

## EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF A DILETTANTE.

[Resumed from page 175.]

*June 25th.* DURING the months of May and June, Robert Willis, M.A. F.R.S., a Fellow of Caius College, Cambridge, gave a course of lectures on Sound, at the Royal Institution, in which, besides stating all that had hitherto been known on the subject of acoustics, and illustrating every fact by the most satisfactory experiments, he introduced and explained what may almost be considered as discoveries of his own, by throwing a new light on subjects that had long remained in obscurity, and nearly escaped the notice of those philosophers who have directed their attention to the various phenomena of sound. These lectures, which must prove of the utmost importance to the art in all its branches if followed up, will, it is hoped, be repeated next season, when Mr. Willis may have an opportunity of communicating the result of experiments which himself, Mr. Wheatstone, and other labourers in the same pursuit, are now making to elucidate the theory of acoustics, and to render a knowledge on this subject practically useful to the composer, the performer, and the manufacturer. Much may be done; and it is far from improbable that we are on the eve of discoveries which will at least very much extend the limits of the musical art, if not work a very considerable change in many of its branches. The annexed syllabus of these lectures will afford some insight into the nature of them, and of the scientific manner in which the various subjects were treated.

‘INTRODUCTION—Production of Sound—Transmission by Air and by Solids—Velocity—Reflexion—Echo—Waves—Interferences—Sirene.

‘Pitch, Intensity, Quality.

‘Vibrations of *Elastic Solids*—Strings, Laws of Vibration, Monochord, Nodes and Ventral Segments, Orbits, Musical Stringed Instruments—Comparison of Sounds, Intervals, Beats and Grave Harmonies—Vibrations of Rods, Plates, Membranes, and Solids.

‘Communication of Vibrations in Systems of Solids—Soundboards, Violin.

‘Vibrations of *Columns of Air*—Cylindrical—Embouchure—Nodes—Harmonics—Pipes of Unequal Diameter—Pipes with Lateral Holes—Velocity of Sound in Gases.

‘Reeds or Vibrating Tongues—Reedpipes—Construction and Mechanism of the Organ—Vowel Sounds—Human Larynx.

‘Diatonic Scale and Temperament.

‘Communication of Vibrations by Air—to Columns of Air—Strings and Membranes—Structure of the Ear.

Mr. Willis's proofs that the Chinese, many centuries ago, possessed a very considerable knowledge of the laws of air vibrating in tubes, and of the action of metallic laminae, or thin plates, were as convincing as curious. To those extraordinary people we are indebted for the new instruments lately introduced under different names, such as the *Æolina*, *Ælophon*, &c., all of which derive their origin from the Chinese hand-organ, or bundle of tubes inserted in a small wind-chest, each tube of which contains a thin vibrating plate, identically the same as those recently brought into use.

*27th.* A paragraph appears in the *Chester Courant*, imperatively calling for explanation; it is perfectly frightful—August, 1831.

ful. There must be some aggravating facts connected with the case that are suppressed, otherwise the punishment is so infinitely disproportioned to the offence, that it will excite alarm throughout the whole country. The statement is, ‘that the late manager of a minor theatre in Manchester, a Mr. Neville, is now in prison, and actually on the treadmill (!), for his inability to pay a fine of 50*l.* imposed on him for allowing an Italian opera to be performed in that house, when no other place could be obtained for the purpose! His family are starving!!’ If this be true, for *Manchester* we ought to read *Morocco*: such an exertion of power is more in character with the vilest despotism under the sun, than with a government that professes to be regulated by the laws of justice and humanity.

*29th.* Signor De Begnis's benefit concert, at which the Signors Lablache and Rubini refused, it is said, to perform, having resolved never again to sing where Signor Paganini plays. This determination, it is added, has arisen from conduct on the part of the violinist which the two vocalists consider as anything but liberal.

*30th.* Her Majesty's English concert took place at St. James's Palace yesterday evening, in the ball-room, which had a temporary platform raised at the east end for the performers. The King and Queen entered the room at twenty minutes before ten o'clock, and the following pieces were performed:—

Glee, ‘Hail! smiling morn.’ Messrs. Terrail, Vaughan, Horncastle, and Leete	SPOFFORTH.
Romance, ‘Doubt not, love.’ Miss Cramer	HUMMEL.
Grand Duet, Piano-Forte. Mrs. Anderson and M. Hummel	HUMMEL.
Glee, ‘The Curfew.’ Mrs. W. Knyvett, Miss H. Cawse, and Mr. Sale	ATTWOOD.
Recitative (!) and Variations on three Airs, composed and performed on one string only (the fourth), by SIGNOR PAGANINI.	
Finale to <i>Cinderella</i> . Solo Parts, Miss Inverarity	ROSSINI.
Extemporaneous Performance on the Piano-Forte, by M. Hummel, introducing ‘See the conquering hero comes,’ and Airs from <i>Masaniello</i> .	
Aria, ‘Se m' abbandoni,’ Miss Masson	MERCADANTE.
Variations on ‘Nel cor più non mi sento,’ without the Orchestral Accompaniments, composed and performed by	PAGANINI.
Finale to the Second Act of <i>Oberon</i> —Air, ‘O! 'tis pleasant to float on the sea,’ Mrs. W. Knyvett; Duet, ‘Hither, ye elfin throng,’ Miss H. Cawse and Mr. Horncastle; Chorus, ‘Who would stay in her coral bed?’	WEBER.

Sir George Smart and Mr. Attwood conducted the concert, and Mr. Cramer led a small band.

It is impossible to read the foregoing and not be struck by what appears a contradiction in terms,—an English concert, in which nearly all the music is by foreign composers; and, of the performers, the two most prominent are, the one a native of Italy, the other of Germany; while Braham and Phillips, unquestionably our first English singers (we might have said the best in Europe), are wholly omitted! Where, too, was Miss Stephens?—How the musicians abroad will chuckle over all this! How M. Fétis will triumph in such a virtual acknowledgment of the justice of his strictures! What! no English opera

worth selecting from!—not even a single English song worth performing before the British court, while Mercadante can find a place!—Our music is indeed fallen low!

*July 1st.* Mr. Hawes's benefit concert. Paganini took his one-third of the gross receipts, his share amounting to about 50*l.*; so that Mr. H.'s portion was only 100*l.*, out of which he had to defray every sort of expense incurred! Lord Byron speaks of some one who 'kept getting better till he died.' If all concerts are to experience the fate of this, the givers of them will be enjoying *benefits* till they are ruined.

*4th.* In a French journal of credit is a very curious anecdote of Buonaparte, which not only shows how much he occasionally interested himself in matters that do not seem to be connected with affairs of state, but also proves how capable he was of seeing into the merits of a question, and promptly deciding on it, though wholly unconnected with his usual pursuits.

At the period when *La Vestale* was to be performed at the French Opera, it created a violent commotion among the performers; they thought not of Joli the poet, it was the composer who turned their heads; and they all struggled for the best parts in what was thought the *chef-d'œuvre* of Spontini. There had already been wasted six days of debate in the *coalisses*: no one could be heard in the noise, and the confusion threatened to reduce to ruins the temple of Polyhymnia. Napoleon was informed of these disturbances, and choosing to ascertain the cause of such disorder, called the director, the composer, and the leader into his cabinet, where, in the presence of some ladies whom he had summoned to this grave council (among them Mdle. Stephanie, his adopted daughter, and Mdle. La Pagerie, both of whom he married to persons of rank), he himself examined the score, then regulated the distribution of the characters, explained how he would have the piece got up, particularly the triumph of *Licinius*, the appearance of the grand priest after the solemn oath at the altar, and the clap of thunder which in the third act announces the approbation of the gods; and so well he arranged all these matters, removing every difficulty, that he secured to the Parisians the enjoyment of a spectacle of which he at a glance foresaw the certain popularity. 'Napoleon,' the journalist continues, 'never felt anything derogatory to him which related to the happiness of a people whom he loved, and for whose glory he was preparing.' That is to say, he was very willing to amuse their minds, and prevent them from feeling too sensibly the evils which his ambition was inflicting on them.

*6th.* A story has made the circuit of the papers, which states that Paganini, witnessing in the streets of Bologna the fruitless attempts of a poor boy to gain a few pence by fiddling, took the instrument out of his hand, played on it, and in a short time collected for the itinerant a sum that appeared to him a little fortune. This may be the creation of some enthusiast's fancy; but I have heard a fact, which tells equally well for the violinist. It was intended by the powers that be, not to employ the leader of the Opera in the same office at Paganini's concerts. The latter heard of this, and, accompanied by a well-merited compliment to the abilities of Signor Spagnoletti, demanded that he should be immediately engaged for all the performances which he, Signor P., might give in the King's Theatre.

*9th.* Such is the dearth of musical talent in America, says *The Observer*, or so great is the passion for its enjoy-

ment, that the bands of their regiments always give subscription concerts in the towns where they are quartered. 'The Boston city guards,' the *New-York Advertiser* states, 'set out on their march for Philadelphia on the morning of the 6th, and are expected in this city on Thursday.' 'They are to be accompanied,' says the *Gazette*, by the 'Boston brigade band, under the direction of a distinguished professor, and it is believed will give concerts here and in Philadelphia.'

*10th.* An account appears in a paper of this date, of the health of the Chancellor having been given by the Lord Mayor during yesterday's grand dinner at the Mansion House, when, instead of Lord Brougham rising to return thanks, up rose Signor Paganini, who played a something on his violin. It does not appear that there was any glee-party on this occasion; I am therefore apprehensive that the one-string wonder may even banish our only national music, our charming glees, from public tables, and that instead of the rational enjoyment of festive harmony—harmony which so much assists in rendering such dinners tolerable—we may in future be obliged to listen to a *prayer on a single string*, or some such appropriate accompaniment to a feast. The Ordinary of Newgate will perhaps think that I refer to a ceremony which he is periodically called upon to witness, but I assure him that I am only alluding to the *preghiera* of Rossini, which Paganini executes on his fourth string.

*14th.* *Apropos* of dinners and accompaniments. I find among my memorandums, extracted from some newspapers, an account of the most singular spit in the whole world, that of the Count de Castel-Maria, a very opulent Lord of Treviso. This turns no less than a hundred and thirty roasts at once, and plays twenty-four tunes; and whatever it plays corresponds to the state of something which is cooking. Thus, a leg of mutton à l'Anglaise will be excellent at the twelfth air; a fowl à la Flamande will be juicy at the eighteenth, and so on. When the sirloin is ready, 'O! the roast beef,' immediately strikes up—I hope, for this is not mentioned in my manuscript.

*16th.* One hears of nothing but reform and the feats on a single string; the town are divided between the two. But Signor Paganini must soon find out something fresh, if he means to keep up the excitement; the harping on one string is proverbially tiresome. Let me offer him a hint: Cornelius Ketel, a painter of the sixteenth century, made himself popular by discarding his brushes and painting with his fingers. The novelty of this, however, beginning to wear off, he had recourse to other tools, and painted with his toes. This stroke of cleverness proved eminently successful, and drew again crowds of admirers to his *atelier*, who, doubtless, bought up what was thus produced at his own price. Collins, the rival of Paganini in all that is wonderful, seems to have anticipated my hint—he makes the string play on the bow. I do not know what the other can do more.

*18th.* Among the musical wonders of the day is GIULIO REGONDI, the child whose performances on the Spanish guitar are not only calculated to surprise but to please even connoisseurs. This most interesting prodigy, for such he may be termed, who has only reached his eighth year, was born at Lyons; his mother being a native of Germany, but his father an Italian. To say that he plays with accuracy and neatness what is difficult, is

only doing him scanty justice: to correctness in both time and tune he adds a power of expression and a depth of feeling which would be admired in an adult; in him they show a precocity at once amazing and alarming; for how commonly are such geniuses either cut off by the preternatural action of the mind, or mentally exhausted at an age when the intellects of ordinary persons are beginning to arrive at their full strength!

The personal appearance of the almost infant Giulio at once excites a strong feeling in his favour. A well-proportioned, remarkably fair child, with an animated countenance, whose long flaxen locks curl gracefully over his neck and shoulders, and whose every attitude and action seem elegant by nature, not art, immediately interests the beholder; but when he touches the string, and draws from it tones that for beauty have hardly ever been exceeded—when his eye shows what his heart feels, it is then that our admiration is at the highest, and we confess the power of youthful genius.

25th. *Ecce iterum Crispinus!* Paganini once again! He has given two concerts at Cheltenham, which were quite successful; but, says a paragraph from that place, dated the 22nd, 'an untoward accident occurred in the afternoon of yesterday, which at one time assumed a rather serious aspect. Paganini, in advertising his concerts, had stated, "that his numerous engagements would render it impossible for him to remain beyond that time;" yet having undertaken to play at the theatre last night, he was accordingly announced. This the residents and visitors of the place considered an act of unfairness towards the regular Subscription Balls at the Rotunda, especially as Mr. Jearrad, the proprietor, had relinquished his usual musical entertainment on the previous evening, in order that Paganini's talents might have full scope. Immediately the Signor's intention was, therefore, made known, Captain M. Berkeley and W. L. Lawrence, Esq. took upon themselves to print a handbill, calling upon the nobility and gentry to support the established amusements of the

town, by patronizing the ball of last night, considering it merely as an act of justice to the proprietor. The effect of this was to secure a thronged attendance at the Rotunda Ball, and so poor an assemblage at the theatre, that Paganini refused to perform. This was communicated to the audience by the manager, who expressed himself ready to return the admission-money. Instead of quietly withdrawing, the audience proceeded *en masse* to the Plough Hotel, to demand of Paganini the fulfilment of his engagement. Here a formidable mob was soon collected; and after threatening to pull the house down, and uttering denunciations against the musical phenomenon, succeeded in frightening him into compliance; and he went to the theatre, where he performed two of his most favourite pieces with his wonted success and eclat. The performance at the theatre was for play-house prices. The Signor left at midnight, in a chaise and four, from the Plough for London.'

I cannot do better than insert here an extract from the *Dramatic Annual* of Reynolds, the veteran author. 'In this sing-song age,' says he, 'a few lessons in music may prove more productive to a boy than a hundred in Greek and Latin; and when I have one, see if I don't put a fiddle into his little hand the moment he is out of his leading-strings.—Make him a parson, indeed! Look at a Welsh curate, with his 30*l.* per annum, and say whether, in the opinion of a blind public, a blind fiddler is not a far more important personage?' What did Haydn, Mozart, or Beethoven realize by their transcendent talents? What reward did any musical genius, unaided by something like charlatanism, ever obtain from the public? How was Weber patronized in this country when he had his concert?—Alas! the answers are too humiliating to human nature.

I learn with pleasure that M. Hummel has nearly finished his arrangement of the *Sinfonia Eroica* of Beethoven, and that it will be out in November.

## HUMMEL AT MANCHESTER AND LIVERPOOL.

THE musical population of this musical town was all alive last week. HUMMEL paid us a visit, and the Directors of the Gentleman's Subscription Concert gave two concerts, at both of which that great master performed; the first on the 5th and the second on the 7th instant. The programmes as follow:

Tuesday, 5th July.

### PART I.

Overture. ( <i>Zaira</i> )	WINTER.
Song. Signor Doino. 'Il mio tesoro.'	MOZART.
Duet. Miss Inverarity and Mr. Parry, Junior. 'Yes, he's free.' ( <i>Maid of Judah</i> )	ROSSINI.
Song. Mad. Raimbaux. 'Se m'abbandoni.'	MERCADANTE.
Concerto in A flat. Mr. Hummel.	HUMMEL.
Ballad. Mr. Parry, Junior. 'Oh! 'tis the melody.'	WEBER.
Scena. Miss Inverarity. 'Softly sighs.'	WEBER.
Trio. Mad. Raimbaux, Signor Doino, and Mr. Parry, Junior. 'Quello di Tito.'	MOZART.

### PART II.

Overture. ( <i>Masaniello</i> )	AUBER.
Duet. Mad. Raimbaux and Sig. Doino. 'M'abbraccia.'	ROSSINI.
Recit. and Air, MS. Mr. Parry, Junior. 'The gallant warrior.'	

Extemporaneous Performance on the Piano-Forte, by

Mr. HUMMEL.

Song. Miss Inverarity. 'Fortune's Frowns.'	ROSSINI.
Quartet. 'Ridiamo, cantiamo.'	ROSSINI.

Thursday, 7th July.

### PART I.

Overture. ( <i>Freischütz</i> )	WEBER.
Duet. Mad. Raimbaux and Mr. Parry, Jun. 'Bella imago.'	ROSSINI.
Scena. Miss Inverarity. 'Gentle thoughts.'	SPOHR.
Grand Rondo, MS., Piano Forte. 'Mon retour à Londres.'	HUMMEL.
Aria. Mad. Raimbaux. 'Pensa alla Patria.'	ROSSINI.
Cantata. Mr. Parry, Junior. 'Napoleon's Midnight Review.'	NEUKOMM.
Trio. Miss Inverarity, Sig. Doino, and Mr. Parry, Jun. 'Vengo! aspettate!'	MOZART.

### PART II.

Overture, repeated by desire. ( <i>Masaniello</i> )	AUBER.
Song. Sig. Doino. 'Pria che spunti'	CIMAROSA.
Duet. Miss Inverarity and Mr. Parry, Junior. 'Ti veggo, t'abbraccio,' (arranged to English words.)	WINTER.
An extemporaneous Performance on the Piano-Forte, by Mr. HUMMEL.	



Your right to access and to use the RIPM Retrospective Index, RIPM Online Archive and RIPM e-Library is subject to your acceptance of RIPM's Terms and Conditions of Use. Available at [www.ripm.org/termsandconditions](http://www.ripm.org/termsandconditions), these state, in part, that (i) you agree not to download a complete issue of a journal, multiple copies of any article(s) or a substantial portion of any journal; and (ii) you understand that the use of content in the RIPM Retrospective Index, RIPM Online Archive and RIPM e-Library for commercial purposes is strictly forbidden.