

Kelvin and Music

THE Cambridge Review, in a recent issue had the following letter on "Lord Kelvin and Music."

Sir,—It seems right that something should be said in the pages of the Cambridge Review (which recently presented such admirable accounts of the late Lord Kelvin's work and character) concerning the relations of this great man of science to the art of music generally and to Cambridge music in particular. For not only was music the intellectual recreation in which he took most pleasure, but while the Cambridge University Musical society exists, so long will Lord Kelvin be remembered with gratitude by Cambridge musicians. He was one of the original founders and early presidents of the society. He remained in close touch with it for 64 years, and he followed its later fortunes with undiminished interest. He would quote with satisfaction the sentence in Grove's dictionary which claims for the C. U. M. S. a place of power in the land, and to the last he took care that the concert tickets to which he was entitled as a member were put to a good use. He was fond of recounting, as he did with infinite humor, the circumstances under which the little Peterhouse society developed into the University Musical society, and how the infant enterprise was nearly killed by a concert followed by a supper, followed in its turn by certain operations on the chapel roof. On the occasion of the next concert, to be held in the Red Lion for want of room in college, the master would only grant permission on condition that the concert givers called themselves the University Musical society instead of the Peterhouse society. The concert was duly held on December 8, 1843, and the band, 11 in number, acquitted themselves in Haydn's 1st Symphony, the Overtures to Masaniello and Semiramide, the Royal Irish Quillets, and Strauss's Elizabethan Waltzes to the satisfaction of a large audience consisting almost entirely of gowns-men.

But the final transformation did not apparently take effect until the ensuing summer, when, at a concert held on May 2 with the sanction of the vice-chancellor, "the society agreed to change its name and to give to the university generally the benefit of a society which, small college though Peterhouse be, it had commenced and nobly carried on." Thus the university can now boast of a musical society which, if not equal to, is but very little behind the old-established amateur society at Oxford. Their origin was both alike; both beginning in small colleges and at last becoming patronised by the heads of the respective universities. The programme included Haydn's "Surprise" Symphony, Mozart's Overture to the Nozze (the best played item), Auber's Overture to Les diamants de la Couronne, two glees, a violin solo by De Beriot, the Aurora Waltzes, the Troubadour Quadrilles (Jullien was still a name to conjure with), and finally two comic songs, "The nice young man" and "Berlin wool," rendered by J. B. Dykes in a way that brought down the house. The critic of the Chronicle warmly applauds the selection and general performance, but draws the line at the Waltzes.

The first president of the new society was G. E. Smith, of Peterhouse, whose instrument was the cornet. He died in 1844 and was succeeded by Blow, also of Peterhouse, "a splendid violin player" and cellist. When Blow vacated the president's chair the society "prevailed on that splendid fellow, Thomson, of Peterhouse, to take it. It will be no end of a feather in our caps," wrote one of its keenest members, "to have such a man as our representative in the university."

Walsley joined the society and gave it his blessing, saying it was "the most splendid affair since he came to the university," and other supporters were Macdonnell, of Magdalene, J. B. Dykes, of Catharine Hall, and three Peterhouse men, Combe, A. A. Pollock and E. Cridge. Of these the sole survivor, though he was some years senior to the rest, is the last mentioned, at this moment Bishop (R. E. C.) of Victoria, B. C., who celebrated his 90th birthday on the day of Lord Kelvin's death. I am permitted to quote a sentence from a private letter of the venerable Bishop, written, in 1903, which throws some light upon the most musical Cambridge college of the forties. "I was present in the room at Peterhouse when the University Musical society had its beginning. I took part" (his instrument was the cello). "Among other things we played the 'Caliph of Bagdad.' What with rather a worn-out piano and the rawness of some of us, who at least did our best, few, I fear, would have prognosticated the renown which the society, thus originated, was destined to attain. One name stands luminously in my memory as that of the man who in my judgment was the main author of its success. . . . I need not say that Dykes is that name. It was pleasant when, waiting for the time for the concert to begin, he would sit down at the piano, and with easy mastery of his subject—say, 'Songs without Words'—with beaming face ever and anon exclaim, 'Is not that beautiful?'"

Mendelssohn was still alive, and it is natural that he, with Weber and Beethoven, should be, as Lord Kelvin said at Jubilee commemoration of the society, "their gods." To these three Kelvin paid worship throughout his life, but most of all to Beethoven. That master was to him as a piece of divine Nature, always, like Nature, demanding reverent attention, always repaying study with the gift of some new and unexpected beauty. At a country house where much music was made, and

where Lord Kelvin used regularly to spend the week after Christmas, he always liked to have the new year played in with some Beethoven, and if it was the Waldstein Sonata (a special favorite) so much the better. But the three names he cited at the dinner in King's in 1893 as governing the taste of the young society did not represent his own pantheon. He would have added Schubert and Haydn, whose fun delighted him, and, above all, Mozart. I well remember hearing Lord Kelvin and the late Provost of Oriel, Dr. D. B. Monro, himself a Mozart enthusiast, eagerly capping quotations from the operas, and agreeing that in this department, as in so many others, there was no one to compare with the writer of Don Giovanni and Le Nozze. For later developments in music indeed he did not care. The following little dialogue (for the accuracy of which I am prepared to vouch, even if it did not bear the inward stamp of truth) well illustrates his attitude towards the modern school. A pianist, whom we will call X, has just played "the beautiful little Traumerli, Op. 9, of Richard Strauss." Lord Kelvin, approaching the piano, loquutur: "The piece is by Richard Strauss, a contemporary German composer?"

X: "Yes."

L. K.: "Any friend of the Strauss family who wrote such excellent dance music?" (It will be remembered that the Elizabethan-Waltzer were an item in the Peterhouse concert of 1843.)

X: "None whatever."

L. K.: "No, I should not have thought so. Has he written much?"

X: "Yes, quite a lot, but this early work has an entirely different character and style from his later compositions."

L. K.: "Indeed! Do you know if there was any cause to account for this? We always look for cause with effect."

X, then gives a short account of Strauss's abandonment of classical models and his development along the line of the symphonic poem inaugurated by Liszt, upon which L. K. remarks, "Very interesting." Exeunt.

Without a doubt Lord Kelvin would have gladly signed the famous protest of Brahms and Joachim against the "New German School."

Probably few men alive today have ever heard Lord Kelvin play the horn—he was second horn in the Peterhouse band, and used to come up from Glasgow to Cambridge to bear his part till '47. In later life he was content to be a hearer. But what a hearer! Certainly his scientific sense and passion for exact knowledge entered largely into his enjoyment. An accomplished violinist writes to me of the characteristic courtesy which the man of science displayed in talking with the artist about intervals and the difference between major and minor tones and the way that perfect instruments answer to the real difference. But that he felt keenly the aesthetic and emotional appeal of the art can be doubted by no one who ever sat beside him in the music room. His pleasure was unmingled and undisguised. He used to give a laugh at passages he liked even if he had the little green note-book in hand and was actively carrying out some abstruse calculation, and the performance of (say) a Beethoven posthumous quartet would draw from him long deep sighs of satisfaction no less expressive in their ways than the countenance of Joachim as he played it. With that great man Lord Kelvin was on terms of intimate and reciprocal affection, and the illness and death of his friend added sadness to the sad last year of his own life. It is indeed small wonder that each was attracted by the other, for they were essentially alike in the mixture of simplicity and greatness that marked them both. To each might be applied, with truth, and with a meaning beyond the writer's intention, the words in which Berlioz defined music: "art d'émouvoir par des combinaisons de son les hommes intelligents et doués d'organes spéciaux et exercés."

I am, Sir, etc.,

H. F. STEWART.

St. John's College, Cambridge,
18 February, 1908.

At the cabin of a Tennessee settler where I stopped over night, says a traveler, they told me of a widow living three miles away who, finding that the body of her husband had been petrified after lying in the ground for five or six years, had sold it to a showman for \$50 in cash. The people were not at all sentimental, but they didn't look upon the transaction as just right.

Next day as I journeyed along I stopped at the house of the widow named for a glass of water. When she learned where I had stayed over night she asked:

"Did they tell you about my dead husband turning to stone?"

"Yes."

"And about my selling him to a show?"

"Yes."

"And they don't think it was right?"

"Oh, they don't say much."

"But I know what they have said to others and how they feel about it. Maybe it wasn't just the right thing to do, but I'll tell you what's in my mind. If I kin get an offer from a rich man I'll marry again, and the first thing after that I'll buy Jim's body back and use it for a gatepost and have him near me all the rest of my life."—Kansas City Independent.

The tin output from Seward Peninsula, Alaska, is expected to total \$3,000,000 this season.

A YANKEE TRICK IN FRANCE

Clever double-dealing, especially in mechanical devices, is supposed by some to be a specialty of Americans, but apparently the French are "creeping up" as Whistler said. Here is a man from Lyons, whose "wireless" system of power development has turned out not to be wireless at all. Says Cosmos (Paris, February 1st) in an editorial note:

"For several months past there has been discussion—rather too much of it—of the discovery of an engineer of Lyons who is said to have succeeded not only in transmitting electrical energy without wires, but in collecting the surrounding electricity on the route of his waves, in such fashion as to obtain powerful effects at the receiving station, though employing at the outset a small current. It should be noted that there is nothing in common between this scheme and the tele-mechanical devices of Branly, who, less ambitious, is content with obtaining, at a distance and at will, by means of Hertzian waves, the control of devices that are powerful in themselves."

"Public credulity is so immeasurable that persons of eminence have received this new extravaganzas with joy and have contributed considerable sums toward its development. Some of these, however, finally demanded convincing proofs, and experiments were carried out near Marseilles, which at first were highly successful. But when a skeptical engineer looked into them somewhat closely he discovered, to the general disappointment, that the whole thing was a trick. The machine that was supposed to receive the energy from a distant station completely isolated from it did, in fact, receive it, but by means of metallic conductors hidden in the legs of the table on which the apparatus rested. * * The superb invention was nothing but a prestidigitator's trick."

"Several years ago in the United States an inventor announced a motor whose whole energy came from the vibration of a plate, determined at first by a second wave, and then taken up by the machine itself (apparently referring to the celebrated Keely motor). The trials aroused enthusiasm; money poured in—and it was finally discovered that the device was simply connected with a motor in the basement. The recent experiments are of the same order, and this revelation must be our answer to several correspondents who have been reproaching us with neglect of the ingenious invention of the man from Lyons. Ingenious indeed! Much better, in fact, than perpetual motion."—Translated for Literary Digest.

THE WASTE OF DAYLIGHT

On behalf of the signatories, we are asked by Mr. William Willett, to publish the following manifesto, says the London Times, the purpose of which is to stimulate interest in his proposal for an alteration in standard time from April to September inclusive—

"We desire by your courtesy to call the attention of our fellow-countrymen to the proposal recently made by Mr. William Willett for terminating the present waste of daylight during the summer months. As we believe that great benefits are attainable by this proposal, we desire to invite the heartiest public

Sport in Japan

At a meeting of the Japan society held at 20 Hanover square, Mr. Tsuneo Matsudaira, third secretary of the Japanese embassy, read a paper on "Sports and Physical Training in Modern Japan." There was a large attendance, and Sir Albert Rollet presided. In the course of his paper—which was illustrated by lantern slides—the lecturer stated that the main features of physical training in the schools were compulsory military drill, on the one hand, and fencing, judo, and baseball, on the other, which were practiced voluntarily every day after lessons. These were supplemented by swimming and boating during the holidays. Reserve officers of the army, assisted by sergeants, were usually appointed military training instructors to the schools, and service rifles of an old pattern were provided by the state. Once or twice a year the students were organized into battalions or companies and, fully equipped with arms and ammunition, were taken into the country for a week or so, under their officers, for manoeuvres under true military discipline. Universal service being in force, all men between 17 and 40 years of age were under the obligation of military service in the Kokumin-gun, or national army, if called up in a time of emergency. So far, however, it had not been necessary to organize the national army in time of war, and consequently it was impossible to say whether the military training given in the schools would have any effective result in actual warfare. But for its main purpose of physical

development it had proved very successful. In fencing the practice sword was made of bamboo and had a handle about 1 foot long, which was held by the fencer with both hands. Japanese experts were of opinion that this method of using the sword with both hands was more effective in real combat than the European practice of wielding the weapon with one hand only. Judo was a modified form of jujitsu. The purpose of jujitsu was by clutched or striking some part of the opponent's body to render him incapable of resistance. The purpose of judo was mainly physical culture. Swimming was also a national sport in Japan. Boating, of Western origin, had become very popular with students. But among the crowds at the regattas of the various schools not a single member of the fair sex was to be seen except as a chance passenger in a passing steamboat or ferry. In Japan ladies did not go in for boating. The American sport baseball had a great vogue. Football had also been introduced, but it had not become so popular as boating or baseball. Tennis was a favorite amusement among quiet students and young ladies. On the whole, Japan was very fortunate in regard to climate, beautiful sunshine prevailing all the year round, so that outdoor sports were not marred by natural conditions, except by occasional rain. A vote of thanks was passed to the lecturer, on the motion of Mr. W. Crewdson, chairman of the Japan society, seconded by Count Mutsu, of the Japanese embassy, and supported by Mr. East, A.R.A.—London Times.

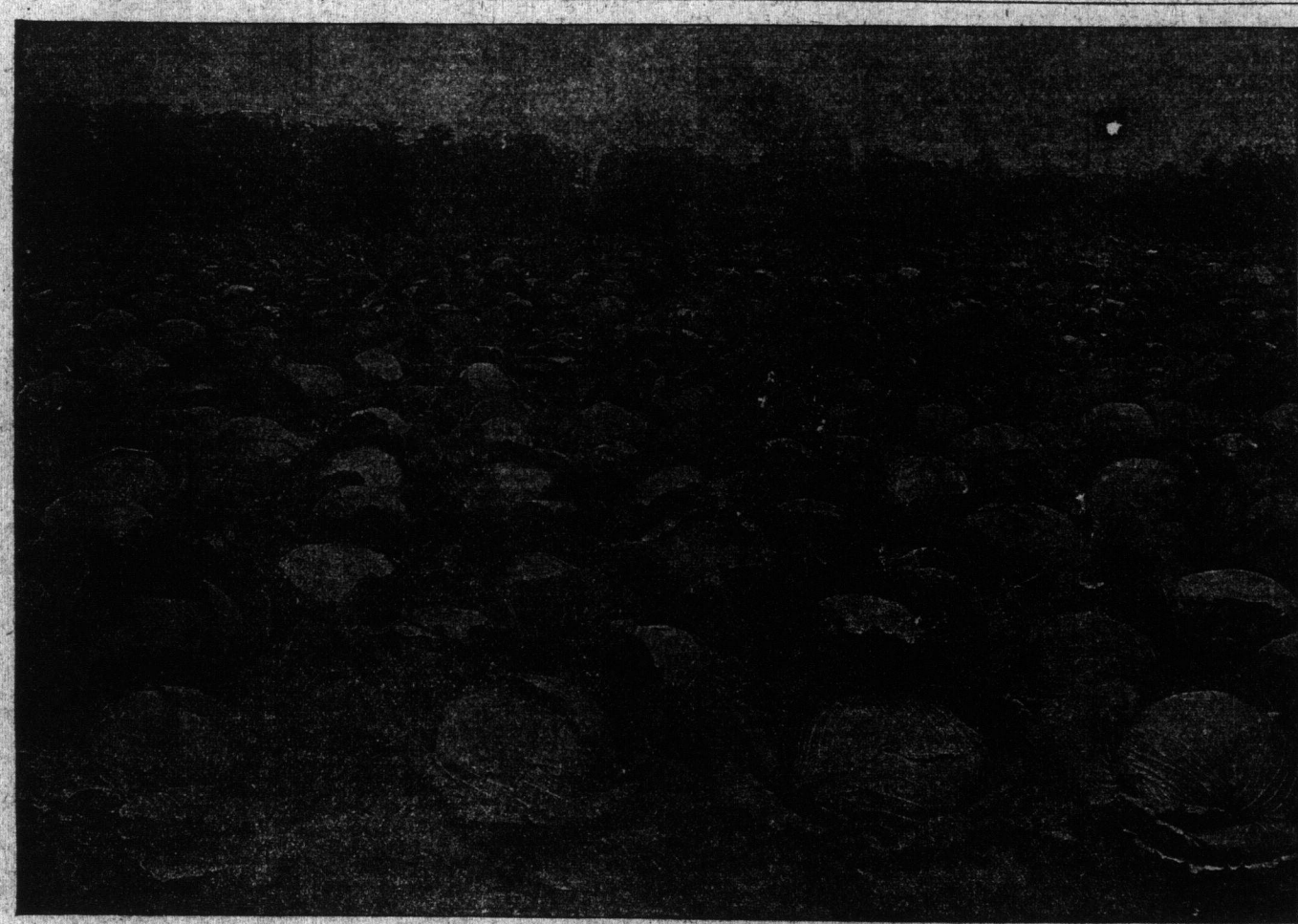
support for the "Daylight Saving Bill," which has lately been introduced in the House of Commons, and passed its second reading on the 26th ult. The suggestion is to obtain the use of 80 minutes more daylight each day for several months in the year by advancing the clock 20 minutes on each of the first four Sundays in April. This alteration would utilize morning air and daylight, and enable all to spend an additional hour and 20 minutes of their leisure out of doors at the end of the day during certain of the spring, summer, and autumn months. We believe that this must materially increase the health, happiness, and moral well-being of every individual, and more especially of those workers in our large towns who, being engaged until late in the day, at present get so little time for open-air recreation. It is also obvious that the resulting economy of artificial illumination would represent a vast sum to the whole nation and a notable diminution in the expenditure of every individual. It is intended to hold a public meeting during the spring, at which many influential supporters of the scheme will be present. In the meantime, Mr. Willett will be glad to send full particulars of his proposal,

draft bill, press notices, and extracts from the letters he has received from many eminent men, to any one writing to him at Sloane square, S.W., and sending him 6d. in stamps."

There are, it is pointed out, four Asquiths enrolled in the catalogue of the British Museum. The new Prime Minister has nine entries opposite his name, nearly all relating to reprinted speeches. Mr. Asquith is the author of "An Election Guide." Apart from reprinted political oratory, that appears to be his only independent publication. His busy forensic and political career has left him little or no leisure for writing. A Robert Asquith has published a "History of Carlisle"; a W. C. Asquith has written on the Punjab; and a J. E. Asquith has ventilated his views on the "Sunday Closing of Public Houses."

Water pipes of terra cotta were used in Crete 40 centuries ago. Those supplying drinking water consisted of a series of sub-conical tubes socketed into each other with collars and "stop ridges," so constructed as to give the water a shooting motion, thus preventing accumulation of sediment.

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