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ESSAY ON MUSIC:

By Jonathan Grimshaw: delivered before the Polysophical Society at Elder Lorenzo Snow's, on Monday evening, April 16, 1855.

BRETHREN AND SISTERS:—

It is not my intention at the present time to enter into an elaborate essay on the science of music, or to explain its rules; nor yet to expatiate on the delights of harmony. Theoretical works on the subject are extant, which you can consult at your convenience, and thereby inform yourselves of the nature and philosophy of the science; historical works on the subject may also be procured, tracing the history and progress of music from the time when old father Jubal first discovered and taught it, or in the simple yet beautiful language of scripture, became "the father of all such as handle the harp and organ," down to the days of those giants in music, Handel, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, and last, although not least, Mendelssohn, whose memory will be perpetuated by the production of his immortal oratorio of Elijah. You may also incorporate in your researches the history of musical instruments, and their improvements—not forgetting the jew's-harp—until you are lost in admiration of the powers and beauties now introduced into that most magnificent of instruments the organ, combining as some do, the qualities of all other instruments, as well as those of the human voice in all its varieties.

I may refer you for instance, to the noble organ at Haarlem in Holland, with its 5000 pipes—some of them of such enormous dimensions as to produce a sound like that of thunder, and some so small as to imitate the warbling of a little bird. Since the construction of the organ at Haarlem, it has been surpassed in the size of its pipes, if not in quantity, by those of York and Birmingham in England; and some are of opinion these surpass it in the quality of its tone.

Be this as it may, they are all noble achievements of art, and may be considered to have formed an era in the history of musical instruments, as much so as the great worthies I have named form an era in the history of music; and by a coincidence somewhat remarkable, the one era was contemporaneous, or nearly so, with the other.

With respect to the practical part of the science, teachers are among us, from whom you can learn the rules thereof, and thus enable you to acquire an accomplishment so universally admitted to be desirable.

As to the pleasures of harmony, poets have sung, orators have declaimed, and essayists have written, in praise thereof—one of the latter having exercised his talents on that subject lately for your especial benefit—so that I intend to confine myself to a few general remarks, which I will endeavor to make as interesting and useful as I am able, and my brief limits will allow me, to both musicians and others.

Harmony is one of the creations of our Almighty Parent. The same all-powerful hand which organized the elements, and formed the earth, appointing it an orbit, and giving it a name and a place among its sister planets—launching it on the sea of space, with its various powers of production and re-production, and peopling it with intelligences of various grades, to carry out his designs;—this same Almighty power also organized the mysterious principle, by which a succession of sounds, and certain combinations thereof, produce a pleasing sensation to the ear, and in some circumstances, call forth the most lively emotions of the soul of man.

This principle is governed by certain fixed laws, as much so, as the rest of the creations of God, and ought to claim its share of attention from the philosopher, and inquirer into nature's laws.

It may be interesting briefly to call your attention to one curious fact in natural philosophy, connected with the science of music, namely, that the same note or sound—or to make myself better understood—the same finger key of the piano, or string of the harp, when used in varied combinations, will produce different mental effects, and in fact draw forth different emotions from the performer or listener. Look at that row of keys upon the piano—there is only one note to each—skilful performers in nearly every piece of music they play, use the majority of them—and yet with what various effects! Sometimes they will make you feel inclined to dance, and sometimes to sing; at other times your risible faculties will be excited; while under the influence of some pieces of music you feel inclined to weep.

What is the cause of this? Is it as some imagine, merely because one piece is played quick and another slow, one loud and another soft, one high and another low? These contribute their portion towards varying the effect, but are by no means the principal reasons. These effects result principally from the fact that each note has a peculiar mental effect consequent upon its association with other notes in the same scale, and varying the kind of effect with the variation of the key or scale.

I will endeavor to make myself understood by reference to one note on the piano, showing how many characters it is capable of assuming. I will choose for that purpose the note G natural; and you are aware that on the piano the note in all of these characters will preserve exactly the same pitch or elevation of sound, and yet in each character producing a different effect. This note in the natural scale you will find to be a cheerful and bold sound—a regular care-for-nothing, if I may use the expression; in fact almost independent of the governing note of the key, which is C natural. In the key of C this note is technically called the dominant, and by singers SOL. Introduce the same note into the key of B flat, and O! what a change. Instead of being a gay, joyous note as in the key of C, it is now a doleful, complaining, and weeping note.

[The various mental effects of the note in all its characters were illustrated on the piano in a very satisfactory manner by Mr. O. Pratt, jr.]

Among theoretical musicians the note is known in this key by its technical name of submediant, and by singers LA.

Now try it in its own key—let us inquire into its character when ruling in its own kingdom, called after its own name, G. We now find it to be a solid, self-dependent being, presiding over its subjects in a dignified manner, they being dependent upon him to put the finish to all they do. It is now called technically the tonic or key note, and by singers DO. Now transfer it to the key of F natural, and it is then anything but independent; leave off with sounding that note when you have been playing in the key of F natural, and your ear is not satisfied with it; you bite your lips, and are ready to kick the presumptuous note out of existence. You long for the presiding note in that region of sounds, F natural, to put in its claim, and when this is accomplished, your ear is satisfied. Its technical name in this key is the supertonic, and called by singers RE.

Now examine our old friend G while figuring in the key of D; there he is a wild, somewhat harsh, and restless being, but willing to make himself agreeable by putting forward his sister, F sharp, upon whose reputation for sweetness he leans, and who apologizes for the rudeness of her brother, and pays for it by her own sweet song.

In this character its technical name is the subdominant, and denominated FA by singers. Now introduce our friend into the key of E flat, and we find it changed to a sweet, and somewhat plaintive note, with which the ear of its listener is never tired; the ear is satisfied with it, even if sounded last, but not so perfectly as when followed by the master spirit of the key E flat. Our old friend is now so tender and soothing that we must remove it from the masculine gender into the feminine; in fact it is now in the same character as I represented F sharp to sustain in the key of D, namely, that of sister to friend G, who in its turn now sustains the same relation towards Mr. A flat, and that of wife to President E flat; and I may further remark that she is in that capacity like our own noble ladies, able to sustain herself in the absence of her lord and master, but not appearing to that advantage as when associated with him. It is now technically called the mediant of the key of E flat, and by singers ME.

We will now introduce it into the key of A flat, and we find its character is now changed to that of a sharp, piercing note, requiring the performer either immediately to ascend to A flat or to descend to F natural before the ear is at all satisfied. It is technically called by musicians the leading note, from its immediate proximity to the key note, and from its pointing or leading to it; it is named SI by singers.

I have now shown one note in seven different characters, and each character producing a different mental effect. As each note in the scale can be transformed in the same way, and to the same extent, you may realize why so many effects can be produced, and in fact why the mine of harmony has not yet been exhausted, or ever will be while eternity lasts. Ever since the days of Jubal, tunes varying in their melodies have been composed, new tunes or pieces of music are being continually written, and may be written worlds without end, without plagiarism or copying the work of another. But I have not yet done with our old friend G; it has certain almost worthless characters which I wish to mention. If we carelessly introduce it into the keys of A or E natural, that is in those of three or four sharps, we find it to be a disagreeable, harsh, and discordant sound; in fact it has no business in either of these kingdoms, unless by special permission, and under extreme circumstances, certain careful preparations, very mysterious to the uninitiated, having been previously made for its reception. Thus our friend changes its character with its company. As I said before, this variation of character belongs to every note in the scale as well as to G; and the same remarks will apply to each by varying the key to suit. This is a great and curious fact in natural philosophy; but the knowledge of it does not end with its curiosity.—Every composer of music must know the fact, and be intimately acquainted with the character and mental effect of each note in whatever company it appears, before he can sit down, and commit his ideas to writing. Just as an architect can sit down in his study, and draw out the plan of a beautiful structure, which has heretofore had no existence except in his own brain, and where probably it would ever have remained, were he not in possession of the knowledge of certain facts and rules, by the aid of which he can turn his ideas to account.

Every singer ought to acquire the same knowledge of mental effects to enable him or her to read correctly and at first sight the musical ideas of another with proper effect; and in fact it is much easier to acquire the art of singing at first sight by obtaining a knowledge or perception of the mental effect of each note in the scale (all scales being exactly alike in their construction, only differing in elevation of pitch) than it is by measuring intervals or distances in degrees from one note to another. Does a natural singer in learning tunes by the ear acquire them by measuring distances? No, verily; but by the mental effect of each note as they occur to the ear. Many who do not know a note in written music, to say nothing of intervals, are so quick at catching a new tune that they have only to hear it once and they are able to sing it; and by taking nature for their guide, scientific singers would do much better at sight singing than they are apt to do generally. It is the want of this knowledge of mental effects that so many are discouraged in learning to read music, yet the knowledge may be easily acquired. And all players upon instruments should have this knowledge before they can appreciate or take that deep interest or pleasure in the music they themselves perform so beautifully. By the aid of this knowledge a person can sit down and scan the works of another, mentally describing the various effects intended by the author, without making a single sound, either by voice or instru-

ment, and never having heard the work performed by others; hence its usefulness as well as the curiosity of the fact itself.

My limits will not allow me, even if I felt myself capable to examine into the cause of this singular fact; this properly belongs to the lecturer on natural philosophy. I shall therefore leave this part of my subject, not however without a hope that I may have stimulated some of my brethren and sisters, to dive below the surface of the refreshing stream of harmony, and discover its hidden treasures.

Music is not only desirable for recreation and amusement, but it is also an important auxiliary in the worship of the Supreme Being, and I shall be able to show that it is pleasing to him before I sit down.

We find from what little has been revealed unto us of the assemblies of the just behind the veil, that they are possessed of golden harps, and that they make melody, and sing the praises of Him who sits upon the throne.

We also find that music occupied a prominent part in the service of the Tabernacle of the Jews, and the Temple at Jerusalem, musicians being appointed from among the Levites who were exempt from any other kind of service, being as the sacred Chronicles say, "employed in that work day and night." Some were appointed to sound with cymbals of brass, some with psalteries, and others with trumpets, Chenaniah being appointed to lead the song "because he was skillful." And these ministered before the Ark of God continually as every day's work required. In the Temple at Jerusalem, four thousand were appointed to praise the Lord with instruments, and the number of those who were instructed in the songs of the Lord, even all that were cunning were two hundred four score and eight. And it is said the singers being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals, and psalteries, and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests, sounding with trumpets, and "it came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voices with the trumpets, and cymbals, and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, "For he is good, for his mercy endureth forever;" that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God."

If music as a part of his worship had not been pleasing to the Lord, he would not have chosen that as a signal for his descending in a cloud, and filling the house with his glory. AND SUCH MUSIC! Only imagine a chorus which, in addition to a host of other musical instruments, would bear the accompaniment of one hundred and twenty trumpets! Brethren, if as has been hinted, the service of the Temple has to be reproduced in the Great Temple in Zion, the musical department of this kingdom should not be neglected, but made to keep pace with other improvements and accomplishments. As it is now we are not able to get one trumpeter to interest himself sufficiently to engage in the performance of sacred music, to say nothing of 120. For one I am anxious that this department of the kingdom may be built up with the rest, and I pray that Zion may soon "arise and shine because her light is come, and the glory of the Lord arisen upon her." Amen.

Simoda, in Japan.

The town of Simoda, or Shimoda, is situated in the prefecture of Kamo, in the south eastern end of the principality of Idzu, which projects as a peninsula from the island of Nippon, having the Bay or Suruga on the West, and the Bay of Kawadzu on the East. The town lies in lat. 34 deg. 39 min. 49 sec. N., lon. 138 deg. 58 min. 50 sec., about the same latitude as Cadiz in Spain, Fayetteville in North Carolina, and Kaifungfu in Honan province in China; the distance to Yedo by sea is about 150 miles, and 125 by land through the town of Odawara.

The principality of Idzu is divided into four prefectures, called Koma, Kawadzu, Nako, and Inozawa; beside which there are four independent imperial cities called Kudzumi, Kusumi, Tegatu, and Kuntaku' to which now must be added Simoda itself. The seat of government is Niraiyama, but Simoda is said to be the largest place in the principality, and about two centuries ago was the port of entry of vessels bound up the Bay of Yedo; at that time Uraga was made the port, and this place has since lost all its consequence.

The town of Simoda is situated at the South-western angle of the harbor, at the mouth of a valley opening Northward, through which a small stream called the Inodza-gawa, runs and empties into just before it. The town itself is built on a flat plain, which lies between the river and the hills, and derives its name, Simoda, i.e. the Lower field, from this peculiarity. The hills on the South and East are so steep and high, the town is not fully seen until a vessel has passed by Centre Island, and nearly reached the anchorage; these hills, especially those which lie West of Tandalia Bluff, also keep off much of the sea breeze, which would otherwise refresh the townspeople.

The landing place on the eastern side of the town and of the river's mouth, between the base of a hill and a stone breakwater, which has been built out upward of two hundred feet into the harbor, in order to deepen the embouchure of the river, and afford protection to junks landing cargo, or which come in here to clean their uncaped bottoms, when the ebb tide has left them on the beach.

At the landing place near the water stands a small stone image of Buddha, and above it, on the bank, are two or three stone pillars and a small wooden shrine, within which are some idols. The head of the stone image has been

broken off by some accident, and then fitted again in its place with plaster, so that it looked somewhat as if it had been dressed up with a white neckcloth; of course the sailors did not fail to have their jokes upon the bald pated Japan parson.

A row of lofty trees near the water, and the finely wooded hill side on the other side of the way, combine to render this landing place a picturesque spot.

Going on a few steps, is a small bridge crossing a ditch, and at its left stands the Goyoshi, or government station, known by the spears and halberds struck up by it, within a wooden fence; here all goods purchased in town are to be delivered. This bridge crossed a rivulet that flows directly across the town, dividing it into two unequal parts, and serving as a drain for most of its streets.

The town is compactly built; and the general appearance, though indicating no wealth, gives the impression that the inhabitants are generally possessed at least of the necessities of life.—The style of the town is, however, as unlike that of a Chinese as it is of an English or German town, and no one would think of China if it were not for the many Chinese characters seen on the windows. The streets average fifteen feet in width, and cross each other at right angles; they are partly paved at the crossings and curbs of the gutters, but are mostly macadamized, and kept tolerably clean. The number of buildings is esteemed at somewhat less than a thousand, and the population at about 7,000, all of whom are common people, there being not more than two or three persons in the whole who are privileged to wear swords.

Standing on the bridge near the Goyoshi, the town appears almost environed with hills. The beach at the right of the spectator leads up the valley Northward, and forms the main opening, while it adds to the variety in the view, to which the cultivated ravines and the wooded hill sides made a charming addition, so that altogether, though lying on so flat a spot, Simoda is a very prettily located town.

The water street leads off on the right of the bridge, and immediately in front of it is a wide road passing along the North side of the rivulet, into which all the streets parallel with the water open. Within the angle of the two, viz., the water street and this wide road, lies the whole town, except about six score of houses built on the South side of the rivulet, between it and the foot of the hill.

The bank of the river opposite the waterstreet has been raised above the highest tides; and on the other side, further out into the harbor, is a sort of dock or ditch, where junks and boats are built and repaired, having various sheds and workshops near them. The sandy beach of the harbor forms the seaward defence of this rude shipyard, whose meagre appointments indicate the little commerce of the place. But if the port should become a mart for foreign traffic, it would be comparatively easy to cut a passage through the beach and make this junk yard a convenient dry dock for the repair of ships.

Along the streets no stalls for sale of candy or fruit, no wayside craftsmen ready to do a job, no money changers or even pedlars with their vegetables and fish are seen; nor is there anything answering to a market or public square. Nor was a magistrate's office or prison seen unless the Goyoshi near the bridge is used for both; and it should be added, no policemen, or soldiers, were conspicuous by their dress from the rest of the people though they doubtless are extant. To one just landing from China, the contrast of these wide, still streets, appearing wider than they really are from the low eaves of the houses, is very singular. No pigs in the path, no window glass in the houses, no gay signs, no vociferous hucksters, and lastly, no squalid beggars, are among these things which one used to the narrow streets of China soonest misses. A fishmonger exhibits his dried and fresh fish at his window, just as his neighbors, the stone cutter and the blacksmith, do their carvings and their adzes. No one seems to take any pains to sell his wares, or contrive any means to attract his customers.

The streets which run parallel with the water are divided from the cross streets by high wooden palings and gates, on the posts of which is the name of the street; and the watchman's station is inside. Sewers are made along the sides, which very imperfectly drain the streets; and in rainy weather they are rather muddy, though a row or two of stones near the gutters enable one to get along. The Japanese in such seasons generally wear wooden pattens three or four inches high, which keeps their feet dry, and the clattering of these clogs is with them most intimately associated with dull and rainy weather.—[Cor. Utica Her.]

The author of Lacon tells the following:—I once heard a gentleman make a witty reply to one who asserted that he did not believe there was a truly honest man in the world. "Sir," said he, "it is quite impossible that any one man should know all the world; but it is very possible that some one man may know himself."

Mrs. Smiles says the reason children are so bad this generation, is owing to the wearing of gaiter shoes instead of the old-fashioned slippers. Mothers find it too much trouble to untie gaiters to whip children, so they go unpunished; but when she was a child, the way the old slipper used to do its duty was a caution.

MODERN.—"Blanchy, my son, run to the store and get me some sugar. "Excuse me, ma, I am somewhat indisposed this morning. Send father; and tell him to bring me a plug of tobacco."