

PERSONALITIES

of the week

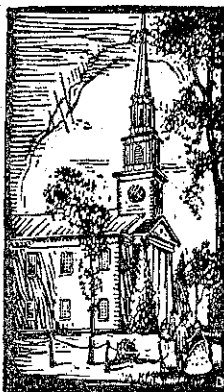
BACH'S £13 SALARY.

TWO centuries ago John Sebastian

Bach conducted the historic church choir of St. Thomas, Leipzig, for which he wrote a new cantata for performance every Sunday. These cantatas ran into hundreds in due time, and the small body of 18th century singers little knew the part they were playing in the foundations of music as we understand them to-day. For this work Bach drew the munificent stipend of £13 a year. He somehow managed to rear a family of twenty children on this ludicrously small income, plus what he made out of teaching. With a long and honourable history, the choir of to-day worthily upholds its splendid traditions under the present conductor, Dr. Karl Straube, who for the past 33 years has ruled its destinies. Dr. Straube is an organist-virtuoso of the first rank. He holds many distinguished musical posts in the musical city of Leipzig, and is a foremost Bach authority.

THE "REV." LEVITZKI.

DR. CHRISTIAN REISNER, of the Grace Methodist Episcopal Church, New York, evidently agrees with the belief of Charles Wesley, who once said: "The devil ought not to have all the



best tunes," so he invited Mischa Levitzki to play a short recital. The church rang with applause, and, responding to Dr. Reisner's appeal for funds the plates yielded over one thousand pounds. "And your playing had more to do with it than anything I was able to say," he told the pianist afterwards. "It

was a direct response to the message which you gave them. They knew it was something bigger and greater than a display of technique—that you were there to unfold to them the ideas which the composers had concealed within the notes as they had arranged them. It was the preaching of the gospel of music and beauty and power."

VERSATILE HARRY.

HARRY DEARTH, whose death robbed the concert platform of a most popular and versatile singer, was born in London in 1876, and was educated at St. Mark's College and the Royal College of Music. His debut at the age of eighteen was at Marlborough Hall. For fourteen years he was principal bass soloist in the choir of Westminster Abbey. He was for three years with the Beecham Opera Company, and a further three years he played and sang in musical comedy in the companies of the late George Edwardes and Robert Courtneidge. Dearth was a favourite soloist at the Royal Choral Society's concerts, and at all the principal concerts and festivals in the United Kingdom. The late Harry Dearth toured New Zealand years ago.

RADIO'S GODFATHER.

POSTERITY will regard Sir Oliver Lodge as one of the men who, along with Hertz, Marconi and Fleming, laid the foundations for the greatest and most beneficial invention since the printing press. When he showed the practical uses to which wireless telegraphy could be put he pointed the way to the greatest contribution to human culture the world had ever known. Like Archbishops Averill and Redwood, Sir Oliver hailed from Staffordshire. The tiny village of Penkhull claims him as its most illustrious native, and 1851, the year of

his birth, was a memorable one for the little settlement. Then was born the man who was to have to his credit a list of inventions of almost superhuman achievement. Astronomy, radio and relativity have all claimed his attention.

COURAGEOUS DORA.

DORA LABETTE, one of the foremost English sopranos of to-day, once had the courage to rebuke a careless audience when she stopped in her song and told them that she would not go on until they ceased walking about and distracting her with their noise. Every performing artist should be grateful to her for her spirited action, for the unmannerliness and ignorance of some audiences is enough to irritate the performer almost beyond endurance. They need such a lesson in decent behaviour far more frequently. Why should an artist strive to be heard above the sound of footsteps, scraping chairs and other jarring sounds? Besides, there are always some people present who pay their money to listen to the music, and it is as unfair to these as to the artist on the stage.

GLASGOW'S PRIDE.

IN 1906 Sir Hugh Robertson founded a musical organisation which has become the pride of Glasgow—and, indeed, of all Scotland—known as the Glasgow Orpheus Choir. It has become one of the most famous choral bodies in the British Isles, and all the credit for its fame that can possibly attach to a conductor, apart from his forces, is due to Robertson. Every year the choir visits London, and these visits have become distinct musical events. Almost always on these occasions they go to No. 10 Downing Street, and have also been to "Chequers" by invitation of the Prime Minister. The choir's domestic affairs are dealt with in the official organ, a little paper called "The Lute," and on the humorous side the choir's conductor frequently contributes most readable sketches.

LEOPOLD GODOWSKI

LEOPOLD Godowsky has proved his artistic mettle in so many and such varied fields that it is not necessary at this late day to dwell upon his exploits as a pianist, adapter and pedagogue. He never has been content to wander in routine paths, and gifted as he is with creative instinct, has shaped his pianistic equipment so as to encompass a style absolutely unique, at the same time qualifying himself as a genius in adaptation by his transcriptions and arrangements of works from the classified repertory. Of late years Godowsky has been doing much travelling in foreign fields, and also has composed much original matter. His outlook has widened, his always extensive culture has broadened.

WHAT NAME, PLEASE?

THE names given below are those of men and women who are featured in the coming programmes from the New Zealand national stations or of radio performers who have been featured in the news during the week. On these pages are paragraphs relating to the activities of the persons mentioned in this column.

SIR OLIVER LODGE, scientist, recorded, from 1YA, Sunday, February 10.

GRETA KELLER, soprano, from 2YA, Tuesday, February 12.

MISCHA LEVITZKI, pianist, recorded items from 3YA, Tuesday, February 12.

DORA LABETTE, soprano, in recorded items from 1YA, Friday, February 15.

ST. THOMAS' CHOIR, recorded numbers from 4YA, Monday, February 11.

HARRY DEARTH, bass, in recorded songs from 4YA, Wednesday, February 13.

GLASGOW ORPHEUS CHOIR, recorded, in items from 4YA, Thursday, February 14.

LEOPOLD GODOWSKY, pianist, from 2FC, Sydney, Sunday, February 10.

STELLA POWER, "Little Melba," soprano, from 3LO, Melbourne, Sunday, February 10, and 3AR, Melbourne, Friday, February 15.