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MARCH 21, 1916,

T. LEA SOUTHGATE, Esq., D.C.L.,

VICE-PRESIDENT,

IN THE CHAIR.

SOME CURIOSITIES OF MUSICAL CRITICISM.

BY MARY M. PAGET, L.R.A.M., A.R.C.M.

MR. CHAIRMAN, Ladies and Gentlemen : I must thank you for the honour you do me by inviting me to speak to you. Though you will not fail to discover the fact very shortly for yourselves, I would rather confess at once that I am only an amateur—and, I hope, a humble one. I come here as much to learn my mistakes as to state my opinions ; and if I do the latter with that certainty and emphasis which are the special privilege of the partially instructed, I hope for equally emphatic contradiction from those who know far more than I do. Having then begun—as do some preachers—by begging for charity, I will start with one of the many curiosities of criticism that I had the pleasure of discovering in that home of delightful curiosities, animate and inanimate—the British Museum Reading Room. One of the best musical critics of the 19th century, Mattheson, of Hamburg, has described in detail the effect of music upon different animals. He does not worry about scientific proof, but says that crabs follow the pipe, hares the transverse flute, camels a small bell, trout and carp a large bell, bees the cymbals, and spiders the lute. “Pigs,” he says, “will go anywhere after a zither.”

There rises before our vision a kind of musical Noah's Ark ; and as we look at the couples that go in last, we wonder what kind of music is drawing them. It is easier to understand the effect of music, if any there be, on a crab, than its effect on a human being. Yet this last is the gigantic subject with which I am supposed to be dealing this afternoon : for musical criticism is simply the attempt to express in words the effect of music upon human beings. The critic is nothing of himself : he speaks only as a man for his fellow-men. True, there have been critics who have tried not to be men—merely to sit apart and watch. Such was the melancholy and self-conscious Jaques, who enjoyed himself in the stalls while all human nature acted before him ; who made “copy” alike of his own evil

life and of the duke's conversion. And what a miserable, anæmic critic he became! How he missed every reality: mistaking sentiment for passion, æstheticism for art, and talk for life.

"The true critic," says St. Beuve, "is the secretary of the public." And so it is the public with whom we have to do, and our study of criticism is after all nothing more nor less than a study of character.

The joy of this discovery cheers us through some rather puzzling hours. It is puzzling to read old criticisms without knowing by whom they were read (by whom they were written is comparatively unimportant), and to feel utterly unable to catch the musical point of view of a past century.

One realizes that it is almost impossible to compare the listeners of past days with the musical public of our own. Owing probably to its severance from religion, art is no longer a controlling influence, except when closely linked, as are the bagpipes, with historical and sentimental associations of ideas. It no longer affects action, public or private. We cannot imagine a Symphony causing a wholesale slaughter or a change of Government. Yet this is hardly due to any increase in gentleness, for the one passion that does seem in the modern listener to have survived in almost primitive intensity is anger. The appearance of anything really new can rouse him to sudden fury, so that, like King Saul, he cares not by what means he rids himself of the intruder. This is not to say we do not like a novelty. We do; but it must be a novelty that reminds us of something we have heard before, or we get angry.

In a book that is of no value to the student of music, but of unspeakable interest to the student of character, I mean "*Richard Wagner in the Mirror of Criticism*," a German writer has collected and gravely arranged in alphabetical order some six hundred specimens of abuse of Wagner, taken mostly from German newspapers. Of course the words with which one chases a bull from a china shop cannot always be carefully chosen. But the names applied to Wagner by some of his critics were strangely inappropriate. For instance: Mollusc, Moloch, Mooncalf, Megatherium, Mendelssohn-and-Water, Alpine-clubbist, and Ape.

I have no intention this afternoon of dealing with anything so recent as the music of Wagner, but I shall often refer to this grim book of Herr Tappert's, for it shows how many are the hindrances to "that right judgment in all things" which is, I suppose, the ideal of criticism: and also how, throughout the whole story of art, and to whatever the judgments have been applied, the same hindrances have occurred—how monotonous, in other words, is what I venture to call the rhythm of criticism.

Fired with the orderly spirit of this book, I tried to marshal

the rough armies of Billingsgate therein brought into the field. and to arrange in classes some of these hindrances to fair criticism. Here, for instance, is a specimen of what may be called the ready-made-up mind—the airtight love of a system: “Wagner is the Vandal of Art. He has no idea of form, no conception of beauty, no rhythm, no intelligence. He is just a conglomeration of brass, wood, and catgut, without a spark of genius.” Happy critic! He has as ready-made and systematic a definition of great matters such as form, beauty, intelligence, and genius, as he has of catgut and brass.

Just such a critic as this was a man to whom most of us have been introduced by Robert Browning,—the Jesuit musician, Abt Vogler. This extraordinary individual, not content with being Chamberlain to the Pope and Capellmeister to several Princes and one King, travelled even to Africa, Armenia, and Greenland, carrying everywhere with him his orchestration, “the instrument of his own invention,” upon which he played Chinese and Hottentot melodies and extemporized. He founded many schools to teach his systems of harmony and organ-building, and into England, where his professional earnings amounted to £1,200, he is said to have introduced the use of organ-pedals. But Mozart, in one of his naughtiest and most amusing letters, says. “Vogler can write bad music in two or three different styles. His book might do to teach arithmetic, but not composition. Yet he undertakes to turn out a composer in three months, or a singer in six. But nobody has seen them yet.”

Mozart abhorred lightning-speed pianists and the audiences who went to *see* rather than *hear* them play. Yet Vogler, with the happy courage of conceit, read through a Mozart Concerto to its composer, taking the Andante *allegro*, and the other movements *prestissimo*. There are few more entertaining curiosities of criticism than Mozart's account of this musical treat.

Vogler was vain even of his appearance, though he is described as short and stout, with hands that could stretch two octaves, and enormously long arms, like a monkey's. Yet he loved to array himself in ecclesiastical Court dress, and to cover himself with orders, and, so attired, to read his breviary while princes and courtiers waited in silence. But beneath all this affectation was a most true and lovable nature, and a positive genius for teaching and inspiring others. It is to the adoring enthusiasm of one of his many distinguished pupils, Carl Maria v. Weber, that we owe the dreadful specimen of music system you will hear.

Weber tells how Vogler made him give up composition for two years, and study the old masters. Well and good. But see what the two of them did with the greatest of the old masters. They admired Bach in a patronising sort of way,

deploring his ignorance of their system, but believing it was never too late to mend—even him. So they set to work. But character will out, even in ready-made critics, and what they really put into Bach was not system, but sentiment.

All his rugged directness is gone. The chords can no longer stand up straight, but have waggly, æsthetic curves: and in one place are supplied with a crutch, in the form of an extra bar, though Weber says they could have done without that. The so-called system has turned a Michael Angelo into a Perugino, an immortal Bach Chorale into a hymn that is neither ancient nor modern.

[Illustration was here given.]

"AUS MEINES HERZEN'S GRUNDE,"

J. S. BACH.

ABT VOGLER'S VERSION.

The musical score is written for piano in 3/4 time, key of D major (indicated by two sharps). It consists of four systems of two staves each. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and accidentals. The first system shows a melody in the treble staff and a bass line in the bass staff. The second system continues the melody with some rests in the treble staff. The third system features a more active bass line with eighth notes. The fourth system concludes the piece with a final chord in the treble staff and a sustained bass line.

* Extra bar.

There is no greater curiosity of criticism than the estimate of Sebastian Bach. I do not mean only the neglect or jealousy of his contemporaries. For that his quick temper may partly have accounted—that temper to which we owe the most curious criticism of all. A man called Scheibe had written of Bach's vocal music as "pompous and artificial." Bach's characteristic retort was the lovely comic Cantata, "Phœbus and Pan," in which he laughs at his own solemnity as well as at the lightness of the Italian school; and, finally, gibbets Scheibe as Midas—long ears, and braying and all.

Here, you see, is not the ordinary criticism of music by words, but something much better—the criticism of words by music.

Many great men have not been regarded as prophets in their own country or their own day, but the neglect of Bach was European, and lasted for a century. We know how the great Passion music, composed in 1729, was left alone till Mendelssohn revived it in 1829. I believe the reason for this long neglect to be simple, though unusual. Bach was simply taken for granted as a member of a family so musical that at one place in Germany the town musicians were called Bachs long after there was not a single Bach left among them. Sebastian was just a Bach—an excellent organist and teacher of music. And therewith he was content. We know what he thought of that wonderful technique of his, which was the only thing his contemporaries really appreciated. "There is nothing very wonderful in it," he said. "You just touch the right note at the right moment, and the instrument does the rest."

We know how he taught for forty years, explaining fingering and writing exercises, and how, when he had dreamed eternal mysteries upon the organ, he copied them into a little book for his son, and dedicated his work (not, as everyone else did, to a prince or a nobleman, but) "to the glory of God and to my neighbour, for his edification." As was said of César Franck, who revived in 19th-century Paris the great spirit of Bach, "faith in his art was blent with faith in God, the source of all Art."

If one believes anything at all, one must believe that to such as Bach and César Franck are given joys which are simply inconceivable by the merely successful.

The rhythm of criticism which for a century under-accentuated Sebastian Bach, now under-accentuates his family. But Sebastian was very proud of his twenty musical children, and one proof of his greatness is that they were quite unlike him. The fame of Carl Philipp Emanuel, whose musical style is described as "gallant," very soon eclipsed that of his father. He was a pioneer, both as composer and as pianist, and did much to prepare the way for Haydn and Mozart. His curious book, "An attempt to show the true way to play the pianoforte," has quite recently been reprinted.

But far more curious is an excursion into the now fashionable region of programme music. Philipp Emanuel composed a Trio representing, so he tells us, a conversation between an optimist and a pessimist. The pianoforte is the optimist, the violin the pessimist. Bach has marked and described almost every bar—there would be no following it without a cinematograph. But this is, vaguely, what happens:

The optimist is for ever dancing round the pessimist, inviting him to join the gambols, and jeering at him because he will not.

The pessimist, poor soul, does his best, grunting out a phrase here and there. "But," says Bach, "this costs him a great deal, and he has to have a silent bar to get over it." He finally relapses into sulky silence, or sleep—probably a pretence. Quite at the end of the first movement the optimist stops chattering to listen for a reply, but getting none, goes off laughing. The pessimist begins the slow movement in a shocking bad temper, but finally gives in—probably for the sake of peace—and, at the very end, joins the optimist, and trips off to the giddy triplets that he—or don't you think it was probably she?—is so fond of?

The greatest musical empire the world has ever known was that of Italian opera. Its power rested on a double foundation—convention and beauty. Anyone can define convention; no one can define beauty. But when they are allied, the second is almost always sacrificed to the first. Of the Italian operatic empire, nothing remains but thousands of beautiful songs, torn from hundreds of conventional operas, whose revival to-day is quite unthinkable. To the Italian composer, as to the Italian peasant, Providence seems to have remitted the need for work.

Melody came of its own accord, dramatic interest did not; so that even men of genius—like Leo, Jomelli, and Handel—were content to turn out operas as like one another as they were unlike real life. And everywhere the people loved to have it so, until Gluck and Wagner arose and gave back to France and to Germany their own national dramas.

We must not underrate that stream of lovely melody which poured, like sunshine, from Italy over Northern lands; only we must notice the inexorable rhythm of criticism. After a time of easy beauty comes often a time of strenuous ugliness—or, at least, of that kind of beauty which M. Rodin defines as "character." All unconsciously, those soft Italian airs were perhaps responsible for the roughnesses of Beethoven, Mendelssohn for Debussy, "Lucia di Lammermoor" for "Salome," and the tunes of many centuries for the tuneless compositions of to-day.

The criticism of modern music that it has no tune is so familiar that I need scarcely say anything about it. But one thing I do want to say. I do not believe it is tune that we all long for—but rhythm. You can whistle a tune with ever so many wrong notes; it remains for you the tune you love. But alter the rhythm, and you lose it altogether.

Of course, the Italian craze was due not only to the songs, but to the singers. Those superb 18th-century singers!—unrivalled in any age, yet disastrous to art. "No music could save an opera without favourite singers" sounds to us a topsy-turvy sort of criticism; in the 18th century it was no criticism, but a truism. They sang what they liked as they liked, and the composers were their slaves. Even Handel,

though he held the Cuzzoni halfway out of a window till she consented to sing what he had written—even Handel wrote nearly all his opera songs for special singers. And strange to say, the orchestra caught the infection and became as selfish and inartistic as the singers.

It is almost incredible that so late as 1813 Spohr, conducting a symphony at Rome, found the following passage :

played thus by the first horn :

while the two clarinets amused themselves thus :

How I should love to see Sir Henry Wood's face if that happened at Queen's Hall.

The strangest thing about the Italian Conquest was the valiance of its prisoners. The biggest foreigner after Handel that it conquered was Hasse, the most "natural, elegant, and judicious" composer of his day, and the most voluminous. Asked for a list of his compositions, he said he could not remember, and would scarcely recognise them. He and his wife, the great singer Faustina Bordone, for whom he wrote acres of runs, shakes, and showy rubbish, became about the most famous musical couple in Europe. His music is often unbearably conventional. But he was a good man, and so Providence gave him space for repentance. Hasse's last opera and Mozart's first were given at Milan on the same day—Hasse was seventy-one, Mozart thirteen. But the old man cried: "This child will cause all of us to be forgotten."

To return to the irony of the rhythm of criticism. I doubt if two men more famous have been more forgotten than Padre Martini and the Abbé Metastasio.

Giambattista Martini, the most learned musician that ever lived, spent sixty quiet years in a Franciscan monastery at Bologna. But his vast knowledge, his library of 17,000 volumes, and above all, his skill as a teacher of music, made him so famous that from all parts of Europe visitors and pupils flocked to him. He received them all helpfully and courteously, though it was sometimes difficult in rooms untidy as only a bachelor book-worm's haunt can be, to find a chair or even a bit of floor not entirely hidden under books or music. Martini did not live to finish his great work, "The History of Music," perhaps because he began it so very far back. "Music from the Creation of Adam up to the Deluge" and "Music from the Deluge to the Birth of Moses," thus are headed two really delightful chapters. Martini does wonders with his scanty material, and his suggestions on the origin of music are quite as interesting as those of Schopenhauer and Mr. Herbert Spencer. He is an artist as well as a scholar. His artistic sense delights in depicting Jubal worrying over musical intervals, till Tubal Cain, hammering his metals, suggests to him grades of sound and the possibility of brass instruments. "But," adds the cautious student, "we must not consider that the music over which Jubal presided attained to the perfection to which it has since been carried."

It is a contrast to turn from Martini to Metastasio. Yet I have a certain wicked satisfaction in so doing: for ever since I studied musical history, I have longed to get my knife into Metastasio. This famous librettist was the very soul—if soul it has—of that shallow conventionality that ruined Italian—and, through it, European—opera for a good century. Every composer was proud to set his dramas—one of them, "Artaxerxes," was set forty times over. He had about as much understanding of classical tragedy as the average baby. Yet he wrote little else, only always taking care that his dramas should end happily. Had he lived now, he would have made an opera story out of *Œdipus Rex*, would have sent him to Wiesbaden for a cure, and consoled Creon with a seat in the House of Lords. If generations are known by their favourite adjectives, as I am sure individuals are, we should know much about the public of the 18th century from its secretaries, the critics. They rave over Metastasio for being "elegant, graceful, and proper": and a drama he wrote at fourteen is admired for being "grave, regular, and accurate." "His heart," they say, "was a durable and copious fountain of deep morality, his moral maxims are daily cited, and his productions are become the code of lovers." This is strange, for in his dramas love, we are told, was only admitted on sufferance, and because there are certain "noble affections, concerning which the vulgar have very little knowledge and less taste; on the contrary, everyone understands love."

What can have been in the mind of these people? Either nothing at all, or else a natural preference for seeing virtue and feeling good, over the effort of trying to be good. And they were content to keep art and life very far apart.

In spite of the impossible virtues which Metastasio was always recommending to others, he seems to have been quite a good man himself. True, he had a fairly easy time, living chiefly under the protection of great ladies, such as the Empress Maria Theresa. He became a priest, we are told, not "from any partiality for that profession, but as the best means of obtaining honour and emoluments." For the same reason, he was also a lawyer, and is said to have won a lawsuit by singing his case so well that everybody wept. He himself thoroughly enjoyed a good cry. One day he made himself cry over one of his own operas, and recorded the affecting event in a poem—and a very good poem it is.

But please do not forget all about the rhythm of criticism. Does not the following sound in your ears as familiar as the tick of an old clock? The subject of it is the *Meistersänger*: "We have come to the end of all music; immediately before us lies chaos." Regret for the past; despair of the future—how often have they discouraged the venture of genius. People quote, "The old is better," forgetting that the words were spoken about wine—that had gone on changing and improving ever since it was made—but that they cannot possibly be applied to works of art.

Of course, in art, the old is often eternally young. And at certain experimental or stagnant epochs the old is even ahead of the new.

Nowhere is there so striking an instance of this as in the history of the Renaissance—not in painting or sculpture, but in music, where it was of course a much more sudden and striking affair than in the other arts: for nowhere was the spirit of the Renaissance stronger than in that little company of amateurs who gathered at Florence in the year 1600 and, at one fell swoop, invented opera, oratorio, and orchestra. They worked with all the energy of the proverbial new broom, and swept out of the way all that hindered them. But what they swept away was not rubbish, but the most perfect Church music the world has ever known. Perfect—and, therefore, ready to die—yet infinitely finer than the discordant, individualistic music that supplanted it. No critic of that time, seeing Palestrina giving way before Carissimi, could be blamed for thinking the end of music was come.

But we, who are entered into the rich inheritance of that musical Renaissance, must acknowledge that Art "fulfils itself in many ways, lest one good custom should corrupt the world." Comparisons are odious in art even more than elsewhere. But the comparison between styles old and new that we have just

been considering is not nearly so bad as comparisons between artists who have not the faintest wish to resemble one another. You will hardly believe the people to whom Wagner was compared—always, of course, to his disadvantage. They are not even all musicians; perhaps, in his sense, none of them are. Martin Luther, Lessing, Goethe, Rossini, Meyerbeer, Bellini, Offenbach. One is reminded of the old lady whose criticism on the tragedy of "Antony and Cleopatra" was that "it was so unlike the home-life of the dear queen." But of course—and yet I do not know why I say "of course"—it is with Mozart that Wagner is most frequently compared; for they have not the faintest point of resemblance, though I am sure that Mozart would have admired Wagner as much as—we know—Wagner admired Mozart. But Mozart is always dragged in by critics when they want to urge other composers to be as gentle and charming as he was. So it amused me very much to find a critic who urges Mozart to try and be as gentle and charming as a composer who, *to the critic*, was a much better man, Luigi Boccherini. It is from "Letters on musical taste," published at Karlsruhe in 1809. "What a difference, between Mozart and Boccherini. The first leads us among steep rocks into a prickly wood with few flowers in it; the second takes us into smiling country with flowery meadows and clear bubbling brooks."

We saw a little while ago, when speaking of the musical Renaissance, how sometimes even a great art may hinder progress. This becomes infinitely truer, if for "art" we substitute "artist."

Handel was a great artist, yet his influence on English music was simply disastrous. He, as has been said, literally sat down on the English school, so that for fifty years no composer here dared be anything but Handelian. That is why the English composers of the 18th and early 19th century are—perhaps deservedly—almost forgotten. Yet I am not content to forget one who, in his old age, was my mother's teacher, and in his extreme youth was the most marvellous infant prodigy that ever lived, not excepting Mozart—I mean William Crotch.

Dr. Burney, in 1779, read a careful account of him to the Royal Society. Master Crotch was then four years old, and was giving daily organ recitals over a milliner's shop in Piccadilly. He had played the organ since he was two, and could also modulate, improvise, and play harmony in six parts. In after-life he was badly Handelianized.

In an old musical magazine I found advertised "a waltz, with fifteen variations, composed by Czerny, Beethoven, Hummel, Kalkbrenner, W. A. Mozart, junior, Master Liszt, and others." The editor of that waltz, like Hans Breitman, had a party, and a queer one—where is that party now? But he was only doing

what everyone did in placing Beethoven's name on a level with those others. It is of course much harder to see differences than likenesses, especially in matters close to us; still,—“Czerny, Beethoven, Hummel”!

“No one,” says a writer in 1857, “plays Mozart or Beethoven in public now, only Hummel and Weber.” And Hummel's pianoforte music was everywhere put next to Beethoven's. But now? What has happened to Hummel—why is he never heard? He was Mozart's favourite pupil, and Beethoven's friend. He imbibed the style of both, added to them his own good taste and brilliant technique, and produced works that needed nothing for greatness, but—the “one thing needful.” “Where there is no vision the people perish.” Poor Hummel had no vision—and has indeed perished.

We are come to that tragic, defiant genius who stormed his way to heaven through evil report and good report, keeping ever in his heart the beauty of holiness and of the vision of God. Beethoven could perhaps scarcely expect a fair judgment from his contemporaries, for he loved to shock them—and, as you know, people love to feel they are shocked, and to say so. When they objected to his rapid modulations, he would compel them to listen against their will, and would, as Grove says, “plunge them into an alien key and hold them down in it till they shouted for mercy.”

And in his music, so in his performance. Spohr gives a pitiful account of Beethoven as a conductor—shouting, laughing, jumping up and down, and thumping the pianoforte, all the time himself hearing not a single sound. The tragic unrest and discord of his later music are but the too sincere expression of a turmoil of misery such as, thank heaven, few of us can conceive.

One word more. It must have struck you, as it has again and again struck me, not only how arrogant, but how futile it has been of me to try and criticise criticism: for, fifty years hence, all my criticisms may, quite rightly, be reversed. Well, if so, they will but fall in with the rhythm of which we have so often spoken—and the best thing too: for rhythm is the law of much besides criticism. It is the law of all art. M. Rodin shows it to us in sculpture; we can find it for ourselves in poetry, architecture, and music. It is the law of physical life. Everyone here—musical or unmusical—is at this moment beating time for all he is worth: if we stopped we should die. It is the law of all nature, and it is the law of God.

“O quam bonus et suavis est—
Domine—spiritus tuus in omnibus.”

DISCUSSION.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am pretty sure you will have heard the remarks which Miss Paget has made upon the art of criticism, and listened to the illustrations she has given us, with great interest. I must say that I am somewhat disappointed. I came here expecting to hear a slashing attack upon critics ancient and modern. But Miss Paget has been quite merciful to them. She has called our attention to certain extravagant and curious criticisms, but she has not said very much as to the personality of the critics themselves; she has not remarked what wretched creatures they are, and how utterly useless! People sometimes say such to me, and the reply I always make is: I wonder what the public would do without the critics, not only in music, but in the other arts as well. I regard the critic, speaking generally, as a person with a somewhat trained intellect and experience. Critics may differ from one another, and differ from the public, but they give their views. If it were not for the views that the critics present of music, the public would not know what to go to, or admire, or whether to admire it or not. My opinion is that the critics render a great service to the community. They may be often right, or often wrong; but the critic in a certain sense stands towards the public in the relation of prophet. By his knowledge and experience he passes judgment on a work submitted to the public. The public may, rightly or wrongly, agree with him. Or the public may take the opposite view and say, This judgment is wrong! You know it is so easy to be wise after the event. Lots of new music produced is often pronounced to be a great success, yet after a brief time it is no longer heard. Other pieces are coldly listened to, like some of the works produced under the ægis of the Philharmonic—Mendelssohn's "Ruy Blas" Overture, for example, was declared to be a noisy piece of rubbish. After a time, judgments are frequently reversed. Well, I thought it possible that Miss Paget was going to give us that touchstone I have asked for before, by which we would be able to tell when we heard a piece for the first time, and by which we might be enabled to say, That is distinctly good, or not good; this piece is going to last, or it is going to die. She has been silent on that point, possibly because there is no certain touchstone to be found. As I have observed, she did not go for the critics. Nevertheless, some of the remarks she made were distinctly illuminating. I daresay a great deal might be said as to the effect of music

on animals. I do not know whether she regards animals as critics. Illustrations were given of the donkey. I wondered whether the criticism would reflect not only upon the quadruped, but on certain bipeds also: there are a good many donkeys among bipeds! One of the strongest criticisms I have come across is to be seen in Westminster Abbey engraved on the tombstone of a great musician: "He has gone to that place [if I remember rightly the words] where only his music can be excelled." I think that is the acme of criticism. There can be no greater. It pronounces on the music of heaven as well as earth. Examples have been presented displaying the importance of rhythm. The accompanying remarks showing its pre-eminence over tune must have impressed a good many here. The folk-song craze of the present day exemplifies the fact that in many of those songs rhythm is the feature. As evidence of that, one may point to the fact that many of these songs have caught the public ear. The public—our forefathers—liked them, and said, "We are not going to lose that!" Then the song, continuing to be popular, became a dance tune, and there are many such instances. In all old dance collections there are favourite songs. Again some of them, not a few, were turned into hymn tunes. "Lo! He comes in clouds descending" is an example. There passed through my mind when Miss Paget was dealing with this subject an episode in my own life of which perhaps I may be forgiven for speaking. An old friend of mine, now dead, a musician in the North of England, was going to bring out a new hymn-book, and he worried me to write for it. I am afraid I was given to frivolity in those days, so this is what happened. There was a popular song going the round at that time, I think it had appeared in one of the comic operas, called "The Rat-catcher's Daughter." I took "The Rat-catcher's Daughter," harmonized it with the most excruciating chords I could think of, and put it in minims—music looks very different in minims from, what it does in crotchets and quavers. As it was intended to be a joke,—and if he had known Latin he would have spotted it at once,—I called it *Muricidus*, i.e., Rat-killer. To my horror he printed this, and put it in his book. Then an old friend told him what it was. There was a terrible row. However, he did not get to London, or I might have had my headpiece rearranged. Well, that is an instance of giving a tune a rhythmical form and causing it to have a different appearance. One of the remarks our Lecturer made was as to the dominance of Handel. A great deal might be said as to the effect of Handel upon the music of this country, but I cannot agree with the opinion she uttered as to Handel's complete dominance for fifty years. Remember at the time that Handel was living and working and producing his operas we had other Englishmen doing much the same. For instance, Dr. Arne. He did not in the least fall under the domination of Handel. I

consider that his music is peculiarly English, more graceful, more fluent, more melodious I will say, than Handel's. He produced a large number of operas, and he not only produced operas but also some excellent instrumental music, which, I am sorry to say, is not so well-known as it should be. Some Organ Concertos and String Trios exist in the British Museum, quite delightful music and independent of Handel. Later came Shield, who also was not influenced by Handel, neither in his operas nor in his instrumental works. May I add that in the British Museum there are Trios by Shield and Quartets for stringed instruments—music of distinct charm. I extracted lately a Trio and Quartet which were played at a Gresham lecture, also one given by Sir Frederick Bridge, Professor at the University of London, and some said to me, "Oh, this is Mozart's music." But I believe it was written just before his time. Those are two names which occur to me, showing that though Handel is declared to have had a terrible dominance over English music, there were some who did not quite yield to his influence. I do not think that Hummel occupies properly that place in the art of music, in the historical ladder of music, which is generally assigned to him. Probably many of you have heard his Septet. It is indeed a fine work. In old times, when John Ella ruled the Musical Union, at the last meeting of each year he gave the two Septets, Beethoven's and Hummel's: he played Beethoven's first and Hummel's last. You may say you prefer Beethoven's, with its flow of lovely melody, written at an early period; for myself I prefer Hummel's Septet. I remember Ella saying to me, "You must remember that was written many years after Beethoven's." Hummel enjoyed the advantage of having heard all gone before him when he produced that work. I still think that Hummel's Septet has been unjustly neglected. We have now to pass a vote of thanks to Miss Paget for her kindness in coming here and giving us this Lecture.

The vote of thanks was carried by acclamation.

Mr. H. H. STATHAM: In regard to the lecturer's remark about art not being an important element in modern life, I think that should be confined to England: at all events, it cannot be said of France. The French take art very seriously indeed; many of them think it the most important concern of life. The English, on the other hand, regard art mostly as a form of amusement. When Prosper Mérimée visited England he wrote to a friend that he admired the English very much; all that could be accomplished by industry, energy, and honourable conduct they could accomplish; but, he added, "ils ont peu de l'art comme mon chat"; and it is equally true to-day. Want of rhythm is a prominent defect in the ultra-modern school of composition. There seems a general want of melodic inspiration: we find themes which seem only the result of a deliberate selection of

notes out of which a certain harmonic or contrapuntal treatment can be evolved; the treatment is often very interesting, but we want something more than that to stir our souls. I was rather touched by the reference made to those many beautiful songs out of Italian opera of past days, which, with these operas, have passed away out of memory. One of my most delightful musical recollections is that of hearing Rossini's splendid and very highly-wrought setting of Desdemona's "Willow" song, in his opera "Otello," sung by a great contralto singer of the day. Surely that opera must contain other songs worth hearing. In regard to Padre Martini, we must take account of the affection and respect which Mozart always expressed for him. There was no praise and no criticism that he valued like Martini's. I would conclude by remarking that there is a general and mistaken tendency to suppose that "criticism" means finding fault. It has fallen to my lot to do a good deal of criticism, both musical and literary; and I have always considered that the business of the critic was to try and find out the special beauties of the work before him, and to point these out to the public. It was not his business merely to carp at what he did not like, unless in the case of authors or artists who made great pretensions which were not justified, then it might be necessary to speak a little plain truth about their works.

MR. F. GILBERT WEBB: I should like to take exception to three statements in this interesting paper: (1) "The critic merely notes the effect of music on human beings"; (2) "The true critic is the secretary of the public"; (3) "Music has no great influence on national events." All those three statements, in my opinion, are wrong. The critic's duty is not merely to note the effect of music on human beings: the critic's duty is to educate the public, to point out the best in art. His second duty is to point out what is wrong or has bad tendencies, so that the public may not be led astray. Then the second statement, that "The true critic is the secretary of the public," that the critic registers public opinion. I do not think that has ever been so. It is rather a smart line, but I do not think it will bear examination. As to the third statement, music has certainly influenced people a great deal. Even political events have been helped by songs. In anticipation of some remarks being made about the old critics, I took down a volume of the *Harmonicon*. In the August number of 1823 is a review of Beethoven's Sonata, Op. 111, and this is what the man writes: "Every genuine lover of music, every real admirer of genius, owes to the great composer whose work is now before us a large debt of gratitude for his vast contributions to an art of so much importance to society, the influence of which seems to be gaining strength and spreading wider every day." Now that shows a lively appreciation of the genius of Beethoven. He was then fifty-two.

Further in the review the critic is puzzled by certain passages in the Sonata, as many of us are now. He finds fault with the technical difficulties, with difficulties of notation which might have been made easier to read. He complains of Beethoven writing semiquavers, and then reducing the length by writing *Andante*. Remembering the date, and that this man saw the Sonata, which was perfectly novel in design at that time—in two movements, *Allegro* and then a long *Andante*—what he wrote shows perception and perspicuity. It is an indication that the critics of those days were not so much behind in understanding as may sometimes be thought. In criticising criticisms of olden days, it must be remembered that musical forms were then being evolved. All art must begin by evolving forms. Those who studied the matter seriously knew that it was in the evolution and right development of forms that the art would advance. That became so impressed on critics that they judged everything from that point of view—that is, in accordance with its effect in furthering the development of form. Beethoven was the first prominent man to introduce the dramatic element largely into his Sonatas. He was groping constantly for what we have now acknowledged—that subject dictates the form, and not form the subject. The old masters during the evolution of form had to put their thoughts into certain required moulds; now we select our subject at random, and the form of the music has to fit the subject. The critic now considers whether the form is appropriate to the subject. I draw particular attention to this point, because it is so easy to be led away from the truth and to say amusing things about old criticisms. So very few people realise the amount of discerning criticism that is to be found, and how helpful it was in the development of the art. It is important to remember that music is helped enormously by the critics. The critic must walk behind the leading composers, and the composers are always getting ahead of their day, striving to break down anything that hinders greater command of expression. With regard to rhythm, rhythm comes before melody. Rhythm is the foundation of everything, so it must come first. In reducing a melody to rhythm you reduce it to its elements, to the original musical atom.

MISS MARY PAGET: I am by no means in accord with that statement that art nowadays has no power to influence the public. I do not think I quite said that. But I do think it has less of such power than it had formerly. It can be shown that music is a thing that has *had* great influence on national events. Indeed, the very names of the Greek modes indicate special states of mind, and we know that there was a great insurrection entirely incited by music. I did not mention other arts. All I meant was that the national government can conduct the politics of the country without calling in musicians to advise. As evidence of

the influence of music on public events one might point to the work of the minstrels and other musicians. But so far as I can see that is not the case to-day. As to the quotation from Saint-Beuve that the critic is the secretary of the public, I must stick to that, because the critic is after all a member of the public, and he can only speak within the limitations of his own time. And these old critics are useful to us as giving us an idea of the feeling, possibly the best feeling, not unique, but perhaps the best common feeling of their time. With regard to Beethoven, I can only say I have read hundreds of criticisms of his work. The one quoted was, I take it, a fairly late criticism; and it was rather in his middle period that people began to find great fault, not understanding that he was trying to enlarge the form of his day to contain what he wanted to put into it. I agree absolutely with the previous speaker that the critic who is out merely to find fault is not a great critic.

THE CHAIRMAN: May I be permitted in passing to say that music has had great influence on public events. You know, for instance, the splendid old English song of the 17th century, "When the King enjoys his own again." Well, it was declared by observers of the day that that had more effect than anything else in bringing Charles back to England and putting him on the throne. And surely the popular "Tipperary," the soldiers' song of to-day, is not without its influence on our countrymen now fighting abroad.