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The Philosophy of the Higher Beauty of Music : Part II

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[NOVEMBER 14, 1899.]

SIR JOHN STAINER, M.A., D.C.L., MUS.D., PRESIDENT,
IN THE CHAIR.

*THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE HIGHER BEAUTY
OF MUSIC.*

BY JOSEPH GODDARD.

PART II.

CONTRAST IN SCENIC EFFECT AND IN MUSIC.

IN endeavouring to discover the larger foundations of the influence of music we have had to travel somewhat far into the region of hypothesis; but there are several striking features of its influence which rest on causes closer at hand: in attempting to explain these we stand on firmer ground. One of these features has been already touched upon—namely, the influence of those effects which arise out of the fact that the musical faculties and sensibilities are, so to speak, grafted on those involved in utterance and hearing; the others may, I believe, be explained from a point of view which, whether it be original or not, I have, I believe, taken up independently—namely, the position of hearing among the senses.

Why do we call the sight of things the things themselves, and the sound of things only sounds? Thus in coming within view of the sea we should consider that we spoke precisely if we said "that is the sea." But if we could only hear the sea, yet made the foregoing exclamation, we should know that we were speaking graphically. To speak precisely in the latter circumstances we should say: "that is the sound of the sea." That is to say, the visual effect would stand for the object itself; the auditory effect would only stand for the sound of that object.

At the root of this difference is the following fact : light has the property of giving us a definite impression of all objects which it strikes or from which it proceeds, but our receiving such an impression depends upon the space directly between the object and the eye being clear of any opaque body or medium. Thus it is by means of the visual impression that we acquire that correct knowledge of our practical relation with an object which is necessary in daily life, and hence an inseparability between the two has become established in our minds. Sound, on the other hand, being reflected from an object, brings away no impress of it, and though when the object itself emits the sound this may suggest the object, the two things (the object and the sound) remain distinctly separate to the perception. We may confront directly an instrument which is being played, or a singer in the act of singing, and the result to the ear in either case will be simply a sound—it may be a sound of a particular kind, but it can never be an object. Thus much as to the answer to my question : “Why do we call the sight of things the things themselves, and the sound of things only sounds?”

This answer, however, places us in a position to define fully the difference between a sight and a sound. As the visual impression is to us the object from which it proceeds, in that impression are merged and co-ordinated the experiences of that object which have been acquired by the other senses. Hence the fact referred to and partly explained in the first part of this paper—namely, that various senses contribute to form our ideas of the things we see though we seem to exercise the visual sense exclusively.*

The distinction then between a sight and a sound beyond that involved by different senses being called into activity may be thus defined : the sight is a composite impression, the sound a simple one, the one involves various sensations coalescing into that due to the visual sense, the other is a single sensation—that is to say, a sensation the character of which is pure and unmixed.

CONTRAST IS LESS PERFECT IN MUSIC THAN IN SCENE.

The above considerations help to explain that difference between music and visual effect which consists in the more definite individuality of the various features of the latter ; for, notwithstanding the great variety of effect which music is capable of unfolding, it never displays the clearly defined variety of a natural scene or its representation.

The ordinary contrasts as observed by the eye between the various objects of nature are not only unmistakably definite and clear, but they are realised without effort. Take

the contrast of lake and meadow. There is no contrast in music so complete and yet so *quiet* as this. By quiet contrast I mean a distinct change of impression (bringing, it may be, change of sentiment) without there being a break in the general mood of feeling. The contrast between day and night or between a stormy and a calm sea involves what I term a change of mood. Music can unfold contrast in which there is the change both of sentiment and mood, as in the case of the melody in the opening of the Overture to "Der Freischütz" and the *tremolo* passage which follows; but it cannot unfold the kind of contrast which we realise in looking at lake and meadow.

At the base of this difference is the fundamental fact that the action of the sense of sight is attended naturally with a greater feeling of repose than that of the ear. But there are secondary causes. In the instance of lake and meadow the distinct nature of the contrast is, to a great extent, due to the unique effect of water on the sense of touch combined with the opposite feelings of muscular resistance which water and land produce. The division between these two effects—that is, meadow and water—is further strengthened by the gulf which separates our experiences of the organic and inorganic worlds. This leads me to remark that the contrast between visual impressions is much deepened by the varying sentiments produced by the different associated experiences. With the sight of a house, for instance, are associated not only the sense effects but also certain feelings—such as those of security, shelter and rest, together with the sentiments attaching to home. With the sight of open country are associated both sense impressions and feelings of out-of-door life—such as the feelings of action and effort—as well as those mental sentiments due to the contemplation of nature. Now the various feelings and sensations thus associated with visual impressions contribute towards our realising the latter in the distinct way we do by supplying additional elements of contrast.

By the foregoing remarks I wish to suggest how largely the distinctiveness of visual impressions is due to their composite nature—to the fact that various senses contribute to their formation, and that this is the case not simply in virtue of the proper—the local—action of the senses involved, but also in virtue of the sentiments associated with that action.

Two potent causes, however, of the clear separateness of visual effects still remain to be considered, one relating to physical, the other to physiological circumstances. The first is the permanent individuality of colours. The second is the faculty by means of which we realise mainly difference of form. The general character of a colour is realised when the colour is exhibited alone. This is the case not only with

such different colours as red, green, and violet, but also with intermediate colours. It may be said that musical sounds have also a permanent individuality as degrees of the scale. But the degrees of the scale only compare with the different colours of visual effect in the case of simple themes—of which a single note is an important part. In more elaborate music—where the design is larger—a passage or section would represent more truly that proportion of the effect which is analogous with colour in a scene. Now, however such a passage or section might be calculated to give the impression of individuality, this impression cannot be compared with the easily recognised individuality attaching to a colour. Even in the case of a simple melody, special and trained attention is required to recognise the individuality of each note as a member of the scale. To ordinary ears neither a single note nor any conformation of notes has distinctive character except as part of the *æsthetic* effect of the piece. On the other hand, colours may be said to have for every eye a fixed individuality and familiar character irrespective of the particular elements they contribute to the *æsthetic* effect.

The reason of this permanent individuality of colours seems to be the existence of a fixed standard of comparison in the effect of white light. The observation of a colour is generally attended by the realisation of white light. There is nothing vague or uncertain about the latter effect; it is unique. White light containing all rays may (notwithstanding the varieties it embraces, each of which stands for it)* be said to be the highest power of light and the strongest stimulus the sense of sight can have. Thus it is the standard with which other effects of light are compared; and being always present and the same for practical purposes, like relations to it are the same and produce each a distinctive sensation.

Whereas, then, in scene the constituent colours have a generally and unfailingly recognised individuality apart from the *æsthetic* effect, in music the constituent sounds or passages have not. Thus it is that all eyes in looking at an object or scene observe certain well marked differences mechanically—at the first glance; whereas in listening to a piece of music corresponding differences would not be observed without special attention or until the *æsthetic* effect had become to some extent unfolded.

I now come to the second of the two causes of the distinctiveness of visual impressions—namely, the faculty by which we realise difference of position in space. This faculty, as you are no doubt aware, is based largely on the muscular sense. Although differently shaped objects produce different

* For instance, the white of this paper by candle-light is very different from what it is by day-light, but our conception is the same in both circumstances.

retinal impressions our comprehension of their forms is largely due to the association of muscular actions with those impressions. For instance, we are cognisant largely of the shape of a circular object by the association with a certain retinal impression, of that sweep of the eye-balls which is involved in following the outline of a circle; of an angular object by the association with its retinal impression, of sudden changes of direction in the sweep of the eye-balls. And in looking at a scene and surveying solid objects other muscular actions enter—namely, the action of the ciliary muscle and that involved in bringing about the various necessary degrees of convergence of the axes of the eye-balls; the former being concerned mainly in our realisation of near distances, the latter in our realisation of distances both near and far, and in our comprehension of objects of three dimensions. Further, besides all this action of the delicate muscles connected with the eye, other kinds of muscular activity contribute to our conception of space and form, as when the head and body move in order to extend the sweep of the eye, or when the limbs move in the field of vision. As I have just implied in referring to the convergence of the lines of sight, the close correspondence of the retinal impressions with the details of varied movement is aided by our having two eyes and thus two points of survey. Even when the retinal impression of an object is small enough to be embraced completely by the region of clear vision without muscular movement, our realisation of its form is still associated with the muscular feeling because our ideas of form begin with experiences of the larger kinds of muscular exercise. The fact, then, that two objects give us two distinct impressions involves also this: we perform two respective muscular movements or series of movements, each of which, when the objects are surveyed simultaneously, are again contrasted with another—namely, that involved in glancing from one object to the other. Thus we realise the two objects as occupying two definitely separated places. These are the reasons why two leaves, or two pebbles, whose pure retinal impressions are similar, and whose associated experience must be the same, create in us two clearly defined impressions.

The secondary causes then of the quiet, clear contrast in scene as compared with contrast in music may be thus summed up: I now give the more material ones precedence. First, the action of the eye involves muscular movement out of which arises largely the definiteness of our impressions of difference of position in space and difference of form. Secondly, whereas the colours of nature have each to our sense an abstract individuality obvious to all without effort, and which is conferred by the ever present absolute standard,

white light, the different parts of a musical effect have not. Thus, whereas in a picture, beside the æsthetic contrast of the colours, that arising from their fixed characters is always realised, in a musical composition it is only the æsthetic contrast which in the main is felt. Thirdly, whereas the contrast of musical effects is a contrast of the impressions of a single sense, that of visual effects involves the contrast between the impressions of different senses.

We are now in a position to understand fully why we feel a sense of clear contrast amid perfect repose when we survey ordinary natural scenes. I have alluded to the fact that in music two strongly contrasted effects are generally attended respectively by two different moods of feeling. This is owing to the single character of the auditory impression. As I have already stated, a similar change of mood is produced by light when the simple sensation of light operates alone, as in passing from shadow to sunlight, or when day is contrasted with night. When objects appealing to the eye produce clearly contrasted impressions attended by an undisturbed mood of feeling, it is largely because the associated sensorial impressions—muscular, tactile, or other—involve respectively such differences as create the clearest contrast without the pure retinal impressions being strongly opposed. Thus, in looking at different houses, different animals, different trees, there may be scarcely any difference in the pure light-impressions in each case, yet we have distinctly separate ideas owing to difference of muscular and other sensorial impressions being associated with the light-impression. Even where there is a strong difference in the light sensation, as supposing the glance takes in a lake, and we have the contrast of land and water, the scene is still surveyed in one emotional temper because the pure light-impressions do not involve the extreme differences of light sensation.

DIFFERENCE OF POSITION IN SPACE AS SUGGESTED BY MUSIC.

In referring to that association of muscular actions and retinal impressions which gives us our ideas of form, I mentioned that these ideas begin with experience of the larger kinds of muscular exercise. The history of the process may be as follows :

A child moves its arms and hands in the field of vision, or produces changes in this field by movements of its head or its body. From the association of the muscular feelings involved in these movements with the different impressions produced on the eye it derives its first definite ideas of difference of position in space. Ideas thus formed become subsequently associated exclusively with the finer—the

purely optical—muscular feelings involved in the movements of the eye. The finer muscular feelings are thus, so to speak, educated by the grosser from which, what I may term, our *standard* of difference of position in space is in the first place derived. It is thus not difficult to understand that our appreciation of difference of form begins with comparatively large differences.

Turning to the ear, though we may acquire through it vague ideas of difference of position in space—as when a sound is heard at a distance, or when two sounds proceed from different directions—this organ cannot approach the eye in the discrimination of distance and direction. Being the *passive* recipient of impressions it has, in the case of two or more sounds issuing simultaneously from different points, no power answering to that which the eye possesses in its muscular endowment by means of which it is directed to various retinal effects, each of which thus becomes associated with different portions of a muscular action. But when the voice executes certain pitch-intervals, then certain muscular actions (connected with the larynx) are, so to speak, registered by the auditory sense. To this, I think, is due much of the power which music has of giving us ideas of difference of position in space, and of form. A common experience in listening to music is the distinct suggestion of difference of position in space in the perpendicular dimension. With difference of pitch passing towards acute we associate an upward change of position, and *vice versa*. This association is probably derived from the fact that in singing comparatively low notes the set of the larynx is such as to direct the vibrations downward to the chest, whilst in singing some high notes the set of the larynx is such as to direct the vibrations towards the head. There are intermediate settings of the larynx which appear to correspond to the different registers, but while each setting prevails, the changes which occur as the notes rise are chiefly directed to an increasing tension of the cords. There is thus no doubt that in the production by a singer of extreme differences of pitch, the sounds are felt to proceed from distinctly different regions of the body in the perpendicular dimension. Whether in singing the scale gradually upward the reverberation actually proceeds from a higher point at each step, as felt, or at what points it does so, seems to one who is neither a physiologist nor a singer to be doubtful. Possibly we only really feel it coming from a relatively higher or lower region in the case of a few different general positions of the larynx, yet this may be sufficient to cause us to associate change of pitch generally with high and low, so that the smallest change of pitch is felt as a change in altitude. That this is also the experience of the listener may, I think, be

explained as follows :—Although laryngeal muscular feelings due to conscious actions only occur in connection with music when we sing, feelings due to that extremely restricted, faint, yet real action which occurs when we think we are only exercising our senses in imagination, might possibly take place in a pure listener—a listener not only to vocal but instrumental music. As the imagining of sounds is considered to be true *inward hearing*, so perhaps actual hearing may be conceived as, to some extent, *inward singing*.*

Instances of composers suggesting a picture of height by pitch-effect are numerous enough. Thus, in the passage, "The waves stood upright as a heap," in "Israel in Egypt," a series of notes not varying in pitch between themselves stands out from the musical context in virtue of being declaimed at a comparatively high pitch of the voice. Rossini is moved by the same instinct in his "Stabat Mater," at the passage "Dum pendebat filius."

It is possibly on some principle of complementary feeling that passages not characterised by variation in pitch help to suggest the other two dimensions, particularly when used in connection with passages varying in pitch. It seems that as passages which rise or fall in pitch suggest the perpendicular dimension, those passages which contrast with them the most—by prolongation or reiteration of notes—tend to suggest sometimes one, sometimes the other of the two remaining dimensions, both of which contrast as much as possible with the perpendicular. This probably explains the fact that music consisting of passages in which pitch-change in *various degrees* is combined with reiteration or prolongation of some of the notes, may be so devised as to impress us with a comparatively definite feeling of visual form. Thus, in the chorus to which I just referred, Handel represents the waves of the sea by figures rising and falling gradually in pitch, and following one another rhythmically and continuously.

Another idea belonging to the outer world, which music suggests, is motion. This is sometimes due to the effect of rhythmic impact when it proceeds at a perceptible pace. The main reason why this effect, whether in music or poetry,

* This appears less improbable when we consider the very close association that exists between auditory sensations and the voice. Dr. M. Foster says: "They (auditory sensations) are in a way essential to the very utterance of the voice; the dumbness which is so conspicuous a concomitant of congenital deafness is in most cases due not to deficiency in the muscular apparatus or even in the nervous mechanism on what we may call its motor side, but to the lack of afferent (incoming) impulses from the auditory nerve. And in popular language we recognise this dependence of the management of the laryngeal muscles on auditory sensations when we talk of such or such one as 'having no ear.'" Inversely, then, may not auditory sensations when operating alone imbue some feeling of laryngeal action?

suggests motion seems to be that it is a frequent concomitant of motion in the physical world. The triplet figure in the accompaniment to the passage in Mendelssohn's "Elijah," where the words "there came a fiery chariot" occur, is a striking illustration of the suggestiveness of the above three forms of effect in combination :—

The effects of the pitch-change and the reiterated notes of the triplet would tend to suggest the chariot wheels (in so far as the mind would receive impressions of form in the upright and horizontal dimensions), whilst the rapid rhythmic repetition of the figure thus formed would tend to suggest their revolution.

But music can suggest motion very vividly without striking effects of rhythmic impact. As in the general world form (or that element of it which involves change of position in space) can be described by motion, so music as it impresses change of position in space can impress a feeling of motion following the form of that change. Perhaps it may be said that this feeling of motion and the visual sense of form mingle or alternate more or less throughout all our experiences of change of pitch in music, the muscular feeling being at the root of both impressions. It is not easy—perhaps it is impossible—to conceive motion without arousing more or less vaguely some action of the visual sense. In music it is possibly where the muscular feeling is relatively strong that the sense of motion supervenes. In the following figure, which comes in both the vocal part and accompaniment of "Waft her, angels," the muscular feeling is invoked in sufficient strength to suggest not only motion but a fine kind of action—

But in the second bar of the Overture to "Der Freischütz" the muscular feeling aroused is very palpable; it not only

gives rise to the sense of motion, but the motion seems to overcome a certain resistance.

The fact that in listening to music we are not visited with impressions of colour or any effect of light having the definiteness and vividness of those ideas of form and motion which arise in the same circumstances, tends to corroborate the assumption that muscular feeling is the bond between form and motion in the general world and in music.* Light and colour are passive sensations; they can be realised in fulness without muscular action. There is thus no factor in common between the sensations of colour and sound; and thus the muscular feeling which conducts the mind of the listener to music to positive impressions of form and motion does not lead it to similar impressions of colour.

A feeling of spacial breadth and depth is sometimes imbued by change of harmony, as at the word "lay" in the following example—

This kind of effect lends itself to the suggestion of increased largeness in space generally. Probably increased massiveness of feeling produced by the harmonic change suggests the massive impression produced by a vast space.

* It is probably because the muscular actions involved are all internal, do not embrace movements connected with the ear itself, and are registered in that abstract world of sound from which we do not in the main get our impressions of outward things, that the ideas of form which they suggest are partial and impalpable.

These likenesses of the general world, though partial and transfigured in relation to that world, are not only perfect and harmonising features of music, but aid largely to articulate its expression. In vocal music and programme music they are rendered additionally vivid by a definite action of the imagination. Observe, for instance, in the following extract from Mendelssohn's "Hear my Prayer," what a limitless new extent of flight is suggested where the soprano part (continuing the ascending movement expressed in the first bar) simply rises through a major third in the second—

THE TENDENCY OF TUNES TO WEAR OUT.

Another peculiarity of music, which perhaps may be to some extent explained by considering the position of hearing among the senses, is the tendency of tunes to wear out. A musical composition, if repeated at comparatively short intervals, soon begins to lose its freshness. Highly original and, when first heard, most striking effects tend, after persistent repetition, to become ultimately stale and vapid. This came upon John Stuart Mill as a disappointing fact, and perhaps few music-lovers have escaped feeling somewhat saddened by it. Effects that thrilled, kindled, enchanted, seem after a certain time trite and flat. It is true that different pieces manifest this tendency in different degrees. Some melodies seem to have escaped the seeds of decay. Frequently it is not the so-called classical strain that wears best; nor does a melody necessarily possess the quality of fadelessness in proportion to its originality. Some distinctly original, sharp cut melodies soon become stale. As a rule the melody which takes a deep root in our admiration is largely pervasive; as well as charming, it penetrates to the depths of feeling; it has in some mysterious way a particularly deep and broad hold upon our susceptibilities. The general fact remains that music grows old. On the other hand, a beautiful visual effect, whether in nature or art, is permanently fresh, permanently attractive; its freshness only declines with the daily ebb of our energies, with their renewal it is daily restored.

MUSIC LOSES ITS FRESHNESS SOONER THAN VISUAL EFFECT,
BECAUSE THE FEELINGS OF PHYSICAL LIFE ENTER FAR
LESS INTO ITS INFLUENCE.

This decadent principle which lurks in musical beauty seems connected with the single nature of the auditory impression, whilst the ever renewing freshness of visual effect seems connected with its composite constitution. For, as we have seen, a large part of the influence of this latter effect consists of feelings relating to physical life—such, for instance, as arise out of the sensations of light, touch, temperature, and muscular action. I have already referred to the fact that a large range of feeling may be associated with visual effect. In looking at a picture, beyond experiencing the sensations connected directly with sight, we may enjoy ideally the warmth of the sun, the freshness of the atmosphere—of wind or of wave, the sensations of exercise and movement, of rest and repose; and in many ways the feeling of zest in existence. It is the property of feelings which we experience continually or regularly to never pall, though the pleasure attending them may vary from simple absence of unpleasantness to a very luxurious feeling. For the reason that plain food never palls upon the taste—its perfect adaptation to our physical organisation—so, under ordinary circumstances, we never tire of light, of the feeling of the air as it blows upon the skin or as we breathe it, or of the various muscular feelings involved in the actions of daily life. But effects of light and form themselves tend to be felt as insipid or monotonous if all influences are abstracted which appeal to our fundamental physical feelings. Displays of colour unassociated with the physical feelings are rare. The feebly pleasing influence of such displays is evidenced by fireworks. It is not that such effects lack beauty, but compared with effects of colour rich in associations of physical life they lack it to emptiness. In the domain of form not only the main effects of the various styles of architecture, but the details of their ornamentation arose out of principles of construction. These effects must consequently, to some extent, appeal to those physical feelings which are associated with utility. The fact then that those visual influences into which the feelings of organic life enter in a certain fulness and variety do not pall, whilst music, which does not present to us the outer world, soon loses its pristine freshness, seems to suggest that it is to the leaven of organic feeling (which is part of the feeling of life itself) that the former influences owe their vitality, whilst the absence from the musical emotion of definite organic feelings is the cause of its ephemerality. This explanation may apply to the fact recently alluded to—namely, that the more permanently pleasing melody is, as a

rule, largely pervasive—that it penetrates to the depths of feeling. If there is any truth in Darwin's hypothesis of "inherited association," the permanently pleasing melody depends upon inherited association in a special degree; thus organic feeling enters into its influence—it smacks of physical life—and hence its holding power upon us.

As music differs from painting in not being imitative—in unfolding its own forms—it has been compared to the arts of architecture and design. In the above respects music certainly resembles these arts. There is, however, this difference: the idea of utility enters largely into architecture and design, and as this idea alone tends to lend a certain dignity to that with which it is associated, it may impart an element of strength to the æsthetic effect of the above arts which, nevertheless, are still in this position: the to us infinite splendour and variety of nature dwarfs and dims all human devised forms of visual impression. Hence, notwithstanding the great impressiveness which architecture and design may have, we cannot help regarding the scope of visual effect in these directions as comparatively limited. Music, on the other hand, does not suffer from nature having already developed to the limits of our conception the species of effect to which it belongs. Though then there is a certain analogy between music and the above arts, their respective effects cannot be compared.

THE LIMITATION INVOLVED IN MUSIC BEING THE WORLD OF
A SINGLE SENSE, IS A SOURCE OF ITS POWER.

The consideration here arises that the very limitation involved in music being the world of a single sense is a source of its power. Music has been always considered peculiarly fit to attend such ideas as eternity, immortality; allusions to that which no eye has seen—to another world; that is to say, the religious and poetic order of ideas. Now its fitness in this connection has much to do with its freedom from other sense associations. It attends the idea of the infinite with peculiar effect, because it is free from many features of the finite; it suggests the spiritual the more appropriately in that it does not present the tangible; the unseen because it does not present the visible. Notwithstanding it is, speaking strictly, an objective influence, we do not altogether realise it as one, particularly in the case of instrumental music, the least important associations of which are the instruments from which that music proceeds. In part I. of this paper I referred to the fact that the stream of sound, though reflected and absorbed by objects, gives us no impressions of them. The sound thus remains an abstract influence. Hence we feel music as something external yet

immaterial. There is thus some resemblance between our mental attitude to music and that we bear toward the religious and poetic conceptions to which I have just referred. These we regard as referring to something external yet immaterial. As I have said, these advantages, which music has as a medium of expression, spring out of the very limitation involved in its being the world of a single sense.

The sense of hearing being perhaps, of all the senses, that which is least associated with the leading sense, the region of effect into which it leads us has been comparatively little explored. Thus it may be said that music is relatively a new experience; that in his essays in it man is pushing into a new world of effect, and that in listening to it we enter upon a new form of being. This is perhaps why its deeper imaginative effects tend to produce in us a vivid feeling of the novel and strange—to influence us somewhat as if we gazed on an unexplored ocean.

When music is produced by the human voice it ceases to be naked in associations, being then enrobed in the manifold associations of humanity. Thus, philosophy alone points to the possession by music of the human voice as a fact of capital importance. It is this vast change from abstract sound to sound rich in human associations—from tones strange to tones familiar—which we feel as so striking and grateful when human voices break in upon instrumental music. In vocal music the mystic features of musical sound have a human aspect. Thus it is that high musical emanation in vocal form has something of the character of inspired utterance. Like sacred prophecy it has in it the note of human sympathy, with a boding of the infinite. Thus it would seem to have been a true æsthetic instinct which impelled Carlyle to speak thus of music: "Nothing among the utterances allowed to man is felt to be so divine. It brings us nearer to the infinite, we look for moments across the cloudy elements into the eternal sea of light, when song leads and inspires us. Serious nations, all nations that can listen to the mandate of nature, have prized song and music as the highest, as a vehicle for worship, for prophecy, and for whatsoever in them was divine."

In the light of the consideration that instrumental music is so largely isolated from the world of the other senses, it is not surprising that resources of expression depending upon associations attaching to certain instruments and styles should be utilised by composers. I refer to the connection of instruments of primitive character with pastoral scenes; of that of the harp with spiritual conceptions and a certain class of poetic ideas; of that of the organ with religious expression, and of that of brass instruments with the stirring emotions associated with war. All these accidental yet fixed

associations open up for the musician scope of effect of great value to him. They enable him, while he works his special spell within, to revive certain familiar ideas and feelings, and thus escape occasionally from *the world of a single sense*. He has, however, and has always had, the means of escaping from this world at will by arbitrarily associating his strains with life and outer nature as in song.

THE PRINCIPLE OF ARBITRARY ASSOCIATION.

INWARD FEELING OF A FERVENT NATURE TENDS TO BE STIMULATED INORDINATELY BY SLIGHT HARMONISING INFLUENCES APPEALING TO OUR MORE SUPERFICIAL SENSIBILITIES.

Thus far I have been occupied in attempting to explain the expression and beauty which are inherent in music. I shall now try to show the philosophical basis of that expression and beauty which music acquires in virtue of its alliance with words.

In the case of this alliance the words are one thing, the music is another; there is no essential connection between them. The music might go with other words or stand alone; the words could go with other music. The two things are associated arbitrarily. At the same time they mutually strengthen and enhance one another. It has probably struck many people that the vividness with which we realise an inward flow of pleasurable and absorbing feeling, whatever may be its source, is apt to be heightened inordinately by the slightest accession of pleasantness in outward sensation. This kind of action is particularly marked when the inward feeling is of a raised temper—a fervent character. Love, for instance, may be greatly intensified by the simplest accession of adventitious charm in its object—the smallest decorative trifle. The poet's finer phrenzy may be raised in a like degree by the simplest natural beauty—by the emergence of a star, a gleam of sunshine, a flower, or even the humble grass of the roadside. What I wish to bring out clearly is that an inward feeling—however deep and settled—may be increased inordinately by influences more or less superficial—appealing mainly to our outer sensibility. But in the field of art this principle is of great importance; here its action being deliberately and elaborately prepared is very striking. It may be observed in that tendency which the poet and graphic writer betray, to link widely separate phenomena—to strike simultaneously the deep and inner, and the outer and more superficial notes of feeling, and thus influence us in a peculiarly extended and massive manner. Shakespeare almost invariably accompanies the development of a serious climax by allusion to certain incidental facts of nature

possessing accordant tone. The sense of terror at the yet undiscovered murder of Duncan is deepened by allusions to the "unruly night," and "lamentings heard in the air." In "Julius Cæsar" the sense of the imminent tragedy is made more vivid by the "unaccustomed terror of the night." All poetic writers betray this tendency to light up some striking extraneous natural fact, not when outward nature is engaging attention, but when the reader is held by some special inward feeling. Tennyson, in depicting a sombre parting of lovers, concludes with this dash of phenomenal accompaniment, "and above them roared the pines." The allusions to the "moonlight" and "silvery mist" in the last page of "Great Expectations," and the grand and protracted reference to "the golden water on the wall," in the touching description of the death of Paul in "Dombey and Son," are also instances of this beautiful feeling.* Now the intensity which the effect of extraneous phenomena adds to the emotional impress in these examples, and the intensity which music gives to literary expression and even scenic effect, are produced on the same principle—the principle of blending with deep inward feelings certain harmonising, yet independent, outward sensations. This "unruly night," these "roaring pines," this "moonlight" and "silvery mist" and "golden water" are the writers' *aiding phenomena*; they fulfil a function which is the same in principle as that which music fulfils when allied with language. There is, it is true, the following difference between the two cases, but it does not affect the unity of principle which underlies them. In vocal music the sensuous influence (the music) points to the mental or emotional subject and to nothing else. That is to say, not being drawn bodily from nature it is, as I have shown, free from all associations but those connected with the attending words; thus, it bears undividedly upon those words. On the other hand, in literature, as in the instances given, the aiding phenomena or sensuous influence being drawn from nature in its regular and spontaneous manifestation, has other and often dominating associations. Whilst then in song the aiding phenomena (that is, the music) is something newly created, in literature it is drawn from the natural world. This is why in vocal music the two influences, though really arbitrarily associated, are felt to coalesce so completely.

The fact that there need be no essential connection between the two orders of influence employed under this principle—that they have only to be placed side by side—both explains and justifies the practice in composition of employing the same phrase in conjunction with different mental or emotional circumstances. However well a certain musical effect may suit a particular idea it can often be effectively allied to

* See "note" to this paper.

another. Music abounds in structural effects which, though they arose probably in the first instance out of originating power, have become common available material. Climacteric effects, the various melodic and harmonic cadences, idiomatic melodic turns and harmonic successions are examples. Nor are these merely perfunctory effects; on the other hand, many of them are so powerful in expression that a large part of the composer's task is to lead up to them in a new way. That it is in the nature of a single musical effect to be versatile in poetic expression is shown by the fact that in vocal music we are continually meeting the same turn of effect associated with a different idea or sentiment.

Whilst emphasising the fact that no special connection is necessary between the subject and the aiding phenomena, I do not of course intend to convey that certain principles of selection have not to be observed. Though there may be no likeness between the two influences brought side by side, there may be still a likeness of relations. To give an instance, let the reader observe the change of harmony at the word "smiling" in the following passage in Gounod's "Abraham's Request":—

The musical score consists of two systems. Each system has a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (grand staff). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The first system's lyrics are "death hath chang'd . . the yet fair". The second system's lyrics are "smil - ing of her face! . .". The piano accompaniment in both systems is a continuous sixteenth-note figure. Dynamics include *dim.* (diminuendo) at the start of the second system and *p* (piano) in the piano part of the second system.

In the action of smiling facial movements of the most delicate nature occur, yet slight as they are the change made by them in the effect of a smile is most striking; it is the change from shade to sunlight. These relations are reflected in the music of the above extract. At the word "smiling" the pitch change is the slightest that can be made—namely, a semitone, whilst the harmonic change is peculiarly smooth; yet the effect is a striking and beautiful contrast. The appropriateness in the selection of effects of detail, in this example, may be regarded as an enhancement of the action of the principle of arbitrary association, to which principle alone the broad and general expression in vocal music is due.

A noticeable circumstance connected with recent music is the leaning of composers towards definite expression. Wagner, I believe, thought that in abstract music Beethoven had said the last word, and that the larger forms of the art would in the future be allied with language and scene. At the same time there exists a feeling that it is only in a vague sense that music can be said to express anything. Notwithstanding the innumerable striking instances of vivid and faithful expression which music exhibits, the fact that the same abstract composition may admit of different poetical interpretations tends to puzzle the mind in its attempt to unravel the principles of musical expression. The present statement then of the principle of arbitrary association may tend to place music in a clearer light in this connection by showing that as, what I term, *aiding phenomena*, it occupies a position analogous to that which in literature is occupied by those transcendent and august effects of the natural world which are infinite in their powers of poetic suggestion.

SUMMARY.

The philosophy of the higher beauty of music as unfolded in this enquiry may be thus summed up:—

The natural effect which adumbrates music is language. Language and vocal music (which is music's fountain-stream) involve the same physiological machinery in their production, and work upon us through the same sense. Thus musical phrases have frequently an emotional complexion in virtue of their likeness to certain inflections and cadences in speech. Yet this accounts neither for the pure beauty of music nor fully for its expressiveness.

Musical charm is fundamentally primal charm—one of the many happy coincidences which arise between the infinitely various influences without us, and that liberal margin for versatility and free play which exists as a rule in the constitution of all our faculties. Our sense of hearing is so subtly constituted that we can distinguish not only different

degrees of pitch, but the most delicate differences of *timbre*; thus we can recognise the lowest whispers and even breathings of different individuals. Yet in these powers, conformed originally for our protection or in some way for our material benefit, are couched those faculties which are necessary for the perception of melody and harmony.

Absolute charm in music may then be conceived as being in line with natural beauty.

But the inordinately expressive power of music—that power by which it stirs the depth of feeling within us as no other abstract influence does—seems to demand further explanation. Upon this power the hypothesis of Darwin relating to music when duly considered tends to throw light; the special part played by the stimulus of sound throughout the long course of organic life, in connection with the deeply laid principle of association, may be at the root of music's penetrative power. The objection that primeval feelings relating to love alone would be unlikely to leave within man that sensibility which under the influence of music kindles into such manifold emotion, disappears when we take into consideration the long and ramified backward course through which the life of feeling extends, the probability that it was at certain stages portion of a raised consciousness comprising many emotions, and the transfiguration which these may undergo in their partial re-awakening—thus, terror may revive as awe, love as devotion, savage exultation as elevated triumph. I have often been struck with the facility with which music lends itself to the expression of triumph. When the composer becomes kindled the note of triumph seems to sound. The jubilant choruses of Handel and Mendelssohn, and the last movement of Beethoven's C minor Symphony are some among innumerable instances. These considerations suggest how deeply the musical stimulus may penetrate into the sources of all our feelings—though starting from the sensation of hearing and traversing its tributary streams of association, how subtly and interminably pervasive within us must be its influence.

The above hypothesis does not imply a likeness between music and past sound effects. It may be only necessary for the retrospective sensibility to be touched at certain points, and yet for this to take place the systematic stimulation involved in art may be essential. The special enlargement of emotional consciousness thus suggested may be the truth to which those praises of music point which connect sensitiveness to music with elevation of the nature, as in the case of Shakespeare's allusion beginning "The man that hath no music in himself."

This hypothesis—that music acts upon an inherited emotional sensibility—is further corroborated by the fact

that it tends to explain that specialty which music has of arousing strong and deep feeling *directly*, without presenting to us any objects or circumstances, such as constitute the natural and ordinary incitations of feeling, as in the case of the other arts. Musicians, with their instruments, assemble, and without word, scene, or pantomimic action; play; and strong, deep feeling wells up in the breasts of the listeners. It is probably the possession of this remarkable property of penetrating directly the innermost recesses of the emotional side of our organisation which caused music's influence in primitive times to be regarded as something mysterious and supernatural.

The following lines from Byron's poem, "The harp the monarch minstrel swept," seem to evince a sense of the inward transforming and creative influence of music which I have attempted to explain. The italics are mine.

"It softened men of iron mould,
It gave them virtues *not their own*."

To pass to causes of some features of musical influence which lie closer to hand.

Certain considerations from the point of view of the position of hearing among the senses tend to explain many peculiarities of musical effect. The sense of sound may be regarded as a sense by itself. It perhaps takes the least part in that mingled action in which various senses are drawn to co-operate with vision. This latter sense being in continual exercise, the consciousness due to it is also continuous. As well as giving us passive impressions of objects, it involves an active (a muscular) form of sensitiveness (which aids us materially in our perception of form), and being that central, leading sense with which experiences of the other senses are associated (as, for instance, muscular movement, resistance, touch, odour, and temperature), it is man's main feeler in his exploration of the outer world. Thus it is that the impressions of this sense teem with mental and moral as well as physical associations. Musical sound, on the other hand, is a single sensation, and music, notwithstanding the transfigured ideas of space and movement which it suggests (in virtue, as I submit, of the associations of vocal muscular action with pitch effect and rhythm), is the world of a single sense.

The absence from the musical sensation generally, of suggested experiences of the other senses; from musical sounds, of a fixed, familiar individuality realised spontaneously; and from the ear, of a sensitiveness due to a muscular action of its own, combine to render music's

power of contrast greatly inferior to that possessed by visual effect, as shown particularly in the inability of music to unfold that absolute yet quiet contrast which reigns in the visual world.

The ideas of space and movement which music suggests, though vague and imperfect in comparison with these ideas as impressed by visual effect, are integral and harmonising features in the musical sensation, and aid greatly in the articulation of musical expression.

As the ever renewing freshness of visual effect is connected with the composite constitution of its impressure, the tendency of tunes to please only for a time (as in the case of effects of form and colour when divested entirely of natural associations) is connected with the single nature of the auditory impression—that is to say, with the comparative absence from this impression of a variety of organic feelings.

Allied with language and scene, another principle of expression enters into musical effect—namely, *arbitrary association*, the influence of which rests upon the fact that a current of inward, absorbing feeling is strengthened inordinately by the accession of certain harmonising outward sensations. This principle operates in literature as well as in music. In the former it is visible where, in order to broaden, deepen, and vivify inward feeling, natural allusions are introduced—allusions unconnected inherently with that feeling, yet still calculated by their broad, sensuous influence to amplify it. But in music the action of this principle is peculiarly clear. Whilst in literary effect the sensuous influence or aiding phenomena is drawn from the general world and thus possesses other associations, in music (music being an abstract effect) it bears undividedly upon the attending language. This, combined with the physical and physiological connection of music and language, is why in the case of vocal music subject and aiding phenomena seem to coalesce so completely.

Thus, from the single nature of the musical sensation proceed the following important qualities, both negative and positive, which characterise musical art:—

On the one hand, its inferiority to art based on vision for defining contrast; and its soon fading freshness.

On the other hand, its seeming immateriality; its power of aiding the expression of religious feeling and idea (due to absence of suggestions of material life); the impressiveness which its comparative strangeness gives to it; its perfect coalescence (in vocal music) with the influence to which it is allied; and the unique character of its beauty.

To take a broad glance in conclusion.

From the point of view attained in this enquiry absolute beauty in music is a coincidence; whilst its deeper expression

depends upon its influencing, through the sense of hearing, the terminals of liens of association reaching backward to far past emotions.

Genius may be regarded as the instinct for discovering two things: first, the outward factor of that *coincidence* from which results absolute charm; secondly, the magic note which touches the terminals of past feeling. It is through the unsearchable action of these two principles—namely, coincidence and inherited association, that a strain not differing from the dullest in the general character of its constitution, or superior on any visible structural grounds, may have the surpassing quality of inspiration.

This attempt to account for the influence of music only applies, as intimated by the title of this paper, to the higher beauty of the art. In every field of effect, whether natural or devised by man, there is a general continuity passing from that which gives a merely superficial pleasure, to that which raises high the wave of art-feeling. Thus, under the appellation of music, there is an extensive range of effect which demands no æsthetical explanation at all.

DISCUSSION.

THE CHAIRMAN.—Ladies and gentlemen, I am sure all who have listened must have learned a great deal from Mr. Goddard's admirable paper. We must give him the credit of being able to state everything he thinks most plainly. I was particularly struck by that in reading the first part of this valuable contribution to the Philosophy of Music in our last volume of Proceedings; he is so thoroughly clear. I hope he will be persuaded to go on with it because there is still a great deal to be thrashed out in connection with this subject. All that he stated about the influence of associations in causing the excitement of our emotions by music in its various forms is very true; but I think there is a great deal more to be said about it. I always feel in cases of this sort that it is rather dangerous to present readers with musical examples, from this very fact of our unconscious associations. Mr. Goddard, for instance, quoted from Gounod. A very excellent musician said to me the other day, "All French music is rot." That man, if you quoted Brahms or Wagner to him, would probably agree with you; but he would say, if you quoted Gounod's

presentation of a smile, "Hang it all, that's nothing to do with it." The association, as Mr. Goddard rightly pointed out, which causes us to receive different impressions from music is most remarkable, because it does not always depend on the actual value of the music itself. Sometimes the most trumpery melodies which impressed us in our childhood give us the greatest delight to the end of our days. We know them to be silly, but we cannot help it. The association of musical emotions must necessarily have a very deep effect on musical criticism. I suppose the ideal musical critic ought never to have had any associations at all, so that he could give his judgments on music according to the admirable principles just now laid down. It is dangerous to quote cases, because the cases from mere association may affect people so differently. I was very pleased to hear Mr. Goddard's excellent remarks about "colour." That term in music has come down to such a point that it does not mean much more than contrast. Sometimes it is even used of style. One often hears people speak of the colouring of a movement of Palestrina and of a movement of Wagner, and so on. But I am sure you will all agree with me that this subject is one that we can much better discuss a month hence, after we have read over the paper. It always seems to me that a great difficulty in laying down principles is to know how far the education of each recipient of musical sounds may not influence his actual power of appreciation. Of course, as Mr. Goddard pointed out, the eye needs enormous education. His description of the process of its learning angles and circles and other shapes from muscular movement is remarkable; but is it not necessary also for the ear that it should go through a similar education? It always seems to me that in laying down principles in the philosophy of music—even the scientific part, to say nothing of the æsthetics—a writer must not assume that all who read him have been equally educated in the art or science. With regard to outward effects that are sometimes brought to bear upon it, I was discussing with Sir George Grove as to what would be the effect of having pieces of music performed in rooms painted with different colours. It would be very strange to hear the "Hallelujah" Chorus performed in a room painted entirely black. Once I was asked what colour I thought they should paint the interior of the Albert Hall. They tried it with white first and that would not do; then they tried dark brown—too dark, I think; and it may have had a very bad effect on the appreciation of the music performed. I would not go so far as the lady who asked her cook what colour each dish would be in order that she might have them all in a succession, pleasing to the eye as well as the taste. The Lecturer spoke very learnedly about the palling of music on the ear. I think he must have observed

the fact that people who live in the most magnificent scenery lose some of their appreciation from seeing it constantly. There is one thing I should like to suggest, and that is that I think a good deal of mischief has come to the philosophic study of music from people getting the idea that sound (and therefore music) is objective, and that music has its own physical and mental effect in itself. The beauty is inside us; it is not music until the sounds have been analysed and taken into the brain, assorted and analysed, and a series of judgments formed. I think if we could only get people to consider that the interpretation of music, and the pleasure of music, is all inside the ear, we would not find in annotated programmes such vapid nonsense about what the music is intended to describe. Every educated hearer of music gives it his own special interpretation. Of course if a man likes to say: "When I heard that I thought I saw a lover standing over an open grave with a dagger in his hand" —that is his business; and I often think he is a great fool for thinking so. It is important that people should realise that music is purely subjective, and has no existence outside each individual brain. It is the education of the mind, therefore, that makes the difference between a good or bad hearer, and also dictates the interpretation of music. Samuel Sebastian Wesley in one of his anthems introduces a most beautiful combination in praying God for mercy, which has often been pointed out as one of the most beautiful touches of genius on his part. The progression happens to be identical with that which Wagner puts into the mouth of the temptresses of Venus's mount in "Tannhäuser," "Come to the bowers." I have often heard those who are ignorant of the opera say that Wesley has here hit on a purely religious musical expression; while those who know the opera describe the same passage as being remarkable for its expression of low sensuality. So much for the notion that music can tell its own story.

A vote of thanks to Mr. Goddard was passed unanimously.

MR. GODDARD.—I just rise to thank Sir John Stainer for his very appreciative remarks, which do not strike me as demanding a discussion. I agree with most of them, and, in fact, regard them as passing comments suggested by my paper rather than as criticism requiring elaborate reply. I have no doubt that when those who wish to do so read the paper they will understand it better than is possible by simply listening to it. It is a kind of composition that really cannot be thoroughly digested at first hearing, especially by those who are not accustomed to philosophical, metaphysical, or scientific writings. I should be most pleased if some arrangement could be made giving time for comments or remarks made upon papers read here, to be considered and deliberately

replied to. Then there would be, I think, some value both in the discussion and the reply. I have noticed, in some of these discussions, that the speakers do not fasten on the main argument of the paper, but refer to some incidental point; and that often there is a long discussion on something quite extraneous to the paper. But if those who wish to discuss a paper had an opportunity of thoroughly digesting it, and then made remarks on it; and if the writer had also opportunity of digesting the criticisms, then probably our knowledge of the subject would be much extended. I again thank Sir John Stainer for his very favourable remarks, and am gratified at finding that the matter has evoked so much sympathy.

Mr. DAVEY.—It is of course impossible to discuss at length so very elaborate and profound and richly illustrated a paper as this, and as you have said, Sir, so lucid in expression. But I should like to give one illustration, despite what you have said about not giving examples. I do not see how one can make one's meaning clear without a few. When I heard the illustration from Gounod on the word "smiling," it suggested to me another which is, I think, a better one, and that is in Haydn's canzonet, "She never told her love." You will find in the way the words "smiling at grief" are set one of the most wonderful things in music. It is simply a chord on the sixth doubled by the two hands, but in its context I think it is marvellous. I should further like to say, Mr. Chairman, that what Europeans call music, not what other nations call it, consists of two parts—the formal side and the expressive. The expressive side we borrow from association, and from other arts sometimes; it is something external. But the formal side of music is music—the artistic arrangement of sounds—pure and alone. It is the one point in which music is especially a modern art, unknown to the ancient world, unknown to the uncivilised world. The modern composer takes a phrase, an abstract succession of notes, and treats them as musical material; but he does that all by two means, by externals and internals, and I think it is a most important point in the apprehension of music and in the apprehension of the history of music if we remember that it is the externals that appeal to men most, and that they appeal to the vast majority of musicians also. I have had some strange experiences in that way, and there have been others hundreds of years ago. It is in the memory of you all, I should imagine, that there were people who would not see any beauty in the works of Wagner, but admitted that his orchestration was wonderful. That is a case in point: the externals were appreciated, the internals were not. I have met musicians who had just heard Wagner for the first time; and what they said was: "The orchestral effects that man has produced are wonderful; I never heard anything like it." They did not

think of the harmony or the melody: that would grow on them in due time. Exactly the same was said eighty or ninety years ago, by John Stafford Smith, of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. He said they certainly possessed greater knowledge of instrumental effects than was known before, but they did not cultivate melody. They appealed to him, as they did to others and to the public also, by their externals. He could not appreciate the melody and the construction till he got used to the style. I think that is the way that all composers appeal to the public and to the vast majority of musicians; and when I read ancient criticisms and when I see written how composers were regarded in their lifetime, I find that what struck the public was the external music—what we can briefly call the orchestration or the colouring. You see this even in the case of Palestrina, who had a singular trick of using one choir as a double choir. Bach's works were similarly regarded in his lifetime as brilliant show pieces; we know it was the same with Handel; it was the same with Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, as I have shown you from Stafford Smith and others whom I have read, and it was the same, as we all remember, with Wagner. What at first appeals to a very small proportion of intelligent musicians only is the internal—the melody and harmony; but it is in that melody and harmony that the eternal lasting beauty lies, and I think it is what we should particularly think of when we are criticising an individual work; we should try to, at least. We hear now of the Russian school—"what wonderful effects they produce!" We heard it when Rachmaninoff's orchestral compositions were introduced to us about six months ago. It is apparently the internals which are most hard to judge of, and this is why new composers are not fully appreciated. I should say that one point in which our English composers fail is the use of externals; and the reason why they do not come to the front is that they neglect externals and think only of internals in the beauty of music.

MR. SOUTHGATE: Might I for one moment suggest to Mr. Goddard that when he puts his most excellent paper into order for printing he should make clear the exact meaning he attaches to contrast and colour? I think there is a little indefiniteness about it, because in music we use the term "colour" not only for harmony, but also for orchestration, and I am sure he would not say there is no colour in music as compared with the different colours we see with our eyes. If, for instance, a passage is played by the strings and then by the brass, there is a remarkable contrast of colour tone. He used for his illustration a meadow and a lake. Of course, as you pointed out, Sir, it is not quite safe to make these comparisons; but there is a very decided illustration of what

can be done in music if one plays a similar passage on the strings and then the same on the brass—there is a very strong contrast. And even with regard to colour itself, may I remind you of a remark made by a blind man to whom some one attempted to describe the colour scarlet? "I think it must be like the tone of a trumpet"—a very natural remark to make. I would only suggest that Mr. Goddard make it quite clear what he meant in speaking of colour. I think he must have used it with reference to our chromatic harmonies, and I need hardly remind you that the descriptive adjective comes from the ancient Greek *χρῶμα*, colour.

THE CHAIRMAN.—I think I sympathise with Mr. Goddard entirely in his limitation of the rather wild use of the term colour in music. I thought his comparison of the functions of the eye and the ear in that respect most admirable. I did not understand him to mean there was nothing analogous to the sense of colour in sound, but I think he rather limited it to the wild use of the term at the present time. Of course it is a difficult thing to criticise a learned paper like that at a moment's notice.

MR. GODDARD.—I meant that in pictures there are such obvious contrasts as are recognised by everyone. I showed there was nothing analogous to that in music. In listening to a composition you hear contrast of musical effects, but there is nothing recognisable similar to different colours. What is recognised is the æsthetic contrast. There is no other essential contrast in music, but there is in nature.

MR. GILBERT WEBB.—I think the difficulty arises from the want of a term. We are obliged to borrow this term colour. If we avoid *timbre* we have not a word for it. *Klangfarbe* is equally clumsy.

A MEMBER.—We have *Klangfarbe*, but we have not different terms for different colours, as we have for red, blue, green, &c. We have nothing describing string tone, horn tone, flute tone—no single distinctive words describing or suggesting to the mind the difference of tone colours. I believe it may be a matter of growth of language. I am not a Greek scholar, but I believe it has been noted by Greek scholars that Homer only uses six or seven colour names in the whole of the "Iliad," while a modern poet would use twenty or thirty. The names were not given to slight differences of colour in old Greek times. There were not half-a-dozen different hues in music; and we have not yet got to the stage of having one colour name for each.

MR. SOUTHGATE.—But we use adjectives which convey to our minds different sensations; we speak of the wailing oboe, the bright trumpet, the soft flute, the strident brass, and so on; but of course we do not use definite colour terms, as applied to the *klang* tone of these instruments.

The CHAIRMAN.—Language is deficient in every respect. We speak, for instance, of music being sweet, but we do not mean that it is pleasant to the mouth.

Mr. DAVEY.—But there are such terms in other languages.

A MEMBER.—We can express the distinctions with the ear, but have no terms for it with the eye.

The CHAIRMAN.—What I think the last speaker is driving at is that he thinks that we may have a series of names for different qualities of tone, like we have red, blue, pink, green, &c., for colours. I suppose it could be done with regard to sound, but we must find someone to invent the names.

Mr. GILBERT WEBB.—Do we want it all the way through? We use words for so many different things—*e.g.*, the word tone. When you have to argue with an opponent, you have to define the meaning of all the terms you are going to use.

Mr. GODDARD.—I did not mean to convey literally that there was no contrast in music, but that the contrast was not so palpable, quiet, and easily recognised as contrasts presented to the eye are. A composition for the violin only has to be extremely original for you to feel a distinctly marked contrast. It requires a great genius to produce true—*i.e.*, æsthetical contrast in music. There are many and marked varieties of effect possible with an orchestra, but these are not so much effects of musical composition as of musical presentation. They are contrasts of mass and *timbre*. I was referring to contrast produced more by the art of music in the act of composition. You rarely find in music a quiet contrast like you observe in nature—*i.e.*, clearly defined contrast without change in the mood of feeling. The greater the genius in music, the nearer he gets to that.

Mr. BELSHAM.—I should like to do more than I have done by merely holding up my hand to thank Mr. Goddard for his paper this evening, and for the previous one which I have read with great interest. The subject is one I have had in my mind and wondered about often and often, but never could arrive at anything satisfactory. Mr. Goddard has given me, and I am sure others, food for thought, for which I should like to express my thanks.

NOTE.

CONTRAST AND THE PRINCIPLE ON WHICH MUSIC AIDS EXPRESSION WHEN ATTENDING WORDS OR SCENE.

As intimated by me in the foregoing discussion, the species of contrast to which I refer in the paper is that arising out of the nature and arrangement of the musical ideas themselves. John Hullah, speaking of Haydn's quartets, remarks that perhaps the greatest test of a composer's powers is to write an effective quartet for stringed instruments; the reasons being—(1) he is limited to four parts, (2) he has little margin for producing increase or diminution in the amplitude of the effect, (3) he can obtain little variety in virtue of the different genres of sound, due to different instruments. Thus in a composition of this kind he is driven to depend on the musical faculty in its essence; on the mother wit of musical invention.

I have often thought that contrast of theme is a great test of power in a composer—the being able to produce just when it is wanted a new theme standing well out from that which, up to the point in question, has been developed. A familiar instance of this power occurs in the chorus, "For unto us a Child is born." Now the opening theme of this chorus is no doubt very effective and appropriate; in it simple, natural exultation is combined with distinct musical charm. But greater evidence of musical power is shown, in my opinion, in the effortless introduction of the second subject—that to the words, "And the government shall be upon His shoulder." The composer is not here helped by the suggestion of a new mood of feeling, for if in the music of the above phrase the note of exultation is not so marked as in that to the first exclamatory sentence, the mood is still bright. Yet how easily the two subjects are separated in the listener's mind!

With regard to my attempt to explain why the most perfect contrast of the kind, to which I have just referred, is inferior to that we realise when we survey a scene, I take this opportunity of entering a little more fully into illustration. Let us take any effective movement in an instrumental work, whether for one instrument, a few instruments, or for full orchestra. We recognise the varying themes and their varying treatment. There is clearness of impression amid variety. At the same time we have to exert a certain

amount of attention, and all the while have the feeling of being in a special world—a world in which all variety is produced by changes in a single character of sensation.

Now let us imagine ourselves regarding any natural scene or its presentment in a picture. We observe, say, hills in the distance, then forest, meadow, and river, with perhaps a boat upon it and a man in the boat. The contrasts are far more fundamental in their nature than in the case of the musical work; and all is realised not only without effort, but amid a feeling of restfulness and repose.

It here occurs to me that in this connection the art of sculpture occupies a position largely similar to that of music. Sculpture, though it approaches nature so closely, is still far inferior to nature in power of contrast, and this inferiority is due generally to the same causes as the weakness of the power of contrast in music; moreover, it involves, as in the case of music, strength in another direction. Take a subject in sculpture, comprising one or two figures. Now, with a little attention, we observe clearly not only the different members of the group, but various points in their artistic treatment; we may, in fact, realise all that cunning faithfulness to nature which, in the case of masterpieces, causes the marble to seem almost to breathe and speak. At the same time we have also here the feeling of being in a special world. Notwithstanding life is suggested, and in certain particulars most vividly, we yet feel that between this life and ourselves is the veil of the art-medium. We are in a world of marble, where if we are not, as in music, confined to the exercise of a single sense, the play of the various senses is considerably restricted. The world of colour is withdrawn; form and surface-configuration remain in isolation; yet so perfect these may be as to suggest vividly such varied qualities of touch as may exist in the original.

Thus in the world of sculpture, as in that of music, we are shorn of certain sources of impression which exist in nature. The two arts differ in the following respect: there is nothing in sculpture which stands for that direct kindling power which music possesses. But, on the other hand, music's appropriateness for expressing abstract conceptions is reflected in sculpture. Here, as in music, limitation is a source of power. The very unnaturalness of the cold, white medium gives to sculpture a certain spiritualistic import—renders it particularly fitted to articulate ideal conceptions in that it gives to their expression a certain chasteness and permanence which are inconsistent with natural conditions.

To pass to another point—the extract in which the word “smiling” occurs. Perhaps my interpretation of the changes

in the music to this word is a little fanciful. I intended to illustrate that which must be a familiar experience to the listener to music—namely, the suggestion, in the form of the music, of certain prominent associations belonging to the idea which it attends. To try another illustration: the air, "The people that walked in darkness," is in the minor mode, and this fact in itself tends to render the precise constitution of the intervals less obvious to the ear than the intervals of a melody in the major mode usually are, because the relation of the various degrees of the scale to the tonic is less simple in the minor than in the major mode. But the above intervals are rendered still more difficult to grasp by the introduction of accidentals. Now the necessity of careful admeasurement by the singer and of perception by the listener thus occasioned seems to render the music in question illustrative of the uncertain, tentative movements of people walking in darkness. The correspondence here involved I term a "likeness of relations." I, of course, do not refer to it with the idea that I am pointing out anything new. And so far from there being anything deep, there seems a certain naïveness in the impulse which moves composers to bring about a superficial resemblance between the form of their music and the ideas it attends. But it must be remembered that in many instances this impulse has led them to very happy results. Why I now allude to this resemblance is simply to notice, in passing, the fact that there is occasionally thus far a connection between music and the idea it attends.

But the principle which I term "arbitrary association" I consider infinitely more important, and perhaps my statement of it is new. In that general fulness and power of expression which is obtained by the alliance of music with language, scene, or situation, I think we may observe the action of a mode of influence and principle of expression which extends beyond musical art. With a view to demonstrate this as convincingly as possible, I will here take the liberty of going a little further into detail in the case of two examples which I have given of the action of this principle in literature.

In the third scene of the second act of "Macbeth" we look upon a court inside Macbeth's castle. It is morning. We have seen some fearful signs of what has been done within during the night; and feelings of dread and horror mingle with the influence of the expression of profound moral stirrings. But Shakespeare is not satisfied with working upon our inner and deeper sensibilities only. While the above emotions are still fresh within us—before they are, as it were, dissipated by the discovery of the murder—our attention is drawn to natural phenomena having

accordant tone. When Macduff has gone in to call the supposed sleeping king, the following dialogue occurs:—

“Lennox.—The night has been unruly: where we lay,
Our chimnies were blown down: and, as they say,
Lamentings heard i'the air; strange screams of
death;

. . . . The obscure bird
Clamour'd the live-long night: some say, the
earth

Was feverous, and did shake.

Macbeth.—'Twas a rough night.

Lennox.—My young remembrance cannot parallel
A fellow to it.”

Thus the whole gamut of sensibility is played upon from inner to outer.

In the illustration from “*Dombey and Son*” the boy Paul is dying. His sister, Florence, holds his head upon her arm. We are touched, but with the master hand that is tender as well as strong—that impresses us with what is purest and loveliest in life, as well as with what is sad and solemn. But Dickens, like Shakespeare, is not satisfied with moving us inwardly: he also works upon our outer sensibility. As the pathetic scene proceeds, amidst the general local colouring and incidental filling up, a particular allusion stands out as relating to the central motive. Not once or twice but five times Dickens refers to the sunbeams that “quivered on the opposite wall like golden water.” This is the first allusion. The following are the others:—

“Thus, the flush of the day, in its heat and light, would gradually decline, and again the golden water would be dancing on the wall.”

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“How many times the golden water danced upon the wall; how many nights the dark river rolled toward the sea in spite of him; Paul never counted, never sought to know.”

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“Sister and brother wound their arms around each other, and the golden light came streaming in and fell upon them locked together.”

The last allusion begins the reflection upon Paul's death:

“The golden ripple on the wall came back again, and nothing else stirred in the room.”

Now here, as in Shakespeare, there is something far deeper and more earnest than any feeling for local colour or actuality. Amid the stress of heart-sympathy some subtle combination of poetic idea and moral insight prompts Dickens to conjure

up this supreme natural splendour, which to our finite sensibility seems a link between us and the inscrutable source of all beauty.

In these illustrations, then, I think there is, in principle, a likeness of the circumstances of vocal music. In them, as in vocal music, while thought and feeling move within, our outer sensibility is appealed to; side by side with the influence which works upon us mentally, morally, or emotionally, are presented to us certain striking or beautiful effects appealing directly to our outer sensation. A generally similar instinct thus seems to move the literary and musical artist. If this is so, then in these considerations we discern the principle of expression—the larger law—that operates when music is applied to words.

J. G.