

The European War and Its Influence on the Evolution of Musical Tendencies in France

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But if we admit the truth of this story, how much more may such musical telepathy reveal to us meanings which are purely psychical, as in 'Prometheus'? But of this work I forbore to speak! 'In his youth at any rate Scriabin was a man of extremes,' continued Safonoff; 'I remember telling him once, just before we parted for the holidays, that his touch was equal to all exquisitely ethereal and alluringly tender effects, but that it wanted deepening. When he came back to the Conservatoire and struck a few chords on the pianoforte it was like two orchestras backed by a thunderstorm. "Good heavens, my dear boy, what have you been doing?" I exclaimed. "Well, you told me to deepen my touch," he answered, rather aggrieved. But, blending these extremes, Scriabin became at maturity one of the most perfectly equipped pianists I ever heard. He could do anything with his instrument, and his pedalisation was something of a miracle.'

This brings me to Safonoff himself as a pianist. Although his subsequent fame as an interpretative conductor has eclipsed his earlier reputation as an executant, those who have never heard him play his chosen instrument have missed a real musical joy. His playing is of the 'legitimate' type; clear-cut, richly sonorous, yet judiciously restrained (he keeps his orchestral effects for his conducting), never harsh or violent, and informed by tenderness and a sense of humour. If he gave a series of recitals pianists would learn much from them, especially the true art of legato playing. But he says, 'At my age to reappear as a virtuoso would be absurd.' Reminded that he and Pugno were born in the same year, he still shakes his head and replies, 'I will only take part in chamber music, thus far and no further will I return to the past.' Well, *si jeunesse pouvait*, one would not perhaps so deeply regret the retirement of the elders who both *know* and *can*.

Safonoff intends to publish very shortly the results of many years' experience as a teacher of the pianoforte. This is not the place in which to give a forecast of the contents of his closely-reasoned, simple, yet very novel formula for acquiring technical skill without the hours of monotonous practice that kills the enthusiasm and dulls the intelligence of many students. The book will need an article to itself. But it may be said that it provides a logical system for the attainment of complete independence of the fingers; rules for the playing of scales whereby they are made to serve at the same time as exercises in rhythm and in the practice of *legato* and *staccato* touch; together with many other ideas, evolved from personal experimentation, which, while keeping the student's mental attention always on the alert, make mechanical, drudging, piano-pounding a sheer impossibility.

Some day it is to be hoped that Safonoff will also write his autobiography. It will be packed with interesting, sincere, and witty things. The memoir of a strong man who has lived an exuberantly active life, who has fought and achieved, sown

his field, and reaped a full harvest of widespread influence—a harvest which we hope will be happily recurrent through many a season to come.

## THE EUROPEAN WAR AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE EVOLUTION OF MUSICAL TENDENCIES IN FRANCE.

BY PÉTRO J. PÉTRIDIS.

In the throes of the gigantic and terrible struggle now shaking the foundations of the great European States, music and the problems concerning its creation and evolution are dwarfed to unimportance. A whirlwind of death sweeps away men by the thousand, holding the rest under a crushing weight of agony and despair. The pacific activities that radiate from normal national life, as from a common trunk, are kept in breathless suspense.

At the flash of fire and steel, fine arts, dealing with the higher and more refined elements of man's consciousness, took a hasty refuge in remote studios and solitary private music-rooms. Art is, indeed, like a sunflower that turns its jovial disk toward the sun of peace after the still dawn of a warm and fruitful summer day. Frost or tempest kills it down until coming spring. Music, more than any other art, is the flower crowning a healthy stem that holds to the soil with a thousand vital threads. A shaken lump of earth, a bleeding stem, will give us no flower or faded petals only. The old soil of Europe is beaten hard and flooded in blood. Shall, therefore, music perish? If not, what lines of evolution shall it follow under the spur of actual circumstances? The object of this study is to plot with what data we have the curve of evolution of the musical tendencies in France. To achieve this object in the simplest way, I will start with a few introductory remarks of a rather general nature on the influence any single personality can exert on music, and then proceed to comment on four main factors that have been formative in the development of modern French musical art.

Of all evolving human activities those springing from consciousness are the less submitted to precise observation. Psychical facts are indeed far from being definitely settled. Music, dealing with an æsthetic combination of sounds and rhythms in view of an architectonic construction of ideas and feelings that emanate in sonorous lines from our inner self, is probably the most abstract and the most subjective fine art. Though not exempt from the operation of fundamental laws that presided over its birth and its historical evolution, it nevertheless lies to a considerable extent at the mercy of a man's genius. Every great master has forced into music such combinations of sounds, such expansion of forms, as were utterly inadmissible hardly a score of years before his time; and of all arts that have broken the moulds of classic age, there is not one I think that can compare with the startling evolution of what is

called the science of harmony. This violent liberation of harmony from certain conventional rules is by no means at an end. Every spring season in Paris offers us fresh proofs of this boiling mania for dissonances. We often ask ourselves the question whether it be not nonsensical to study scholastic composition. This gradual elimination of the rigorous principles of composition that save the mediocre composer from writing very bad music, is concurrent with an ever-increasing domination of personal taste. Taste, indeed, and architectonic conception become the chief criteria of musical composition. These elements of appreciation and especially the former being innate, subjective, and refractory to any strict law, we come back to our former assertion that musical composition more than any other form of self-expression bears the impress of a creative mind. The direction a great composer gives to music is of course to a certain extent the resultant of an historical evolution which dimly suggests the path genius explores. The indirect influences of the War will be stamped on the generations to come through physical and moral indices that will become racial and innate, betraying this great human commotion. Their study is the work of posterity. To us is left the examination of the second point, namely, the direct impetus the War can give to individuals who are actually going through the ordeal of the grand crisis. It is quite certain that no external forces whatever can make a man a genius if he has not been born capable of incarnating these forces and expressing them in art. The War may lift some men to certain high conceptions, but others, equally able, may not be at all affected. History offers examples on both sides. The 'Persians' of Æschylus seems an inspiration from Salamis. But on the other hand we see in Greece that the long series of contentions started by the Peloponnesian War, the successive campaigns of growing Rome, the innumerable wars of the Byzantine Empire, the secular religious struggles in Europe, the wars following the French Revolution, and those of the Napoleonic Era, had no appreciable effect on contemporary art. Furthermore, by an interesting side-look, we observe that amidst the whirlwind of mediæval invasions, the birth of the Gothic Style appears to be the creation of an awed and mystified Christian soul in its heavenward expansion. Italian, as well as Dutch painting, owes very much to the excessive comfort and well-being of the cities that saw its birth and development. And the wars are few that spare men pain and misery. This War, more than any other, devours innumerable youthful victims and buries endless ruins in deserts of ashes. The external circumstances drawing thus very close to the worst, we may feel hopeless as to whether the War will give any generative impulse to contemporary artists. *A fortiori*, it would elude the shrewdest observer to foresee any possible changes music may undergo under the influence of a hopelessly expected war-made genius. We may therefore pass to the examination of the four factors which,

when the cannon may no more boom, will normally influence the evolution of French musical art.

#### I.—PATRIOTISM AS AN ART STIMULUS.

Intense patriotism is evidently the most pervading mood of the present time. This supreme concentration upon ourselves and our homes naturally eliminates to a certain extent other more universal feelings. The predominance of patriotic frenzy over these larger and more human feelings, and the constant self-picturing of battles and of heroes, will probably stifle for a time artistic creation of a high rank. If there be any, it will more or less exclusively be fed on emotions dealing with the love for country, the heroic deeds of admirable men, and other similar ideas. War and patriotism have, indeed, rarely been a direct source of art. This assertion may seem paradoxical at first sight, for the greatest epic monuments of the world, the Homeric poems, are currently considered to constitute a series of beautiful battle and hero pictures. The Iliad contains, in fact, many a stirring battle story, and the verses are not scarce where the poet sings Achilles' exploits, Ulysses' cunning, or Nestor's sweet word. But art, though not despising these subjects, cannot fence its range of action in the circle of a single man's activities, however marvellous these may be. The Iliad and the Odyssey corroborate the above-mentioned paradoxical statement. Their most beautiful pages deal with some of the human feelings having no direct relation with martial or patriotic events: the admiration of the old men for Hélène's beauty, the friendship between Achilles and Patroclus, the conjugal tenderness of Hector and Andromache, who smiles through her tears, finally the sublime twenty-fourth song of the Iliad, where Priam goes to the tent of Achilles to beg him render the corpse of his son. Music, more than poetry, draws nearer to abstraction and cannot restrain its field of inquiry in an individual's personality. It can mostly praise a high principle ushered in or sustained by a hero. Such is the 'Heroic' Symphony of Beethoven, which is an ode to liberty as proclaimed by Napoleon. But Beethoven's imagination outranged by far the limits of any man's physical form. His dominant desire was to paint the divine or devilish spark that flashed in Napoleon. This being not understood, but felt, we may not be wrong if we presume to assert that for Beethoven the beautiful goes quite beyond the concrete admiration for a single man. Even his intense attachment to his Rhine-Fatherland was little expressed in his music. Patriotism, in fact, is but a temporary and restricted inspiration. Real art, being universal and eternal, can by no means be limited by the temporary and local character of patriotism. Talented French composers will therefore very soon rise above the patriotic flood. Admiration for a prominent man of the day may lead to such compositions as the 'Heroic Lullaby' of M. Debussy or the 'Française' of M. Saint-Saëns. The former is dedicated to King Albert of Belgium. It contains the first theme of the Belgian National Anthem.

Beauty of sound evidently cannot be denied to this 'Lullaby.' The question, however, that interests us is, whether the piece is real art. Time of course will answer that. For the rest, it being a tiny exception opening no path for a patriotic school of composition, we may safely say that true and profound music will not undergo in France any patriotic invasion. Thus, by itself and directly, patriotism will have no significant influence on the evolution of the musical tendencies in France.

## II.—THE ELIMINATION OF TEUTONIC MUSIC.

Though of itself not a lasting influence, patriotism has nevertheless given a mighty impulse to certain other tendencies which are destined to mould the basis of modern French music. The first of these tendencies—the complete ostracism of German music from French programmes—constitutes the second factor of our study. A retrospective glance at the musical performances in France during recent pre-war years reveals a rapidly swelling flood of German music. A Beethoven Symphony and at least two Wagner fragments were the *sine qua non* of any serious symphonic concert programme. Along with these great masters, modern German composers like Richard Strauss, Humperdinck, Mahler and others had also an ever-increasing share in the task of pleasing the French public, very often in spite of itself. The national Opéra did only due justice by giving at least two Wagner representations per week. The 'Salome' of Richard Strauss had already been warmly applauded, and it was stated that the 'Rosenkavalier' of this composer was under rehearsal for the ensuing winter. Hardly had the extraordinary 'Parsifal' series come to a relative *rallentando*, when the Anglo-American Opera Company (Boston and Covent Garden combined) announced, along with some modern Italian pieces of doubtful value, an extraordinary Wagner series, interpreted by some of the German Opera stars under the direction of the Leipzig masters Felix Weingartner and Arthur Nikisch. Their 'Parsifal' was an utter failure. On the contrary the 'Mastersingers of Nürnberg' and 'Tristan' were performed with wonderful skill and deep feeling. To this sweeping German musical invasion, great French masters of the calibre of Berlioz, Franck, Lalo, Chabrier, Chausson and others, had only a pure genius to oppose. They lacked the industrial organization of the Germans, who flooded the world market with good and accessible editions of classic and modern music, and who dazzled the French public by ingeniously exploiting the splendour that justly surrounds names like Bayreuth, Dresden, Leipzig. The imposing political and military situation of the German Empire was naturally of great help in facilitating the musical Germanization of the world. Under this colossal pressure, the rising French composers were not happier than their predecessors in pushing their way through. State regulations ordain the compulsory performance of a certain

number of works of living French musicians at the Paris Opéra and at subsidised concerts. This limitation was kept strictly at its minimum, to the utmost desolation of all talented young men who dared aim at a great creative career. Men like Ravel, Dupont (who died young, in August, 1914), Florent Schmitt, and Paul Dukas, were relegated to concerts given with limited resources. Even M. Debussy had to offer his latest works at Saturday night performances of a rather intimate character. This saturated atmosphere had to be cleared. The case was almost hopeless until the War broke out. And then, under the auspices of M. Saint-Saëns, whose vehement anti-German articles published in the *Echo de Paris* exercised great influence on music-teachers and the popular mind, what in time of peace seemed an utter impossibility was turned into an accomplished fact. From that time onwards in France we have heard no German music whatever. Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner are rigorously excluded from all programmes. Is the fact justifiable? Should it be approved? These are questions not to be answered as yet. The point that highly interests our study is that much good and bad music rushed in to fill up the enormous gaps left by the wholesale elimination of the voluminous German musical literature. We had, therefore, the chance of coming into closer contact with the modern French school. We thus appreciated its intrinsic qualities and its evolutionary tendencies. Such an intimate communion of the French soul with its pure creations awakened in all minds the very simple notion that music is the joyful or sad, amorous or distressed cry of a nation, and through it of humanity at large. That, consequently, it springs up from the innermost recesses of man's soul. It therefore gushes forth in forms that originally responded to the outburst of popular feeling whether in dance, in mourning, or in prayer. In fact, all the various forms of our classic and modern musical language evolved from the motet or the madrigal. The real sources of sincere music thus clearly set before our eyes, all attempts that try to implant in a national structure musical tissues whose roots lie far away under different skies, are destined to fail or to flourish only temporarily. The recent history of music affords us a very conclusive example. A group of first-rate masters tried, more or less consciously, to acclimatize German music in Russia. Their effort failed utterly under the pressure of the genius of Moussorgsky and Borodin, whose music reflects the endless Steppes, the shores of the Volga, the naive gaiety and the deep religious feeling of the Russian people. Could any German musician offer to the melancholy and passionate Slav the wild Polovtsian Dances of 'Prince Igor'? This psychological truth, being of a universal character, can equally be applied to the case at hand. Could German music satisfy wholly and permanently the French soul? M. Debussy answers the question. In a short article in the *Intransigent* entitled 'Finally alone!' he says:



We know that music will soon take up again her magnificent consoling task interrupted by this War. We think even that she will come out of this fire-ordeal purer, stronger, and brighter. The fortune of our arms must have its immediate echo in the next chapter of our history of art. We must finally understand that victory brings a necessary liberation to the French musical conscience.

For many a year I continually preached that for a century and a-half we have been faithless to the musical tradition of our race. It is true that people have often mystified the public by offering as pure French traditions any tendency in fashion that could claim no right to this beautiful title. By veiling and hampering the fine blossoms of our art's genealogical tree how many parasitic vegetations have misled the careless observer! Our indulgence for the naturalised has gone beyond limits.

In fact, since Rameau, we have no more a purely French tradition. His death broke Ariadne's thread that led us into the labyrinth of the past. We have since stopped cultivating our garden, and welcomed, on the contrary, the travelling-merchants of the whole world. We respectfully listened to their idle talk, and bought their cheap stuff. We felt ashamed of our most precious qualities as soon as they contrived to smile at them. We offered excuses to the universe to justify our liking of buoyant clarity, and raised anthems to profundity. We adopted writing processes that are most contrary to our spirit, excesses of language by no means compatible with our thought. We tolerated the overcharges of orchestra, the torture of forms, the uncouth luxury, and the shrill colours, and we were very nearly signing some more suspect naturalizations when the cannon claimed the word.

Let us learn how to understand its brutal eloquence. On the day that all the virtues of our race are exalted, victory must render to the artists the sense of the purity and the nobility of French blood. We have got to conquer a whole intellectual province. That is why, at the moment that destiny turns the page, music must be patient and meditative before she breaks the moving silence that will follow the explosion of the last shell.

We have here the apologia of one of the great masters of our day. M. Debussy confesses that French musicians have been faithless to their tradition. He furthermore urges them to turn to the French folklore and musical tradition, that eternal and true mother of inspiration. First of all, he and his school will sincerely try to shift the trend of their creative evolution into the proper line so neatly projected by himself. The task is evidently very hard after a secular deviation that offered to the world so many beautiful works. But a fair trial will doubtless set on the true and right track those of the rising artists who have not as yet found their way towards the realization of their creative selves. This effort will soon be seconded by others pushing on in the same direction. And the universal tendency will finally be in tune with the sound and true principles so vigorously ushered in by the artistic and didactic influence of M. Vincent d'Indy and his school. The best critics are not fighting this trend of French music. M. Pierre Lalo has for years been pointing out to musicians the error of their snobism. He has not missed the occasion to drive the point home again. Writing in the *Temps*, he says:

What will be in France, after the end of this war, the tendencies and the destinies of musical art? After such a formidable commotion that shall have embraced the whole nation down to the most intimate depths of its being, there will be in music, as everywhere else, a

great transformation. Life and spirit will not be what they were formerly; we shall no more be what we have been; we are no more so already. In the face of the enemy,—his race, his culture, and his force organized against us for our ruin and reduction into servitude,—considering the unprecedented gravity of the day's events, there is none of us that has not felt more or less clearly the need and the duty to bring to life in himself the national sense in all its fullness; to understand and love better the ideas and the feelings that are purely of French essence; to free, to deliver them of strange manners of thinking and feeling as well as of those decadent affectations under which we had left them to die. There is none of us that has not already felt these dead fruits break off and fall away. What other fruits, bred on the best of our sap, shall to-morrow supplant the former? It is impossible not to think of it, not to be busy with it, and not to prepare the future. It is a kind of large test of conscience of the whole nation, a test out of which new France will spring. Music must also participate in it.

Developing his thesis M. Pierre Lalo dwells on the existence of French music, its clarity, its sobriety, its vividness, its sense of order, of measure and of proportion; its grandeur without emphasis, its sensibility, its precision of form. He traces the popular origin of this music, and follows its evolution through the centuries. He then examines the results of German influence, and ends by showing its gradual elimination.

It is very probable, indeed, that the period of Wagner-imitation, already drawing close to its end, will soon disappear, and that Wagner's influence will subsist in the general measure in which a man of genius has any bearing on the historical development of art. What interests us is the fact that, whether under the spur of patriotism or that of fatal evolution of art, or under both, musical France is conscious of her wanderings of the last years and of the right path to follow. This path,—as already indicated, and avowed unanimously by those who to-day create music and musicians in France,—leads to a close contact with pure French folk-lore and musical tradition, and thence to a great Music that shall reflect a splendid past and a glorious present.

### III.—THE INFLUENCE OF RUSSIAN MUSIC.

The third factor of influence on French music is of foreign origin. Though working slowly for perhaps a score of years, the influence of the Russian school has become obvious during the last few years. It is therefore previous to the outbreak of the War. But curious to note, it coincides with the intimacy of political and social relations between Russia and France. Drawing from this intimacy the certainty of a preassured manifold success, the Russian ballets year after year flooded Paris programmes with their old and new musical and decorative exhibitions. The fantastic lines and the extravagant colour-combinations of decorative painters such as Leo Bakst and others had an immediate effect upon the corresponding art in France. 'High-life' fashion could by no means resist such an invasion. It yielded thoroughly, and we beheld toils of unspeakable colour-blending, of amusing lines, and of ultra-Oriental loose swing. These Russian elements were easily perceivable in French life.

But the musical penetration of Russian influence is not so easily perceptible, and needs for its discovery close acquaintanceship with the latest French music. It has not as yet taken any form, but flickers like an *ignis fatuus*. We can, nevertheless, observe the Russian influence if we look where it is at work. Though in a veiled way, we see it in the flow and the rhythm of melodic line. The delicate French melody—slightly tending to half-conscious sentimentality—is tempered by the sober and monotonous note of Slav melancholy. On the other hand, the light and elegant orchestrating spirit of the French is considerably tinted by brilliant Rimsky-Korsakov-like tinkling infusions. The positively set out musical ideas and phrases that so faithfully reflect the rationalistic essence of French mind, absorb slowly the loose easy-going bent of Oriental imagination. Even the latest over-complicated tendencies of some living Russian masters found imitators and expounders in France.

Up to this point the Russian influence has been working in a positive way, but it is interesting to observe that it is also acting in a negative or destructive way. To understand this point, we must first settle another matter seemingly foreign to our subject but essentially homogeneous with it. Russians, in spite of their pretensions, have not been able to create a purely Russian architectural style. Most of the fundamental elements of their civilization, their architecture and their religious music at least, are of Byzantine or Greek origin. These extraneous elements, along with others purely local, were adapted into the organized whole that forms the Russian civilization of to-day. But Russia could not do more. Its music has been evolved in a rather haphazard way by masters of incontestable genius. Yet there is lacking in this music an architecture that would make it a living monument, reflecting an organized society, in the way German or French communities are reflected by their respective music. Instead of attempting to construct this monument Russian masters seem to prefer free and adventurous flights to Arabian or Chinese magic gardens, and to create works on fantastic subjects and intents that have nothing whatever to do with the Russian soul. We have thus, instead of a monument erected on the hearth of Russian tradition and feeling, numberless single stones, some of which, beautifully carved,—but in crooked lines,—lead us to Bagdad, China, and wherenot. Whither elsewhere will Russian music move? We do not know. But we clearly see one fact, that this diluting process is felt in France. The Russian free and incoherent style attracts many composers, because it demands from them no previous study of French tradition, of literary subjects, of history, or of native art-work that would bring them in tune with the genius of the race, and perhaps add one more beautiful marble to the already erected monument of French music. In this direction Russian music is exercising a negative influence on French musical tendencies. This War, excluding for

a time German music and bringing in abundant Russian works, will surely strengthen the influence of the latter; but it may be hoped that the French, lovers as they are of system and proportion, will not be misled by the negative influence of the Russians, and that, profiting from what this young and vigorous school can give them, will go on cultivating their own garden.

#### IV.—ORIENTAL INFLUENCE.

The fourth factor of our study is of very recent origin, and stands almost isolated among other movements. It has not perhaps as yet the continuity necessary for any single fact to mark a tendency. It can however become one. I will therefore treat it under this suspensive condition. If classified, it may constitute one of the many radial deviations of French music. It consists in the fact that certain French masters choose an Oriental subject for their music, and desiring to be fair and true to this subject, they either live in the environment and collect the proper motives or they adapt to it their own more or less flexible inspiration. Many years ago, M. Saint-Saëns in his 'Samson and Delilah' had, quite successfully, tried this grafting experiment. Others have done so later. M. Rabaud gave us recently the latest example in the 'Marouf.' The work enjoyed a fair success, and is actually on the stage. It surely constitutes a characteristic fact and will have an after-effect. Some of the younger composers are also working on similar lines, and occasionally this tendency is decidedly marked. I cannot help associating this new phase of French music with the development of the African colonial policy of France. The contact of African elements is most clearly seen in contemporary French sculpture and still more in painting. Every year's Art Exposition offers us more and more works, inspired by the Oriental and especially by the North African world. Along with the other representatives of French civilization, investigating the various sides of the newly conquered colonies, the French artists try to feel these new landscapes, to observe human and animal structure and all that an artist's eye can catch. Similarly, M. Saint-Saëns has written his 'Algerian Suite' and M. Rabaud in his 'Marouf' dealt with Egyptian fairy-tale. There is taking place as in past epochs of history a general and mutual permeation between conqueror and conquered or, in modern terms, between civilizer and those being civilized. The French soldier conquers these new lands. Behind him the miner digs out the precious metal and the capitalist hastes to invest his money. The painter is taken by new colours and interesting lines. The sculptor is drawn by the bronzed bodies that freely move around or lie in neglectful pose. The composer retains melodies, rhythms and tones new to European ears, and, when at home, weaves them into harmonic tissue, and thus the main current of French music is constantly enriched by these side-streams. We have seen in the foregoing paragraphs that, until the War broke

out, French music, though strong and gushing, was itself a side-stream to the flood of Teutonic music.

In this article I have tried to show that the innumerable trenches dug out to stop the German invasion will also keep back the rush of the German musical flood, and to indicate in what direction the liberated French music may flow, and I have exposed the foreign elements of influence in their particular contact with French composition.

It may be the object of another article to study the universal eastward expansion of music: in other words, to treat what in recent terminology is called 'Orientalism in Music.'

Paris, July, 1915.

### Occasional Notes.

WAR TIME grants given for many years to the ECONOMY. Royal Academy of Music (£500), the Royal College of Music (£500), and the Royal Irish Academy of Music (£300) has occasioned some commotion in the quarters concerned. Mr. Pat O'Brien, M.P., raised the question in the House of Commons on December 13, but all in vain. Sir Charles Stanford writes to *The Times* (December 18) a long and strong letter of protest. We are afraid, however, that the general public will not be roused to feel very strongly on the subject. The R.A.M. and the R.C.M. cannot claim to be dependent on this amount, which is small in relation to their whole income from scholarships and other sources. The case of the Irish Academy is different. This very deserving institution has been disastrously crippled. Let us hope that in peace times there will be a great revulsion of feeling in favour of liberal encouragement of the Art that helps to make life worth living, and which during war time is affording so much inspiration and solace to innumerable persons.

Mr. Havergal Brian, in writing of STRANGLE THE the terrible Teutonic tendencies of GERMAN YOKE! our text-books, exclaims: 'Surely it is time we threw off the German musical yoke!' But surely also we should let the Germans have shells galore. With a fine disregard of consistency of metaphor Mr. Brian asks the 'English [why not the Scottish, &c.?] musical profession to rise up and strangle it' (that is, of course, the yoke). An interesting operation.

While there have been a few good AMATEUR clerical composers, they are hope- HYMN-TUNES. lessly outnumbered by others who are untaught. A Lancashire paper recently published a hymn-tune written by a local vicar which bristles with grammatical errors of the most elementary description. Moreover, the melody is reminiscent in every bar,—and reminiscent, too, of the worst of models. The publication of the tune called forth a long letter of protest from a local musician, who dissected the poor bantling without ruth. A solitary champion entered the lists on behalf of the reverend composer, but as he began by admitting his ignorance of matters musical, the critic found him, like the tune, an easy prey. If clergymen choose to spend their leisure in composition, no one can complain. But a protest is called for when, as in

this case, the results are thrust upon local congregations and choirs. Cobblers have on occasion been known to lay aside their last to good purpose; but, generally speaking, they are more useful when they stick to it. Here is a line from a Vesper hymn recently offered us by a clergyman:



The letter accompanying the copy of the 'music' said:

The enclosed hymns with tunes have been used in our Church and *with some pleasure*. They are original compositions [we agree], and I am anxious to know if they could find a wider circulation. . . . Would you kindly let me know on what terms you would take them?

We suspected a practical joke, but inquiry proved the innocence of the ungifted composer.

Occasionally there is a gleam of unconscious humour combined with colossal ignorance in the 'Answers to Correspondents' department of some of our journals. In a recent issue of a well-known Irish weekly magazine the editor, in reply to a query as to the spot-cash value of a copy of Ward's Cantos—the famous Roman Catholic controversial pamphlet, also known as 'England's Reformation,' written over two hundred years ago—thus unburthens himself:

I do not know of Ward's Cantos, but, I fear, old music of this class would fetch little or nothing. Old music books are sold for a few pence at second-hand book shops in Dublin.

Evidently the Irish editor had a vague idea that Ward's Cantos was an old music book!

From the *Daily Telegraph* of December 18:  
TOO MANY VARIATIONS.

From an account of last Monday's Philharmonic concert: 'It remains only to notice César Franck's "Symphonic Variations," in which the solo part was cleverly played by Mr. "Symphonic Variations," in which the preciation of the music which its merits deserve.'

The *Telegraph* adds amiably:

It remains only to congratulate both the unknown pianist and the unknown printer.

The following paragraph from the *Church Times* is an interesting contribution to the controversy on the use of folk-songs in churches:

Our correspondents who have deprecated the singing of the hymn 'God that madest earth and heaven' to the old Welsh melody 'Ar Hyd y Nos' seem to be unaware that the words were actually written for the music. The story is that Heber was staying at a house on the borders of Flintshire where a harpist was kept, as in the Highlands a piper is kept by great families. The harpist was playing the melody in the hall one evening, and Heber retired to a corner and wrote the first stanza of the hymn to be sung to it. The second stanza is not, of course, Heber's, but was added by Archbishop Whately.

*Musical News* has a leading article entitled, 'Stop Nomenclature.' Why should we?