

a tempest : I say it is little to the purpose, if the sounds which should directly suggest the conflict do not, without mistake, suggest it. To criticise music, as if it had the qualities which belong to articulate speech, is to put it in positions as ludicrous as some characters were wont to hold in the ancient drama, in which one man represented a wall, and another a grove—and in which each was obliged to indicate his part by saying—"I am the wall!"—"I am the grove." Every art has its own limit; and to endeavour to convey it beyond that, tends to degrade it from genius to quackery.

From the very fact that music is not bound to a rigid and arbitrary articulation, it is the most spiritual, the most impressive, and the most universal of all arts; it is thence, the voice of humanity, for it is the voice of the heart. Poetry and music act on the same elements of our nature, but in a diverse method. Poetry awakens emotion, by means of thought, but music awakens thought, by means of emotion. The effect of music is more immediate and intense than that of poetry, but the impression of poetry is more indwelling and more lasting. Poetry, also, has the great advantage, that its power can be carried to the heart at once, and does not need, as music, an agency, which, even in moderate skill, cannot always be commanded, and that in perfect skill can rarely be found. Music, however, in the works of its greatest masters, is to me more marvellous and more mysterious than poetry—of all that proceeds from creative genius, I regard it as the most wonderful emanation. The spirit of a sublime poet, however remote from me, is not beyond my conception; but that of a sublime musician, is enshrouded from my ken within a sanctuary which my imagination has never been able to pierce. Listen, for instance, to a complete orchestra, in the performance of any noble musical composition—be it opera or oratorio, mass or symphony—and you will apprehend what I am unable to explain. Now a strain, almost rudely simple, comes upon your ear—then there rolls a swell of harmony, hugely onward, as the waves of ocean: now there are tones of sorrow—then a burst of 'choral gladness': now, groanings from the depths of a wounded spirit—then, gushings of praise, such as angels might have shouted when earth was born into sunshine: now, the wrangling discords of anger—then, the wild incoherencies of madness—then, the breathings of holy thoughts, the purity of saintly feelings, so chastened that they seem not for the coarse air of our hard world, so celestial that they seem fit only for the harps of seraphs. What imaginations must they have been, in which all these were conceived a forethought! what a combination of reckless en-

thusiasm with consummate art! what a union of the spontaneous and the reflective, of the instinctive and the æsthetical!

Marvellous as the variety is in all the most glorious music, the unity of it is yet more marvellous—unity of spirit, unity of purpose, and unity of effect. Consider the mechanism by which this unity is to be produced, the arrangements and adjustments of so many sounds, with so many modes of producing and combining them, in song, hymn, anthem, symphony—in all harmonies of dramatic fancy, sacred and secular—these things, then, considered, tell me whether an inventive and a creative musical genius is not, in the known works of God, among the rarest and the most surprising.

The desire for popular effect has injured music, as in these days it has injured every other art. And *themischief*, as in the case of all permanent mischief, has come from the abuse of genius. Paganini, who had the capacity of a wizard, to rule human passion as he listed, either from the vulgar inclination for notoriety or gain, chose to wed empiricism to power. Not content with the high sovereignty of a mighty artist, to hold a perfect sway over emotion, by cutting anties on a single string, he entered into competition with a dancer on the tight-rope. Men of genius, on other instruments than the violin, have unfortunately been tempted to make that the rule which Paganini made the exception, and to take that for their system, which, with him, was only sport. These men of a true inspiration, capable, if just to that inspiration, of moving souls in their profoundest consciousness, have preferred the wages of ingenuity to the immortality of fame. The noblest art is thus turned into elegant jugglery; and the musician that so degrades it, is, to a cultivated audience, precisely what a conjuror, who can eat fire or balance a pike on his nose, is to country clowns. True art, to be sure, delights in overcoming difficulties; but it overcomes them for a purpose, and the conquest it uses as a means, but never stops in it as an end. Within the last two winters I have heard, in common with enraptured crowds, two musicians, who, in the spirit of right enthusiasm, have subdued the obstinacy of a most obstinate instrument. The men I allude to are Knoop and Bolrer—and the instrument is the violincello. Most glorious sounds have they flung upon the winds of Yankee-land, and most devotedly have such of our free and enlightened citizens, as the grace of God has blessed with taste, gone to hear. Both these men are masters, and both are different. Knoop is a zealot, and you cannot but observe his zeal. He is a dogged adorer of his instrument, and he clings to it with ungainly gesture, but with fervid