

DECORATION

BY MARJORIE MEEKER

A LOOF and pale, the queen passed through dark curtains
That were parted with pomp and proudly opened wide,
Then languidly drawn together again by the gaping
Pages who stood outside.

White and frail as a frail white flower was the queen
Against the violet curtains that swayed and stirred;
But the heedless pages wagged their heads and whispered
Of a strange thing they had heard.

A little they marveled at the queen's proud hands
And the shining of her jewel-twisted hair;
But mostly they talked of a darkly-burning ring
She never used to wear.

A little they spoke of her voice more silver strange
Than the sweetness of flutes in the highest castle hall;
But mostly they told of a name the queen would murmur
Unheard, she thought, by all.

Proudly the queen had passed. . . . The somber curtains
Remembered her paleness, and stirred and sighed with the wind;
But the pages nodded busy heads, and whispered
That the queen had sinned.

LEOPOLD GODOWSKY, OPTIMISTIC PESSIMIST

BY L. DEAN-HATCH

"THE trend of modern music is *down*," said Leopold Godowsky recently in a conversation which I had the good fortune to see and hear. They were talking about the drift of the present school of music, meaning of course, not the universally condemned jazz and ragtime, but the best creative art in harmony that our generation has produced.

"The trend is *down*," and the face of the great pianoforte master, which lends itself so naturally in pleasant little creases to a clever jest or the teasing quip of the broad-minded observer of human frailties, straightened into the gravity and firmness his pupils learn to respect.

"Nothing that has been done in the last thirty years will live. In another twenty-five it will not be found. It *must* die. There is nothing in it to keep alive—to make live.

"The old masters," he explained, "they had a basis. To be exact, I suppose there is nothing in the world that has not a basis. But Beethoven, Bach, Brahms, Mozart—these men worked on the best foundation they knew in life. They took for their inspiration—what shall we call it?—the Church? Maybe religion is the better word. But now, of recent time, the composers think only of material things, so that all they have to give us is little pictures, *motifs*, trifles of description. These things have

no roots. They will vanish like the snow on the hills.

"Then there is this modern school that boasts the wild dance for a basis." The refined poet-musician shrank visibly at the thought. "Imagine the ultimate results of evolving music from the dance of savages that howl about a cave fire while they kill and eat one another! Compare that with music inspired by the most beautiful Gothic cathedral, where the thoughts and harmonies rise up to the lofty arches, which themselves but represent aisles in the mighty forest stretching upward to heaven.

"There it is in a nutshell. The old masters reached as high as they could. The new school grovels as low as it can go. The one lives; the other dies. It is very plain."

"Then are we not to hope," asked another musician, "that some higher inspiration may evolve out of this—this, our unfortunate period? Have we no future to beckon us in music?"

"It sounds discouraging," some one else objected, "for our day. Like the people who tell us the world is getting worse—going all to the bad—"

"Oh-h!" began Godowsky, cheerfully; "I did not say that there was no hope. It was not I that said the world was black and hopeless. Not at all. We are in a period of transition—that is what I say. The whole world, along every line, is going through the same process.

You might put it, there are great masses of rubbish we are sorting out and burning. Our age—what is it? It is a mere span in the great bridge of life. And it appears that this span—our time—is dedicated to cleaning things up. It is given to us to recognize and burn up the vast masses of rubbish—as you would clean a yard, a boulevard—"

"But are we really burning anything? Or is it we're just collecting unsightly heaps, and making a noise about it?"

"It is certain that much that is evil in the world is being destroyed," affirmed the great man. "Though," he added a trifle soberly, "much that is good gets destroyed along with the bad. This generation has killed off many of its clever, able people.

"For it makes a great chaos and confusion, this transition, this sifting out the worth-while from the not-worth-while. There is nothing you can put your finger on and call it definitely this, that, or the other these days. We have no republics. No more have we any monarchies. No aristocracies. Nor democracies either. Lloyd George, of England, cannot tell any more than the rest of us what anything really is.

"It is also a fact that we no more have any governments. Just organizations it pleases us to call by that name. You might put us pianists in office," he added with a twinkle, "and you would have as much real governing performed. Never

were peoples so hard to govern as at the present."

It is always delightful to listen to opinions expressed by great people. And especially so when the talk drifts quite naturally, without steering, into unpremeditated currents. Who had thought of Mr. Godowsky wandering into the sea of world politics when discussing modern music?

Yet what digression could have been more natural? If a man has mind enough to become a master of one department of life, that same master mind will be great enough to be interested in all other life. It will have its own viewpoint on the world and its special outlook on current affairs. After all, I thought, it is the strangest thing that we keep trying to shut artists off into an impractical group just because they enrapture our souls through the medium of piano keys or pictures.

Who is so traveled as the world's master pianist? Who can speak to so many people in so many languages? And who is in so fortunate a position to rub up against the best culture and the most earnest thinking of his day?

But Mr. Godowsky was speaking again. He was summing up his attitude toward life, in the semi-humorous, semi-sober strain characteristic of him in his relaxed and social moments.

"Personally, I am what you would call a cheerful pessimist. Or," with a merry smile, "a pessimistic optimist. Either phrase will do equally well. I see chaos all about. That is true. But I also see hope. If we observe a trend downward in some one thing—even in many things—in our view of our age, our little span of life, that does not hinder us from believing that there may be also a greater trend *up* going on at the same time, reckoning on a larger scale, if we acquire the wider view.

"If some men persist that man is an utter failure—very well, then probably out of the universe—it is vast, we cannot comprehend the universe—somehow, somewhere, might be produced some super-being that will succeed better than man. It also we cannot comprehend. But, at any rate, we can believe—have faith.

"But myself, as I say, I am a cheerful pessimist. I do not see that we need to imagine super-beings. I see hope everywhere, even in our world confusion of the present. Russia is a wonderful country. Russia is capable of marvelous things—things not yet dreamed of. The mental capacity"—he tapped his forehead—"in Russia is absolutely amazing. She is virgin soil. All other countries, any other race—they have one, all, been developed to the high-water mark in the present or the past. They are civilizations or relics of civilizations tilled for centuries. But Russia—she is like the new earth fresh from the forest. Prepare it; throw on the water, and allow the sunshine. The growth will be past belief. You will see Russia rise.

"Germany too. I have great hope for Germany. In twenty-five years she will be greater than before the war. But in a different way. Not aggressive—this will be enlightenment."

"And England?" asked his hearers.

"England? Oh, it will have been good for England—all her troubles. She was getting too easy—into ruts. Nothing to force her into initiative. But now, fine! good! She must exert herself."

Here we were, listening to a rapid diagnosis of national conditions—a determinedly hopeful and cheerful diagnosis too. And a few moments ago our hearts had been sinking with the thought of modern music tobogganing to the dogs. Certainly Mr. Godowsky was proving himself a cheerful pessimist.

It came to me to wonder where the great master fitted in in this chaos of transition he told about, as it pertained to music. What part was he playing in the sifting out and sorting over of the art realm? The world's greatest pianist, a prolific composer himself, a refined poet-philosopher of piano literature, as he is called—it was inconceivable that he would be willing to have his own labor and influence descend to the canines with the common trend, and be lost within twenty-five years, almost before it was launched upon the world. What were Leopold Godowsky's aims and purposes?

He soon gave a clue, though quite unconsciously.

A lady had been introduced to him as a great admirer of his music, but one who technically "knew nothing" of his art. "Is she a critic?" asked Godowsky, merrily, for every one acquainted with the master knows that he regards "critics" and "know-nothings" as synonymous.

"Call me whatever you please," returned the lady, pleasantly. "All I know is that I do love music. But I am sure I could get more out of a recital if I knew what to expect. One could sort of tune one's self up to receive—as you tune a violin—"

Now all really great people are humble—humble enough to appreciate real humility.

"I will give you a hint," began the master, kindly. "Musicians are like speakers. When you attend a novelist's lecture, you don't expect geology, do you? Philip Gibbs won't give you a didactic discourse, like a minister; he will probably tell you about the war. A poet will read you poetry. But a scientist—you never think of being entertained by a scientist. It is the Harry Lauders you look to for that.

"It is even so in the world of music. Some musicians will educate you; some will thrill; others dazzle, brilliancy being their forte. Some will entertain you merely. There are even what we call 'spectacular' players. And then there are poets of harmony, and philosophers in music, and masters of sublime inspiration. Each one is a personality. A master along his own line—if he is any-

thing at all. If not, he is only a copyist or a pupil. Though a pupil, if he becomes good enough, may rise to a master."

"You have indeed given me a key," said the lady; "you have made the individuality of artists quite, quite plain," adding with a playful hesitancy, as she glanced at a paper in her hand. "And what—what shall I expect—"

"Oh!" interposed the great man, throwing up his hands and relapsing into dialect in his haste, for he correctly divined the paper to be the programme of one of his own recitals; "that ees not for me to say; that ees entirely for others. But," coming back to earnestness, "I can tell you what I am *trying* to do in my playing—in my compositions. I am attempting to amalgamate two distinct schools of interpretative art, the classic and the romantic. I am trying to unite the perfection of form of the classics with the freedom of fantasy of romanticism."

And he proceeded to explain to the lady his meaning in simplest language.

Now, I thought, why was Godowsky striving to unite these two schools—a difficult task—unless it was that in the general downward slump he feared the romantic school might otherwise be lost? For every one knows its position is not as assured as that of the classics.

So *that* was his aim and purpose? To sift the worth-while out of the chaos of transition as it operates in the realm of piano music, and preserve it from destruction? Poet and philosopher in music Godowsky is called. But here showed his practical side. In this great world spring-cleaning he had described he sought to snatch precious brands from the burning and enshrine them safely for future keeping.

Afterward a star pupil of the master's, a young prodigy, of whom he entertains great hopes, was showing me a complete set of Godowsky's compositions, magnificently bound in morocco, which he had just presented to her. I was astonished at the size and number of the volumes. Godowsky's works are extensive, his compositions beginning at the age of sixteen.

"Some of it is too difficult to be played by ordinary pianists, which is probably why you have not heard more of it," remarked the pupil. "For instance, his Sonata. It is a most marvelous thing, and takes over an hour to play it."

"But will it live?" I asked, remembering the doom pronounced upon modern creations.

"Yes, I believe it will. For it has melody. Melody, you know, is the basis of all the old masters' work. Mr. Godowsky has consistently sought out the elements of real greatness and striven to amalgamate them, quite as he says.

"But Godowsky's own special line of greatness lies in his marvelous inner voicing—his weaving in of counter-melodies. It is an art that lends a peculiarly



(C) Keystone

LEOPOLD GODOWSKY

rich finish. Everything he touches turns out a rare mosaic. And he brings out the special beauty of each of these minute and myriad themes and intermelodies so exquisitely in his own playing. That is why it is difficult for the technique of the ordinary pianist to reach up to the detail and refinement of standard necessary to play the intricately rich compositions of Godowsky.

"But he has had forethought for this contingency. I suspect his own acquiring of his amazing technique prompted him to one of his greatest achievements, these, his 'Arrangements of the Chopin Studies,' which are intended to develop the possibilities of pianoforte playing, to widen its range of tone and coloring, and to expand what are called its polyphonic, polyrhythmic, and polydynamic potentialities. And here are his 'Miniatures for Students,' too, so beautifully arranged, with the bass played by the teacher. These studies are amazing, like the tricks of Godowsky's own hands.

"And then," swiftly turning the leaves of more great tomes; "here again are his wonderful 'Cadenzas for Beethoven and Mozart' Concertos.' These massed effects in pianoforte playing—it can readily be understood they are prepared to meet the vaster potentialities of the modern stage and its lavish sources of equipment.

"So, don't you see how Godowsky in his careful retention of the primal principle of melody, in the added enriching decoration of his own style, and his wise

preparation of the student in technique to meet modern rapidly widening possibilities—don't you see how the master *must* believe in an *upward* trend again? How he is working for it?"

"These are his paraphrases—a line of work that has offered a great outlet for Godowsky's inimitable talent for enrichment. You see, he will run across some little thin piece, or theme, in the field of music which he thinks has promise in it, but which will *never* survive and be used as it is. He will take it, apply to it his wonderful faculty of inner-voice etching, and behold! it comes from his hands a rich and lovely thing."

The star pupil rippled a few simple phrases off the piano keys. "This," she told me, "is one of Strauss's waltzes which Godowsky has *paraphrased*. And see what he has made of it." And she began the "Artist's Life," that wonderful blending of melodies and mingled themes which are so profusely and elegantly woven and patterned together that the whole effect is magnificent.

"These Renaissance pieces," she picked up another volume, "are along the same line. They are among the most beautiful arrangements in all piano literature, and are particularly fine examples of that happy art of blending, or amalgamating, the purpose of which you heard him trying to explain to the lady.

"Left as in the original, they could never in the world have been played on a modern piano at a modern concert.

They would have needed some quaint old spinet of their own time and day. But that is Godowsky's forte—taking a simple thread, and making of it embroidery or filigree, or weaving many filigrees into glorious tapestries. He saves and enriches countless things that otherwise would be lost to the world. I suppose it is an example of what he would call his optimistic pessimism.

"The purists in Germany made a great furor about it when they saw what he was doing. But why should they? It is precisely what Shakespeare did in literature. And did not their own Wagner work up old German legends into his 'Lohengrin' and 'Nibelungenlied'? Besides, Godowsky is perfectly open and frank about his work. He tells the world plainly whether his production is entirely of his own creation, or an arrangement, or a paraphrase, and precisely why he has done what he has done."

"Away with the fussy, meticulous purists!" I thought. For my part, I was glad some one had come into the world to meet this chaotic age of ours and rescue the principle of melody out of the modern syncopated jumble we all have to struggle to like, and to preserve what beauty we can from the prevalent destruction.

And that is how I discovered the practical side of a poet in music—the individuality of Leopold Godowsky in the realm of art—poet, philosopher, and preservist.

MODERNISM AND THE CHURCH

BY ROLAND COTTON SMITH

When the Modern Churchmen's Union was formed last fall, The Outlook asked the President of the Union, who for twenty years was rector of St. John's Protestant Episcopal Church, Washington, D. C., to write concerning the spiritual questions that are stirring people to-day as they have not been stirred for years, and the following article, prepared before the first of the year, is the result of The Outlook's request.—THE EDITORS.

AS President of the Modern Churchmen's Union I have been asked to say something about this society, recently started in the Protestant Episcopal Church.

I willingly do so, as there has been a misunderstanding of its character and aims. The members have been looked upon as a sort of compound of Cubist and Bolshevik, eager for any kind of revolution, and ever ready to destroy. It has been feared that we would break down the faith of good people, and form another party in a Church where there are already too many. On the other hand, our declaration of principles has seemed too innocuous and inoffensive to warrant our existence.

The reason for our existence lies in the chaotic and turbulent condition of the world to-day. Foundations have been, not shattered, but shaken, and they have to be examined and strengthened before we can build our new world. To begin with the reconstruction of any part before we have examined the whole spells failure.

There can be no success until the individual man knows himself to be an Atlas with the weight of the whole world upon him and the responsibility for the rebuilding of it resting upon his shoulders. We must be appalled and sobered by the gravity of the situation before we can do anything.

For the greatest obstacle to any solution of the problem is the irresponsible and unbridled tongue. Not the tongue that is held in check by the appalling realities, and, feeling its responsibility, speaks only of that which it knows, and criticises the other man's opinion in love; but the tongue of the man who feels no weight of the world upon his shoulders, and thinks that its reconstruction is to be brought about by rulers and congresses, and speaks without knowledge and criticises without love.

If the world is to be built up again, we must have ideas as to how it should be built; not one man's idea, but all men's ideas. And before we do anything else we ought to assemble at a great Hague Convention of the Spirit, and adopt these two fundamental principles: I. "There are, it may be, so many different kinds of voices in the world, but not one of them is without signification." II. "Finally, brethren, be courteous."

The Modern Churchmen's Union is a modern Atlas with a sense of humor. It is weighed down by the seriousness of the situation, but it does not take it-

self too seriously, and it has already adopted the fundamental principles of the spiritual Hague.

If the world is to be built up again, it will have ideals as well as ideas. It will have religion; the binding together of the material and the spiritual; placing the spirit within the wheels. It is bound to have a Church, the organized expression of the life of God in the soul of man. And this life of God is bound to express itself in many different forms.

This Church will have a creed, for a creed is a statement of what men have found at any given time, and at all times, in the spiritual world.

If, therefore, the world is to be rebuilt, the Church must be rebuilt, not to conform to the world, but to transform it.

With these universal principles in mind, the modern Churchman turns to his own Church to study the problem there. And the same problems will be found to exist in all of the Churches.

As the Modernist studies the problem of the rebuilding of the Church on the old foundation, the prospect is unexpectedly and magnificently encouraging. As he studies the thoughts of the people of the world, and especially the people of his own country, he finds a chaotic and bewildering whirl of ideas palpitant with life. As he looks into the melting-pot of thought he discovers that men are not thinking in terms of matter, but in terms of spirit. The methods and conclusions are often grotesque and twisted, futile and abortive. Nevertheless this most important fact stands out—men are trying to interpret life in terms of the spirit. Since this society has been started I have received many letters from all parts of the country, telling how the individual man, throwing aside all authority, is trying to work out for himself the problem of the spirit. Laymen everywhere are writing books, showing how, from their particular angle, they have worked out the problem for themselves, until they have reached for themselves reality. The novels of to-day, below all their filth and defiance of conventions, are concerned with some problem of the spirit. The art of to-day is not sensual and materialistic; it is the attempt of a man to express, not what the other man has seen, but what he sees of the spirit within the form. The result of his labors often appears monstrous, but it is a step in the right direction, for when the true spirit is recaptured it will inevitably express itself in the right form. This develop-

ment which we can see most clearly in modern art throws a light upon the whole modern surging of the spirit. It springs out of life and demands reality; and it refuses for the present to accept any of the established forms; but when the spirit is recaptured we shall find that it will express itself more and more in the old accepted forms.

Men to-day are trying to express life in terms of spirit. Fifty years ago men were trying to express life in terms of matter, and scientists, by the careful and painstaking collecting of facts, by their loyal devotion to truth, and by their penetrating generalizations, unrolled before men's eyes a physical universe so stupendous and overpowering that men were led to believe that the physical world was everything. Now men are beginning to see what the prophets declared fifty years ago—that there is still a world of the spirit untouched by natural science; that evolution, whether it be true or false, is merely a statement of a physical process, and has no bearing whatever on the existence or nature of the spiritual world. The scientist and the spiritual expert work side by side and in entire accord within their separate spheres. When the scientist now and then tries to make an excursion into the spiritual realm, and uses his approach to prove the reality of the spiritual life, he is still dealing with material things, and makes no contribution, and the spiritual expert by his side smiles and says: "What you seem to have recently discovered we have known ever since the world was made."

The real contribution that the scientist has made to the rebuilding of the Church is his method. What we need to-day are spiritual experts who will laboriously and patiently collect and classify spiritual facts and truths in human experience, state spiritual laws and principles, and make broad generalizations. Not to dodge behind every new word and call themselves psychologists or something else, but reclaim the old word, a word that best describes the nature of God, and know themselves spiritual experts in a spiritual world.

Now, the fact that men are trying to express life in terms of the spirit and the fact that science and religion have come to a better understanding and can work side by side make the present conditions most auspicious for the rebuilding of a Church. There never was a time in the history of the world when the prospect was more promising.

And that brings us to the question: