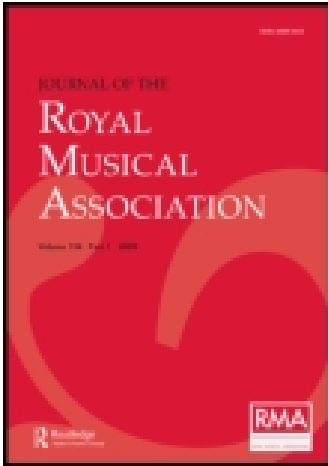


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Music Printing

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MAY 4, 1885.

MAJOR CRAWFORD
IN THE CHAIR.

MUSIC PRINTING.

BY WILLIAM H. CUMMINGS, ESQ., F.S.A.

THE limited time at our disposal this evening will only permit a brief sketch of the history of music printing.

I need not expatiate on the benefits conferred on mankind by the invention of printing—the art which has done more for the advancement of civilisation than even the steam engine or the electric telegraph. Printing was practised in the East many centuries before the Christian era. The British Museum library possesses a roll from Japan which must have been printed in the early part of the eighth century. It is probable that the art was introduced into Europe by the Venetians, who traded largely with China. The Chinese and Japanese printed from wood blocks, as they do to this day. This block printing was adopted by the Venetians, who carried the art into Germany, where it was undoubtedly practised early in the fourteenth century. The printing press had not then been invented, and the practice of the time was first to smear the wood block with colour, and then place the paper on the block, from which an impression was taken by gently rubbing the back of the paper with the hand. The impressions were taken on one side of the paper only, and if required to be made into a book the leaves were pasted or gummed together, back to back. The earliest example known of a block book, on which impressions have been taken on both sides of the leaves is dated 1448 (*Die Kunst Ciromantra*).

About the time I have just mentioned, an enthusiastic and untiring genius was experimenting in secret, in order to perfect an invention, which was to create a revolution in the world; this genius was John Guttenberg, who, in or about the year 1450, successfully accomplished the production of movable metal types. There exists a papal indulgence dated 1454 printed from movable metal type by Guttenberg; this is to be found in the library of the Earl Spencer. The first books, as probably most of you know, were printed to imitate as nearly as possible the manuscript books, then only to be

found in the possession of ecclesiastics and wealthy scholars. This similarity gave rise to a fable promulgated in later days; to the effect that Fust was impeached by the Parliament at Paris, for practising sorcery in the multiplication of MS. copies of the Bible, and that in order to clear himself he was obliged to divulge his secret method of printing. It is now known that no such impeachment was ever made.

If we think for a moment, we shall at once feel that a type printer would naturally imitate the characters used by the scribes in the town in which he lived. This was the case at Strasbourg, Bruges, Rome, Paris, London, and elsewhere; in each place the type printer endeavoured to imitate the writing of the book scribes. Service books and Bibles were made to look like the MSS. used in the churches and monasteries; and secular literature usually appeared in what is known as bastard Roman. When the Germans carried type printing to the monastery of Subiaco in Italy, they discarded the German form of letter which they had previously used, and adopted the one common in Rome. In London we find Caxton made his type printing closely resemble the writing of the period; this may be seen by comparing his printed books with the ancient MS. records of the City company of which he was a member, the "Mercers." I think we may take it these facts go to show that in imitating MSS. there was no desire on the part of the printer to deceive his customers. It may be noted that Fust and Schœffer, in their celebrated Metz Psalter (1457), expressly call attention to the fact that it was *not* the work of a scribe.

This will be a convenient time to show you a book printed in 1471—so like manuscript that it has actually been thought to be written, by the uninitiated.

Guttenberg's movable types were only available for words, and it is probable he never contemplated the possibility of adopting a similar process for the production of the signs of music-language. At the time of his splendid discovery, music had cast off the trammels and fetters imposed on it by the ancient Greek written music system, and also the doubtful half-developed system of the old Church writers, who used signs called neumes. These latter could only be regarded as aids to memory, they were so vague and ill-defined. Had either of these systems been in use at the time Guttenberg invented his movable types, he would have been fully equal to the task of reproducing them. Here is a *fac simile* of some ancient Greek music, and here are several specimens of music depicted by neumes.* Fortunately for the progress and development of our art of music, the Greek and Neume systems had been superseded by the invention of the staff of lines representing various graduated sounds or

* Specimens were exhibited.

pitches, and notes of various shapes representing length or duration. These horizontal lines and perpendicular notes presented enormous difficulties to the early type printer. I do not think it would be possible to adduce stronger evidence in favour of our staff music than the fact that, notwithstanding the difficulty it presented to the type printers, no endeavour was made by them to thrust it aside and revert to the ancient practice of representing sounds by letters or points (neumes), which they could so easily have reproduced. We may also note that in spite of many attempts which have been made in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries to get rid of the staff, it remains to this day unrivalled as a pictorial representation of music language, whether that language be the simple devotional strain of a Tallis chant, or the complex convolutions of a Wagner full score.

As the printers were unable to cope with the task of producing music with their movable types, they were obliged to content themselves with the use of wood blocks; occasionally, where music was required to be intermixed with words, the latter only were printed, and spaces left to insert the necessary music by hand.

The date of the earliest printed music has yet to be ascertained. Hans Froschauer has been cited as having printed a book at Augsburg in 1473. Here is a book, probably unique, without a date, but in the opinion of good judges a work of about 1470—(the type of the words shows that it was printed at Mentz, by Schœffer)—*Agenda Ecclesie Moguntinenses*. Of course the music was printed from blocks. Here also, for comparison, is a MS. Service Book, probably an early fifteenth century work. The following specimens are also appropriate, as showing the style of block music from various localities at this early period:—

Flores Musices, 1488. Printed by Pryss, at Strasbourg.

Aulus Gellius. Printed in 1508, at Paris, by Petit.

Rosetum Exercitiorum Spiritualium. Printed by Petit, in Paris, in 1510.

These rare Paris books were unknown to Fetis, Coussemaker, or Goovaerts; the latter gives 1527 as the date of the earliest music printing in Paris.

Margarita Philosophica. Printed in Basle in 1508.

Devotissimum. Printed in Rome, 1539. A very beautiful specimen of open white notes.

The last specimen I shall show you of block printing is the rare book *Ornithoparcus*, by Douland, printed in London in 1609. It is curious as containing music printed from wood block and also from movable type.

Wood blocks for printing music are still occasionally employed in England and on the Continent. In recent years

our European system of music, with its staff notation, has been introduced into the schools of Japan. Last year I saw some magnificent specimens of music printing from wood blocks which had been executed in Yokohama. They were certainly most perfect.

We must now return to type printing. I mentioned just now the Fust and Schœffer Psalter, printed at Mentz in 1457. This book is an example of another plan which the early type printers adopted, namely, that of printing the staff lines and leaving the notes to be afterward inserted by hand. The lines were sometimes black, but more frequently red. There was a choice of two methods for inserting the notes by hand. One was simply to write them as in ordinary manuscript; the other was to employ a wood die or block with the required note character engraved thereon, and after it was inked to stamp or impress the note in the place required on the staff. Numerous examples exist of books with all the necessary staff lines printed from type, but which have never received the notes for which they were prepared. The examples to which I refer belong to the early part of the sixteenth century, but I have here a remarkably late specimen of the kind. This book was printed in London in 1788 by Coghlan. As you may see, there are one hundred and thirty-three pages of staff lines and words, but not a single note.

We now advance a step in the art of movable type printing—the natural sequence of type-printed lines combined with hand-stamped notes. Of course it speedily occurred to the printers that it would be a more expeditious plan to produce music by two distinct press impressions, one to give the lines, the other the notes. Accordingly we find that very soon service books were produced from movable types. Generally two colours were used, in imitation of the old MSS.—red lines and black notes. This practice has continued to the present time. I have a variety of examples to show you.

1st. A book printed in Paris in 1520, with a very interesting wood block representation of the process of type printing with a press.

2nd. Merbecke's Book of Common Prayer, noted. Printed in London in 1550.

3rd. A *Pontificale Romanum*. Printed in Venice in 1572, by the celebrated Junta.

4th. A *Ceremoriale*. Printed in Rome in 1600.

5th. A *Rituale*. Printed in Munich 1673.

These works, as you see, are all printed with two colours, red and black.

The success in producing service books, containing the simple plain song, naturally suggested an attempt to print

florid song from movable types, by the double impression process; many type printers, in various countries, endeavoured to accomplish this, but none were so successful as Ottaviano Petrucci, who had not only the good fortune to overcome the many practical difficulties which stood in the way, but was still more happy in obtaining the protection and patronage of the civic authorities in Venice, and also of the Pope. In 1498 the municipality of Venice granted him a patent for twenty years, by which he held "the sole privilege of printing music in many parts, for singing, organ, and lute." The privilege granted him states that it was bestowed because, "he had with great labour and expense executed what many before him, in Italy and elsewhere, had long attempted in vain." His first publication appeared in 1501, and in the preface to the book, the *Harmonice Musices Odhecaton*, Petrucci speaks of his predecessors, the "many inventive men, who had often attempted, without being able, to overcome the difficulties," he himself had at last surmounted and brought to perfection a "thing as welcome as it was difficult and of public utility." Petrucci afterwards journeyed to Rome, where he obtained from Pope Leo X. a privilege for the sole printing of figured music for fifteen years.

The interesting document translated reads as follows:—

"Leo X., Pope.

"Beloved son, health and apostolical benediction. Having lately given us to understand that, during your residence at Venice, by your application and ingenuity, you first discovered the method of printing figured song; and whereas our beloved sons the Doge and Senators of the Serene Republic of Venice have granted you the exclusive privilege of printing the same, as the inventor, forbidding any person whatsoever within their jurisdiction, under certain penalties, either to print or vend any other but yours, for the space of twenty years; and having also informed us, that lately, on your return to your native country, Fossombrone, and intent on new discoveries, by great labour, expense, and course of time, you first invented the method of printing organ scores, which had been hitherto attempted by several eminent men, as well in Italy as other countries and given up as impracticable, and which adds greatly to the dignity of divine worship, and proves a help to those who are desirous of improving in music; and that you are inclined to print several books on different subjects, which never hitherto appeared in print in your country, or in any other, directly or indirectly, subject to the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical state. We, disposed to favour your petition, and willing that you, as the inventor and the first printer of the same, should enjoy the privileges annexed to our apostolic

indulgence and leave, provided you vend the same at a moderate price, and in order effectually to prevent other printers from reaping the advantages of your labour and expense, and that we may encourage you to attempt discoveries of greater moment, we, in consideration of your being the inventor and first printer of the same, forbid other printers and booksellers to print or vend any organ scores within fifteen years, or any other books on other subjects which you have already printed, or mean to print (not hitherto published by any other person whatsoever), within fifteen years from the date of their first publication, and that under the penalty of excommunication, with the loss of their books and scores, and a fine of four ducats for each book, to be equally divided, one part for our exchequer, a second to the informer, and a third to the indictor of the punishment. We moreover direct the auditor of our exchequer, and the governor of our beloved city, senators, sheriff, and all other persons acting in any official capacity whatsoever, within our jurisdiction, both now and hereafter, to give you every necessary assistance, when called upon by you or your attorney, under the penalty of an *ipso facto* excommunication to any or either of them that may fail therein, insomuch that they are not to suffer you to be any ways impeded in the execution of the premises, but to terrify the offenders by ecclesiastical censures, and the aforesaid penalties; also to call in to their assistance, if required, the secular power, in order the more easily to facilitate the performance of all or either of the premises, ordering at the same time these our letters patent to be printed, and to hold full force in our courts of judicature and elsewhere, no person whatsoever to obstruct the execution of the same, at their peril.

“Given at Rome, at St. Peter’s, under the Seal of the Fisherman, this 22nd of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand five hundred and thirteen, being the first year of our Pontificate.

“PETER BEMBO.

“To our beloved son, Ottavio Petruccio, of Fossombrone.”

At the Caxton Exhibition, in 1877, we were unable to produce a specimen of Petrucci’s printing, but since then I have purchased his *Misse Petri de la Rue*, printed by him in Venice, in 1503. You will see by this example how beautiful was the work executed by Petrucci.

Petrucci’s method of printing was practised in London, to what extent it is impossible to say. There is in the British Museum a book of twenty songs, printed in 1530, by Wynkyn de Worde, Caxton’s successor, who had previously, in 1495, published the book called the *Polychronicon*, which contained just eight music notes on a staff of eight lines, produced from

metal types; these latter were of a somewhat improvised nature, having been simply odd bits of metal rule, &c.

Petrucchi's double impression method was an expensive one to use, efforts were therefore made to print staff and notes combined from a single impression. This was accomplished with fair success by Erhard Oglin, of Augsburg, who in 1507 published a work entitled, *Melopiæ sive Harmonice Tretracenticæ*. The music in this was printed from movable type by one impression. Our Englishman, John Day, printed some excellent work from movable type at one impression. I have here a curious example of his, which illustrates the old adage, "Nothing new under the sun." In this *Whole Booke of Psalmes*, published in 1576, we find not only the notes but also the sol-fa syllables, a distinct forerunner of the letter-note system, which we fondly regard as an invention of our own times. Day, in his preface "to the reader," says: "Thou shalt understand (gentle Reader) that I have (for the helpe of those that are desyrous to learne to sing) caused a new print of Note to be made with letters to be joyned by every Note; Whereby thou mayst know how to call every Note by his right name, so that with a very little diligence (as thou art taught in the introduction printed heretofore in the Psalmes) thou mayest the more easily by the viewing of these letters come to the knowledge of perfecte *Solfying*; whereby thou mayest sing the Psalmes the more spedely and easier. The letters be thus—V for Ut, R for Re, M for My, F for Fa, S for Sol, L for La. Thus where you see any letter joined by the note, you may easily call him by his right name, as by these two examples you may the better perceive. Thus I commit thee unto Him that liveth for ever, who graunte that we may sing with our hartes and myndes unto the glory of hys holy name. Amen."

Of other specimens of printing from movable type here are—

Orlando di Lasso. Printed in Nuremberg in 1580.

Arcadelt's *Madrigals*. Printed in Venice in 1557.

Luca Marenzio's *Madrigals*. Printed by Scotto in Venice in 1585.

In 1575 Thomas Vautrollier obtained from Queen Elizabeth a patent granting him a monopoly to print music. This patent passed to his heirs. Thomas East, of London, printed music from type fully equal to the contemporary Continental work. Here is a copy of—

Byrd's *Psalmes, Sonets and Songs of Sadnes and Pietie*. Printed by East in 1588.

The Whole Booke of Psalmes. Printed by East in 1594.

In Antwerp there was the house of Plantin, whose productions were of the most beautiful kind. I have been unable to bring several books of theirs I wished to show on

account of their bulk, but here is a little book of *Cantiques*, printed by Plantin in 1679. The magnificent home in which this family of printers resided and worked in Antwerp for nearly 400 years is still in perfect preservation, and it is worth a journey all the way from London to Antwerp simply to see it. There are preserved the designs of Rubens and other artists, the types, the presses, the proof-leaves, the books, all the plant in fact of a great printer intact in an ancient house, workshop and home combined—a history and a romance. Having spoken of the Antwerp Plantin family, I must needs remind you of another family of printers who resided in Paris, whose work was generally of superior excellence. The Ballard family of Paris for nearly 200 years held a monopoly for music printing. It is said that their types were made by Guillaume le Be in 1540, and remained in use till 1750; they received a patent from the King in 1552, which was continued down to the French Revolution. Ballard printed some of Lully's operas from movable types. Here is the *Achille*, dated 1687. Also the "*Pseaumes de David*," dated 1562, a perfectly lovely specimen of print.

Gradually in all countries type printing deteriorated, until at last it was most discreditable, in Germany worst of all. Our English products were disgraceful.

Let us now turn to John Playford, born in 1623, described by Burney as "the most intelligent printer of music during the seventeenth century." Hawkins says, "Playford contributed not a little to the art of printing music, from letter-press types, by the use of what he calls, in some of his publications, the tied-note." Subsequent writers have adopted these statements, but I question whether John Playford was a printer of any kind, certainly he did introduce or use the tied-note. In the old method of type printing the custom was to print each quaver and semiquaver with a separate tail (the superb edition of *Marcello's Psalms*, printed in Venice in 1724-6, is a late example of this method, and of square-headed notes), never to group or connect them by a common tail, as in our present practice. In all the music printed for John Playford by Godbid and Jones, the tails are separate. Joined or tied-tail notes were introduced into England by a printer named Tom Moore, who printed for John Carr. Moore was afterwards associated in similar work with Heptenstall, and they were succeeded by William Pearson.

Here is John Playford's "Introduction to the Skill of Music," printed by Jones in 1694, the year of Playford's death, it does not contain a single tied-note. Here the edition of the same book, printed by Pearson in 1700, has tied-notes. No special attention was called to the fact on the title, but in the next edition printed in 1703, the title page states that it is "done on the new ty'd note." Why it was

then called the *new*, seeing that the edition printed three years before was exactly the same, it is hard to discover.

The *Comes Amoris*, printed by Moore in 1688, has all tied-notes.

The *Venculum Societatis*, printed by Moore and Heptenstall in 1688, is like it; and

The *Thesaurus Musicus*, printed by Heptenstall in 1693, has also tied-notes.

I was careful to say that the tied-notes were introduced into England by Moore, not that he was the first to use this kind of note with types. A recent writer has made the mistake of supposing that they were first used in England, and that other countries afterwards adopted the practice. The contrary is the case; here are two books printed by Ballard, in Paris, in 1644 and 1683, which show the use of the tied-note. In 1755 Breitkopf of Leipsic made such important improvements in type printing, that he styled himself "Inventore di questa nuora maniera di stampar la musica con caratteri separabile e mutabile." His new method did not meet with much acceptance, and he continued to retain a large staff of writers, for the purpose of supplying MS. copies of current musical works, his published catalogue issued soon after 1755, contained many more MS. copies for sale than printed works. In 1784 Dr. Arnold patented a process for printing from music type. I have here a specimen of his work, and some interesting documents, including an autograph letter of his, which describes his invention.

The letter is addressed to Sir Watkin Williams Wynn of Wynnstay:—"Sir,—I would have done myself the honour to have written to you before this time, if I could have sent you a complete specimen, so as to have given you satisfaction and done me credit, in order to accomplish which, I have laboured with unwearied assiduity, and had according to your request set up *Non Nobis*, but I found when it was done that the letters to the words were so thin and meagre, compared to the fulness of the notes, that they by no means harmonised together, nor could I find a letter full enough now in use in any printing house in London. I was therefore determined at any rate to have a new fount of letters, cut on purpose, with a full face (that is the term), in order to make the whole as respectable as possible, determining to spare no expense to render it compleat. The letters to the large and small are very near cut, after which they must all undergo the operation of being struck into a copper matrice before they can be cast, which although it will retard the business something longer than I hoped for, yet it will be much more compleat than ever I expected. I have fixed on Zadoc the Priest for the specimen, if you prefer any other it shall be done, but there is a regularity in the Symphony to that Anthem that will give it

a uniform and beautiful look. However, I am not wedded to it, if you prefer anything else. Does His Majesty know of this scheme? What is the best approach to him on this subject? I hope you will pardon my asking these questions, which I would not have done had you not been good enough to interest yourself in this matter. I wish strictly to follow your advice."

I shall for the present defer further remarks on type printing, in order briefly to speak of engraved music. We must remember that with all the skill shown by Petrucci and his contemporaries, they never succeeded in printing other than single voice or instrumental parts, when the question of producing a score or an organ part presented itself they were completely baffled, hence the necessity of finding some mode of writing music, on a material which could be used after the manner of a wood block, but with greater facility.

Prints or pictures from engraved copper plates are said to have been executed about 1450, and the art of etching on copper by means of aquafortis was the discovery of Francis Mazzuoli, of Parmegiano, about 1532. I should expect to discover music engraved by this process soon after the latter date, but at present can only refer to Verovio's *Diletto Spirituale*, printed in Rome in 1586. Dr. Rimbault believed that our English *Parthenia*, published in 1611, was the first engraved music book, but he was mistaken. The *Parthenia* is a charming book, as you may see by this copy. Here are some beautiful specimens of engraved music by Kapsberger from Rome, dating from 1604 to 1612—

Frescobaldi's *Toccate*. Rome, 1615.

Lully's *Armide*. Ballard, Paris, 1725.

Muffatt's *Componimenti*. Vienna, 1730.

Bach's *Clavier Uebung*. Engraved by the composer himself.

All these examples of music printed from engraved copper plates closely resemble good MS. I have not shown any Dutch work, although I have numerous examples in my library of books, type and engraved. This nation soon excelled in the art of music engraving. Probably most of you are familiar with the beautiful Dutch editions of Corelli's works. England, too, was not behind in the race. Witness the fine specimens by Tom Cross; Handel's *Suites*, engraved by Cluer, and published in 1720; J. C. Smith's *Suites*, engraved by Cobb. This latter I consider superior to the engraving by Cluer.

The next step was the use of pewter, a mixture of tin and lead, as a cheap substitute for copper plates. This is said to have been the work of John Walsh, who published a work printed from pewter plates in October, 1724, in which the author, Dr. Croft, speaks of the new and improved method

of printing. An advertisement in the *London Journal*, May 2, 1724, referring to Cluer's new edition of Handel's *Julius Cæsar* about to be published, warns intending purchasers to "beware of incorrect pirated editions done on large pewter plates." Down to 1730, although pewter plates had come into use, they were engraved after the manner of copper plate; but soon after 1730, punches were used for stamping the heads of the notes in the plates. Before leaving this point it will be well to note that the invention or introduction of pewter plates undoubtedly belongs to England, and most probably to Walsh. It brought about the art of stamping or punching music characters, a system which has entirely superseded the old mode of engraving, and is superior to it on account of its exactness. Possibly pewter plates will eventually give way to zinc plates. These are used by Dr. Chrysander for his beautiful edition of Handel's works. This is a proper time for exhibiting a page of music printed in 1770 from a stamped pewter plate. The dimensions of the plate are 20½ by 13.

I shall now go back to type music. Arnold's invention, which apparently he must have abandoned, for his large edition of Handel's works was printed from stamped plates, was succeeded by important improvements made by Olivier and Godefroi of Paris, in 1802; but their expensive experiments ruined them. In 1820 Mr. Clowes obtained new punches and matrices from Germany for the purpose of casting new musical types. The result was seen in the *Harmonicon*, which was printed from these types for nearly eleven years. In 1834 he attained to still greater perfection, as may be seen by his edition of Clarke's *Handel* and the *Musical Library*. In the same year the proprietors of the *Musical Library* bought the patent of a secret process invented by M. Duverger. Later on we find the Scheurman process, patented in 1856. From the notes set up in type a mould or compression in wax was taken, and on this wax mould the staff lines were added; finally, from the completed mould a stereotype cast was taken, but owing to the fragile nature of the material used, it was difficult to avoid damage by breaking. The mode now pursued by our best printers leaves little to be desired in the matter of well placed notes and continuous staff lines. Any little irregularities in the original set up can be corrected in making the stereotype from which the music is generally printed.

I now come to a practical question. Is the music issued from the press in the present day as perfect as it might be, or as it ought to be? As bearing on the subject, I should like to call your attention to a paper which was read at the Society of Arts a few weeks since by Mr. Brudenell Carter. Mr. Carter's paper was devoted to the investigation of "The

Influence of Civilisation on Eyesight." He said: "There could be no doubt, not only that the eye, as civilised men now possessed it, was inferior to that possessed by animals, which we had far outstripped in other particulars, but also that, amongst ourselves, it had fallen very decidedly below the standard of excellence which it had attained in some of the families of the human race. . . . What he might fairly describe as national neglect of the culture of the eyes, and of efforts to improve the faculty of seeing, was chiefly due to the prevailing absence of notion concerning the proper range and scope of the visual function, and hence concerning the powers which the eyes ought to possess. Few things were more remarkable than the common want of information about all matters which related to the use and functions of these important organs. In most other respects it might be said that the majority of parents had a fair knowledge of what ought to be average powers and capabilities of children. They knew, approximately at least, how far a boy of ten years old could reasonably be expected to walk, how high or how far he could jump, how fast he could run, what weight he could carry, what force he could exert. There was not one parent in 500 who had the smallest notion how large an object, say a capital letter, a boy ought to be able to see clearly at 100 feet away; or who could tell at what distance he ought to be able to see and describe the characters of an object of given magnitude. There was not one parent in 500 who could tell whether his children possessed natural colour vision, or who, if the inquiry were suggested to him, would know how to discover the truth. . . . He would urge that all lesson books for very young children be printed in large type, and that the children should be compelled to keep such books at a distance (the type in which we often see texts of Scripture printed to be hung up in railway waiting rooms would be a good size for the purpose). He would urge that many of the school books now in use should be abandoned; and that new editions should be prepared, in type of at least twice the size, and twice the legibility (the latter depending much upon the shape and design of the letters) of that which was now in use. Finally, he would urge upon all who were concerned in the organising of athletic sports and contests, that excellence of vision should be highly esteemed in such competitions. He felt sure that, if public attention were once fairly directed to the question, if the eyes received as much attention as the muscles, and if an intelligent knowledge of what they ought to accomplish were diffused abroad, that our country, in the course of two or three generations, would be peopled by a race who might engage, if not without fear, yet certainly without disgrace, in a seeing contest with any other representatives of the human family."

Mr. Carter's remarks would, I think, have been much stronger if he could have seen how the present system of music printing was tending. Look, first of all, at type printed music. There are, of course, degrees of excellence; some is execrably bad. I could have produced a small edition of an oratorio in which the type notes are very small, very indistinct, the lines badly joined, or rather not joined at all, the paper so thin that the ink shows through from one side of the paper to the other. But let us speak of the best type printed music. Here we find good paper, well-formed lines and notes, but all so minute and crowded that it requires a serious effort to identify and grasp the picture which has to be conveyed to the brain through the eye. The notes are small, but the words are smaller; and when you come to a recitative—in which, of course, the words form the more important element—you will find, for the sake of saving a little space, that the type setter has used a smaller letter than usual. I speak from painful experience when I say that these small type copies are productive of headache, eye-ache, and neuralgia. Just think what the octavo type editions were first intended for. They were meant to be used as hand-books by the audience for following the music at public performances of oratorios. But latterly they have taken another position; they are used by singers, pianoforte players, and conductors—often there is no choice, for no folio editions are obtainable. In these cases I think pianists and conductors are to be pitied. I appeal to all my brethren here whether music is not much easier to read and execute when you have the advantage of an uncrowded page and of well formed notes. If we turn to orchestral parts, we find as a rule that they are printed with a good legible note—true, it is the practice for two to play from a desk, but even then they have but one line at a time to read, whereas a pianist or conductor has to read a multitude of lines and notes. The tendency of the day with the high class publishers in music printing is to produce a neat looking page. Take, for instance, the recent full scores published by Breitkopf. The latest edition of the *Elijah* looks much neater, prettier, perhaps, than the first printed full score; but the notes are smaller and closer, it is therefore not nearly so legible. I dare say we have all seen curiosities of engraving, such as the "Lord's Prayer" in a circle somewhat smaller than a threepenny piece—very remarkable and pretty it is, but who would like to be condemned to read his Prayer Book or his Bible from similar engravings?

DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN.—After the very interesting lecture we have just had, I shall certainly not take up your time by entering into the historical or antiquarian details of the matter, or the subject would be endless. With regard to the practical part with which Mr. Cummings has concluded, I would only add one remark, that is in addition to the smallness of the type and the closeness of the notes. I may add one other point, which I think is worthy of attention, and that is the colour of the ink. If you look at some of those old books Mr. Cummings has shown us to-day, you will see how much blacker the ink was in those days, and how it preserves its blackness. In modern days the ink is much inferior. I shall say no more myself, but I trust there are those here who take an interest, and have had practical experience in these matters, and who will let us know their views upon it.

Mr. LITTLETON.—The modern portion of the subject treated by Mr. Cummings being one of great personal interest to me, I trust I may be allowed to make a few remarks. Mr. Cummings' later statements appear to be very like a libel on our popular octavo editions, which have always been accepted as specimens of neatness and cheapness. It is impossible to have printed music with large notes and large words without materially adding to the size of the publication, and consequently adding to the price. The public have now become so accustomed to buying an oratorio for 2/-, or even 1/-, that it is useless to publish editions at a much higher price. I will mention one practical example:—When I purchased the copyright of Sterndale Bennett's *May Queen*, I re-printed the folio edition, and published it at the comparatively low price of 6/-. The public decline to buy this edition, and much prefer the octavo copy at 3/-, half the price. To test the matter in a smaller way, an Easter Anthem, which was issued two or three years ago in *The Musical Times*, was also printed in the folio size, and two months after Easter had passed, I found that sixteen copies of the folio edition had been sold against a very large number of the octavo. It is of no use blaming the publisher for printing in a small size if the public will not buy the larger size when it is to be had. Mr. Cummings complains of the new full score of *Elijah*, published by Breitkopf and Härtel. In my opinion it is one of the most beautiful scores ever printed. If you insisted on larger notes in full scores, it would be impossible to print them on ordinary size folio paper and you would be compelled to increase it to the size of the largest plate Mr. Cummings says he ever saw.

Mr. PROUT.—I am sure we have all listened with a great deal

of interest to Mr. Cummings, and I think that it has not only been very interesting, but most instructive. I have certainly learnt a great many facts I did not know before. I think what Mr. Cummings would most wish to have discussed is this practical point he has raised, on which Mr. Littleton has just spoken. I must say that five years ago I should have gone in much more warmly for octavo editions than I am prepared to do at present, but, like most of us, I am sorry to say I am not quite so young as I used to be, and I find it is a little more difficult to read. I think, perhaps, it is only a simple matter of justice to Mr. Littleton to say that I do not find Novello's octavo copies so close reading as some of the German octavo copies. I was playing through only the other day an octavo piano score of Rheinberger's *Christophorus*, published at Leipsic, and it was distinctly closer, and more difficult to read than the average of our own English octavo printing. While playing it through I remember remarking that I must be getting old, for I cannot see as I used to do. There is unquestionably a certain amount of difficulty with small type, but no doubt, as Mr. Littleton says, it is useless for him to print larger copies if they cannot be sold. I am rather inclined to side with Mr. Littleton against Mr. Cummings in the matter of the new score of *Elijah*, for I think the whole of these Breitkopf editions are very beautiful, and I must confess for myself I have not found the slightest difficulty in reading, the ink is so very black, and the whole of the printing is so clear. If we never have any worse type to read from than these scores of Breitkopf, I shall not complain. Unquestionably there is a great deal to be said in favour of folio music, but it appears to depend very much, as it has been put, on the question of supply and demand.

Mr. LITTLETON.—I should add that I have some octavo editions with which I am not satisfied, such as *Saul* and *Solomon*, but I have so much new work that I have not yet had time to reprint them. I began a new edition of *Solomon* a year and a half ago, and on asking the other day how much was done of it, I found only twenty pages were done. There is certainly no excuse for some of this smaller type, and, as fast as I can, I am going to reprint the whole of these works, whether they are particularly saleable or not.

Mr. CUMMINGS.—Just a few words in reply to the remarks made by Mr. Littleton. I carefully abstained from making any allusion to any printing house, and, therefore, I am indebted to Mr. Littleton for having kindly spoken himself. I can most cheerfully bear testimony to the splendid way in which they (Novello & Co.) do their works. There is no other house in London, I believe in England, which does work so well; I do not know any publisher who sacrifices

so much as Mr. Littleton does to print full scores, and I know the return beyond that of a satisfied conscience can be very small. But at the same time I do say this, that there is still room for improvement. If I did not think so, if I did not hope my saying so would do some good, I would not here assert it. I believe Mr. Littleton has improved the type, and most of the new editions, *St. Paul*, for instance, are very good, but even in *St. Paul* there are cases in which there are very small words for the recitatives; of course, I know it is for the sake of saving space, but I do hope Mr. Littleton will see his way to have by-and-bye a larger type, or to have the words a little larger in the octavo edition, if that issue is the most convenient. But surely we can be accommodated if we want to have folio editions, and if we cannot, let us have a little larger words, so that we who have to read from the pianoforte, or the conductor's desk, may see them. Referring to Breitkopf and Härtel's full score editions of the *St. Paul* and *Elijah*, I am very thankful for them, and did not mean to grumble at all, I simply pointed out that if you put beside any one of their new editions one of their old scores, you will see at once the difference, and although there are more pages and more turns over in the older scores, that does not matter much to a conductor, and the engraving is a little more legible. Modern books look very beautiful, but that is a matter of small consequence. The chief difficulty is with type, if we could have a half-way measure, between the old Harmonicon size and the present used by Novello, it would be I think an improvement.

Mr. LITTLETON.—It would double the length of the work.

Mr. CUMMINGS.—I should not mind that, particularly if it were sold at the same price.

Mr. LITTLETON.—Mr. Novello tried once to do it, and he issued a specimen page of *Jephtha* in large type, but the book would have taken double the number of pages; only two scores could be got on each page in the choruses, and there would not have been more than two-thirds as much in the width. I think the present edition is about as good as can be.

Mr. CUMMINGS.—Take for instance the new edition that Novello has published of *Samson*, it is beautiful and comparatively easy to read, that is simply because there are very few notes in the score. If you take an edition of Mackenzie's *Rose of Sharon*, where there are plenty of notes and no end of leger lines, then it is most perplexing and confusing to read. We all who read at the pianoforte know that at the top of each stave, where you get binds and leger lines, it is very difficult to distinguish where the five-line staff ends, and therefore, with modern music, which is so much more elaborate, it would be a great advantage if the type were a

little larger. It is not for me to say if it is possible or no ; I fancy it is, but experts must decide that question. If we could have the thing a little larger, both the notes and the words (but if not the notes, certainly the words), it would be better.

Mr. SPENCER.—I think the present occasion is one for suggesting a difficulty which I have often found, and that is the great similarity between the natural and the sharp. I think in a meeting like this, if the question could be mooted, an idea would be put forward, which would be useful.

Mr. CUMMINGS.—I had thought of that subject, and I had meant to refer to it. The difficulty is to provide the distinguishing mark. The old sharp was very superior ; it was a double cross with dots, whereas at present it requires a microscope, or a telescope, to discover which is a sharp, and which is a natural. The old one is made crosswise, but that would not do at present, as it is so much like the double sharp.

Mr. STEPHENS.—I think the difference between the sharp and the natural might be shown by making the horizontal marks in the natural descend, and the sharp ascend. I have seen printing on that principle. With regard to the general question, it would be difficult to have the score in too large notes, because one of the objects of the score is to have it so that the conductor can take it all in at one glance. If the type were too large, he could barely arrive at all the details in his mind at the same time. It is an unfortunate necessity that we are compelled in such a case to have the notes rather small, so as to be within reach of the conductor's eye.

The REV. M. E. BROWNE.—Have you examined any specimens of paper type writing ?

Mr. CUMMINGS.—Yes, but I did not like to refer to it, because if I had it would have been in very opprobrious terms.

The REV. M. E. BROWNE.—I quite agree with you, but would it not be possible to improve it ?

Mr. CUMMINGS.—It is possible to improve it, I should think.

The REV. M. E. BROWNE.—Could you not by that method get the page to any size you choose ?

Mr. CUMMINGS.—I have a specimen of it at home, which I will defy anyone to read.

Mr. G. A. OSBORNE.—I think it is only right that I should ask you to give a cordial vote of thanks to Mr. Cummings for the very agreeable and instructive paper he has presented us with. I am sure we have all enjoyed very much his paper, and there being so many here to-day, proves the interest that we all take in it. Mr. Cummings always makes himself thoroughly well up in what he has to say, and he has a very effective way of saying it.

The CHAIRMAN.—I think, ladies and gentlemen, there can be no dissent from what Mr. Osborne has said.

(The vote of thanks having been carried unanimously)—

Mr. CUMMINGS.—I am much obliged to you, Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, and I confess to feeling somewhat overwhelmed for your thanks, for this reason, that when I undertook this task I had no idea it would require such labour. I had prepared the type business very thoroughly, but when this morning I got up early to begin the plate portion of the subject, I found that if I continued that at the same length, I should have to keep you here until the next monthly meeting.
