

Register 13/7/21

**A Forward Move.**

Kalkbrenner, said the lecturer, with his more thorough theory of fingering than Hummel, was in turn outwitted by Czerny, whose work represented for a long period the most complete pianoforte school, and embraced modern manifestations of virtuosity. In matters relating to rendition it represented the chief step forward. For the training of pianists, Czerny produced the most serviceable, appropriate, and instructive material during his period. He was the teacher of Liszt, Doehler, Kullack, and other noted pianists. In the piano schools of Moschelen and Fitis, fingering conducive to lightness of hand was insisted upon. Schumann's introduction to his studies on Caprices by Paganini had historic value. Instead of laying so much stress on technical virtuosity, Schumann favoured a more ideal standpoint, which was also stressed in A. B. Marx's writings. "Do not sacrifice too much to technique," he wrote. Mr. Reimann rapidly but thoroughly reviewed the work of Kullack and Louis Plaidy (who had a well-thought-out theory of touch). A transition period which saw a great step in advance followed. One of the boldest innovators was a pupil of Liszt, C. Tausig. Here the final court of appeal was not technical convenience, but the phrasing of the musical structure. In this standpoint Reimann, a specially fine authority on phrasing, and Henrich Germer concurred. The author and inventor of a physiological system, Gustav Stowe, deserved mention. With him pianoforte technique was represented as musical-physiological movement, combined with a system of gymnastic exercises. He summed up his theory thus:—"The first condition and requisite of a good technique is to have loose joints, the second to be able to tighten them." The modern pianoforte method, based on physiological study of the functions of the muscles, condemned the old method of sole activity of the fingers. Ludwig Deppe was the progenitor of the modern psycho-physiological school of pianoforte playing, about which fierce disputes were waged by various writers, but even antagonists were coming under the influence of the modern relaxation method. There was, perhaps, so far, rather more of theory than result in this school, but in the future the two extremes would probably blend. Mr. Reimann concluded with a story of his last visit to the veteran Joseph Scharwenka, whose pupil he was. "You are 72," he said, "have played the piano all your life, are the head of a great piano school—what is your view of the matter?" "Cultivate all the joints you possess to their utmost capacity—and then play with them as you jolly well like" was the response.

**MADAME CLARA SERENA'S RECITAL.**

The Elder Hall was well filled for the successful vocal recital given in the afternoon by Madame Clara Serena. The favourite contralto, who was accompanied by Mr. Roy Mellish, was in splendid voice, and her singing was an example of what can be done when to such a voice is added culture, temperament, and a most attractive personality. The aria "O Don Fatale," from "Don Carlo," by Verdi, brought out to the full her dramatic powers. Then came a delightful group of songs, each more tenderly rendered than the last—"The young nun" (Schubert), "In lonely fields" (Brahms), and "Lullaby" (Strauss). In the air "Bois Epais" (Lully) the rich quality of the singer's voice was well heard, and "L'Invitation au voyage" (Duparc) only served to increase the impression. Expressive and dramatic was the recit and aria "O ma lyre immortelle," from Gounod's "Sappho." The final bracket included "Prelude" (Cyril Scott), that picturesque writing "The sea" (Cyril Scott), "E'en as a lovely flower" (Frank Bridge), and "Four by the clock" (Mallinson). A tempest of applause led to an additional number, a negro melody, "I'm a longing for you."

**BASSOON RECITAL.**

During the afternoon there was a bassoon recital by Mr. W. H. Foote, A.R.C.M., who was accompanied by Miss Lozelle Foote, his daughter, with just the right sympathy and effect. The recital gained in interest from a few explanatory remarks at the opening. Mr. Foote said that as the bassoon was not very familiar as a solo instrument, something about its origin might be of interest. It was evolved in the 15th century from an instrument called an Eight Foot Pommer, which was carried in front of the player like a psaltry and emitted rhythmical notes useful for marching. A monk, named Afranio, cut the Pommer in half, and, splicing the two pieces together, gave the bassoon something of its present form. The music for the bassoon written by Mozart in 1774, must have demanded high skill in the then only partially developed stage. Mr. Foote then played Mozart's "Concerto in B flat," with a command of tone and an expression that well exemplified the possibilities of

the instrument. Weber's "Andante" and "Rondo Ongarese in F major" followed, then a delightful "Sonata in F major," by Hurlstone, once a pupil at the Royal College of Music, now teaching harmony there. The "Adagio in F major and minor" by Louis Spohr, and part of a sonata in E flat by Gus Schreck concluded the programme in which Mr. Foote gave evidence of a complete mastery of the resources of an instru-

ment, which, rich in tone and variety, demands much of the player. Sometimes intensely human, sometimes somewhat resembling the cello in tone, the bassoon has a character quite its own.

**VIOLIN, CELLO, ORGAN, AND PIANO RECITAL.**

On Tuesday evening, in the Elder Hall, a recital was given by Mr. Harold Parsons, Mus. Bac., Mr. Harold Wyde, F.R.C.O., and Mr. George Pearce. Once more there was a good and appreciative audience, and the programme was of more than usual interest. Beethoven's Sonata in G for piano and cello, Mr. George Pearce and Mr. Harold Parsons gave a specially finished and artistic rendering. A feature of the programme was the Piano Concerto in C sharp minor, by Schytte, admirably played by Mr. George Pearce, whose crisp touch and brilliant technique were especially noticeable. He was ably supported by Mr. Harold Wyde at the second piano. A striking group of violoncello solos, with organ accompaniment were rendered by Mr. Harold Parsons with the depth of tone and expression which gives his playing such a special appeal. First came "Adagio" (Hadn) full of fine dignity; and then "Andante Expressivo" (Goltermann) with its deep feeling, and finest of all the "Hebrew Melody—Hamabdil" (Bantock). In this the tone was especially fine. Mr. Harold Wyde, besides accompanying Mr. Parsons and Mr. Pearce, played a number of organ solos. "Fantasie in D flat," and "Fantasie in E flat," by Saint-Saens brought out well the variety of tone of the instrument, and the versatile power of the organist, who gave the florid and intricate passages with ease and fluency, and made the most in turn of the tender value of soft passages, and the full depth of the louder one. Most hearty applause followed. Later, he played three numbers by Bonnet "Matin Provençal," full of curious effects; "Lamento" restrained and tranquil, and "Rhapsodie Catalane" robust and colourful, with interludes of contrasting simplicity.

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**UNIVERSITY COMMERCE ASSOCIATION.**

At a meeting of the Adelaide University Commerce Association on Monday night, Mr. I. Golovsky read an able paper on "The economic resources of the River Murray." He briefly dealt with "the Nile of Australia" and its tributaries in regard to the size of its watershed and length, as compared with the world's great rivers. The possibility of prolific crops, both fruit and fodder, and the making of Murray Bridge and Taillem Bend deeper ports through constructing parallel breakwaters at the mouth of Lake Alexandrina and the dredging of a channel through the lake, were dealt with. The lecturer also discussed the prospects of export trade in fruits, preserves, and game, and minor industries, such as cod fishing, rabbiting, box, and tinsplate manufacture. To build up such industries the country must have people, who, in turn, must be housed, clothed, and shod. They must have implements and machinery, cement for canal making, wire-netting, and so on. Given a sympathetic and enterprising Government, with an industrious and intelligent application of labour to the soil, the Murray Valley should prove to be one of the Commonwealth's greatest assets, in which would be built up communities of happy, united, and contented people. Songs and other items were rendered by Miss Thyer and Messrs. C. H. Bressler, F. Bourne, McCarron, A. E. Watson, and Thyer, and altogether an interesting and enjoyable evening was spent. The next meeting will be held on August 1, when the subject for debate will be "Capitalism." The Commerce Association will support the present system, while the University Arts Association will take the opposition.

**MUSIC CONFERENCE.**

**MADAME LARKCOM ON SINGING.**

The morning session of the Music Teachers' Conference on Wednesday afforded an opportunity of special interest and value. Madame Agnes Larkcom, of the Royal Academy of Music, London, read three addresses upon "The singer's art." The attendance was large, and the audience showed the keenest appreciation throughout. In introducing the speaker, Professor Harold Davies, Mus. Doc., said that Madame Larkcom's knowledge of her subject was great, her experience in England entitled her to speak with the very greatest authority, and it was a great pleasure to welcome her after her 12 months of journeying round the world.

**—The Singer's Art.—**

Madame Larkcom said there was a great desire among educationists to include music in future schemes of education, and many believed that the best way of stimulating the musical sense in children would be to arrange that lecture recitals of vocal music by really good singers should be given at frequent intervals in schools and young people's clubs. Notes on authors and composers would be followed by some of the most charming of English songs, simple enough and pretty



MADAME LARKCOM.

enough to inspire the hearers with a desire to sing themselves, but also those in which the words were of literary value, and beautiful in sound as well as sense, thus demonstrating that the English language was really very lovely when used by fine writers and enunciated by singers who had mastered the difficult art of pure and correct diction. It was a psychological fact that any human being who sees anything being done is fired with the desire to do likewise, so young persons would be more likely to be interested in music after hearing attractive examples of vocal art beautifully sung and expressed than from any amount of teaching, urging, or exhortation. All the fine arts made their appeal to the emotions, and thoughtful persons were beginning to recognise that works of genius could appeal to the lower as well as the higher nature. Art was not necessarily elevating because it was clever. During the last few years there had been examples of horrible paintings, hideous sculpture, offensive literature, and ugly music—it seemed almost as if the dreadful spirit of evil which had found expression in the great world war had been seeking to infect the human race through the arts, and contaminate at its source that which was intended to be used for good. This state of things was particularly dangerous for the young. As far as literature, painting, and sculpture were concerned, selection was possible, but music was difficult. This art, so intangible, so elusive, exerted an enormous influence so difficult to detect that its effect for good or evil might be more far-reaching and tremendous than that from any other branch of art. Music had the power of creating an atmosphere capable of stimulating every kind of emotion. This being so, the educationist should devote attention to the kind of music set before the young and impressionable. In vocal music of the best kind was found the emotional influence of appropriate music united to the direct appeal of beautiful words. English music had special characteristics. Studied seriously two qualities stood out above all others. They were the outcome of the sense of reverence, the yearning for the sublime and spiritual which existed in the English

people, and the other that unquenchable gaiety of heart which showed itself in love of the open air, fresh water, forests, and the flowers—the spirit so evident in our soldiers and sailors, that which made them carry on with a smile and a jest, no matter how weary the heart might be.

**—Music and the Masses.—**

Madame Larkcom said she did not think English music was very passionate, at least not with the passion evident in much of the music of foreign peoples. Personally, she thought English musical de-

velopment had been greatly retarded by the presence of so many foreign and semi-foreign musicians. These persons had persistently put their ideals forward, playing on the natural tendency of the English to decay themselves whenever possible, and had seriously retarded the development of characteristic native art. Two composers of English music which exemplified this very perfectly were Elgar and Sullivan. The one had reached in many instances the height of purity and sublimity, and the other had exhibited in their most delightful form the freshness, gaiety, and humour so characteristic of the ideal Englishman. Several ideal programmes embodying the most characteristic songs were given by the lecturer. "We possess," said Madame Larkcom, "a wealth of native music which admirably illustrates and encourages the capacity for sunny gaiety, wholesome sentiment, and pure passion which is so characteristic of the English people. In almost every example the words are beautiful, in some supremely so; and they tend to prove that when diction is good English is musical in sound as well as picturesque, forcible, and direct. Simple music can be just as efficacious as difficult music in conveying its message, and exerting its influence for good. Vocal music offers a wonderful medium for self-expression, and self-expression in one form or another is a necessity for each one of us." She did not think music was ever fully appreciated if only listened to. It was necessary for the development of the musical sense that children and young persons should take part in making it, as it was good for them to play their games instead of merely looking on. There had been a tendency in late years to relegate music to professional musicians. A few to perform, and thousands to listen was the ideal of the business manager. She would like it just the other way—as many people to perform, and few left out to criticise. The many choral societies that used a few years ago to be run entirely by amateur musicians had done a great educational work. Now, conductors and instrumentalists, and even sometimes choristers, were taken "en bloc" from town to town. There was little local interest and real hearty, widespread love of music flagged. Concert performances tended to become more and more exotic, and appealed mostly to the few, the fashionable, and the highly trained. The fine arts attained their greatest heights in the daily life of the people only when each individual contributed his small proportion of the original work, as in Gothic art, when they helped to create a harmony which no amount of specialized science had ever since been able to equal or conceive. Commercial production, and machinery with its soul-deadening repetition, had nearly ruined the

simple arts, and sometimes there was fear that music, by becoming almost wholly professional, might in turn lose its place as one of the most valuable and humanizing means of realizing beauty at the command of mankind. But each possessed a potential musical instrument in his throat, so singing should be encouraged and developed, choosing songs which told noble stories, or treated of fine emotions, in beautiful words and soul-stirring strains.

**—Expression and Diction.—**

Speaking on expression and diction, Madame Larkcom said the art of expression rested entirely on sympathy and understanding. Only by insight and imagination could the real meaning of great poets and musicians be interpreted. The aim should be to so develop resources as to be able, in some degree, to enter into their state of mind, see from their point of view, and rise to their ideals. It was pitiful to see the frivolous, petty, uneducated singer or performer struggling with the masterpieces of art. They could never reach their heights. It was like trying to contain Niagara in a teacup, or to weigh the ocean in a kitchen-balance. Imagination, character, and education were the first necessities for really fine art. It was difficult to define "beauty." Some called it "only a convention." Those things were beautiful which stimulated the higher emotions and gave the ineffable sensation of being uplifted, of which all were conscious at times. For a brief space something exquisite seemed to be added to life which no amount of physical pleasure could ever give. It was the momentary union of the spirit with the ideal and infinite, after which it blindly and feebly groped through the greater part of existence. In the education of the interpretive artist, side by side with the education of the mind, must go the training of the physical organs employed in