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DECEMBER 3, 1877.

GEORGE GROVE, Esq., D.C.L., IN THE CHAIR.

*THE FORMATION OF A NATIONAL MUSICAL
LIBRARY.*

By WILLIAM H. CUMMINGS, Esq.

THE title of my paper, 'The Formation of a National Musical Library,' may be open to some misconception, and I should like therefore to premise that it does not simply mean a library of *national* music, though that certainly should form a very important and indispensable section of any national library. The subject proposed for consideration is one which must assuredly deeply interest all musicians, amateur and professional, and the theme is capable of so much expansion that I could, without difficulty, engage your attention during the whole of the time allotted for our meeting; but I shall be brief, in the hope that my few remarks may induce some considerable discussion, leading, perhaps, to practical action.

Firstly, then, let me state what a *National Library of Music* ought to possess. As to printed matter, it should have every published book which treats of the art or science of music in any of its very numerous branches. It should also possess every published piece of absolute music, whether part-book or score. Some among us, probably all of us, have musical libraries: one, perhaps, especially rich in full scores, one in vocal scores, sacred or secular, one in psalmody, one in antiquarian musical works, another in scientific or theoretical treatises; and it is of course natural that each should look with more favour on his own collection, representing the special bias of his mind, or his particular line of study; but all the varied collections I have named should find a home in a national library of music. Thus far I have spoken of printed music only; but a 'National Musical Library' should also be the great repository of *precious* musical manuscripts, particularly those by composers of our own country; these are often of priceless value as pieces of national history,

and if not properly conserved, by degrees drop out of sight, and, 'out of sight out of mind,' thus eventually become lost for ever. It must also be borne in mind that although *printed* books are often rare, sometimes unique, from the nature of things in the case of *manuscripts*, they so seldom exist in duplicate that the loss of any one is generally irreparable. A few years ago old printed musical literature was to be bought for pence, where the cost would now be pounds; and manuscripts then often considered almost as valueless are now rarely to be met with—indeed, very many have disappeared altogether. I could easily cite instances in proof of this, from old sale catalogues and other memoranda. The time, then, for completing a national library of music is now—to-day. Prices can never be less than they are at present, and opportunities for the acquisition of musical treasures will yearly become less frequent. Many things conduce to this result: there is the universal cultivation of musical knowledge, historical, antiquarian, and practical; moreover, our cousins in America and our brothers in the Colonies are all awakening to a feeling that they must have musical art and musical libraries. The supply of the works of past years is but limited, and the appetite and demand for them is becoming unlimited; when a dozen would be purchasers of the same article strive and compete, the result must be to raise the price. It may be noted as a curious fact, that reprinting a scarce work seems generally to have the effect of enhancing the market value of the original, not of depreciating it, as is sometimes imagined.

I have said that precious musical manuscripts, as a rule, do not exist in duplicate, but modern art enables us to make up, in some measure, for the deficiency. A national library of music should possess photographs of desirable manuscripts which exist in other national or public libraries; by this means the student would be able to read the inspirations of Handel, Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and other giants, with a confidence that he was perusing the expression of their thoughts, penned and noted by their own hands, and in the very symbols characteristic of each of them.

Let us now consider whether it is reasonable to hope for such a library as I have described, and how and where such an one may be formed. To my mind it is clear that the British Museum is the true home for the library I have endeavoured to sketch out, and that there we ought to find an ample supply for every want.

At the British Museum most things find a home: all the *ologies* and all antiquities are there splendidly represented; general literature, too, is to be found in magnificent profusion, most admirably classified and cared for. The only *unfortunate* in the whole establishment seems to be music and musical literature; music appears to have been regarded by the trustees as a very poor relation of very little consequence, and therefore but just tolerated, with a very distinct understanding that as little

money as possible should be spent on her. This condition of things may have seemed natural and proper a few years ago, when, for instance, the authorities of the Museum denied themselves the advantages of the services of the well-known music librarian and antiquary, Thomas Oliphant, for the sake of a few pounds per annum.

In 1841 the neglect of the music deposited in the national library of the British Museum had become so notorious that it was considerably discussed in the public journals, and the attention of the House of Commons invoked. Since then, however, a very beneficial change has gradually supervened, and now there is an evident desire to place music on a better footing. The past neglect of music at the British Museum induced the late professor of music at Gresham College, Edward Taylor, to attempt the formation of a musical library in connection with the civic institution which he so ably and so faithfully served. He solicited donations of books from friends and the public generally, and met with encouragement from various quarters, Her Majesty the Queen contributing several volumes. The professor's efforts and intentions must, however, be considered to have failed; in 1872 a catalogue was printed of the music in the library of Gresham College, and apparently the whole collection did not exceed 430 volumes.

I shall not refer to the Gresham Library further than to say that, from personal inquiry, I find it is not available for consultation by any but the professors attached to the institution, and therefore is of small practical use. Perhaps it would be a wise and generous act if the trustees would present it to the Free Guildhall Library, whereat present, I believe, they have no musical literature, but where rich and poor have common and free access every day to the vast stores of information treasured up for their enlightenment.

To return to the British Museum: I urge its claims as the true and proper home of a national musical library, firstly because it already possesses a magnificent nucleus for one which shall be really worthy of our country. Properly nursed and developed, it would soon become unrivalled. No exertion in other quarters (South Kensington or elsewhere) could possibly produce such a library as the British Museum already possesses. I believe at South Kensington they have a small musical library, ancient and modern, but there the student has to pay a fee before he can obtain access to the books; at the British Museum all is free.

The British Museum has another eminent and singular advantage. By law it receives a copy of every publication issued in this country, India, and the colonies. This in itself is a matter of the utmost consequence. It is true, the Museum is obliged to accept everything, whether valuable or worthless. The same delivery may enrich it with the new oratorio 'Joseph,' and burthen it with the 64th edition of 'Tommy make room for your uncle.' But this is not altogether an evil, for the worthless song or ballad of to-day becomes to-morrow a piece of history, and in a hundred

years time may prove a theme for the pen of a future Macaulay or Froude.

Another most important reason occurs to me for preferring the British Museum for a musical library; it is this—there the student has at hand every help which he may need to thoroughly prosecute his inquiries, for it is quite possible that he may, although only a musician, want to refer to some work of history, geography, travel, biography, or even medicine.

As to the musical collection proper which is already in the British Museum, I can only give a few rough guesses. Probably I shall not exceed the truth if I say that the catalogue of printed musical literature includes nearly 100,000 works.

Of the manuscripts, Mr. Oliphant prepared and printed a catalogue in 1842, and the collection then consisted of 241 volumes, many, of course, containing a considerable number of distinct musical compositions. Now, I think I may say the collection will amount to 1,000 volumes, or more.

The MSS. are of untold worth, commencing with graduals, service-books, and treatises of the 13th century, and include many autograph compositions of native composers, as also others by Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert; the most modern addition to the collection being the series of autograph scores of Balfe's operas, presented by the composer's widow.

Amongst the manuscript treasures are two books, one a thick volume written on vellum by John Wylde, Precentor of Waltham Abbey about the year 1400; a volume full of learned musical matter, and remarkable as having become the property of the celebrated Tallis, who has written his name in the book in two places; from Tallis it passed to Thomas Morley, and was largely drawn upon by him for his celebrated 'Introduction to Practical Music,' in 1597. The other book to which I refer is an oblong volume, a considerable portion of which is written on staves of twelve lines; it was compiled by Thomas Mulliner, probably for the use of King Henry VIII., and contains many youthful compositions of Tallis and his fellow-choristers. Amongst the pieces is the well-known four-part song, 'In going to my naked bed,' by Edwardes. I am sorry time will not permit me to speak more fully of some other manuscript treasures, such as Beethoven's sketch-book.

Now, with all the advantages I have named, can it be possible that anything is really wanted in the British Museum? I answer, yes. First of all we want an index catalogue. We all know that without a catalogue and index a library is almost useless, excepting probably as an ornamental illustration of the art of bookbinding. Only a few weeks since a society was formed, called the 'Index Society,' for the purpose of printing indexes for standard books in general literature.

At the British Museum the catalogue is very incomplete; recent purchases of music are not entered in a separate class catalogue, but have to be sought for amongst State papers and

other incongruous matter. Psalters, hymnals, and service-books are sometimes only discoverable in the catalogue of liturgies, and printed musical *literature* has to be sought out from the general catalogue; musical *composition* being the only branch of our art which enjoys the advantage of a separate class catalogue.

It seems to me that a complete catalogue and index, embracing all the varieties of which I had previously spoken, should be immediately prepared, and that the catalogue of works published before the year 1800 should be printed and sold. I stop at the year 1800 advisedly; at the end of the century it will be time enough to consider the propriety or necessity of printing an appendix. The catalogue index of the MSS. might include all the most recent additions, because they increase but slowly, and MSS. must in all cases be historical.

Now, in order to secure these catalogues it will be necessary to devote a little more money to the musical department of the Museum; and it would be a wise thing to make it a distinct class *at once*; placing the printed music under the supervision of Mr. Evans, and MSS. under Mr. Jenner; both those gentlemen being well qualified by their knowledge and sympathies for the special branches I have named. When these catalogues and indexes are formed, it will be easy to ascertain in what respect the library is deficient; and no pains or expense should be spared to supply whatever is wanting.

Can we, as members of this Association, do anything to aid in the good work? I think we can. First of all, we can endeavour to persuade our wealthy friends who have musical libraries or books to bequeath or dispose of, to give them to the British Museum. One very excellent reason for suggesting the British Museum as a safe depository for such treasures is the very thorough precaution taken by the authorities to guard against fire. The eminent head of the Fire Brigade of London has told us that all private libraries are inevitably doomed to become the prey of the fire demon. So firmly is Captain Shaw convinced of the fact, that he has drawn up a table showing what is the average length of existence of books. Secondly, if we ourselves come across some musical treasure not already in the Museum, we can secure it and hand it over to the trustees without charging a commission. Thirdly, we can formulate and subscribe some proper memorial to the Prime Minister, asking for a special grant of money on behalf of the Musical Library at the British Museum. At present the annual vote to the Museum is £10,000 for books in *all* classes of literature, and £5,000 for binding. With such a large field for expenditure, of course but a very poor and inadequate sum can be allotted to music—so much the more inadequate in consequence of the long years of neglect. And it must be borne in mind that any extraordinary outlay for purchases would only extend over a very few years, until such time as the arrears, if I may so call them, have been wiped off.

I cannot help saying a few words respecting the remissness

of the trustees of the Museum in not availing themselves of special opportunities for acquiring celebrated musical collections within the last few years. I need only speak of instances within my own memory and observation. In 1873 the library of Thomas Oliphant was sold, and as a rule the books were disposed of for sums far below their real value. Doubtless the whole might have been secured for the Museum, and such surplus books as they would not have needed could have been re-sold. As it was, an agent for the trustees attended the sale, and so carelessly were the interests of the Museum looked after, that many books they ought to have had were bought by private individuals. I purchased several, which I subsequently transferred to the agent for the Museum. Since then, in 1875, the Sterndale Bennett collection has been sold, and dispersed into various private hands. More recently still, in the early part of this year, the Rimbault library was brought under the hammer, and a large number of books of national importance, and MSS. which we can never replace, were purchased for America. It is also currently reported that all Mendelssohn's MSS. were recently offered to the British Museum on certain easy conditions, but were declined.

As an example of what has been done in another country, I need only mention the library of the celebrated musical critic and historian, Fétis, purchased by the Belgian Government, and deposited in the National Library of Brussels in its entirety. The noble work was consolidated and made generally serviceable to the world at large, by publishing a complete catalogue of nearly 1000 pages. Some mention must be made of the splendid musical library belonging to the Sacred Harmonic Society, a collection which has been acquired by purchase and gift since the year 1837, commencing modestly with a copy of Arnold's edition of Handel. It has increased so rapidly that it now numbers 3000 volumes, all of which have been thoroughly indexed and catalogued by the librarian, Mr. Husk, whose labours in the cause of musical bibliography deserve especial mention, and I can only deplore the fact that the fine collection under his care must, from the circumstances of the case, be considered a private one.

At the commencement of my remarks I stated that national music would, of course, occupy a prominent place in a National Library; and we may reasonably hope that a thorough revision of the arrangements for the musical collection at the British Museum would awaken other eminent bodies throughout the kingdom to a sense of their responsibilities in regard to the preservation of national music. Every cathedral and college in the land ought to have been a grand storehouse of national music, but ignorance and indifference have permitted a most wicked waste of valuable material. True it is that at the Chapel Royal, St. James's, some five or six years since, there were splendid old parchment books, now, I believe, turned out of the chapel—I hope not to share the fate of kindred works in former years, and be treated as rubbish

and waste. There are still valuable fragments of part-books at Westminster Abbey; there were also such at St. Paul's Cathedral, especially organ part-books, when I was a boy, but I fear to inquire what has become of them now.

Doubtless, the same tale may be told of other cathedrals. I venture to say this because I have from time to time bought at public sales books including autograph manuscripts of Purcell, Creighton, Croft, Reading, and others, which have in former years belonged to the Chapel Royal and various cathedrals and colleges. I would suggest that the deans and chapters should publish an index catalogue of the music they possess, and that all old or rare part-books should be removed into the library for reference, supplying their place with modern printed or MS. copies for daily use. In 1861 the Dean and Chapter of Ely inaugurated a movement in the direction suggested by publishing a catalogue of ancient services and anthems preserved among the MS. scores and part-books of Ely Cathedral.

I believe I have now entered sufficiently into details to enable the members of the Association to form an opinion as to the advisability of drawing up and presenting a memorial to the Government, asking that music shall receive such encouragement and pecuniary aid as its importance demands—that the National Musical Library in the British Museum may be made complete in every sense. In asking this we shall be appealing on behalf of the whole of our musical community, whether amateur or professional, upholders of old notation or apostles of a new; and on behalf of both sexes: for at the British Museum ladies are placed on an equal footing with gentlemen, and are treated with that unvarying courtesy and consideration which is always a marked and distinguished feature of the numerous gentlemen who form the official staff of the library.

DISCUSSION.

Major CRAWFORD said the subject was one of very great importance to everyone interested in music, whether as a professional or as an amateur, and he hoped the result would take some practical shape. As regards the British Museum it was most unquestionable that that was the proper place for a musical library to be established. In the first place it was a permanent institution, and all societies like the Sacred Harmonic, though they might earnestly hope they might be permanent, were not necessarily so; and supposing anything happened to such a society, the library would be put up to auction, and a large part of it would probably be sent to America. In the Museum again, all books were taken care of, and it was freely open to all. But, speaking as a reader, the first thing

he wanted was an index. That was the first thing they should look to, and it would enable them to see their way more clearly. At present musical literature was divided into two classes: the music proper, which had a catalogue to itself, though that actually was very imperfect, and also a very large class of musical literature which was scattered through the general catalogue; so that unless a man happened to have bibliographical experience, he could not find anything he wanted—there was no guide to a student in commencing his researches. There was, in fact no such thing as a catalogue which formed a general guide to musical literature. The oldest one on a large scale was that of Foucault, published in 1790, and there had been supplementary catalogues published at different times in France and Germany, but there was no general catalogue which would enable any man to ascertain for himself the different books he might require for any particular line of study. Another topic had been slightly touched upon, and that was the reprinting of ancient and scarce works. There were a great number of works which were exceedingly scarce, and not to be found in any museum, some of which undoubtedly would be worth reprinting. Some of them might be small treatises of the 16th or 17th century, but they contained a great deal of interesting illustrations of musical history, and their republication would be very important. There was a precedent of this kind of thing in the reprints produced by Mr. Arber not long ago, of scarce works of the Elizabethan time, which were carefully produced and indexed with bibliographical and biographical indexes, and sold at a price from 1s. to 2s. 6d. Something of the kind was done in Paris some years ago, for when he was there he met with several old treatises, the originals of which were never to be seen, edited with great care, well printed, and sold for two or three francs. No doubt the number was limited who purchased these things, but they probably repaid the cost of publication. It seemed to him that that society would be doing good service by selecting such of these old treatises as were worth republishing for the benefit of the present generation. There was a large and increasing number of persons now taking an interest in musical literature, and he had often had inquiries as to where such and such a book could be obtained, which in many cases he was unable to answer.

Mr. W. CHAPPELL, Vice-President, said this was a subject in which he had long taken a very active interest and in fact the present catalogue in the British Museum was due primarily to himself, he having brought before Earl Cawdor the anomaly that while publishers were taxed to supply a copy of each work which they issued, there was no catalogue either of music or of manuscripts in the museum. He again had had the happiness to be the projector of the Musical Antiquarian Society, which had done something towards reprinting old works. With regard to this point, it was absolutely necessary there should be a society to reprint these works. All the written treatises to which reference

had been made which came from the British Museum and the Bodleian, except one, were edited by himself and sent over to Paris. But he doubted if they could print them here at so low a rate, unless they could get encouragement from a large number of subscribers. He thought it would be therefore a question of reviving the Musical Antiquarian Society.

Dr. BRIDGE said he might make a remark or two on the allusion by Mr. Cummings to the fact of Cathedrals having collections of manuscript works. Soon after he went to Westminster he found an opportunity of inquiring what was in the library, and he found the music was very carefully catalogued, and even in that library he found a very interesting manuscript, a setting of the *Te Deum* written in score for strings, trumpets, and drums. He had shown it to Sir Frederick Ouseley and to almost every musician of any eminence with whom he was acquainted, but he had not found any one who knew the author of it; it was a manuscript of apparently about the date 1730, and probably Italian. It was very fine music, and it would be a pity if it were lost sight of, even his predecessor, Mr. Turle, had never seen it, although he had been there fifty years. With regard to part-books in cathedrals, although he thought they should be taken care of, his own feeling was that the sooner they were removed out of the way of the choir the better. He knew that in nine cases out of ten, where difficulties arose in the performance of the music, it was from this cause: the choir sang from old part-books while the organist's copy had been lost or destroyed, and he had a new edition which did not always correspond. He could lay his hand on a particular service which had been in use for many years, in which the choir had two bars more than the organist had. Therefore, though he should be very sorry to destroy these old relics, which were very interesting and important, he thought they ought to be put away in the library.

Mr. BOSANQUET drew attention to a remarkably good index which had of late years been compiled, namely, the Royal Society's index of Scientific Papers. He did not know exactly when it began, but he believed it was projected about the year 1860, and the first columns appeared about 1868. At all events there were now six large volumes, and every scientific paper which any person the least known had written within the last fifty or sixty years was entered by its full title in that catalogue; therefore any person who wanted to look up any particular subject only required to know the names of the men who had treated it, and he could by examining this catalogue find out everything to be known on the subject, without the slightest difficulty. He did not agree with what Mr. Cummings said, that the catalogue should be only up to the beginning of the century, waiting to the end before a supplementary catalogue was to be published, because then it would be enormously large. He believed the Royal Society's plan was to publish a supplementary volume every ten years, at any rate one was issued from time to time. He must say that if the work was to

be kept going, the catalogue should always be in progress, for this was the only way in which it could be done; there should be some one who would make it his daily business to enter everything in its place as it was published.

Mr. BOND (keeper of the MSS. in the British Museum) being called upon by the chairman, said Mr. Cummings had so thoroughly gone into the subject, that he had really very little to say. The Museum had received a due amount of credit for what it had done, and some little blame for what it had not done; but he thought the fault to a great extent lay with early collectors not having paid sufficient attention to this subject. For instance, in the manuscript collection of Lord Harley, Sloane, and others, the subject of music had been altogether overlooked. Mr. Oliphant's catalogue was printed in 1842 and included only some 240 manuscripts; but since then there had been much greater activity, and they might have credit for having more than doubled them in the last ten years. Within the last ten years they had added about 400 or 500 manuscripts, but he must remind the meeting that if an opportunity occurred, there were many difficulties in a public auction-room, where there were very strong bidders, and where if a museum went to bid the prices generally rose directly; and they were therefore obliged to use great caution. It was more by the assistance of individuals like Mr. Cummings that they were able to get over such difficulties. The thing most needed was to induce private owners to bring forward the treasures which they had. It was seldom a museum could buy a very large collection, because it would lead to a number of duplicates which they had not power to exchange. If they wished they could exchange under certain circumstances, but not merely as duplicates. As to the general index to musical manuscripts, one great difficulty was in the cataloguing, which had only been brought down within the last few days to 1875. They had also a classified catalogue in use in their own room, in which all these things were represented in their places. The reflection made on the employment of Mr. Oliphant he thought required a little modification. That gentleman was keeper of the manuscripts; he offered to make a catalogue, and his offer was accepted. In conclusion, he said if there was any subject on which information was wanting, he should be happy to give it, but he thought the great difficulty would be, if efforts were made to obtain this classified index of printed books, that the same thing would have to be done with regard to all other branches of literature, which would be a very extensive task.

Mr. OTTO GOLDSCHMIDT, Vice-President, said he had recently visited the Fitzwilliam Library at Cambridge, but that had no catalogue. He felt some hesitation in speaking on this subject, because it was a special one which required particular study; but he might remark with regard to Mendelssohn's manuscripts, that he did not believe they were ever offered to the British Museum.

Mr. BOND said they had not been, to his knowledge.

Mr. OTTO GOLDSCHMIDT said he believed the family decided if possible to leave them at Berlin, and there they remained. But there was a collection of Handel's manuscripts—it was true, only copies, but authenticated copies—in the handwriting of Smith, which he was very sorry to say had been allowed to go from England. It struck him that that was one of the most important collections, because Handel's original manuscripts, as they knew, were shut up from general use at Buckingham Palace. If a plan could be devised to found a National Library, these various items would probably in course of time return to it. He might also state that Sir Sterndale Bennett had several times spoken to him about his own library, and he felt quite certain that if there had been such a focus as a National Musical Library, his collection would have gone there. With regard to the Fitzwilliam Library, he could only speak of it with very great diffidence, because there was no classified catalogue. The Handel manuscripts did not strike him as very important, but there were several very interesting things, as for instance three or four volumes in the handwriting of Dr. Croft, Purcell, Dr. Boyce, and Dr. Blow. The Berlin Royal Library received a large grant every year. It contained most of Sebastian Bach's manuscripts; it was admirably classified and indexed, and was now under the care of a musical custodian.

The CHAIRMAN said he thought it was a mistake to blame the authorities of the British Museum for anything that had happened in this matter, for the state of music in the Museum was but an index of the state in which music had been in England generally: until lately, it had been looked upon as a matter of amusement, not of serious study. His own experience was very much in favour of the trustees, for he remembered some twenty years ago, when he was studying the works of Sebastian Bach and began to make a thematic catalogue, he went to the museum and found but a very small collection. He then got all the lists from German publishers he could find, and made out a complete catalogue of the publications made in Germany up to that time, and sent them in to Mr. Panizzi with a note, and within a short time all those works were provided; he could not therefore think it right to visit the shortcomings of the library on the trustees. He did not believe the trustees had any idea of the way in which music had come to be looked upon in England lately, but if it was properly brought before their notice, very likely something would come of it. The musical department of the library is very unequal. It contains some books you would not expect to find there at all. For instance, the 'Florilegium' of Bodenschatz (1603-21), a collection of extraordinary value, of vocal music of the 16th century, for from 4 to 10 voices. That is a rare work, and it is there. On the other hand, Eslava's fine collection of Spanish music, which may be got by merely sending to Madrid, was not there, nor was it, he believed, in any other public museum. There was one in the Fétis Library at Brussels, but not at Berlin, Leipsic,

or Vienna. He should like to see some practical result coming out of this paper. Mr. Cummings had most admirably and temperately brought before them the exact state of the case, but he did not think it would be for that society or for any private person to start an index catalogue. As to the suggestion which Major Crawford had made, that rare treatises should be republished, he was afraid it would be necessary to start a society for the purpose, like the Percy or Camden societies, or to find some publisher who would do it; and he believed there were gentlemen there who would support his opinion, that there was very little chance of reprints of this kind being produced at such a rate as to pay the publisher. Mr. Arber commanded a much larger field; he dealt with general literature, while those who took an interest in music were comparatively a small number. He believed, however, that if they could bring exactly what was wanted in a temperate memorial before the trustees of the Museum or the House of Commons, there would be some chance of its being attended to; and he would therefore suggest that the Council of the society should be requested to draw up a memorial, to be submitted to a future meeting. He was afraid that they must not think that those who were interested in this matter were a very large or influential body, and probably the trustees would complain of the expense which would be involved, but if they persevered they might eventually succeed in doing something.

Mr. W. H. CUMMINGS said he had not referred to the question of reprints because that was for some private association or a publisher; the Museum had nothing to do with it. In his proposal as to cataloguing he did not intend them to form anything like an index society, because he understood that it was the duty of the Museum to prepare a proper index; and his reason for stopping at the year 1800 was that previous to that year musical literature was not very large, but since then its growth was so enormous, that if they proposed to bring up the catalogue to the present day, they would have to include everything published daily in Regent Street, which might be an obstacle. What they wanted was a commencement. He did not care even if they stopped at the year 1700, so that they got the beginning of a proper indexed catalogue: and if they asked for too much, he feared there would be no chance of getting it. If a memorial were drawn up as was suggested, he hoped it would not only be signed by members of the society, but that it should be placed in the large music warehouses, so that people might append their names; and he believed they would find, in a short time that those who would sign it would be neither few nor unimportant. Dr. Bridge's remarks with regard to Westminster Abbey fully justified him in having called attention to the libraries of cathedrals, and nothing could be more conclusive than the fact he had stated. The fact was the part-books to which Dr. Bridge had referred were written in olden times, some probably by Tallis and other learned men, and they required learned musicians to read. Such

men were not now to be found, and therefore it would be much better to go to Novello's and get a 3d. copy, and put those books into the library for reference, where they would be most valuable for study by those who understood them. They had come to this point in cathedrals, that a gentleman who perhaps had not been brought up to music, but who happened to have a voice and could sing after a certain fashion, went there and had to read from a book unbarred, with certain hieroglyphics which represented so many bars. He met with a scale which he had never heard of in his life, and he thought there ought to be a sharp in one place, and put it in accordingly; then the man who came in on the following day, and had the same thing to deal with, thought there must be some mistake, and altered it back to a natural; whilst the next man put a flat: and so at last it became almost unintelligible. It was quite clear, therefore, that these books should be put into the library as treasures for study, and not employed for ordinary use.

The CHAIRMAN said he did not think the collection of Smith's Handel could very well have been bought, because no one could have been more anxious for the acquisition of that collection than the late Mr. Bowley was to acquire it for the Sacred Harmonic Society. It was only owing to some extraordinary chance or some sudden resolution on the part of the person to whom it belonged, that it was not put up for sale.

Mr. OTTO GOLDSCHMIDT said he did not refer to the first purchaser of the collection, but to the second. It went to the public library in Hamburg, which was very poor in works of that kind. It was bought for Hamburg, and might have been equally well retained for London.

The CHAIRMAN said there was one point which Mr. Cummings had referred to, in which he was much interested, namely, that of the possibility of collecting for the musical library facsimiles of the autographs of great musical works. He knew, even from the little experience he had had in the subject, how interesting these things were. He was much struck with this when he went to Vienna to look for the Schubert manuscripts. Nothing could be more instructive than the original manuscript of Schubert's great symphony in C Major, showing the extensive and material alterations which he had made, during the process of composition or revision. Not only were themes altered after treatment, but one of the most interesting passages in the whole manuscript was crammed in as an after-thought. He remembered also the manuscript of the third movement of Beethoven's ninth symphony at Berlin, where he remarked a thing which he had never seen noticed by anybody else, viz., that the Trio in the *Scherzo*, where it changed from triple time to common time, was in $\frac{2}{4}$ time in the manuscript, instead of $\frac{3}{4}$ as it was now printed, which would make a certain difference in the accent of that movement in its performance. All these things could be easily made accessible by photography, and this was a point in which

the British Museum had much more power than any private individual. There were several notes on the margin of Beethoven's manuscripts, showing the places where he had written them; and these were very interesting, and might be made available by photography.

Mr. CUMMINGS said the Fitzwilliam Museum, which was now under the care of Mr. Sidney Colvin, showed very forcibly the necessity for having an expert to deal with these musical matters. Since Mr. Goldschmidt had been there, some one had been looking at the catalogue, and there was a note to the effect that one of the books was inaccurately bound. It was in fact one of those volumes in which the author had written at both ends, and had it been bound in any other way, it would have been inaccurate.

It was then moved by Major CRAWFORD, and seconded by Mr. GOLDSCHMIDT:—'That the Council be requested to prepare a memorial to the trustees of the British Museum, calling their attention to the deficiencies and imperfections in the collection of manuscript and printed music and musical literature in that museum, and the great want of an indexed catalogue and other means of more ready reference than at present exist.'

The CHAIRMAN suggested that this memorial should be submitted for signature to the various recognised musical institutions, such as the Royal Academy of Music and others. This was agreed to and the resolution was carried unanimously.

Mr. PROUT remarked, with reference to the difficulty of getting a catalogue completed, that the last time he was at the British Museum Reading Room, he had occasion to consult Mr. Evans, the superintendent of the printed music, who pointed out to him some books he had recently received (one of which he wanted to refer to), and told him that it would be two years before they would be on the shelves.

The CHAIRMAN said that this difficulty arose from music being a part of the general machinery of the Museum library, and he thought they would never get the musical portion into a satisfactory state until it was made separate and distinct, and its great and growing importance recognised.