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NOVEMBER 11, 1902.

CHARLES MACLEAN, ESQ., MUS.D., VICE-PRESIDENT,
IN THE CHAIR.

HUNGARIAN MUSIC OF A THOUSAND YEARS.

BY ILONA DE GYÖRY.

THE reason why music appeals to every side of our nature is that music itself is the result of the activity of the whole nature of a man. Being called forth by the travail of thought, feeling, and will, its effect is the stirring of the thoughts, emotions, and volitions of the listener. It reminds me of one of the natural phenomena in my Oriental country—those mysterious springs that well forth from unknown depths and penetrate into mysterious depths again; the strength which enabled them to break their way from the dark, also enables them to find their path into new depths—the greater the warmth that gave existence to the well, the brighter it sparkles, the higher it rises, and the deeper it sinks again.

To the music that stirs our emotions,—the gentle and the mighty ones—that awakens our thoughts, either calling to dreams or to deeds, to music like this we do not listen merely because it moves *our* soul, but because we feel that in another soul there also had vibrated a hundred chords of feeling before this harmony was created.

And thus, when it is the music of a whole nation we contemplate, we must feel deeply moved by the idea that it is an invisible host of thoughts and feelings which hovers around us. The music is the people; on hearing real, national music of the purest style we can nearly divine the character of their history; and on learning their history and national features we can guess the character of their music. The Spanish dance melodies, which unite in themselves the flourishing metallic sound of war trumpets as much as the

most languishing, dreamy tunes, melting away in sensual softness, could only have their origin in a country the soil of which has not brought forth anything more abundantly than the oak-leaved garland of warlike deeds and the glowing garnet flower of love. It is the music of a people whose conception of life is expressed in their proverb: In war, in chase, in love, a thousand troubles are worth one pleasure.

Guerra, caza y amores
Por un placer mil dolores.

What we hear in the Russian melodies is the awe-stricken whispering, the stifled sobbing of a people of slaves, which never dares to raise its eye, its hand, its soul—and, in the song, not even its voice.

And is not the Italian barcarolle the real expression of the mind of a people living in a country blessed by all the treasures of nature? It is the song of a happy, lazy, artistic, inactive, dreaming people. Much feeling, little will; much effusion, few deeds. Their national philosophy awakens our envy and our pity at the same time. *I mali che non hai considera come altrettanti beni e sarai lieto* (the misfortunes thou dost not have, consider as so many pieces of good luck, and thou wilt be satisfied).

Then again, the French menuet, the gavotte, and the pavane. This music, consisting of tiny filigree motives, where the small content is worked out so gracefully, cannot belong to any other nation than one which in art never uses great masses, partly because it cannot manage them, and partly because it does not need them. It is the maker of Sèvres china figures, of lace, of gold filigree—a small mass of material, much invention in its use.

And if the circumstance that national history and national music are closely connected make it *possible* for me in the case of another nation to speak about *history* when I have to speak about *music*, in the case of Hungary's music it is not merely possible but essential that I should do so, because in our life it seems indeed as if Polyphemia (the Muse of song) had tuned her lyre according to the events that her sister Klio (the Muse of history) imaged in stone.

To explain music is always a dry, ungrateful task. To do so to musical people is superfluous; to unmusical ones, useless. When music undergoes scientific analysis, it is as if a flower were dissected into petals and stamens; the more we dissect it the less is it a flower. And I feel that the more musical those are to whom I speak, the better I may trust to them the task of deciphering, solving and understanding our strange music. I will not tear the petals of the flower, but I wish to show you the soil from which this

flower has sprung, just as there springs the cornflower in our fields, simply, with a natural wild grace, without nursing, without cultivation.

And the soil that gave life to the Hungarian music is indeed like the soil that gave birth to the cornflower. The Hungarian nature is somewhat like the clod of our country; the colour rather dark, and its material heavy, the surface is not very smooth, not very soft either; thorny sometimes when deprived of the loving care of the cultivator's hand. If an icy wind touch it unmercifully, all at once it freezes to stony hardness; but if heaven yield to it the benefit of warm rain and of sunshine, at once it melts to softness, when it reveals by means of its marvellous productivity what richness of contents is slumbering in it, and to him who knows how to manage it, this Hungarian soil, like the Hungarian heart, yields treasures of pure gold.

Before giving the character-sketch of our music I would mention that the nations of Europe may, with respect to their music, be divided into two main groups, Western and Eastern. Quite apart from all other characteristic differences, we have to remember that while in the Western group we notice a strong tendency towards musical cosmopolitanism, in the Eastern music the tendency is in the opposite direction, that of pronounced individuality. The Western group of styles is better known, the Eastern one we meet with in Russia, Turkey, Roumania, Transylvania, Hungary, Croatia, and Slavonia.

Musicians have often emphasised the strange fact that the music of nations who often had to bear subjugation generally ran in the minor key, as if their songs voiced the melancholy of a people deprived of freedom. And indeed we cannot deny the fact on hearing the music of Finland, Poland, Ireland, and Southern Russia among the European nations; and among the Oriental races we notice that the music of the southern part of Hindustan is all written in the minor key, in contrast with the music of the Northern tribes that came down from their hills to conquer the dwellers of the plains. And Egyptologists point out the fact that on the wall pictures which illustrate the hieroglyphs, we find quite different musical instruments in the time of Egypt's independence than during the epoch of subjugation; the first ones being flourishing metallic trombones, and the latter pealing bugles.

The history of our thousand years accounts more than anything else for the deepest melancholy in our music. But even the most superficial knowledge of Hungarian songs reveals to the hearer that there is another strongly contrasting element in it too, a bright, mirthful, flourishing, triumphant one. And indeed it is the presence of

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Nothing shows more clearly that Hungarian music actually unites in itself the deep melancholy of the Eastern European music and also the bright triumphant element of the far East than the scale, constructed quite differently from either the minor or major scale of Western European music. The Hungarian scale is as follows :—

The investigations of musical history are in perfect accord with those of philology. We all know that the Hungarians are a Turanian race, the original home of which was the centre of Asia, where they lived in close connection with the Persians. That the relationship is real is clearly demonstrated by the analogy of *their* religion and *ours*. That dualism of the good and evil gods—Ormuzd and Ahriman in the Persian, Hadur and Armány in the Hungarian creed; even the word denoting deity is strikingly similar—in the Persian language Iztan, and in ours even to-day it is Isten. So, too, are related the names of evil spirits: Dev, ardev, besorchin = dög, ördög, boszorkány. Our decorative art also shows the relationship. We know that the ornamental designs of primitive peoples generally make use of the sacred animals as motives: Assyrian art uses the bull, sacred to Baal, Melchart, or Moloch; Egyptian art employs the scarabeus, the ibis, the ram, and the crocodile; Indian art the elephant, on the back of which the universe rests, and the Ananta serpent, which held the cradle of Brahma, born from a lotus flower. And among all these pagan Oriental nations it is the Persian where we first see the horse; it appears in paintings, in tapestries, in metal work, and is the leading decorative detail of architecture, Persian columns resting on four horses' heads. And the sacred animal of the Hungarian god Hadur is also the horse. All our other ornamental details are the same: the tulip, the pomegranate, carnation, rosemary. And the similarity is more striking still in our poetry. But before pointing out this, we must mention the other opinion maintained by philologists, namely, that the Hungarians' nearest relatives were the Finns. It is quite

true that the grammatical structure of their language is like ours—yes, but this relationship is far from excluding that with the Persians, as we all know that the Finnish race is not related either to the Slavonic or the Germanic tribes among which they live, and we also know that their original home had been the plains of Turania, so that probably the Finns also are related to the Persians. And it is their music that yields the most striking proofs. Our musical literature contains the results of investigations concerning this question, and I could refer to essays in case any foreign musician should find the question interesting enough. But here I mention only that the peculiar Hungarian scale we have seen does not appear in any other music except the Finnish songs, where it is to be recognised, as pointed out by one of our musicians, Dr. G. Wolnár.

The Baskirs are, as we know, also of Finnish origin, and in their music a foreign investigator, Wallascher, had pointed out ("Primitive Musik") :—

Foreign musicians assert that in our music it is the curious mingling of the *flat* and *sharp* signs which explains its character,—the sudden transformation of the dark, melancholy tone into bright effects. Running the risk that you will think it exaggerated, I venture to point out that I find our national taste to be this, whether in poetry, music, painting or art-industry: A calm, quiet, rather dark background or fundamental tone, and on this, here and there, sudden, brilliant effects of light and colour and tone. Our music is like this; after the calm, broad *portamento*, *lento*, or *largo* of the first part, all at once the throbbing, lively, sparkling second part of the song. But this is the style of our decorative art too. You know the historical costumes of our noblemen; the so-called "Hungarian patterns" are, even among Italian Renaissance brocades, velvets like this—dark, quiet coloured, rather sombre background, and on this a few

bright effects of light colours. It is thus that the costumes of our peasants are composed ; this is the style of our ancient jewelry—dark enamel, oxydized metals, and on them conspicuously bright stones. Our carpets, embroideries, weapons, harnesses, form no exception to this rule, and in art, of those two painters of ours who are real representatives of the Hungarian national genius, Michel Munkácsy, the painter of "The Christ before Pilate" and of "Milton dictating the 'Paradise Lost' to his daughters," reveals this way of combining bright effects with a dark tone just as much as the other, Michel Zichy, who lives in Russia as the Czar's painter. And finally, just as a curiosity indeed, I mention the words of a foreign writer on physiology, who says about us : "The Hungarian face is in striking harmony with their way of speaking ; the fundamental character quiet, the real colour of the complexion a calm amber tint, but now and then a sudden bright flush ; straight lined, calm, regular features, to which only the curving lines of the mouth give an appearance of vivacity ; steady looking, almond-shaped eyes, very much shaded, but suddenly turning lively and flashing."

I mentioned the likeness of our poetry and the Persian. It is to be noticed both in its internal features and in external form. Symbolism closely connected with Nature is the real character of the Persian, Arabian and Hungarian poetry, easily explained by the way they lived, by that free life in contact with Nature ; but as the metre, the form of poetry, stands nearer to music, let us speak here only about this external aspect of poetry. Many of our ballads and the romances in our folk-lore remind the reader vividly of the Schah Nahme. And as to our national metre, it is the choriambus — u u —, as it is in the Arabian ; even the lines are alike, the most ancient metre of the Arabian romances being the *reml* :—

— u u — | — u u —

It is composed of four equal lines, and all our ancient historical songs have this form. The strong rhythmical throbbing gave a musical character to it :—

Monda Magyar : Hej ki tudja,
Merre van a hazánk utja,
Kerek az ég minden felé
Anyám, anyám, meghalsz belé.

The other national Arabian metre is the *fachti*, very frequent in Hungarian songs too :—

— u u — | u u — | u u —

As in this :—

Buzaföldön kivirult a virág
Nálad nélkül mit sem ér a világ,
Buzavirág az apád mezéjén,
Kékszemű lány, te leszel az enyém.

The *reml* often appears in Arabian heroic songs in this combination :—

— u u — | — — | — u u — | — —

And this is the metre of all our heroic songs about King Attila, about the migration of the Magyars, and similar themes.

Hullatja a lombot az idő vén fája,
Terítve hatalmas rétegben alája — —
Én az avart jártam, tünődve megálltam,
Egy régi levélen ezt írva találtam.

I need not point out what a remarkably strong musical rhythm is to be noticed in the language. And it has been demonstrated that music has always developed best in countries where the language itself was musical; as it was the case with the Greek, where the strongly pronounced anapæstical rhythm of the language soon created the anapæstical religious songs sung on the occasions of sacrificing goats, so that the well-known word "tragedy" was formed from the words *tragos* and *ode*, meaning goat and song. The Italian nation is again an instance that melodious language best leads to musical development. In order to show that the three dominating elements of our music—the softness of love songs, the deep melancholy of the sad ones, and the strength of war songs—are easily expressed by our language itself, let me quote a few lines where it describes the peace of a summer night; a second, the sorrow of a funeral; and the third, war.

In our music the religious element probably played a great part too in Pagan times, as during the ceremony when the head priest, the "táltos," sacrificed the milk-white horse, the maidens of the tribes stood singing around the hill where the altar was raised. But of course all these Pagan songs were destroyed with a fanatical hatred by the German and Italian monks who introduced Christianity. What our original instrument for war songs was, we know well, by means of this event: In the year 955, when the Hungarians fought against the German Emperor, Otto the Great, one of their leaders, Lehel, was taken prisoner. The enemy knew how masterfully he played the bugle, and before they

executed him asked him to give them a tune. He did so, but at the end of the song the Pagan warriors' belief awoke in him that the enemy he slew here would serve him in the other world, so he grasped his bugle, struck the Prince Conradin on the temple, and said: "Thou goest before me and wilt be my servant." And the bugle, which they keep in one of our museums (at Jászberény) shows a dent on its edge.

For many years the battles of the predatory Hungarian tribes ended in victory, and their war-songs were flourishing triumphal marches; their religious songs joyful thanksgiving hymns. But by degrees the neighbouring nations learned how to defend themselves against them, and the wars at the end of the tenth century taught serious lessons to the Hungarians. Their songs show a new element, when they are mourning over lost battles, dead heroes. The minor key mingles with the dominating sounds of the major. And this transformation seems to prepare the way for the milder sounds of the Christian hymn.

But here, at this period, we see why it was that the individual character of our music was preserved in spite of the efforts of the foreign monks, directed to the destruction of all Pagan traditions.

Try to think of the map of Europe. We may roughly divide it into three portions: the north-west occupied by the Germanic races; the south-west by the Latin tribes; the east belonging to the Slavonic nations; and in the middle of all these there was a small nation, a stranger to all the rest, not akin to anyone. Nobody ever acknowledged us as kinsmen in the days of peace, but when the stormy times of barbaric invasions followed,—invasions of Tartars and Turks—all our nearest neighbours expected us to defend their culture with chivalric courage. Of course they felt no concern for Hungary's culture, as it was only just dawning, while that of the others had existed for centuries. Oh, but nobody thought of it, whether it was not sadder than anything that its morning light should be darkened by storm-clouds, that even the hope of a peaceful day should be annihilated. Hungary sacrificed her own culture, but saved that of Western Europe, when fighting the Tartars and the Turks. Yet when the danger was over the surrounding nations failed to remember what Hungary had saved, and they only saw with disdain what she had lost. And to whom could we have told all this? Common joys and common griefs have often destroyed the dividing walls between related nations, the similarity of their language has paved the way for increasing friendliness. But we? Who would have understood us? What means had we of expressing our joy and grief?—The song.

Try to think of a nation lonely as we were, and then perhaps you will understand that the strange elements in our music which fasten upon your imagination do so by the power of sincerity and truth ; you will understand that this music is the history of a people with all its joys and griefs ; and you will recognise in it the sound of bells pealing at the funerals of so many heroes—the sound of sobs lamenting them, and the sound, sadder perhaps than all this, that of the fetters.

It is no wonder if the nation clung to its music, as it was its history at the same time. The nation clung to its music, and this clinging manifested itself as a reaction. When first introduced, Christianity sought to stop the national songs ; but the very opposite of this happened, for these national elements penetrated into the Christian hymns, and certainly one of the most interesting details for investigators of Hungarian music would be those early hymns to the Virgin Mary, to our patron saint, then to King St. Stephen and St. Ladislás. Of course the general character of our music made this strange mingling possible ; the rather serious, dignified "portamento" of our songs makes them so suitable for church-music. The best example of it is the majestic oratorical composition of Francis Liszt, entitled "St. Elizabeth," where we have but to play the leading motive in a little quicker tempo and we discover a simple, foolish little song about no more dignified a subject than a meagre dinner of brown bread and radish.

Then also the great reason that our historical songs had to commemorate events of such intense sadness, accounts for these songs being singularly sad, dark, mournful ; as we may see them in the first printed collection of our songs made by one of our minstrels, Tinódy. During all this time the instruments were the different kinds of horns, bugles, trumpets for war and mourning songs. The best among them was the tárogató, that wonderful instrument equally suitable for fanfare-like flourishes and for sweet, whispering melodies. The wandering minstrels (called "lantos") had a lyre-like stringed instrument called "koboz." There was no trace at all of any instrument used at the present time by the gipsies.

In the first part of the fourteenth century Hungary became closely connected with Italy in consequence of the succession of the Anjou dynasty to our throne. Italy spread her refining, beautifying, softening, but at the same time effeminating influence over Hungarian manners. Hungary first becomes acquainted with velvet dresses, glass goblets and jugs, gloves, upholstered furniture, and in music with the violins and other stringed instruments of decidedly gentle tones. It was in the time of the Anjou kings that the military power of Hungary was organised according

to the Italian feudal system, and it is interesting to notice that among the marches played by these troops we clearly detect real Italian motives. As the court of King Louis the Great was one of the most brilliant centres of Renaissance life in Europe, many Italian artists lived there. Later on, in the time of King Mathias Corvinus, this Italian influence increased still more, in consequence of his marriage with the Italian Princess Beatrice, and it was at this time that two factors of musical life at the Hungarian court were well known all over Europe; two things about which the Italian historians often speak: first, the gigantic organ with pure silver tubes in the cathedral of Visegrád, and the second the famous choir, the best in all Europe at this time.

But if Italian elements entered our musical life, on the other hand our national music also became known abroad at this time. In the years 1572—75 there was published in Strassburg a collection of the two best known kinds of Hungarian dances, the slow and the quick one, under the names *Passamezzo Ongaro* and *Saltarello Ongaro*. Later, in 1621, there was again published Hungarian dance music under the names *Ballo Ongaro* and *Padoana ditta la Ongara*, collected by Giovanni Picchi, the organist of the Casa Grande in Venice.

When speaking about these facts, the only thing I want to emphasise is that even here we do not yet detect anything of the floritura introduced by the gipsies later. The Hungarian dance itself, the ancient *palotás*, was a slow, graceful, very dignified dance, a real court dance, as its name indicates. But at this time we clearly distinguish two kinds of music, the one living on by means of tradition only among the people, and which can never be written down with perfect truth in any notation, and the other kind composed by cultured musicians and authors, but under the influence of foreign teaching, as the "*Cronica de introductione Scytтарum in Ungariam et Judeorum de Aegypti*." And it is at this time that the gipsies appear. How could I draw a sketch in a few minutes about this strange, peculiar sort of people, different from all the others in their good qualities as well as in their faults! Let me point out what contradictory elements met when the Hungarians and the gipsies came into contact. There you see my Eastern race, with all its heavy, slowly-moving, hard Oriental dignity; I am afraid with no small amount of self-consciousness or even pride, and—I am afraid again—with no small love for playing the "grand seigneur," and finally with a deadly terror of two things, namely, currying favour with anyone by means of a flattering tongue, and "playing the fool" as they say for anybody's sake. Now, does not the combination of these qualities explain why the gipsies have found a home in

Hungary ; the gipsies, who are as far from dignity as possible, able to bear all humiliation, all ridiculous and awkward situations, entirely submissive to dominating behaviour, with no sacred traditions of religion or of national or family life, with a creeping, flattering nature nearly insensible to disdainful treatment, able to bear all this for the sake of profit ?

Now, are not the parts of master and servant clearly indicated ?

Some of the facts I have mentioned about my Hungarians explain why, in the matter of music, we really thought very much as the Turks and Arabians did about dancing. When the latter saw the brilliant crowd at a ball in a Western town they said : " Such tiring work is done by the servants in our country." Well, the Hungarian liked and enjoyed music, but preferred having it done for him by people to whom he could give his orders ; so that even a hundred years ago, when the professors discovered decided musical talent in the son of one of our noblemen, and advised the father to allow his son to study, he nearly felt offended, and said only, " I can keep a whole gipsy band ; there's no need for my own son to do it for me or for himself." Well of course it is to be explained why it was that the Hungarians encouraged the gipsies, paid them, were most gracious masters to them, but—did not want to have anything in common with them. All that was most sacred to us, our hearth, our pure family life, the very soil of our country, was no object of reverence to the gipsies. But, alert and cunning as they were, they soon found out that the Asiatic pride of the Hungarians liked to be served by musical entertainment, and so they quickly found their real occupation. It was the easier for them to take it up because—to tell the truth—the gipsy is not to be domesticated and trained for any regular work or regular life. Quite apart from their remarkable musical talent, they have much mechanical skill, but the gipsy works only when driven to it by the utmost necessity ; as soon as the clouds begin to disperse a little from above his head he is his old self again, strolling about, sleeping, idling, fiddling away the whole live-long day. What the word "*Bohème*" means in French we know. Three hundred years' efforts were not enough to train them to do anything else regularly but music. Many of our kings tried to do so by means of special laws—in vain. One of our Archdukes, Joseph, who is living now, gave them three villages and tried to organise them ; it went on for a time, till all at once one morning they gave notice to their generous landlord and off they went.

If ever you happen to read the work of Francis Liszt entitled "The Gipsies and their music in Hungary," there you will find a short biography of a gipsy boy. You cannot

read anything more true, more characteristic of the whole race, than the story of this talented, uncontrolled, reckless being, full of genius but simply incapable of any regular study even in music; full of vanities, weaknesses; living only a material life, and among all the luxuries of a cultured life feeling a wild yearning after his unlimited Bohème freedom—every word is true when applied to the whole race.

As to the new elements they introduced to our music, it was the musical trimming, the *fioritura*, the profusion of which (making it sometimes difficult to discover the real contents) is entirely a gipsy feature, as they have this liking for a profusion of ornament on their dresses too. It is proverbial that the dream of perfect happiness for a gipsy would be to sleep in the wood all the day except at meals, and be dressed in a scarlet suit with golden tresses and buttons. You often see gipsies dressed in rags, but with strings of brass coins, glass beads on the neck.

The instrument most characteristic in their band, the *cimbalom*, is of Egyptian origin, as they themselves are.

When the Reformation divided the country into two parts, the Western being the Catholic and Austrian one, and the Eastern part the National and Protestant, many of our nobility lived at the court of Vienna, so that in the West even the music shows some foreign elements; but in the East the music became more and more monopolised by the gipsies.

The Reformation transformed even our church music too, as the Protestant party emphasised their national character by giving Hungarian turns and endings to the hymns. This is to be noticed in many of our Calvinistic hymns even now.

The part played by the gipsies really became important in that period which, but for its belonging to recent times, could be imagined to be a time of legends, of myths, of heroic tales, because it possessed the pure, sacred elements of legends, the wonderful and dazzling colours of myths, and the pathos and grandeur of heroic tales. And all this was added to the epoch by one personality; all these elements surround the figure of one man, who was pure as the heroes of legends, fascinating like those of the myths, and grand like those of heroic tales—Francis Rákóczy the Second.

That age created a new epoch in music too; not only because his court and his wealth assured success to the musicians, but because his personality was the centre of all the whispering, languishing romances, of all the flourishing, triumphal songs, and later of all the sobbing laments of immense sorrow, when the figure of this most unselfish patriot disappeared from Hungary,—faithlessly deceived by all his foreign allies, because he did not think deception possible—

and he went into exile giving up his enormous estates, as he could not keep them without being false to his principles, and surrendering all his dignities and rights that he might be true to his conscience.

While he lived among us, there we discover in the music of his favourite court musician, Barna Miska, and in that of the mysterious gipsy woman, Czinka Panna, the elements of that war song each sound of which seems to us the calling of the day of judgment, the Rákóczy March. This was born on the strings of the violin animated by the wild genius of the woman artist, Czinka Panna, who followed the leader, Rákóczy, from camp to camp, through all his misfortunes; followed him as the poor, creeping, humble shadow follows the glorious sunlight, follows it even when the time of sunset arrives.

And the sunset arrived. The bright luminary fell from our firmament, and sank into the waves of the marble sea. There he died in Turkey, in exile. When the rolling waves of the Marmora are roaring about his grave, his soul must hear in their sound that war song which is sacred to us, hallowed by his name.

Each name mentioned in this epoch of our music would furnish a subject for monographs, and the difficulty of giving the character and history of a nation's music in one evening is still more to be felt when we arrive at modern times and modern musicians.

But on the other hand these times are easier to be known with regard to our music. Haydn, Schubert, Beethoven, all had visited Hungary; their essays also added to the world's exact knowledge of Hungarian music. Names are crowding in these times, names that must be the more interesting to any musician the broader his view and the nobler his taste is. If you wish to know all the rich, unbounded genius of a real gipsy artist, together with all the peculiarities of his race, study the music, study the style and the life of the best among them, Bihari; about the strange fascination of whom let it be enough if we mention only that in 1814, at the time of the congress at Vienna, the Empress Maria Louise, wife of Napoleon, felt afraid at seeing that each tone of the fascinating artist's violin was played only to one of the foreign queens. This homage was emphasised still more by his looks continually fastened upon the face of this lady, and the answer of those eyes may have revealed something dangerous, so the Empress Maria Louise thought it wise to interfere. His biography we also find in the books of Liszt, also furnishing an excellent character sketch of all the race.

Then if you wish to see Hungarian music made more systematic, clear, refined by a self-conscious artist's hand,

you find rich mines for investigation in the works of Lavotta, Csermák, Rózsavölgyi, Egressy, Mosonyi.

For all this you do not need my help in pointing them out to you. What I would say in conclusion is nothing else than this: If you hear that strange, contradictory music of ours, let it have a share in your interest, bearing in mind that the bright, metallic sound in it is the voice of our victorious legions; but give to this music something of your compassion too, because the sobbing melancholy in it is the echo of centuries of suffering; and then give to our music something of your sympathy too, because the bright, clear, leading motives in it, so distinct and straightforward, are like the leading words on our banners in the struggles of a thousand years—"Right, Honour, Patriotism."

DISCUSSION.

THE CHAIRMAN.—The lecturer has been so good as to give us a paper couched in highly poetic language, to which this plain room with its chocolate and yellow is for the most part not at all accustomed; though I am looking at another lady (Mrs. Newmarch) who has often introduced a poetic element into our proceedings. I think we were surprised when the lecturer, a stranger among strangers, stepped on to the platform and with such fearlessness and candour delivered this excellently worded address. She has also given us a pleasure in hearing many specimens of the mellifluous Hungarian tongue, which from its being entirely removed from our experiences we generally imagine as something that must be ugly to listen to. In the same way I am sure that when we see the half-Runic half-Greek characters of the Russian tongue, we always think in advance that it must sound rough, whereas in reality it is as soft as Spanish. I request that you will signify a vote of thanks to the lecturer in the usual way. [Vote of thanks carried.] The lady will pardon us if we proceed according to custom to discuss her lecture, even though, to use her own simile, this is like pulling a rose to pieces. I have come into the chair by an accident, and have really no special knowledge of the subject. I wish Mr. Fuller Maitland were here, for I believe he is familiar with it. It has just occurred to me that a quarter-of-a-century ago M. Tisza was my guest for two days. I think that was before he was prime-minister. I remember that he was a very quiet, pleasant gentleman, and he had one thing in common with Mdle. Györy, that he spoke exceedingly good English. I cannot think of any

other connection with Hungarian subjects. However, our card shows a surfeit of topics for those to discuss who wish to. Speaking a moment for myself, I am not in sympathy with some of the remarks about nations and politics. I do not see that the Italians need our pity for being light-hearted; and still less on the other hand do I believe in what is said about oppressed people and minor thirds, though I know it is the fashion to talk so. It may be that we English people have been politically successful too long for us to be fit judges on such a subject. Still I must express my convictions, and they are that the Governments sitting at Buda-Pest, Paris, or London, or wherever else you like, have scarcely any appreciable influence on national character and still less on national music. Nations, like individuals, have of course their characters; but it is much more likely that these make the Governments than that the Governments make them. As an instance of an oppressed people the inhabitants of Southern Hindostan were quoted in the lecture. I really must protest against this, having lived among them so long and so very intimately. The Dravidians are a primitive, sturdy nation of thirty and odd millions who have not developed any taste for democratic institutions; but who has oppressed them I do not know, and they certainly are the happiest conceivable race. I think we may reasonably object to these things being said here. The idea that their primitive scales have any connection with political melancholy is totally absurd. Well, the Chairman is put up on these occasions to talk against time, while Members are making up their minds what to say. Even in that capacity I find it hard to enlarge on the subjects of the lecture. I only call to mind that the Magyars and gipsies, though numerically a small part of the population, make up Hungary in fact from an artistic point of view. We should have been glad to hear even more of the gipsies, who were as yeast in the dough.

Mr. W. H. SHRUBSOLE.—Mr. Chairman, I have listened with very deep attention to the excellent discourse Miss Györy has delivered this evening. So fully has she covered the ground that it seems to me she has left very little for anyone to say. But I cannot refrain from remarking that I am extremely interested in the musicians of Hungary. I took every possible opportunity of hearing the gipsies, and I certainly found much pleasure in listening to their most peculiarly delightful method of handling their instruments. A true gipsy band is a new sensation. It is something altogether different from anything I have ever heard in London. I do not know whether any gipsy bands are ever found in this part of the world. I never heard of any. I have heard of Hungarian bands it is true in London; and I asked some Hungarian friends who had visited London

whether they had made the acquaintance of any of them. They told me that when they addressed in their own language some of these so-called Hungarian bandmen, they found that they could not understand a word of it. I only wish that there were a true gipsy band in London. They would often find me among the audience, I know; and if such a band could be imported I am sure it would be one of the greatest novelties of the season. These gipsy musicians are credited with a rather larger amount of musical knowledge than they really possess. In every guide-book it is said that if they once hear a melody played or sung they can reproduce it in all the parts on their respective instruments. Well, I am not a musician, but it did seem to me that such a feat as that would be something approaching to the miraculous; so on more than one occasion I put it to the test. One of my friends, an Englishman, sang a little-known Welsh air, which it was practically certain they could never have heard before. They said they would try to reproduce it. After my friend had sung it once, the bandmaster said, "Will the gentleman please sing it again?" That was done; then they stopped, and we expected the band to begin, but the bandmaster said, "Now if the gentleman will sing, we will play it with him." What happened eventually was that the leader of the band got very close to the singer and waited for each tone, and the moment the vocal note was uttered, he followed with the same note, but always a minute fraction of a second behind, while the others vamped something which made fairly pleasant harmony; but it did not bear out the statements of the guide-books. I am sure that music is cultivated to a high degree in Hungary by a large number of people, and I noticed that even uneducated people had very quick ears and very strong voices. But I found that though they have such good voices (the men seemed capable of ascending to almost any required height) they are usually quite unable to read music. It struck me that it would be a blessing to those people if they knew something of the Tonic Sol-fa system. I do not know whether you think me a heretic, but I am a strong advocate of that system. I thought what a blessing it would be as an educational means of promoting a knowledge of music among these people. When I went this year I took some music in the Sol-fa notation, with Hungarian words, kindly printed by Mr. Curwen, and I had the pleasure of instructing a number of theological students, professors of music, schoolmasters, and teachers at the University College at Kolozsvar. At Buda-Pest I was introduced to the musical professor of the Pædagogium—where school teachers are trained—and made a convert of him. I had the pleasure of putting him through an examination prescribed by the Tonic Sol-fa College of London, and the first Tonic Sol-fa

certificate to go to Hungary was afterwards sent. The Minister of Public Instruction has informed me that if the reports are favourable he will order the Tonic Sol-fa method to be introduced into all the Public Schools of the country, and I look forward to the time when it will be as beneficial there as in our own land.

Mr. SOUTHGATE.—I have also had the pleasure of travelling in Hungary, and I venture to think the Hungarians do not require the Tonic Sol-fa or indeed any system at all. These extraordinary people, who play this most interesting music, cannot read, cannot write, cannot translate a note of written music; but they are gifted with such marvellous ears that they seem able to play anything, besides their own characteristic music. How they do it I have never been able to understand. When I went into Hungary I found that the Magyars would only speak their own language, that they did not want to hear any other, certainly not German. It prevented me from talking to these musicians, and greatly I regretted it. But I could hear with my ears, and found that when they played a piece of concerted music and it was encored, it was never repeated identically. I cannot help thinking that when a nation is so gifted as that, systems matter nothing to them. They evolve this music from their inner consciousness; possibly some learned German pundit can explain how it is done. This strange music is delightful to hear, though it seems to be in a different tonality from ours. I think our lecturer said we ought to share in the interest which she and her country people feel in the Hungarian music. The names of some musicians, who if not Hungarian by birth have at least drunk at the fount of the Hungarian tonality, should make us reverent and thankful for what they have done. One peculiar feature, the augmented second, I always think is a marked characteristic of all Slavonic music. Independently of that the music is so very different in character from ours that it may be said it is not written in the same modes or scale. It is, I think, derived from old Greek modes. They have the notes of our diatonic scale, and can use them if they like, but they omit certain notes and take wider skips than we do. That is the difference; they prefer it that way; and it seems new and uncommon to our ears. Then our rhythms are different. I am afraid our rhythms in the West are restricted as compared to the old Greek types and recitative-like cantilation. We get movements in $\frac{5}{4}$ time sometimes; and we know how the public appreciate it. I wish our composers would find some way of obtaining more novelty in this respect. The Hungarians have not only strong accents, but accents in different places from ours, and these at once strike the musician's mind as something fresh and original. With

regard to the intense interest which the Hungarian people feel in their music so inseparably bound up with their history, let me tell you something that came under my notice with regard to the Rákóczy March. Most of you know this from the magnificent orchestral arrangement found in Berlioz's "Faust." It is often played in concert-rooms and always with great applause. I remember hearing a real Hungarian band in Vienna—not the fashionable society bands we get here, with merely dressed-up players. They played this and were encored; they played it again and were encored again. At last the excitement got so great that the people who had swords drew them, and some of them got on the tables, and really I began to feel rather fierce and bad myself. I mention this to show the extraordinary effect that this Hungarian music has when one hears it *in loco*, and catches somewhat of the spirit of its national character. Of the Hungarian musicians whom we know well, Liszt has been mentioned as the great exponent. I would rather take Joachim as a characteristic Hungarian musician. If there had been no pianoforte, I do not think Liszt would have held quite the place he does now. He is before all things the wizard of the pianoforte. I note what the lecturer said about his "St. Elizabeth," but I must say it has not produced that effect on me, nor indeed on our English critics. But it is impossible to hear Joachim's Hungarian Violin Concerto without feeling what a great work it is, full of characteristic music, and I think it stands forth as an example of what highly-developed modern Hungarian music can be. I would very much like to have heard whether there is any wide difference between the sacred and the secular music of Hungary. We know there is such a difference in other countries. May I venture to differ from the lecturer in one respect? She says the gipsies came from Egypt. So no doubt they did. But they did not bring from Egypt their cembalo—we call it the dulcimer. I have gone somewhat deeply into the subject of Egyptian music, and I should be very glad to learn if anything resembling a dulcimer is to be found on the Egyptian frescoes. It would be interesting, because the dulcimer is the parent of the pianoforte. Representations of this very ancient instrument may be seen in the new Assyrian room at the British Museum which has those magnificent slabs of the famous bull-hunt. You will find on the ground-floor a representation of the king going to war; and among the musicians in the procession there are some dulcimer players. They have the instruments suspended round their necks and little hammers in their hands. The instrument they are playing on is in its main features similar to that used by the Hungarian players; so that comes from Assyria, and not from Egypt.

Mr. SHRUBSOLE.—The members of one gipsy band assured me that they learned all their music from notes, and one bandmaster asked me to give him the notes of "God save the King," as otherwise he said he could not play it properly.

Miss GYÖRY.—The Hungarian hymns are derived from the Reformation. The Hungarian youths generally studied at Berlin, and brought home the Lutheran tunes, but in the Eastern part of Hungary, where Calvinism prevails, we have the real Hungarian music. The Calvinist hymn-tunes differ from the Lutheran; they are all in the Hungarian scale that was heard at the beginning of the meeting.