

who have been bored by drawing-room performances, without knowing why, to have their feelings thus articulated by so poetical a mind. Charles Lamb was at home in the palace of imaginative literature, nor did he ever lose the key to that. But the palace of music was as a prison to him, the key of which he never possessed.

To all those imaginative minds who would claim the author of *Elia* as a kind of big brother, there is this word of comfort: Be content to have a good song, set to good music, provided you can hear what the singer says; as for the rest, leave it to those who can honestly enjoy what you honestly describe as, to you, "empty instrumental music."

But are there those who can find in instrumental music, apart from its local associations, a boundless store of wealth for the imagination? I answer, yes. Read F. R. Havergal's poem on the *Moonlight Sonata* and you may learn how full of imaginativeness, to her mind, is that wonderful piece of "empty instrumental music."

Another instance of such wonderful fulness, we have in one of Mendelssohn's letters. At Milan he visited Madame Ertmann, one of Beethoven's friends, who told him: "When she lost her last child, Beethoven at first shrank from coming to her house; but at length he invited her to visit him, and, when she arrived, she found him seated at the piano, and, simply saying, 'Let us speak to each other by music,' he played on for more than an hour, and, as she expressed it, 'he said much to me, and at last gave me consolation.'"

Many of us stand somewhere between Charles Lamb and Madame Ertmann. I do not say which extreme is the safer one to approach. All I want to show is that both extremes exist.

In regard to music and words, there is, strictly speaking, no such thing as vocal music, except when a solo voice is accompanied by other voices in a humming accompaniment, as is done admirably in some parts of Dudley Buck's arrangement of *Annie Laurie*. What we usually understand by vocal music is in reality music of the larynx *plus* the inflections of elocution. Still, what is called vocal music is the great need of the hour. We need more of good articulation, and more of a much neglected thing among those who have many other musical acquirements—the power of singing at sight. These form the best basis for a musical education and also the best crown for the edifice.

Whatever may be said of the colossal tone creations of such masters in the realm of "empty instrumental music" as Mozart and Beethoven, and I could go a long way in saying it, when we come down to the needs of the home and the school, the sick room and the sanctuary, there is nothing else that rewards us like Milton's compound of "Lydian airs married to immortal verse."

MUSIC: AN ODE.

Was it light that spake from the darkness, or music that shone from the word,

When the night was enkindled with sound of the sun or the first-born morn?

Souls enthralled and entrained in bondage of seasons that fall and rise,
Bound fast round with the fetters of flesh, and blinded with light that dies,
Lived not surely till music spake, and the spirit of life was heard.

Music, sister of sunrise, and herald of life to be,

Smiled as dawn on the spirit of man, and the thrall was free.

Slave of nature and serf of time, the bondman of life and death,

Dumb with passionless patience that breathed but forlorn and reluctant breath,

Heard, hehkd, and his soul made answer, and communed aloud with the sea.

Morning spake, and he heard: and the passionate silent noon

Kept for him not silence; and soft from the mountain moon

Fell the sound of her splendor, heard as dawn's in the breathless night,

Not of men but of birds whose note bade man's soul quicken and leap to light;

And the song of it spake, and the light and the darkness of earth were as chords in tune.

—A. C. SWINBURNE.



TALKS WITH WOMEN, ABOUT WOMEN'S AFFAIRS.

COME, let us pull our chairs together, dear sisters; you, with your knitting-basket, dear old grandma; you, with your darning-ball and great stocking bag, thoughtful mother; you, with your scrap of linen and your pattern sheet, sweet young wife; and you, my girl, who are neither wife, mother, grandmother, or anything but your own lone self! That makes a fine circle, does it not? And while the back log snaps and flames, and the shaded lamps cast soft gleams over each of you, I will talk and you will listen, or vice versa, in turn, and so, month by month, we will grow to know, and, I humbly hope, like one another!

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It must always be in the evening that we talk, in these short winter days, for you and I are busy folk, and have enough to do all day; but it is so much cosier round the hearth these long evenings, so much easier to speak out, and so much pleasanter to think, after the day's work has been fully accomplished, than while we have still the coming and going, the trotting and the trying, which unsettle us all day long. I cannot hear you speaking, yet, but I hope before long the postman will be our constant messenger, and I can have the joy of response, the joy of receiving as well as the privilege of giving. If you are puzzled about the boys, uneasy about the girls, worried about the bill of fare, sick or sad or weary; if you are glad and merry, won't you let me share it all? In another country I have known this pleasure, and, often yet, a message from the far away friends, whom I have never seen, follows me like a benison and makes me glad. I hope a grandma will write, in her wavering handwriting, just trembling enough to shew that she is growing ready for the wonderful step from life to Life! And, by the bye, dear grandma, would you not like a knitting-needle sheath? I notice that you have to hold that old needle in your mouth, or stick it in your grey braids of hair, where it doesn't keep quite as polished as it should. This is the way I made a needle-holder for our grandma, yesterday. I took a narrow piece of whalebone four inches long, and covered it with black silk; then I took two pieces of chamois leather, an inch wide and six inches long, and stitched them together down each side and across one end, with cardinal silk. Then I stitched three rows of stitching from the closed end up to within half an inch of the open end. After that I sewed a big hook on the silk covered whalebone, and then sewed the whalebone on the under side of my stitched pieces of chamois. Then I sewed a big eye to match the hook on the band of grandma's apron, and after I had pushed her four needles down into their four pockets of chamois, I hooked the whole business on to grandma's apron-band. My! but she was pleased to have it so handy.

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Do you know, mother dear, if I were you, I should never darn that awful hole, criss-cross as you're doing, so patiently. It will take you half an hour. No, nor I wouldn't "throw away" a good stocking either, just because the "heel is out." When you know me better, you won't think I would! But I noticed that you did throw away that hopeless pair, which have been darned and darned. Now I should use them to patch.