure than we, the Latin races. The Central Powers had, therefore, the field free to themselves, and with their undeniable energy they clung hard to their monopolistic position. The only discord in this Teutonic concert was represented by the Pole, Chopin, our unconscious first ally in the dethronement of the German Muse.

"And is it not interesting to note that the musical hegemony of Germany was practically broken almost simultaneously with the rise of the political world-power of the Fatherland? Was it the concentration of all the faculties of the German soul in the direction of industrial development and militaristic superiority, was it the gradual curtailing of individual liberty? Well, we leave the explanation of the phenomenon to our psychologists, but nobody will grudge us Frenchmen the satisfaction that lies in the knowledge that the Hungarian Franz

Liszt was the first to spike the triumphal chariot of his Saxonian-Bavarian father-in-law, Wagner.

"It was Liszt who aroused the musical conscience of non-Teutonic Europe. He inspired and helped the Russians Glinka and Rimsky-Korsakof, and our own Camille Saint-Saëns and César Franck. Liszt was a great musical agitator—besides his merits as composer and virtuoso—and the present movement for the musical emancipation of the Allies from the overbearing domination of Munich, Düsseldorf, and Vienna can rightly call him its patron saint. He helped in the process of nationalizing the art of music. He made of it a distinctive feature of the national soul by lifting it from the hazy atmosphere of artistic cosmopolitanism toward concrete national consciousness.

"The French school, with Camille Saint-Saëns at its head, and his pupils and followers, Fauré, Lalo, Chabrier, César Franck, and Claude Debussy, appeared on the scene. Russia, with her original melancholic music, a blending of the Slav soul and the



From "La Esfera," Buenos Aires.

A MASKED BALL AT BUENOS AIRES.

Spanish-American cities, like their mother country, retain some of the gaieties of life to offset the woful oppressions of the cities in the war-zones.

genius of Asia, produced a Balakirev, a Borodin, Musorgski, Skryabin, and Stravinski; Italy claimed her place in the sun with Casella and Malipiero; England with Vaughan Williams, Frank Bridge, and Eugene Goossens. This is the Allies' musical array."

The French composer addresses himself particularly to the younger generation of composers and virtuosi; it is they, he thinks, who ought to become the main factors in this anti-Teutonic musical-defense league. After the war of 1870, the first impulse had been given to a creation of this sort; the present war ought to impress upon it the seal of final sanction. Mr. Jean-Aubry advocates, however, a close cooperation with the Société Nationale de Musique—born February 25, 1871, i.e., while the Germans still stood on French soil—and analogous organizations which are in formation, at present, in Italy, Russia, and England. The first effort of this new sort of national crusaders, as far as France is concerned, ought to be, according to him, to turn the French public from its inveterate tendency to consider the stage as the almost exclusive center of musical life. Since the United States has become an ally, her musicians should not fall without the stream of modern tendency, whose wide-spread agencies we see here:

"The Società Nazionale di Musica, founded a few months ago by the great Italian composer and musical critic, Alfredo Casella, and supported by men such as Bossi, Busoni, and