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JANUARY 12, 1892.

W. H. CUMMINGS, Esq.,

IN THE CHAIR.

ON JUDGMENT AND TASTE WITH REGARD TO
MUSIC.

BY HENRY C. BANISTER.

IN venturing to offer for your consideration a few thoughts on "Judgment and Taste with regard to Music," I might almost take as my starting point, if not exactly as my motto, the words of the Laureate with regard, not to music, but to the spirit or tendency of the age generally:—

"Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell,
That mind and soul according well
May make one Music as before,
But vaster."

Instead of "mind and soul," I have used the words "judgment and taste." "Judgment," I need hardly remind you, is one translation of the Greek word "*krisis*"—from which we get our term *criticism*—bringing to judgment, whether adverse or favourable. And I am not unmindful of the fact that this Association has been favoured with two papers on this subject in past years*: one of them, however, having been rather a criticism of critics than a treatise on criticism; the other, dealing very thoughtfully with certain considerations which may assist in thoughtful listening to, and estimate of, music. I am aware that I am somewhat at a disadvantage in seeming to re-open the subject before the same Association. And further, I have myself addressed a kindred association, rather recently, on the "Appreciation of Music"—though to a very limited audience. Moreover, before yet another Association, some time back, I read a paper on the "Enjoyment of Music" which has since been included in a small volume of my papers for musicians. Notwithstanding all these recollections, however, I have had

* C. Kensington-Salaman, Esq, Nov. 1, 1875, and Dr. (now Sir) John Stainer, Jan. 3, 1881.

the temerity to venture once more on the consideration of cognate matters; hoping that the breadth and charm of the main subject—Music—may compensate for the narrowness and dryness of the lecturer.

I must at the outset say that I only deal with that which is termed—by way of protest, as I suppose, by some; by way of depreciation, apparently, by others—*absolute music*: music for its own sake; music self-contained; music that neither asserts superiority nor claims indulgence by reason of any “poetic basis”; music which is its own poetry, music which has its own basis. I am not now deprecating any such music as that which I have alluded to, which regards such poetic basis as almost an essential to music in its highest phase, and allies itself, more or less, with any other form of art. Although music in alliance with drama, or with non-dramatic words, may have to be mentioned, it will be of the music itself that I shall speak. It has been said by a competent critical writer: “All criticism—except, indeed, that scientific criticism which everybody has heard of and no one has ever seen—consists of a record of something observed from a certain point of view; and few questions that can be asked concerning any critic are more important than these: (1) ‘Is his point of view, on the whole, well chosen?’ and (2) ‘Does he appear able to see that, howsoever well chosen it be, it is only *one* point of view from which, as a matter of course, only one aspect of the object is discernible?’” Now, I have indicated my point of view about music:—it is almost a truism to say that it is *music* that I view—and that I look at it as an art which, to view rightly, requires, as my title says, “judgment” and “taste.” Need I say that, while taste is a matter of innate perception or susceptibility, judgment presupposes both knowledge and the maturity which experience alone can give? All this is very common-place, I know; but it seems to be almost necessary, now and again, to reiterate common-places, in meeting the very shallow talk that prevails. At all events, I avow, personally, that I listen to music as to that which appeals to my taste, my sense of beauty, my susceptibility of fascination, my capacity for enjoyment of a pure kind; and likewise as to that on which my severer mental capacities may be brought to bear, as somewhat trained and furnished by life-long acquaintance with the Art, and a not wholly meagre theoretical equipment.

I find it, then, impossible, or nearly so, to listen to music without to some extent analysing as it goes on; so far as to observe the course of thought, the structure, in outline, at least, of the movement, the modulations, and any points of exceptional interest, if any, in the harmonic progressions. But while this is so, I think I may candidly and truly say that, whatever my principles as a musician, my theoretical

principles, my views of structure, my pre-possession with regard to the methods of development that have prevailed among the acknowledged great masters—if you like to call it conservatism, all this—I give myself up, in the first instance, to the impression of the moment, as to the agreeableness, the reasonableness (if not conventionality), the sweet reasonableness (if non-compliance with conventional practices), the earnestness, seriousness, beauty, or sublimity of that which I am hearing. In other words, I listen with an open mind; ready for new impressions, new ways of expression, new idioms, and so forth—in short, as lawyers say, without prejudice.

“Ah!” you will exclaim, “that is a great deal to say, ‘without prejudice!’”—without *pre-judgment*. Yes; it is so, if by “an open mind” is meant a vacant mind; if by “without pre-judgment” is meant without preparation for judgment by any principles or tests. But surely that will not be imagined as the pre-requisite of judgment!—that there shall be no principles, standards, or tests. Nor will it be contended that taste, in the sense of impressionability, is to be respected when uninformed, unregulated, unprincipled. The one point is that, granted the principles of grammar—such as the use and treatment of discords—and the principles of key-relationship controlling the modulations in a composition, or at least regulating them—and the principles which govern all true art—the coherence, consecutiveness, and inter-relationship of ideas—granted these, as opposed to chaos under the disguise of freedom, and mania or discursive non-consecution in the guise of inspiration—and eccentricity, shamming genius—one shall be ready for new methods, new impressions, new ideas. And these pre-requirements are surely not prejudices, with regard to that which claims to be an artistic production, as distinguished from an imaginative experiment. And such pre-requirements by no means preclude either new structures, or extraneous modulations, or even new harmonic combinations or progressions; unless, indeed, such a revolution should be sought as that of the transition period. I am not speaking under any apprehension of the advent of a new Monteverde or a new tonality. But I do contend that with music as we recognise it in the acknowledged masters, no new view of its possible—nay, even if I admitted its desirable—alliance with other art, dramatic or otherwise, should or can dislocate or revolutionise the principles on which music, pure and simple—absolute, if you will—is to be constructed. With regard to this I must say, “hands off!” I dispute the right of any other art to subordinate music so as to distort it, mis-shape it, unbeautify it, or render it in any way grotesque. I cannot too strongly insist on it that it must be *music* amidst it all; and music which shall

impress me or please me, music that appeals to my taste, which I think is just a convenient term for my artistic yearnings; and I resent the insolence which says, as has been said lately, that such self-contained music is not fine art at all, but "only a luxury." Mozart said* that, even in opera, "the poetry must be the handmaid of the music." Music is *the* Art for the time being. And yet it is about Mozart that it has been said lately by a writer whom I have referred to, that he "if left untutored would probably have arrived at the conclusion that a composition without a poetic or dramatic basis was a mere luxury, and not a serious work of art at all." And that "as it was, he was trained to consider the production of 'absolute music' as the normal end of composition, and when his genius drove him to make his instrumental music mean something, he wasted the most extraordinary ingenuity in giving it expression through the forms and without violating the usages of absolute music, bending these forms and usages to his poetic purpose with such success that the same piece of music serves as a pet passage of tone poetry to the amateur who knows nothing of musical formalism, while the pedant who is insensible to poetry and the drama holds them (*sic*) up as models of classic composition to his pupils. This combination of formalism with poetic significance has been much applauded, not only for its ingenuity, as is natural, but as a merit in the music, which is perverse and absurd." I do not follow this writer in his conjecture, which is of the nature of a *petitio principii*, as to what conclusion Mozart would have arrived at had he been "left untutored"; it is quite open for me to conjecture what he would have thought and said as to such notions of the beautiful art of music had they been proposed to him. Happily for us, he wrote the Symphony in C which we know as the "Jupiter," and that in G minor, and the Sonatas in C minor and A minor, and many other works, such as the Quartets, the Fugues for Pianoforte, the Overture to the "Magic Flute," in which the so considered pedantry, or, at least, formalism of the Fugue, is combined with the first movement form in so marvellous a way; and we, myself and many here, have happily had these works "held up" to us as "models of classic composition"—models which, unhappily for us, remain unapproached models still. And if we have failed it is not because we have sought to follow these models instead of striking out a new path for ourselves.

In short, by all means let us go on learning, experimenting, developing new forms: "let knowledge grow from more to more"; but also, "more of reverence in us dwell"—reverence that shall keep us from pitying those who have set such models before us: so "mind and soul according well"

* See Jahn's "Life of Mozart," English translation, II., 226, 227.

may "make one Music as before"—as much "vaster" as may be, though not with the vastness of huger orchestras; but "one Music," having coherence, symmetry, all that is nicknamed "formalism," as in the Sister Arts.

I say "nicknamed formalism"; for I urge strongly that it is a mistake to suppose that symmetry and coherence constitute formalism or formality in any stiff, ceremonious, pedantic, or in any other way objectionable sense. When we talk—I mean musicians—about form, we mean *design*—that is, preconceived purpose or plan; and that is a plan which the music alone is able to carry out. And when we say symmetry and coherence, we mean proportion, and bearing of one part upon another. And when we speak of development, we mean the working out of ideas, subjects which music alone has originated, and which music alone can develop, in methods peculiar, prerogative to music. I might put it that Music is able to construct, after having formulated, its own drama, if it must, or if it will be, dramatic. When the Sonata form is sneered at as either arbitrary, or stiff, or pedantic, or formal in a bad sense, or, at least, a narrow, restrictive sense—it might be sufficient to reply, in the words of a modern writer, by no means enslaved by any rules: "The forms, depend upon it, were founded in reason and nature. They grew through long periods to be what nature fixed them at; and, as long as the thoughts of composers did not burst their limits, they were perfect."* And here it is well to recall the early remark about a standpoint not being the *only* standpoint. The dramatic standpoint, or the association with other arts standpoint—either of these may be perfectly legitimate, intelligible, right: I stay not to discuss this question. But musicians have a prior standpoint, which they are jealous of having relegated to any subordinate position—that of music as self-sufficient. And the formalism or design which is so animadverted upon grows out of music itself, as we understand it; and is not imposed on it as a restrictive influence. For we contend that music is not a mere vehicle for assisting in the presentation of imaginative thoughts originating in connection with other arts, but is itself, so to speak, the imaginer: the imaginations being musical, and not expressible by any other means than those which music herself furnishes. And, further than this, that music is not only imaginative, and emotional, and ideal; it is also specially logical and rhetorical—in the highest sense intellectual; having methods of presentation and development peculiar to itself. And these methods—of which more presently—constitute that which it pleases certain writers to term formalism. But it is no more formal for a movement to have a first and second subject than it is for a novel or a drama to have a hero

* Grove's Dict., Article "Beethoven," p. 204.

and a heroine ; nor for these, with what are sometimes termed tributaries, to be worked in various ways, than for the plot to become involved or entangled, in a literary work. If it really were a canon of musical art and criticism—a necessity, according to musical judgment and taste, that these subjects should always be worked after one or other of two or three recognised patterns—that would, indeed, be pedanticism, worse than formalism. But that such is not the judgment of musicians is evident from the way in which, for instance, such a work is accepted by them as the “Hebrides” Overture, by Mendelssohn ; which, while not anarchist or defiant, is yet not quite to be classified under either of the stereotyped forms—I use the term stereotyped under protest. And so, not only with that despair of all Overture writers, as it has been called, the “Magic Flute” Overture, but also with the magnificent “Euryanthe” Overture by the so-considered founder of the so-called “Romantic” school, no musician—at least, I, for one, do not—objects to the fugal episode, nor, I imagine, does the modern romanticist reject the first and second subject method in it.

The fact is, there is in music *workmanship*, and this neither implies the subordination of poetic intent nor the curbing of imagination. It is one of the beauties and delights of the art that it can add new interest to beautiful thoughts and ideas by multitudinous modes of development and presentation. And while taste accepts or rejects initial ideas, judgment pronounces upon the aptness, propriety, efficiency, knowledge, skill, with which these ideas are presented and worked. Musical judgment says that there is no musical power or skill in the mere introduction, abruptly or otherwise, of a certain *motif* in the same or another key as on its first presentation, and with little, if any, other difference in its presentation than its difference of key, or *perhaps* of instrumentation ; that there *is*, on the other hand, *musical power—absolute* musical power, be it observed—in the presentation of a musical phrase with different harmony, different counterpoint, different superposition, different combination with other subjects, and so on. And, we think, as I have often contended, that this is a unique feature in “absolute” music. And, therefore, whatever the elasticism, the adaptability of music to the illustration of a story, dramatic or otherwise, or “to represent feeling,” “the beauty of a composition”—as has been quite recently insisted on—“is specifically musical, that is, inherent in the combinations of musical sounds, and independent of all alien, extra-musical notions” ; and by “combination” here may be understood all the purely musical surroundings, context, and the like.

So that, while it would be lamentable pedantry to demand

that all compositions shall conform to one or other of a few accepted models—though even here a *teacher* is surely discreet in advising his pupils to do as the great masters have done, with the afore-commended “reverence,” to ponder, for guidance, the acknowledged works of those who have gone before—it is, on the other hand, no pedantry to refuse to be dazzled by mere glamour or to be fascinated by mere impression—unregulated taste; but to enquire—Is there, herein, intellectual power of a *musical*—purely musical—kind? Can the composer say something *musically* continuous, coherent, argumentative, without accessories, auxiliaries, to disguise inherent weakness? Is the effect, here, an achievement of purely *musical* logic or rhetoric, in conjunction with imagination, or is it all a fly-on-the-wheel, raising a dust to blind both composer and listener to the tawdriness of the whole procession, and boasting of the very dust which blinds?

“That mind and soul, according well,
May make one Music as before,
But vaster.”

That is our aim, our contention, that music shall be “as before,” as hitherto; music dependent upon its own resources of beauty, imagination, contrivance, structure, expressiveness, power; music of symmetry, law, order; recognising the scientific and artistic principles of relationship, connection, and progression, as regards keys, chords, discords; of logical coherence and continuity, instead of spasmodic or rhapsodical impulsiveness, posing as genius. “One Music,” therefore, one with that of those who have gone before; from the pioneers of the contrapuntal school, culminating in Palestrina, and the harmonists that succeeded them, led by Monteverde, to the latter classicists, names held in reverence, not in disdain: Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and others. “But vaster”; yes, vaster, not by increasing the number of blatant instruments, or the length of movements, or the show of accessories, but with the vastness of vaster minds than those of the men of the past whom I have named, when they arise; men who wrote for the future, because they wrote for all time, inasmuch as they wrote for the time then present that which was according to just principles and pure imaginations, and which, therefore, can never become effete, any more than can the principles of truth and beauty, as expressed by music, absolute music, music alone, in its unique power of expression, commending itself to balanced and refined “judgment and taste.”

DISCUSSION.

THE CHAIRMAN.—Ladies and gentlemen, the paper which Mr. Banister has brought before us is full of thought, and deals with a subject which requires a considerable amount of careful consideration. The opportunity for that will be afforded us by-and-bye in the Journal of the Society. In the meantime, I think I shall express your feeling if I tender to him our very grateful thanks for the preparation and delivery of this paper. It is too often the case, I fear, that the distinction between judgment and taste is forgotten. Mr. Banister did not say very much on the subject. He seemed to take it for granted that we were in accord with him and needed no enlightenment upon it. Judgment, as he said just now, necessitates a certain amount of technical knowledge of the subject upon which you presume to form a judgment. The judgment of a person who knows nothing of the art he is going to adjudicate upon is worthless. It may, perchance, by a mere accident, be in consonance with the canons of taste; but the probability is that it will be diametrically opposed to them. And, on the other hand, taste is quite a different thing, and does not really depend upon judgment, but rather upon one's habits, one's companions, and upon one's walk in life. It is vain to expect a porter, who comes from somewhere down the Thames, where they unload coal ships, to appreciate the same things that would be enjoyed by a cultivated poet or musician. It is so in all things. Take the language of folk who are not accustomed to move in good society. They speak with the utmost confidence, and without the least intention of giving offence; yet the words they use can only be abhorrent to people of better education, though they be used tenderly and lovingly. Taste depends upon one's associations. To the individual in question coarse language is in perfectly good taste. Taste is good or bad according to the light in which you have been brought up to regard it. Mr. Banister touched upon this part of the subject very lightly, and I think very much more might have been said. In the art of music how important it is that in educating our young folks, whether in schools or elsewhere, we should try and set before them good models in order to foster good taste. Taste first and judgment next. Good taste comes intuitively. A child may become musical by absorption, by taking it in through the pores of the skin, so to speak. If you are brought much in contact with music you must become musical. Therefore, it is extremely important that our children should have the best examples set before them. The effects are more far-reaching than is

generally supposed. How often do you hear it said: "The child is only a beginner. Don't you know someone who could put her in the way of playing the pianoforte?" To the child who is to grow up into a musician, whether professional or amateur, you cannot give anything too good either as regards instruction or instruments. At schools one is occasionally asked: "Don't you know where I can pick up a piano for about £2 10s., something for the pupils to practise upon?" A worn-out instrument is the very worst thing you can give to a young student. First, try to cultivate taste in your young pupils, and you will then aid them to form their judgment.

MR. SOUTHGATE.—The thought which passed through my mind was the initial one that, after all, the first requisite of both taste and judgment was education. I listened with great interest to our Chairman impressing upon us the value of being properly educated in music, for without such education it is impossible to form taste of any value, or judgment that can pretend to be critical. The first requisite should be a proper education with proper models set before us, so that we may be able to form a judgment; we may then be able to pronounce upon the question of taste. But, after all, it should be pointed out that, *de gustibus non est disputandum*, tastes must differ, even among the educated. I have many friends who listen to the works of Wagner and those of his compeers with great delight. I may say that to my judgment and taste they do not commend themselves; that may be my misfortune. There are many good musicians who do not like Bach, while there are others, of equal merit, who are satisfied with the strains of Verdi and Rossini, and want nothing beyond them. All these points depend upon taste as well as judgment, and it seems to me a little difficult to lay down any special laws or rules by which we are to determine what is good and what is bad music. We should put the very best before our young pupils—*i.e.*, that which we shall all agree is written in good style. Then they will be able to form a certain judgment, and taste will follow in due course. I remember, some years ago, waiting outside, I think it was, Westminster Abbey, where a performance of Bach was going on; while the people were struggling and pushing to get in I could not help overhearing a conversation that took place. One young man was expressing his opinion pretty loudly about Bach. Someone near him said: "Well, what I think of Bach is that he is so ugly, there is no melody in him." "Oh," said the young man in question, "what I complain of is that there is *too much* melody in him." So, you see, there was something very deficient in the education of both speakers.

MR. JACQUES:—Mr Chairman, I should like to express my

thanks for the great pleasure Mr. Banister's lecture has afforded me. With most of it I am in entire sympathy, and if upon one or two points we are not quite at one, our difference is not very great. The first remark that impressed me was Mr. Banister's praise of the quality of reverence. That I was very pleased to hear. Want of reverence is too often conspicuous in criticism, and I think this not infrequently arises from the youth of those who now-a-days are allowed to write. It may, perhaps, be a hard thing to say, but I cannot help thinking that many persons who are allowed to print their opinions are neither old enough nor instructed enough for the responsible position they are allowed to hold. Mr. Banister is perfectly right in appealing for more reverence. I should, however, like to see reverence not only as he wishes, for the composers of the past, but also for the composers of the present—that is, of course, when they justify it. Some of the criticism upon one or two modern composers (it is not necessary to specify names) has been somewhat wanting in this quality of reverence. I was also pleased with the emphasis Mr. Banister laid on the combination of "mind" and "soul," "intellect" and "feeling." A good deal of our criticism is too technical, while some is too much the other way. There are a great many well-meaning men with high aspirations who lay too much emphasis on the "soul" part of the music, and then we get incoherence. With regard to "absolute" music and "poetic" music, there, too, it is, perhaps, still more necessary that we should have a distinction. That is a point, to my mind, which is not sufficiently kept in view. It seems to me that the laws by which we judge works of music are not the same for absolute as for poetic music. Mr. Banister, in his subsequent remarks, seemed to suggest that he would not sympathize with the view I have just put forward. I submit that music has been dividing itself since about Beethoven's time, or even earlier, into two main branches, and I cannot see why these two main branches should not be allowed to develop themselves in their own way, without interfering with each other; and I cannot see why people cannot be intelligent enough to love both, provided they be good of their kind. Then there is another difficulty which occurred to me. Mr. Banister said that freedom was to be distinguished from chaos. Of course it should; but how are we going to do it? What one person claims to be freedom another may consider downright chaos, and there are many examples to show how men have often changed their minds in regard to the two and eventually come to regard as freedom what they at first took to be chaos. I should be very glad if Mr. Banister could suggest a means by which the two might be easily distinguished. If a thing be very complex—it may be a perfect

work of art—and its complexity beyond our capacity for comprehension at the moment, we have the impression of chaos at once. On repetition, and as we become familiar with the details, that feeling may disappear. Of course, a thing may really be chaotic and then no amount of repetition will efface the original impression. Mr. Banister said that where music was combined with drama or poetry, he objected to music being made the handmaid or subservient to the other art. Why? When we combine two things for the purpose of making one out of them, why should not each give way to a certain extent to the other for the purposes of such combination? Surely a bachelor cannot expect to retain his freedom when he gets married? He changes in many respects and so does his wife; there is a blend, as it were. I do not see how we can produce a work in which organic unity is conspicuous if the elements we propose to combine are to remain as they were before combination. When we put music to a drama we do so, not for the purpose of making an independent musical work, but for the purpose of getting the music to assist the drama. I thought it a very necessary point Mr. Banister made in saying that we ought not to profess pity for our predecessors. In the progress of music it is quite obvious that each of the stages at which it has arrived is worthy of respect, and it is not right to compare the earlier efforts with later ones. If a comparison is to be instituted at all, due attention should be paid to what went before and what came after. It is not fair to compare Mozart with Beethoven, nor Mozart's predecessors with himself. I also sympathize with Mr. Banister's remark about form being natural. The growth of form is decidedly natural, and that is not sufficiently shown. It is very easy to see that modern habits of form have grown almost unconsciously—each step out of the previous one. Mr. Cummings spoke about taste. It is hardly necessary to remind you that in the older books on æsthetics the word was intended to mean "cultivated sensibility" and was not used in the sense of "like" and "dislike." With regard to pupils, I sympathize very much with what Mr. Cummings said about setting the very best possible models before them. Unfortunately, that is the difficulty. They cannot help hearing a lot of music which one feels they ought not to hear, and I don't see how the difficulty is to be got over. After hearing Wagner and other modern composers they frequently lose all sympathy with the older masters. Mr. Southgate, too, was quite right. It is very wrong of modern musicians and the Wagner party to sneer at those who do not follow the Wagner cult, and to depreciate the older masters; but it is equally reprehensible in those who do not like Wagner and other modern composers to stigmatize those who do. There are lots of

excellent musicians who do like Wagner and who began, perhaps, by disliking him. I, at first, thought Wagner's music anything but pleasant. It was some years before I felt its beauty and power. Mr. Rockstro, in his later writings, practically retracted his original remarks on Wagner. He has even pointed out Wagner's obedience to the laws of form in "Tristan." Then Mr. Southgate spoke about melody in Bach, and how one said there was too much, and another said there was too little. The assertion is very characteristic and has been made in connection with several other composers. People use the word "melody" in so many different senses. If we would only try to understand each other's meaning a little better, many differences of opinion would never arise. A clever article was published in the *Edinburgh Review* some time ago, which was very antagonistic to Wagner. The writer said, "We all know what we mean by melody"—a most absurd proposition. Each of us knows what *he, himself*, means; but we don't all use the word in the same sense. The laws of melody should be a little more clearly defined; this would put a stop to much controversy.

The CHAIRMAN.—Mr. Jacques has suggested a great many fresh thoughts. He spoke about music having branched off in two directions since Beethoven's time. I feel rather dubious about what he points to there. My opinion is that music which is not allied to words, to programme, or to any worldly thought whatever, is the highest kind of music; and if that be so, I am at a loss to find anyone who has succeeded Beethoven. For my part, I don't know anything which has yet superseded or gone beyond the first, second, and third movements of the Ninth Symphony. I mean, of course, music unallied to words. To me such music suggests nothing except the vague longings of the heart. I am quite at a loss to understand how music has advanced since then, and wonder what those branches are that Mr. Jacques referred to.

Mr. JACQUES.—I mean that music has advanced beyond Beethoven in definiteness of musical expression, not in beauty.

The CHAIRMAN.—Then all I can say is, ladies and gentlemen, that I do not care for definiteness in music. I agree that order was Heaven's first law, but I do not want definiteness in music. I do not want music to represent a cow or a bullock, or anything else. I want it to represent something I do not know anything about. I must say that I feel very strongly upon this point, and I cannot admit that Beethoven has in any way been deposed yet. Then as to melody. I do not think it at all necessary that we should define melody.

I am an admirer of the greater proportion of Wagner's works, I can say that honestly ; and yet there is much of his music which has given me pain. He is full of melody ; so is Bach. I cannot find that he is in the least deficient in melody. On the contrary, those who complain of his want of melody are people who do not understand the language they are listening to. He has too much sometimes. I am old enough to remember the time when Mendelssohn was amongst us. I have seen and spoken to him, and I can very well remember, as a little boy, being a terrible Mendelssohn disciple. On one occasion I was invited to a ladies' party in Brunswick Square, then a very fashionable place, and in my musical enthusiasm I poured out as much Mendelssohn as I possibly could, when one of the dear old ladies said to me : "Yes, Master Cummings, it's all very pretty, you know ; the only trouble is that it wants melody." Now, if people cannot find it in Mendelssohn, they will not find it in Wagner or Bach. I suspect that a good many musical people have a little difficulty in appreciating the extraordinary way in which Wagner puts several melodies together, sets them going, and lets them drive their own way, caring not whether they knock the panels out of the coach. There is a tremendous clashing together ; it is not chaos, but there may be a terrible wrench to your feelings whilst you listen to it. Wagner's great glory, of course, is his colouring.

Mr. JACQUES.—I do not say that absolute music has advanced since Beethoven's time. I am quite at one with Mr. Cummings when he says that Beethoven represents, at present, the highest water-mark we have arrived at as regards absolute music. But I think that another branch has developed from increased definiteness of expression. By definiteness I don't mean the power of conveying a barn-door or anything of that kind ; I mean definite feeling, not thought ; you cannot paint things or thoughts in music, but only feelings.

Mr. BANISTER.—I have to thank you all very much for the patience with which you have listened to my paper, for your tolerance of its defects, and for having made so many interesting comments upon it. I am fully aware how very much more might have been said on the subject, and how very much I have left out. These shortcomings are due to circumstances which Mr. Cummings is probably aware of. I have not been able to give the time to the paper I should have liked. On the other hand, to some extent, I feel like the minister who said to his congregation : "My dear friends, there is a great deal more that I might say on this text if it would only occur to me." As to reverence of Wagner and the modern school, I think reverence should be paid to any man who has really anything new to say to us and to teach

us. Unfortunately, so far as I know, both Wagner himself and his disciples have adopted a very irritating tone of defiance and irreverence towards those who have been the supporters of the classical school, and where such irritating tone exists there will be, of course, a slight tendency to over-statement, perhaps, and what might be called irreverence on the other side. I very well remember an intelligent young man in society talking to me once about Sir G. Macfarren, and saying: "Why is Macfarren so angry about Wagner?" The answer might very well have been not only that Macfarren's opinion was that Wagner was doing a great deal of damage to music, pure and simple, but that so long as that was his opinion, he could not express himself too strongly upon the point. Then with regard to the two styles of music, I did not intend by anything I said to imply that music could not be made the expression of sentiments suggested by literature or any other art. I only wished to most emphatically protest against such a notion as that music, by itself, is not sufficient to constitute a fine art or that absolute music has reached its finality, its goal, and that there is nothing more to be done with it. That, I think, is one of the axioms of the modern school. Then, again, how you are to distinguish between complexity and chaos, a question raised by Mr. Jacques. Of course, no absolute law can be laid down on that subject; but we can all, to some extent, recognise that amidst the utmost complexity there may be a sense of unity of purpose. We all know what it is to listen to an argument. We feel it too much involved to follow it; but we haven't the smallest idea in our minds that the speaker is talking about something he doesn't understand, or in a chaotic way. And so it is with regard to the involved contrapuntal works, and that again brings me to the melodizing of Bach. It is not the long continuity of the melodies or the want of rhythm in them, but it is the continuation of the melody in the fugal style in Bach which perplexes people who have only small minds, and cannot follow two or three simultaneous careers of parts, so to speak. As to defining melody, Sir George Macfarren used to contend that any succession of sounds constituted melody, and that it was not at all necessary that they should be pretty or sweet. I don't think that that view of melody has been followed by him or generally accepted. Of course, when music is united with another art, either the one or the other may be subservient for the time being; but it must not be the subserviency that arises from such a view as that which I quoted, that absolute music, music without a poetical basis, without the assistance of any other art, is expressionless in meaning, and must, therefore, subordinate itself and become the handmaid of something else. Of course I have met with persons who

have even thought Mendelssohn unmelodious. The tendency now-a-days is to think him simply poor and unprofound. I have the same recollections, and delightful recollections, of Mendelssohn, personally, as our Chairman. To think Bach unmelodious shows how very lacking in a certain power of analysis some persons are or else how deficient they are in power of expression. Beyond these remarks I have only to thank you for your indulgence in so patiently listening to my paper and for your interesting comments upon it.