English Musical Privileges

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almost recalls Beethoven's earlier style in the boldness of its harmonies; while the long *Adagio patetico* has the grace and suavity of Mozart. Here again the very florid ornaments seem to have furnished more than one hint to Hummel. The *Finale* is preceded by a short *Intermezzo*, which is in fact nothing more than a *Prelude*. Though full of spirit and very tuneful, it cannot be said that this movement is at all equal to the rest of the *Sonata*. Its chief theme is very trivial, and not without a tinge of vulgarity; and as it forms the principal material for the subsequent developments, the music nowhere rises to a high level.

Over the next set of three *Sonatas* (Op. 39) I must pass hastily, though much might be said about them. They are suited for teaching, rather than for concert purposes, being only of moderate difficulty. All of them abound in delightful melody, and in passages which are most pleasant to play as well as improving to pupils. The first and third (in G and B flat) are on the whole the best; the second (in C), though extremely pretty, is, with the exception of a delicious little final *Rondo*, hardly in its author's happiest style.

With respect to the third *Sonata*, in B flat, there is a very curious difference of text in different editions, on which some of my readers may perhaps be able to throw a little light. I have in my library the original English edition of these three *Sonatas*, and on comparing it with Breitkopf's new edition very remarkable discrepancies appear in the *Rondo* of No. 3. In the first place the chief theme of the movement appears each time unchanged in the old edition, while in the new edition it is embellished with different ornaments on each recurrence. Besides this (not to mention minor differences) two bars of the original are omitted in Breitkopf's edition, at the foot of the last page but one; and the last five bars of the old edition are replaced by nine which are entirely different in the new. Breitkopf's new edition is, I believe, reprinted from their old complete edition of Dussek's works in twelve volumes. Can anybody inform me whether the latter (which, to judge from the type, must have been published early in the present century) was produced under the superintendence of the composer, or whether the alterations are founded upon tradition, or are the work of some irresponsible editor? The changes are important enough to make the question worth asking.

In the next *Sonata*, Op. 43, in A major, is found the most important and brilliant, and in some respects the finest, of all the two-movement *Sonatas*. It is pre-eminently a concert piece, and in point of technical difficulty is surpassed by very few of Dussek's works. The first movement is an excellent study for double notes; rapid passages in thirds and sixths are of frequent occurrence, but the music never degenerates into a mere finger-exercise. It has been already said that Dussek was remarkably happy in his invention of passages; and nowhere is to be found a better example of the combination of brilliance with melodic charm than in this *Allegro*. The following *Rondo* is, with the exception of one page, considerably less difficult, but not less beautiful; the music flows along in one tuneful stream from the first bar to the last. This *Sonata* would be well worth producing at the Monday Popular Concerts.

(To be continued.)

ENGLISH MUSICAL PRIVILEGES.

By HENRY C. LUNN.

THAT our many ruined castles must not be accepted as a proof that the power and independence of the inhabitants of this country have in the slightest

degree declined may be shown by the patriotic adage that "an Englishman's house is his castle," a proverb which, although in the present day not being capable of too literal an application, is one grateful to a Briton, as undeniably affirming the truth that neither physically nor mentally is he to be easily dispossessed of what he has once firmly got hold of. Douglas Jerrold, in one of his comedies, has sarcastically drawn the character of an Englishman who, confined in a French fortress, resolutely insists upon it that even British prisons are infinitely superior to foreign ones, and naïvely asks an officer who is eloquent on the wines of his country whether he has ever tasted our English champagne. Caricature apart, however, there is much in our national character which, owing perhaps greatly to our insular position, may be said to amount almost to dogged obstinacy. It is very well for foreigners to fancy that by the adoption of new ideas they are progressing; but "Old England" as a rule erects her "wooden walls" as pertinaciously against the invasion of mental as against physical intrusions upon her territory, and holds on to what she has long believed in with a bland feeling of contentment which astonishes those whose convictions are based solely upon the result of intellectual investigation. Were we free to range over every subject, we could cite many instances of this truth; but, confining ourselves solely to that of music, there can be no difficulty in showing in how determined a manner we guard against any alteration in our existing artistic methods of thought, whilst the utmost diversity of opinion exists around us.

In our school geographies we are told, after naming the established religion of a nation, that "all others are tolerated." Precisely so is it with our recognised theory of what is generally termed "Harmony." There is a popular belief that the origin and treatment of chords has been reduced to a system which is universally taught in this country; and although it is well known that the subject has latterly been reconsidered and ably explained upon principles diametrically opposed to those which have hitherto been received, and this by the very ablest musicians, no movement is made towards authoritatively establishing the science upon a firm and solid basis. Reviews tell us that the laws laid down in the books of some of our best modern theorists are incontrovertible. We have of course no intention here of arguing their relative merits, but there can be no doubt that these critiques are in many cases perfectly true; yet each man has to fight his own battle unaided, the inference being unquestionably that amidst a conflict of theories it is better not to favour any one, a resolve perhaps thoroughly in accordance with the natural independence of the British character upon which we have commented, but scarcely one which can conduce to the progress of the art. There may be a little healthy excitement when the pupils of one master quarrel with those of another as to the fundamental facts which regulate the science each is studying; yet we cannot but believe that, were a congress of the most eminent musicians called to frame a code of laws which should be universally accepted, a permanent good would result to the many, although some trifling concessions might be necessary for the few.

Then we would ask whether our firm resolution to adhere to a pitch which has been gradually raised until it has reached an altitude which frightens vocalists who visit us is not essentially English? True it is that, as in the instance already mentioned, having once settled the matter, we may choose to

defend it, regardless of consequences, merely because it exists; but we can scarcely expect that foreigners will favour our conservative views on the subject, and some day therefore we may find that we shall be forced to give up a point, as a matter of policy, which long ago we should have gracefully conceded as a matter of reason. In this case, however, many have arisen in our own country ready and willing to point the way to a solution of the difficulty. The Society of Arts, after deliberating for some time upon the subject, and inviting discussion from all those most competent to consider it in all its bearings, came to a conclusion as to the number of vibrations which should represent the note C. Tuning-forks adjusted to this pitch were sent round to each person who assisted at these meetings; and, as far as the Society was concerned, the matter was settled. But what was the result? Pianoforte-makers tuned their instruments precisely as their customers pleased; the pitch in concert-rooms and opera-houses was regulated by the will of each Conductor; and the tuning-forks already mentioned remained as a melancholy proof of the futility of imagining that any deliberative assembly can interfere with the boasted privileges of Englishmen. But the matter did not rest here, for a vocalist whose services could ill be spared protested that he would not sing at the absurdly high pitch prevailing in this country. It might be imagined that, having thus assumed so practical a form, the question would be sufficiently important to compel us to a definite settlement of the pitch, even presuming that we did not adopt the *diapason normal*, which was held up as a model for imitation. Not a bit: rather than acknowledge that any reform could be needed, the artist mentioned was openly accused of wishing to bring down the pitch to suit his failing voice; and, although a *prima donna* (against whom the same charge could scarcely be brought) joined most heartily in condemning what is termed the "English pitch" (which in fact means the pet pitch of any Conductor), the slight agitation caused by the discussion very shortly calmed down, and Englishmen continued to retain the glorious privilege of measuring notes as they please, irrespective of the requirements of those artists whose interests should have been first consulted.

The "English fingering," too, is one more instance of the tenacity with which we hold to our vested musical rights. Music is said to be an universal language, and, as far as notation goes, we freely admit this truth; but foreign editions of pianoforte works which are fingered are rendered useless in this country, not because (as we have often heard said) we finger differently from our Continental neighbours, but because they finger differently from us. Pupils may be told, it is true, that four means three, and two means one; but as a rule they revolt against foreign fingering; and we have even heard a refractory student declare that she was not going to put her thumb when it was clearly marked first finger. Musical publications, therefore, printed abroad must undergo a certain revision before they can be accepted in this country; for it is not likely that we, who refuse to accept a Continental pitch, would blandly accept a Continental fingering.

We could strengthen our case by adducing more proofs of England's refusal to be guided by the musical customs of other countries—such, for example, as admitting persons in our concert-rooms during the performance of a composition; tuning all the orchestral instruments before an audience; and waiting between the acts of an opera until those who occupy unsecured seats are perfectly wearied

out—but enough has been shown to prove that we are resolved to defend our artistic privileges against all innovators, without any examination into their merits. Resistance of foreign intervention is an instinct with our countrymen; and although it may perhaps be questioned whether fencing ourselves around with convictions sometimes sanctioned more by age than by reason will not occasionally have the effect of drawing ill-natured criticism upon us, we can at least have the satisfaction of feeling not only that "an Englishman's house is his castle," but that he would rather let it crumble away from the ravages of time, than be forced to repair it by pressure from without.

It is a fact no less melancholy than true that by running away from the metropolis you do not run away from music. Possibly there may be a lingering idea that a man cannot enjoy himself thoroughly unless "sweet sounds" accompany him through the brief holiday he usually snatches from his life of drudgery; but the "music of the sea," to which a longing allusion is so constantly made by business men, is by no means the same thing as the "music of the seaside;" and indeed the expression is after all only a poetical method of affirming the truth that the monotony of nature, as distinct from the monotony of art, is soothing, but never irritating. It may be said that a man who places himself in a quiet nook at some pretty watering-place need not go where music is to be heard, and this we at once freely admit; but how is he to escape from the infliction when, as we can affirm from experience, the music comes to him? To say nothing of organs, accordions, and banjos occasionally mingling with the welcome roar of the waves on the beach, a pianoforte in the next house at the moment we write greets our ears, the selection for the morning including Czerny's "Hundred and One Elementary Exercises," the "Plough-boy," with variations, and one of Mendelssohn's "Lieder ohne Worte," *La melodia ben marcato*. Then a band plays immediately under our window every morning from eleven till one, the music being chosen to display rather the power than the delicacy of the performers. As one of the principal residents of the town remarked, however, people would not be satisfied unless there were "plenty of the trombone and big drum." And very likely he is right, only we cannot help thinking that, in justice to those who dissent from this view of the subject, it would be better to confine the performances of the band to some open space where only those might assemble who wished to hear it. Would it not also be possible to set apart a portion of the town where pianofortes for practice could be provided at so much an hour—a sort of musical gymnasium which should be kept exclusively for the exercise of little fingers? Of course we know that we are bound to put up with certain inconveniences when away from home, but we are not prevented from grumbling at them; and many fellow-sufferers will, we are sure, thank us for our suggestions. If what is known as "seaside music" must continue, every well-trained person should certainly learn to bear it like a man, but, as Macduff tells Malcolm, he must also "feel it as a man."

EXPERIENCE has proved that nothing is so easy to obtain as a "testimonial" to the efficacy of an instrument designed to facilitate teaching; for many persons, partly from a laudable desire that the