

from an audience representing the wealth, culture and strength of the Catholic element in Montreal," are sufficient to show how much, and how happily, the "great lecture" in extenso would contribute to the closing of "the unhappy breach" between Protestants and their Catholic fellow-citizens which the *Post* says it desires to do all in its power to accomplish. The further perusal of Pere Graham would be rewarded by honorable mention of the English people and Government, respecting whom the Irish Protestants are so much in the habit of professing loyalty and affection. There is the usual romance of the great glories that were a long time ago, and the great glories that are to be in a very long time to come, and, of course, England is to fall for ever before another Fontenoy. Irish orators seem to be no more able to keep that famous fight out of their speeches than could Mr. Dick keep King Charles out of his book. England has beaten at Fontenoy. Pere Burke, Pere Graham and other celebrities have given us the poetic fiction of the fight. Will some one give us the facts? I want the facts! On, Fontenoy! On with the facts!

The *Post* asks why cannot Irish Protestants be proud of Owen Roe O'Neil? It seems hardly fair to ask people to be proud of a man who thrashed their forefathers. I can assure the *Post* that although pride could scarcely enter into Protestant feeling respecting that hero, not only Irish Protestants, but Saxons—those favorites of Pere Graham—can, and do admire the military genius of Owen Roe O'Neil and Hugh O'Donnell, as also the literary genius of the lamented McGee. But I do not believe that any rational being could be called on to either admire, or be proud of, a Christian clergyman whose mission is peace, love, charity, but who could debase his undoubted ability to the inciting of hatred between Englishmen and Irishmen.

Montreal, 19th Nov., 1878.

ANGLO-SAXON.

MUSICAL.

MECHANICAL MUSIC.

When literature was confined to that small section of luxurious individuals called the "reading public," and the love of antiquated models was considered a proof of taste, it often happened that those persons who really had little or no creative genius would spend their time in spinning verses which were only remarkable from the fact of their adhering strictly to some shape or form, trusting that the ingenuity of the workmanship would compensate for the want of originality of thought. Addison, in his essays on wit, fully exposed the shallow pretensions of these would-be authors; and, as many of his remarks on "false wit" apply so aptly to what may truly be styled "false music," I cannot refrain from quoting a few of his observations.

In the first paper, after mentioning a number of short poems, which were written in the form of an egg, a pair of wings, an axe, a shepherd's pipe, and an altar, he proceeds to say that he would have been happy to present his readers with the translation of some of them had he not found, on examination, that the authors had been much more intent upon the *form* of their poems than upon the *sense* of them. In speaking of the Anagram, he compares it to a mine not yet broken up, which will not shew the treasure it contains till many hours have been spent in search of it; the great object being to find out one word that conceals itself in another, and to examine the letters in all the variety of stations in which they can possibly be ranged. The Acrostic, he says, was probably invented about the same time as the Anagram, though "it is impossible to decide whether the inventor of the one or the other was the greater blockhead."

Any person reading these essays cannot avoid being struck with the similarity between those artificial contrivances in literature and those ingenious mechanical inventions in music, which depend for their success *entirely* upon the accuracy with which they are put together. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries we find that composers, anxious to lessen the monotony of the gloomy church music, had recourse to the canon, which was then a puzzle, and bore about the same relation to music that Anagram and Acrostic do to literature. These ingenious gentlemen also devised the *fugue*, some specimens of which were written as to be sung backwards and forwards; and, whilst music was thus regarded as a pleasing game, every person who could invent a new trick received his meed of praise. Notwithstanding the rise of melody, however, and the birth of *true musical genius*, the taste for many of these antiquities was carefully preserved, and thus the *fugue* and *canon*, not merely in spirit, but in form, are still held up by musical gropers in past ages to the intellectual student of the present time.

Now it may be asked how can I be so bold as to deprecate a species of composition which has so long been considered classical. My reply is, that I am bold enough to say what I think on all occasions; and, as I *think* that the cold form of a *fugue* is the *very worst* that can be held before the student during his probationary study, I do not hesitate to say so. The ingenuity and industry requisite to produce a perfect *fugue* or *canon*, would produce, with equal success, a poem in the form of an axe; and, as the production of either of these should never be attempted by a man of the highest order of genius, so would I not wish that it should ever become the fashion to compel him to do so.

In speaking of the *fugue* and *canon*, however, I do not wish to underrate the value of the *idea of imitation*, as this must ever be acknowledged as one of the most beautiful effects in composition. All I wish to establish is, that writers of this mechanical music must be content to take their places as studious men who use notes as mathematicians use numbers, whilst the composer, who, knowing and feeling music to be an intellectual and eloquent language, speaks to the *feelings* of the people must ever be considered as the true and heaven-born musician. The time is rapidly approaching when pedantry in music will die, as it has already done in literature; and, by the light of public opinion we shall quickly discover who are the men destined to shed lustre on the art. Industry will then only be considered valuable when allied to genius; and the person who prides himself on the ease with which he can construct *fugues* and *canons* will receive precisely the same praise as the writer who contrived to transcribe the whole of the Old Testament in a full-bottomed periwig, and promised, if the thick kind

of wigs came in again, that he would add two or three supernumerary locks that should contain all the Apocrypha.

The above, from the pen of Mr. Henry C. Lunn, of the *London Musical Times*, will doubtless be interesting to our readers. We think that far too much attention is given to the *letter* and too little to the *spirit* of musical compositions. Even in our leading English universities degrees are conferred, not for the most poetical and refined compositions, but for those which are mathematically and scientifically correct; and though we could not expect that any musician who was ignorant of the generally accepted grammatical rules should receive a degree, still we think it quite as absurd that a mathematician devoid of musical taste or feeling should by any possibility be dubbed a Doctor of *Musica*.

What is required of a candidate for a musical degree? We would expect that the quality, style and poetical nature of his composition would at least have *something* to do with the matter; but no—the candidate (at most universities) is required to write a composition in four or five parts (for a Doctor's degree in eight parts,) the *harmony* to be free from consecutive fifth octaves, false relations and the like, but the *melody* may be the most lugubrious and sickly stuff ever written. There may be neither style, spirit, sense nor meaning in the entire composition; all that the authorities require being an observance of certain *negative* rules laid down by some of the early composers.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN SPECTATOR:

SIR,—The dis-ingenuous reply of Mr. George Wallace ("lessee of the Academy of Music") to what he is pleased to call your "attack" upon him, elicits from a few music-lovers amongst this community possessed of some "bottom facts" a desire for increased light.

It is quite refreshing to me to note Mr. Wallace's zealous defence of Mr. Strakosch's agents for the Kellogg-Cary Concerts in Montreal—Messrs. Hathaway & Pond—when I happen to be aware that these gentlemen neither require nor desire any championship in the premises, and, I am of opinion, would prefer to choose one who was thrice armed by having his quarrel just.

When Mr. Wallace engaged the Kellogg troupe (composed of *forty persons*, he states) contracting on "sharing terms," as it is styled, and issuing all notices, posters, placards, bills, tickets, &c., besides inspiring the press notices and "telegrams," whom but he can be responsible for each and every announcement respecting the performance or *personnel* of the troupe?

A more recent effort, however, of this lessee—*viz.*, the engagement of the "Marie Roze Concert Company"—suggests one more pertinent query. Will Mr. Wallace be good enough to inform your readers why he failed to carry out his Toronto contract with Messrs. Hathaway & Pond, when he discovered that his Montreal speculation showed a balance to the debit?

I have heard some wonder expressed that Sir Hugh Allan should lease one of the most important opera houses in the Dominion to any but responsible and experienced parties. There would assuredly be neither incentive nor security for enterprising managers to visit our city with their artists should the impression go abroad that the venture might be simply a game of "heads I win, tails you lose."

Montreal, with its advancing taste for high-class entertainment in music and drama, requires to be catered for with particular care, and really good amusements are not so abundant with us that we can afford to jeopardise the fleeting opportunities for culture in art which drift in our direction by frightening away any who might be attracted to this growing and beautiful city by vagaries in regard to contracts, or fears of promises as invalid as dishonoured notes.

Yours truly,

DIOGENES.

Montreal, Dec. 3rd, 1878.

THE GRAND OPERATIC CONCERTS AND THE WEBER PIANOS.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN SPECTATOR:

SIR,—In the last number of your valuable journal your musical critic, while doing justice to the marvellous qualities of the piano used at the recent Camilla Urso Concerts, takes exception to the maker's name being placed so conspicuously on the instrument. And another writer, signing himself "A Musical Subscriber," in the same issue, in a very able and candid criticism of the recent Roze-Mapleson Concerts in the Academy, while characterizing Mr. Pease's performances on the grand Weber used on that occasion as extraordinary, and the instrument itself as fully justifying the great expense of specially importing it from New York, objects to having the advertisement of the maker appear as it did on the programme of the second night's performance. Now I think in Mr. Weber's case the objections are not well founded. It is well known that there is a hostile influence existing against the introduction of the Weber piano to the concert halls of this city, and this hostility appears in various forms. In these very concerts where the troupe brought the Weber instrument with them, thousands of printed biographies of the prima donna, with advertisements of another manufacturer interspersed, were delivered at the houses of our leading citizens, and here and in Toronto were distributed at the very counter where the tickets were sold. If the programmes first printed had been allowed distribution at the doors of the Academy, with the announcements previously circulated, the grand tones of the Weber piano brought out by the masterly execution of Mr. Pease would have been credited to another maker. As it was the audience had placed in their hands a very glowing and pressing invitation to purchase one instrument, while the incomparable tones of another were appealing to them from the stage.

I am informed that Mr. Weber has since refused the use of his pianos at the Academy, and will not allow their use at any concerts in Montreal unless his name appears on the instrument in view of the audience.

Yours faithfully,

H. J. S.

"Sanitary Engineering," Lecture X., by Professor H. T. Bovey, will appear in our next number, which will be the last Lecture before the Christmas vacation.

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