A Neglected Hymn-Tune

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it can a series of letters—especially when the latter is doubled, as is the case when the “bridge” tones are employed.

I trust sufficient has been said in explanation of the “opinion” advanced in my former letter, and that, though I may not convince your correspondent that I am right, he will not require further entry upon the well-worn controversy respecting the two systems. In conclusion, I would commend to the notice of Mr. Manson a paper “On the Principles of Musical Notation,” read by Dr. Stainer before the Musical Association, first session, where the subject is discussed at greater length, and by a greater authority (a friend, too, of Tonic Sol-fa) than—Yours faithfully,

STEPHEN S. STRATTON.

Birmingham, September 14, 1880.

A NEGLECTED HYMN-TUNE.

TO THE EDITOR OF “THE MUSICAL TIMES.”

SIR,—In spite of the great change in taste in regard to the style of hymn-tunes in recent days, and the numerous modern contributions to this branch of church music, most collections still retain certain of the old English tunes which have kept their hold on us through all these changes, and which no compiler can afford to omit; such as “Rockingham,” “Melcombe,” “Abridge,” and a good many others. But I have looked in vain in most modern tune-books for one of the finest of the old English tunes, one which I have never seen in print since I first found it in an old collection of tunes with hymns published in the early part of this century (the title was “Devotional Harmony,” but I have no recollection of publisher’s or compiler’s name), where it was called “Evening Hymn,” and ascribed to Jeremiah Clark. The tune would very likely be found in such a collection as Webbe’s “Psalmody,” but as no one seems to know it now, I ask leave to quote it here as a tune which is worthy a place in any tune-book, and which certainly ought not to be passed over and forgotten:—

The harmony is exactly as it stood in the old book I have mentioned, but the movement of the inner parts I think I manipulated a little, transposing alto and tenor in one or two bars, as the parts were not well distributed. I adopted it, at a church at which I played many years ago, for Cowper’s fine and pathetic hymn—

The billows swell, the winds are high,*

the feeling of which the tune seemed to express exactly; but I never heard it in any other church. The tune must, of course, be taken in rather slow time, or its true expression will be destroyed.

Having in my hands the other day the tune-book published by the S.P.C.K., and edited by Mr. Sullivan, I looked

* A hymn which also seems entirely beneath the notice of recent compilers.

with some curiosity to see if by chance my old friend was included in this collection; and there I did find, with the name of Jeremiah Clark appended to it, the following tune, which is evidently founded on the one already quoted, but with the key, time, and melody altered so as to render it barely recognisable:—

I will not insult the critical capacity of your readers by asking which is the finer melody, and which bears internal evidence of having been the original form of the tune; but I do feel some curiosity as to who is responsible for this piece of mangling.

London, September 20.

H. H. STATHAM.

[We feel sure most people will agree with Mr. Statham in his estimate both of Jeremiah Clark’s fine hymn-tune, and of the curious perversion of it published under Clark’s name in the tune-book of the S.P.C.K. The tune is first found in Playford’s “Divine Companion” (second edition, 1709), and, under the name of “Uffingham,” is included in that valuable repertory of our old psalm-tunes, the Rev. Henry Parr’s “Church of England Psalmody” (London, Novello). We may add that Webbe’s tune “Melcombe,” to which Mr. Statham refers, was not originally written as a hymn-tune. It was an “O Salutaris,” and will be found in Webbe’s “Collection of Motetts or Antiphons” (1792).—Ed. *Musical Times*.]

ORCHESTRAL REFORM.

TO THE EDITOR OF “THE MUSICAL TIMES.”

SIR,—With the profoundest respect for the feelings of your correspondent (Mr. Smith, of Limerick Cathedral), I would say that I cannot endorse his opinions upon the subject of reform in orchestral notation. If so humble and obscure an individual as myself may put forward his views of the matter, I would say that a score, written in the conventional manner, is a puzzle and a source of perplexity to even sound musicians and experienced conductors. Disguise it as you will, the fact still remains that, if a conductor desires to see the exact form of any passage in his score, he has to mentally transpose some parts a major second, others a minor third, and still others by different intervals. Why is this absurdity necessary? Why not write each part exactly as it sounds, leaving to the copyist the task of transposing, where necessary, in writing out the separate parts? In my own humble sphere I have always done so, and I think nothing could induce me to follow any other plan. Of course, transposition by the octave being the simplest thing imaginable, I write the octave-flute and the contra-bass parts an octave below and an octave above their actual pitch respectively. All this seems simple and crude enough, but what objection is there to it? It answers most fully all the purposes of a score, both to composer and conductor, because the score thus written *speaks the truth*, since it presents to the eye everything *exactly as it sounds*, the octave transposition of the above-named two instruments (and certain others, perhaps) being previously understood or indicated at the time.

I feel somewhat reluctant to put forth this matter in your columns, because, most undoubtedly, these ideas can be no originals of mine, and I have no wish to forestall, in the mention of them, others, my superiors in the profession, who surely must have felt the truth of the principle long ere this; therefore I have waited and looked in your