

THE Musical Times

ESTABLISHED IN 1844

Thomas Wingham

Author(s): Louis N. Parker

Source: *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, Vol. 34, No. 603 (May 1, 1893), pp. 270-272

Published by: [Musical Times Publications Ltd.](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3364855>

Accessed: 30/01/2015 14:58

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Musical Times Publications Ltd. is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

From Balfe to Bunn is an easy transition, and a letter of the librettist to E. T. Smith shows that, in 1856, Smith was looking out for a country residence, with Bunn as a kind of "lion's provider." Here is an extract:

I have made the necessary enquiries, as you suggested, about Tor Abbey—it should be seen at once. As you can command a railway pass, if you will get one, I will run down.

If I remember aright, Smith subsequently became the Lord of Branksea Island, with the castle thereupon, and displayed the banner of his illustrious family from the highest turret.

Another easy transition brings me to a letter of Fitzball, also addressed to E. T. Smith. It is dated November 24, 1863, and written from Great Charlotte Street, Blackfriars Road:—

MY DEAR SMITH,—I ought, perhaps, to tell you that I left my "Poor Dog Tray" at your place, but did not have the pleasure of seeing Miss Nicholson, which was a great disappointment, believe me. As regards the melodrama, if you do not see your way in it at Christmas (or any other time) let me have it back if you please, as I have no copy of it, and the Victoria people, I think, would go to some expense about it. The storm, and the dog, and the shipwreck would draw all London, especially after the pantomime. I wrote a little book on the subject, seventy copies of which were purchased in a boys' school at Kensington within a few weeks, so, you see, the story is well known even in our neighbourhood, and the *Era* strongly recommends it for a drama.

Sad muddle at English Op. ! I told Wallace he'd never have such good luck as with the old poet of "Maritana" and "Lurline."

I wonder if you will read this.

Dear Smith, ever truly yours,
FITZ.

Even Fitzball had a "star" and faith in it.

X.

MUSIC AND MANNERS.

WHEN glancing through some American papers not long since, a contributor to this journal saw that a Californian "professor" had been lecturing upon the flute, and giving illustrations upon five different examples of that instrument. A note was made of the fact, and, at the end of his short paragraph our contributor wrote "Shade of Cherubini!"—the reference being, of course, to the Florentine master's monosyllabic reply when asked what was worse than one flute. In an evil hour, this harmless pleasantry came under the notice of the Californian "professor," whose natural satisfaction upon finding his name in a European journal gave way to a torrent of wrath called up by what he regarded as a sneer at the instrument of his choice. Laying down the flute, the "professor" took up the pen, and, addressing by name the Editor of THE MUSICAL TIMES, unburdened his soul of much vulgar abuse, and also of a threat that unless the Editor apologised he would be shown up here in London as unworthy of his post and a disgrace to his profession. We treated the letter with the ridicule it amply deserved.

While waiting resignedly for the fulfilment of the Californian threat, there was some interest in speculation as to the precise channel through which punishment would flow. It now appears that the "professor" honoured *Musical News* with his choice, urged thereto, perhaps, by the mysterious sense of affinity which often exerts an influence upon human action. The Californian avenger seems to have had no difficulty with our contemporary. He sent a copy

of his letter to some English sympathiser (who wisely, if not bravely, conceals his name), and this congenial accessory embodied it in an epistle of his own, which *Musical News* published.

We dismiss the "professor," but must address a few words of gentle remonstrance to our young, eager, and not otherwise contemporary. The remonstrance shall be gentle because maturity should have patience with youth, and with its "heavenly ignorance of what is called the world, and the world's ways." We cannot suppose that *Musical News* was altogether unaware of the fact that to assail an editor by name, unless that name be avowed, amounts to a flagrant breach of journalistic etiquette. Some of our contemporary's more severe critics protest that it has not yet quite mastered the orthography and syntax of the English language, but it surely has had time enough for elementary acquaintance with the rules of the Press. That *Musical News*, knowing what was right, did wrong, we attribute to want of judgment—

"The youth . . .
Yielding like wax, th' impressive folly bears."—

and also to boyish love of a row. Such shortcomings must be looked upon with a tolerant eye. We were all young and foolish once. The case, however, calls for counsel. We do not mean Queen's Counsel (although gentlemen of the long robe have often been set in action by conduct less libellous), we mean kindly advice, such as we now proceed to give.

Musical News should not mix itself up in other people's quarrels. If a Californian flute player find cause of offence in the editor of this journal, what is that to our contemporary? To meddle is to run the risk of chastisement unrelieved by sympathy. Neither should *Musical News* open its columns to vulgar abuse of people with whom it has no dispute. It cannot desire the unsavoury distinction of a *Cloaca Maxima*. Nor should *Musical News* descend to offensive personalities directed against gentlemen engaged upon a contemporary. It is bad enough to do this in the case of any gentleman whatever, but even an elementary sense of decency and politic behaviour might induce a journal to refrain from throwing mud at persons connected with what is, in some sort, a rival enterprise. Our young contemporary will, we trust, ponder these words, and behave better in future. Meanwhile, we suggest that its present ardent and scarcely responsible spirits should submit to the guidance of some staid and prudent journalist, familiar not only with the etiquette of the profession, but also with the rules which govern the intercourse of gentlemen.

THOMAS WINGHAM.

By LOUIS N. PARKER.

At first we were students together—he at the top of the ladder and I just timidly putting my foot on the lowest rung. He was very earnest, very grave, very ascetic in his ways of thought, and I suppose the violent contrast in our natures drew us together, for very soon after our first meeting, when he favoured me with a quietly sarcastic reproof for wearing a tie of too worldly a colour for the halls of Academe, we were inseparable. It was, to be sure, an unpromising beginning for a friendship which proved lifelong; but I suppose I showed such penitence for my frivolous taste in neck-cloths that he could not but see I had a better nature than appeared on the surface. Those old days at the Academy were very delightful. Somehow the sun used to shine more brightly then, the trees in the parks as we walked homewards of a summer evening—it was summer all the year round, I remember—wore a fresher green, and all the geese

on the ponds were swans indubitable. I was firmly convinced in those halcyon days that the greatest achievement of the human mind was an opera libretto—the greatest, that is to say, next to the composition of the music—and I persuaded Wingham that the short road to glory for both of us was by means of a grand opera. We did not, either of us, trouble our heads at all about such sordid details as what we were to do with our great work when it was finished; I daresay we imagined that all the *impresarii* of Europe would leave whatever they were doing and rush to secure the prize. We both had, afterwards, many opportunities of learning that when *impresarii* hear there is a new opera in any particular spot they rush in the opposite direction. But it was the period of dreams, and we fed full on them. Wingham was then, in a very beautiful sense, the favourite pupil of Sir Sterndale Bennett. The old class-room in which Bennett taught—spoken of by the students who had no access to it in awful whispers as the Committee Room—was occupied one morning every week by an enthusiastic band of young composers who were all going to do marvellous things some day. Alas, where are the snows of yester-year? The only one who in any degree justified his own hopes was Thomas Wingham—and he is dead. There we used to sit, some of us perhaps little appreciating our privilege, and listen to Sir Sterndale's gentle voice. I have met many men since whom the world calls great, but I have never met any man with so gentle a manner, with so glowing an enthusiasm, with so delicate yet brilliant a wit, or with such absolute mastery of his subject. Wingham was more than a mere pupil; he was the beloved disciple of the great master, and their conferences were not like a lesson between teacher and learner, but like an interchange of thought between kindred minds. We others sat by, only too glad to let our wretched imitation sonatas and pinchbeck anthems be forgotten, and listened while the old great man and the young man who, we believed, had all the elements of greatness, discussed the masterpieces of dead and living composers. Bennett every now and then would jump up with a "Do you remember—?" and play long extracts from forgotten operas or symphonies with that exquisite touch of his which died with him. The pianoforte was turned by the magician into an orchestra and chorus and a miraculous galaxy of soloists who took no liberties with their composer. And when Wingham and I walked home together after one of these lessons we trod on clouds, and it is no marvel that two impressionable young men thought the world was their oyster. Then the opera would rise in our thoughts again, and we would hammer away at plots. In those days the Academy was given over body and soul to Weber, and it was quite natural that we should struggle with romantic subjects which far out-did "Euryanthe" in an accumulation of horrors. I have that youthful libretto by me now. It seems strange in the cold light of middle age that two young men, who to all outward seeming were no madder than their mates, should for one moment have thought there was any sort of merit in such a farrago of nonsense. I don't know whether Wingham composed any of the music to "Love's Burthen," as the great work was called. But I do know it afforded an excuse for a delightful trip abroad. "Love's Burthen" was all about Charlemagne and feudal castles, and Egginhard the minstrel, and such matters, and it was obviously necessary that we should go and study up our subject on the spot. At Cologne we were hospitably entertained by Ferdinand Hiller, who was then Principal of the Cologne Conservatoire. The mere fact that we came from the Royal Academy of Music seemed to commend itself to him as a reason for overwhelming

us with kind attentions. These foreigners have a way of being kind on the slightest excuse. Then we visited a good many of the old-world watering-places, the names of half of which are unfamiliar to most people now-a-days, such as Schwalbach, Schlangenbad, Ems, Kreuznach, Bertrich. But mostly Wingham's interest was centred in the gorgeous cathedrals of the Rhineland; and I remember that after a great night at Freiburg im Breisgau, where my old fellow-students had insisted on giving us an Ehren-Punsch, he got up at a weird hour in the morning to make a pilgrimage to Strasburg. It was the festival of a great Saint, and he could not resist the temptation of being present. For already his mind was made up concerning the change of religion which he embraced soon afterwards, and I have no doubt that the contemplation of so many masterpieces of mediæval architecture and of the outward tokens of a simple, thorough-going old-world faith which met him on every hand, had a great influence in hastening that change. In no case has such a determination been the result of deeper conviction, and I should say that in very few cases has the convert passed through a much severer ordeal or paid a much greater price for the courage of his opinion. Soon after our return from our little vacation ramble our paths took us far apart, but our friendship suffered no diminution. Wingham remained in London, and many of the honours which music holds in store for its servants gradually fell to his share. He was a professor in all the musical institutions of any repute; but however distinguished his position became, he was never above running down to the pleasant townlet in which I was "labouring," and playing the organ or the pianoforte or the kettle-drums in our modest orchestra. Meanwhile composition went on slowly. I should imagine it is not known to many what a mountain of manuscripts he has left behind. Who, for instance, has heard his Choral Symphony? And who, again, knows much about his opera "Nala and Damayanti"? One would like to know what has become of that? The libretto was written by Mrs. Oscar Beringer, and a great deal of the music was finished in sketch form years ago. Has it ever been orchestrated?

Wingham's career as a composer furnishes much food for reflection, and should be taken to heart by all young students who are to-day looking with eager eyes into the future, where they see visions of glory and worldly reward. He was a man of exquisitely delicate fancy, his melodic gift was distinguished, his learning was deep, the modern orchestra had no secrets for him, and his ideals were lofty. He never turned aside for a moment to write *ad captandum* ballads, he never for a moment made derogatory terms with vulgar popularity, and always he carried about in his mind plans for large and broad compositions in the grand classical style. Now he was planning a symphony, now a quartet, now a concerto, or again an opera. The Philharmonic Concerts were open to him, and Mr. Manns was his staunch friend and admirer. And yet to how few people outside his own circle is he known, excepting as an admirable teacher and, perhaps, as the Director of the music at the Brompton Oratory? Granting his genius, he should by rights have been one of the glories of musical England. Why has he fallen short of that? I venture to think because he got into the whirlpool of teaching and examining which devours so many of our brightest talents. His responsibilities were onerous, and as he was a man of honour he shirked none of them. Two paths lay open to him: either to live for his art or to live for his duties. He chose the latter, and among his friends and those who were dependent on him his memory will be all the sweeter for his choice; but I think his own artistic development

was hindered thereby, and I am sure the world is the loser. Social life in England absorbs artistic life and—bitter as it is to say—it seems almost impossible to be at the same time a great artist and a good citizen, unless one has independent means or scorns delights and lives laborious days. Wingham's day was laborious enough in all conscience, but he spent himself on others. His pupils have absorbed what was meant for mankind. It is their duty, as I am sure it will be their joy, to see that his fame does not suffer, to do what they can to bring the compositions he left behind into prominence, perhaps to help him to posthumous popularity.

MR. F. G. EDWARDS read, on the 22nd ult., an interesting and amusing paper on "Some musical haunts in London," before the members of the South-Eastern section of the Incorporated Society of Musicians. Mr. Edwards has the true spirit of the antiquary that can find romance in an ancient ledger and that makes the searching of dusty tomes and the revival of forgotten incidents concerning men of cherished memory a duty and delight. Thus on this occasion many tales were told and remarks made about various London houses in which geniuses had dreamed and fretted, and performed life's ordinary duties more or less faithfully. Amongst the places mentioned were Thomas Britton's upper room over his little coal shop in Clerkenwell, in which may be said to have originated "Chamber Concerts"; "Crosby Hall," where Mr. Dando held some of the earliest "quartet parties," and where Mendelssohn's Motet "Hear my Prayer" was first performed; and "The Hoop and Horseshoe" Inn, near the Mint, where Wagner, in 1839, spent his first night in London with "his little wife and a big Newfoundland dog." Exeter Hall naturally called forth many recollections. It seems that when the Sacred Harmonic Society asked permission to hold their concerts there they were refused, until the secretary discovered that music was a science; upon which, and the rent being guaranteed, the Society were allowed to use the hall on condition that the music was of a sacred character and that no applause was permitted. Other notable houses referred to were Mr. Cousins's, "hair-cutter," in Cecil Court, near the National Gallery, where the Mozart family lodged on their first visit to England; and their subsequent apartments in "Thrift," now "Frith" Street, Soho, where "Master Mozart" gave a Concert of which it was announced that "The price for each person is five shillings, or else to take the sonatas composed by this boy and dedicated to Her Majesty (price 10s. 6d.), which he has had the honour of performing many times before their Majesties." Of course, Mr. Edwards had much to say concerning Great Pulteney Street and the long list of celebrities who had frequented Messrs. Broadwood's. How this firm was established by one Burkhardt Tschudi, a Swiss, in 1732, and how one of his journey-men named John Broadwood won a partner and a partnership in his daughter "Barbara." Many interesting details were also given about the old Argyll Rooms in Regent Street which were burnt February 6, 1830; and concerning the Hanover Square Rooms, both at one time the home of the Philharmonic Society. But the remarks most valuable in results were made in reference to Great Portland Street, where Weber, the guest of Sir George Smart, died in 1826. Mr. Edwards expressed a hope that a commemorative tablet would be placed upon this house, now No. 103, and thought that the Society before whom he was speaking should take the matter in hand; a proposition which met with so

cordial a response that, at the suggestion of Mr. W. H. Cummings, it was unanimously decided to at once take the necessary steps to ensure this being done.

It was not to be expected that the article on Congregational Music, which appeared recently in these pages, would escape severe criticism at the hands of private correspondents and the public press. We do not propose to reply to these in detail. It may be as well, however, to point out to our readers that church music may be viewed from two totally different standpoints: some see in it only a *useful* element of public worship, others consider it as being *in itself* an offering to Almighty God: those who hold the former view naturally become warm advocates of the congregational style; those who hold the latter just as naturally think that, as an offering of the soul and mind, church music cannot be too beautiful *as a work of art*. Our ancestors certainly thought that a work of art was a worthy offering to God when they raised our splendid cathedrals. Westminster Abbey is, without doubt, not so well adapted for congregational worship as Exeter Hall or Spurgeon's Tabernacle, but it was built as a beautiful gift to God, not as something which would be very useful to a crowd. This is no doubt a mediæval—perhaps it may even be called a sentimental—view, quite unsuited to the closing years of the nineteenth century; but, nevertheless, those who hold it are deserving of some consideration and respect. Just as church music may be gradually reduced to a Moody and Sankey level by a consistent endeavour to spread its utility, so also the art of architecture may be gradually dispensed with until we arrive at a four-square brick building with large round-headed windows, containing within huge galleries on three sides, while the fourth is devoted to the rostrum of the minister; and this cheap and useful place of worship is a true exponent of *congregational architecture*. May *congregational music* shun the example! Some critics have credited the author of the article with an assumption that "church music was invented for the sake of the art of music." This he neither stated nor assumed; indeed, such a statement would be as silly as to say that "churches were invented for the benefit of architects." Such an assumption is in fact merely one of those straw men which disputants set up in order to show how cleverly they can knock them down. On the whole, it seems desirable that we should have amongst us men who value highly artistic church music and dread to see its existence threatened, as well as those who come forward as champions of congregational singing.

THE announcement that Samuel Sebastian Wesley's "Wilderness" is to be performed, with orchestral accompaniment, at the approaching Bristol Festival recalls a similar presentation of that noble work at the Birmingham Festival of 1852, when the composer conducted, and Madame Clara Novello, Miss M. Williams, Mr. Locket, and Herr Formes were the solo vocalists. Wesley's anthem, which immediately followed the first performance of Mendelssohn's "Christus," failed to meet with the approval of *The Times* critic. "Deficient in melody," said the leading journal, "confused in harmony and part-writing, full of intricate combinations and 'modulation run mad,' it by no means gives a true expression to the text which it is intended to illustrate." The *Athenæum* joined in a similar strain, saying: "It is a weak, tiresome and pedantic exercise, not likely to be again heard of." *The Times* criticism naturally