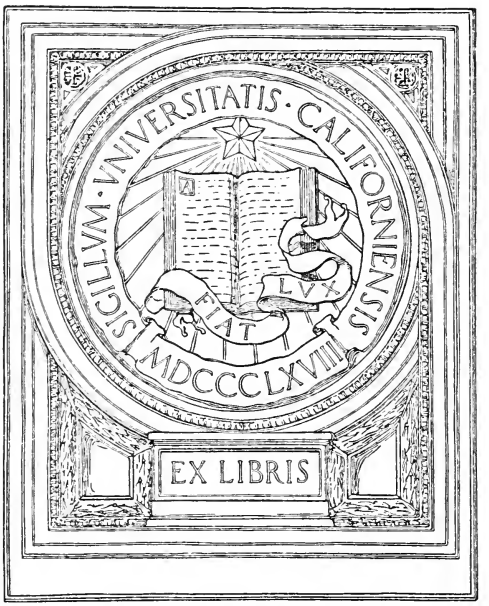
PHRASING AND INTERPRETATION

J. ALFRED JOHNSTONE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TOUCH, PHRASING, AND INTERPRETATION.

TOUCH, PHRASING AND INTERPRETATION

BY

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LONDON:

WILLIAM REEVES 83 CHARING CROSS ROAD, W.C.

Catalogue of Musical Literature on Application.

Printed by The New Temple Press, Norbury Crescent, London, S.W.16.

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PIANO TOUCH AND PHRASING

Introductory Remarks.

THE intention of these essays is to give a lucid presentment of certain musical questions, which, through involved discussion, and for lack of careful analysis, have become enwrapped in some obscurity.

Many fanciful, and many complicated theories, upon the subject of piano touch, have been published from time to time, and have given rise to lengthy discussions. What is of real practical value to the student is often lost sight of, or is overlaid with obscure doctrinal matter; what is in truth very simple often appears to be both mysterious and involved.

Again, the important subject of phrasing is so often treated carelessly that its doctrines seem to be little better than a sort of cant cult among a large section of the musical public. An attempt is made here to explain the chief principles which form the basis of phrasing in piano playing, and to make this explana-

tion clearer by parallel illustrations taken from the construction of prose and verse.

The question of how Bach's fugues should be rightly interpreted on the piano is one which is still at issue. The various opinions on the subject already set forth are here examined, and practical suggestions are made on many aspects of this most interesting question.

The chief "Educational Editions of Piano Classics," with their varied advantages and comparative values, are discussed at some length. This is a subject which has suffered rather from lack of attention than from over-discussion in the past. And it is to be feared that this lack of attention is in some measure a reflection of the attitude, upon a very important subject, shown by not a few even of our leading teachers. An attempt is here made to dissipate illiberal prejudice and to induce larger-minded and more scholarly views.

I.

Touch in Piano-Playing and Some of Its Curiosities.

THERE is no subject which, in its varied exposition, shows forth more clearly the lack of careful mental training, and more especially the lack of keen cultivation of the faculty of analysis—a faculty so essential to the thoroughly equipped teacher—than that of *touch* in piano-playing.

Although in treating the subject I have, here and there, for the sake of brightness, adopted a lighter tone than the gravity of the subject might seem to warrant, still, *quamquam ridentem dicere verum quid vetat*, it is my earnest purpose to elicit the truth regarding a subject often misunderstood.

I. VARIED MEANINGS OF THE WORD "TOUCH."

The word "touch" is used, with confusing carelessness, in many distinct senses, as well as in a combination of senses. It is applied to the instrument, and is

used to signify (1) the quality, efficacy and result of the mechanism of the piano in connection with its tone production. It is applied to the player, and is used to signify (2) the various methods, such as percussion or pressure, adopted by him to produce piano tones. It is used again to signify (3) the general quality of tone, or still oftener, the general musical or unmusical effect produced by a player in his performance of a work. Or, it is used to signify (4) a modification or a combination of some of these. Its most popular use is, to denote the general quality of tone effects produced by a player, regardless of the complex factors which make up this result. And so we hear the hazy and indefinite expressions: "What a beautiful touch," "What a sympathetic touch," "What a melodious touch," "What a hard touch," from multitudes who, if persuaded to attempt an explanation of their criticisms, would fall into hopeless and helpless confusion.

Such criticisms, instead of leading the student to think clearly, furnish him with what may be regarded as a highly respectable garment for covering ignorance. Time and confusion, and the emotional utterances of many musicians, have lent to this subject of "touch" such a glamour of mystery and romance, that he who attempts to submit it to scientific analysis, and to describe it as simply as the facts will allow, must run some risk of being considered prosy, unimaginative, inartistic; and in the estimation of not a few superficial and unmusical persons, a quack and an interloper in

the sacred domain of the pianist's art. Yet, a desire for some simple, lucid, helpful statements, which, even at the risk of seeming unpoetical and unromantic, may offer to the student a clear conception of this important subject, impels me to a somewhat uncompromising attitude towards many fanciful varieties of touch, such as the "caressing touch," the "devitalized touch," the "willing of tones from the keys," the "liquid touch," the "floating touch," and a bewildering host of other touches, equally romantic, equally practical and equally enlightening, which are, nevertheless, seriously discussed by eminent writers on piano-playing. Poetical haziness of expression is good, no doubt; but a simple exposition of the truth is far better for the student. As essentials toward this clear exposition, the whole subject must be carefully analysed, the errors causing confusion must be eliminated, and the possibilities and limitations must be clearly defined.

II.—"TOUCH" AS APPLIED TO THE INSTRUMENT.

Let us therefore examine the facts of the case, as simply and shortly as possible, for each popular use of the word "touch." (1) The quality, efficacy and result, of the mechanism of the piano in connection with its tone production.

A piano is said to have, for example, a heavy or light touch, an even or uneven touch, a deep or shallow touch, a responsive or hard touch. When a piano key

is depressed, a mechanism is set in motion by means of which a felt-covered hammer strikes one or more strings. This stroke, by setting the strings in vibration, sounds a tone. Excellence in the touch of a piano requires a mechanism so nicely adjusted that the tone resulting from the depression of each separate key is always exactly the same when exactly the same force and speed are used in the depression; that an almost equal amount of force and speed in depression will produce tones of equal intensity from all adjacent keys; that by variations of force and speed in depression, every gradation of tone can be produced, from the softest *pp*, without indistinctness or thinness, to the loudest *ff*, without harshness; that the fall of the damper instantly and effectually stops the vibration; and that there be no checking of the vibration of the string by the blocking of the hammer against it, but that by an instantaneous blow and rebound, the full, pure tone of the instrument is at once to be secured. It may be noticed that the mechanism of the piano, in the best instruments, is practically so perfect that the only difference in hammer movements is, the varying degrees of rapidity with which the hammer approaches and strikes the strings according to the varying degrees of speed with which the key is depressed. The time during which the hammer is actually in contact with the string is practically but an instant.

A word of explanation upon a few varieties of *touch* as applied to the instrument itself will suffice. If, for

example, the keys require a heavy pressure or a heavy blow to elicit its medium tones, the piano is said to have a *heavy* touch. Many able teachers advocate the use of such a piano for the purpose of acquiring a powerful technique. However this may be, there is no doubt that even the young student would do well to avoid practising on pianos whose touch is very light, or whose touch is very shallow; that is, where the key touches bottom after a slight depression; or whose touch is uneven or uncertain, that is, when the keys near one another require a different power or speed of depression to produce the same tone, or where the same keys may not answer alike every time to the same force; or, on irresponsive pianos, that it, where, instead of a great variety of shades of tone answering to a great variety of degrees of force, the difference in response is very slight, and the quality thin and harsh, no matter what may be the diversity in the stroke or pressure. In short, every student, young or old, should study at the very best piano available.

III.—LIMITATIONS OF "TOUCH."

This first cursory view of *touch* as applied to the instrument leads naturally to the second into which the player and his method enter: (2) the various methods adopted by players, such as pressure or percussion of various modes, to produce piano tone.

Now, although the relation of the mechanism of the

piano to the production of its tones seems simple enough, yet it is just at this point that many fanciful theorists invest the subject with much mysterious complexity. Therefore, at this starting point the student should try to begin his investigations in as candid and matter-of-fact an attitude as if he were about to examine the construction and use of any piece of every-day mechanism entirely unconnected with his art. He will find that a candid, personal investigation, first, by examining the mechanism of the piano; and, secondly, by a series of experiments probing the possibilities and the limitations of varieties of tone by varieties of touch, will teach him more clearly, more rapidly, more thoroughly and more convincingly, than the arguments of many treatises. For the purposes of his experiments a single key will suffice, as extraneous complications may thus be avoided the more easily. Let him *strike* the key with his finger-tip, his knuckle, or with the end of a rubber-tipped pencil; let him *press* it down with finger or book; let him alternate these modes of touch, let him "caress" the key "entreatingly," "earnestly," or in any other way; let him treat it "lingeringly," "gently," or with "passionate fire"; let him vitalize or "devitalize" his fingers as he best may; let him use any efforts of will, or any incantations, over the key, in ringing the changes of these modes of touch by pressure or percussion; only let him take care to make the tones equally loud or equally soft during the whole of each series of experiments with these varied modes of

touch; and, at the same time, let him take as the companion of his experiments a hard-headed, unemotional critic of sound, skilful in detecting even small differences in quality, intensity or length; and he will be astonished to find how soon his mysterious romance of "touch" is whittled away into the commonplace and unpoetical fact, that do what he will with the piano key, treat it how he may, he can alter the tone in two simple ways only, *in force and in length.*

It may be stated here explicitly, and once for all, that the slight automatic change in the quality of the tone which will always accompany the corresponding degree of change of force, does not affect the argument.

But lest it should possibly confuse the student during his experiments, he has been cautioned to try to approximate as nearly as he can to the force of a given tone in all the separate experiments of each series.

By greater or less strength of blow or of pressure, the key may be depressed more or less rapidly, and the tone be made louder or softer; or, the key may be released, thus causing the damper to fall and stop the sound, after being held for a longer or shorter time, according to the length of the note required. Thus, a note may be louder or softer; or, it may be longer or shorter. But no device of touch, no curious movements of fingers, hands, wrists or arms; no mysterious pressing of the keys after striking; no coaxing, no bullying, no willing; no schoolboy, no Rubinstein, no Liszt, can produce any varieties of tone more complex than these.

Here, then, based on simple experiment, is discovered the first article of the student's rational creed on "touch": *I believe, that given equal force and rapidity in depressing a key, no variations in the manner of its depression, in the modes of touch, can in any wise alter the quality of its tone.*

The attitude of those who are offended by the simplicity of a simple truth is as ancient as the days of Naaman the Syrian: "Had the prophet bid thee do some great thing wouldst thou not have done it; how much more when he saith unto thee, wash and be clean."

The Matter Defined in a Paragraph.

Let us suppose for a moment that it is possible otherwise to modify or change the tone than here stated. This change must be made, either *(a)* before the hammer has struck the strings, which is absurd; or *(b)* at the instantaneous contact of the hammer with the strings; or *(c)* after the hammer has left the strings, which likewise, is absurd; *(b)* alone remains to be considered. It must not be forgotten that, in a well-constructed piano, the hammer can move in one plane only to and from the strings. The only difference that the player can produce by key depression, then, is a difference in the velocity with which the hammer is moving in that plane, at the instant when it strikes the strings.

IV. POSSIBILITIES OF "TOUCH."

If at this point the enthusiastic student should be momentarily depressed by this prosaic aspect of the limitations of touch, he may immediately rally his spirits by a glance at its possibilities; and this glance will show him the work which lies before him. The gradations of tone are infinite both in force and in length; and for the right interpretation of his music the player must possess the power to express these infinite gradations. His work is therefore clear; he must devote all his attention to the simplest and most effective method of depressing the key with every variety of force, and of releasing it at any moment of time. To perfect these delicate powers requires the careful practice of years, in order to develop power, independence, flexibility, rapidity of movement, exquisite sensibility of finger-tips and a fine sense of sound.

V. CONFUSED IDEAS ON "TOUCH."

Here it is that many eminent teachers, because of the mysteries and complications of their theories of touch, puzzle the student and divert his attention from the real issue and the work required. According to them the mystery and complication of the mode must be proportionate to the complication of the theory. Such teachers, whose strength lies rather in emotional intensity than in the power of careful analysis, men from whose subjective impressions their methods of

work are unconsciously developed, impress upon their pupils the theory that numerous qualities of tone are to be produced by as many varieties of "touch"; nay, many of them even go so far as to say that varied pressure on the key after the string has been struck by the hammer will add still further variations in the quality of tone. I have, indeed, myself seen a pianist of world-wide repute working his fingers hysterically on the key after depressing it fully, when the hammer must have already left its string, in a manner similar to that adopted by a violinist to procure a *vibrato* from his string. This was evidently done with the confident hope of equalling the violinist's effect, whereas it showed the folly of study without a clear knowledge of the limitations of touch.

VI.—TONE-COLOUR.

The notion that, by some mysterious efforts of the will, or movements of the hand, many varied orchestral *timbres* may be produced on the piano, is a fad which grows as a weed in the hotbed of mental confusion. It is rather surprising to see it flourishing in a mind such as Bulow's; and yet one finds him directing the student to play passages of Beethoven's sonatas on the piano "quasi fag., quasi flauto, quasi clarinetto, quasi oboe"! His notions are echoed by Dr. Marx, and are elaborated by modern teachers from whom one might have expected more sense. Mr. McArthur amusingly

tells us that he succeeded in imitating the *timbre* of flutes, clarinets, horns, violoncelli and the human voice, on the piano, "more by willing the tone than by hitting the note!" And Mr. A. J. Goodrich, an able American theorist, in his recent work on interpretation, devotes a whole chapter to orchestral tone-colour in piano-playing, in the course of which he gives the directions which follow as "random selections" from Beethoven's sonatas, merely intended as hints to young pianists: "Horns, trumpets and trombones; bassoons and double-basses; then flutes. Brass, wood-wind and strings in antiphonal semiphrases." What rubbish! Ask any sober listener to name the instruments imagined to be imitated, without telling him what to expect; and if he ventures beyond *piano*, his guesses would probably surprise all those who fancy that their subjective impressions may be realised in impossible ways merely because those impressions are vivid. It were as sensible to attempt to produce the *timbre* of the bassoon on the piccolo, or that of the violin on the trombone, or that of the nocturnal cat on the harp. Each instrument, the piano not excepted, has its own distinctive *timbre;* and to produce the most artistic effects with this *timbre* should be the performer's aim.

VII.—CAUSES OF CONFUSED IDEAS.

But if it is all so simple and clear, if all these complicated systems of touch can be dispensed with, from whence have arisen such rival and diverse theories upon

touch, upon finger, hand, wrist and arm position and movement, upon pressure and percussion? It is impossible to believe that generations of eminent men could build fanciful follies to such an extent upon a mere foundation of ignorance.

The answer is obvious. Those who desired to become efficient teachers watched the habits of great players, and formulated theories of touch from the positions and movements they saw, believing that these positions and movements were the necessary and the only means, or, at all events, the very best means, for attaining to the artistic playing they heard. Or in some cases the great players observed the methods which had been developed in themselves by the influence of their subjective impressions, and upon analysis of these methods founded their scheme of touch. Some teachers watched with eagerness the high action, with curved fingers, of one school, others, the low wrist and the dragging or pressing down of the keys without percussion, of another school; others again heard the sweet sounds elicited by some great pianist-composer with fingers sprawling as it were over the keys; and each staked his faith on the method which apparently produced the music most pleasing to his artistic sense One teacher found that "liquid qualities of tone singing in an earnest manner" were to be produced only from low wrists and fingers which by gentle varieties of pressure lingered and prolonged could coax the qualities of tone; another swore that the true secret of touch

was inseparably connected with some other kind of position or pressure or percussion or movement or complication of movements or rigidity or bonelessness, or entreating, or willing, or a compound charm consisting of a mixture of all these, or something else quite different and equally indefinite. And yet all this time their eyes were set on the wrong thing, and their minds, following their eyes, led them, for lack of a child's grasp of the simplicity of the matter, to elaborate endless systems of "touch," and schools of finger-movement and finger-mystery, so perplexing to the earnest student.

Had these teachers fully and clearly understood that the possibilities of touch were limited to variations in force and length, they would promptly have turned their minds in the right direction to discover in what lay the real difference between the playing of one artist and another. And it is this right direction which leads naturally to a consideration of the third common use of the word *touch*. (3) The general quality of tone, or still oftener, the general musical or unmusical effect, produced by a player in his performance of a work.

VIII.—"TOUCH" AS APPLIED TO THE GENERAL EFFECT PRODUCED BY THE PLAYER.

The interesting and vital question is, what are the true relations of the cultivated artist between the simple act of setting in motion the mechanism of the piano

by striking or pressing keys with varying degrees of force and speed, on the one hand, and the complex rendering of his music on the other? What is it, moreover, that constitutes the essential difference between the players who are described as having a "melodious," a "hard," a "musical," a "brilliant," an "unsympathetic," a "heavy" touch? For do not they all strike or press the keys of the piano with varying degrees of force and speed? Although the analysis is easy, the artist's "touch" is so difficult of attainment as to necessitate the patient study and toil of years. The essential difference of the artist's skill lies chiefly in his possession at all times of perfect knowledge as to the right gradations of force and length, and such power and sensibility of finger as will enable him to put this knowledge into practice.

His delicate and ever-varying tones, produced by combinations and successions of notes played with every gradation of force and length, enriched by an appropriate use of the pedal, and prompted by wide musical knowledge and feelings trained to a nice degree of sensibility, are indeed, in the full beauty of the complex result, likely so to carry away the imagination of the listener into a region of wrapt admiration, that his critical and analytical powers sleep; and he is not to be greatly blamed for believing in and proclaiming the doctrine of some mysterious and complicated methods of sounding notes, which he sums up in the indefinite word "touch," whose species are as

subtle and varied as the emotions of the music they interpret. Yet, as every student now knows, the means for producing his marvellous wealth of tones is no greater or more complex for the full-grown genius than for the youthful pupil; there is no device beyond the simple process of depressing single keys with varied force, and of releasing them after varied length. If this simple analysis of the artist's touch discloses much that necessitates the laborious study of years—wide musical knowledge, severe mental concentration, systematic toil, delicate sensibility of ear, perfect co-ordination between brain and muscle, fingers trained to every nicety of movement, an emotional nature, strong, broad and cultivated so as to be able to enter sympathetically into the myriad emotions of his music—still, there is comfort for the student in the reflection that a just analysis has removed some of the mysteries, the perplexities and the difficulties, from the beginning of his path.

IX.—OBJECTIVE RESULTS OF SUBJECTIVE DESIRES. MELODY-PLAYING.

But the true relation between the artist in his mode of depressing the keys, and the ultimate rendering of his music, may be more clearly shown by a short analysis of the desire of the player, and the natural influence of that desire upon the manner of his action. The melody or *cantabile* player, for example, is not one who, by any subtle process, elicits from the keys

an exceptional quality of tone; but he is the player who realises in his mind the character and importance of the melody, its phrases, its shades of tone; who, keeping the melody thus prominently before his mind, insists that above all things in his playing, it shall ring out clearly and richly; who subordinates his accompaniment and uses it only further to enhance the beauty and prominence of the melody; who adjusts the force of each melody note with such nicety that its vibrations will last in suitable strength till the next melody note sounds; who constantly, and with the utmost delicacy of ear and perception, uses the pedal to enrich and sustain those tones for whose prominence he strives; one who, realising that even a single chord may be played so as to sound harsh or pleasant, uses well his ability to regulate the tone of its several notes so as to produce in combination the most musical effect; one who, understanding that our musical notation is not an accurate expression of the relative length of notes, adopts such almost imperceptible variations in their lengthening and shortening as to enhance their expressive effect; yet still, one whose single notes, in short, vary, as yours, only in force and length; but whose finished work differs from yours in the delicacy of his gradation, in the blending of his tones, in the adequate realisation of his constant aim to make the balance of his parts, and the proportionate force and length of his tones, so nicely adjusted that the melody

will indeed seem as if it had been made to sing out by some subtle power.

And when we now examine for a moment into the natural influence of this desire of the player upon the manner of his action, we shall discover why it is that by general consent, pressure instead of percussion, a low wrist instead of a high wrist, a lingering pressure upon, and a gentle release of the key, instead of an instantaneous release and a high uplift of the finger, are considered to be essential elements of that branch of technique which is devoted to "melody touch."

We have just analysed the chief aims of the melody player. He wishes to emphasise the production, in a single prominent part, of a full clear quality of tone, not too loudly harsh, on the one hand, or too weak on the other; he wants to ensure that each melody note has its exact shade of force so that its sound will be in the right proportion to its place in the melody or in the phrase, to its harmonic value, and in proper accord with the character of the whole melody; and he wants to ensure further that each melody note be as well sustained as possible until the next melody note is sounded, so that all the melody notes may ring out clearly, connectedly, properly shaded, and combined into an artistic whole. The main general ideals which dominate his thought are the flowing *cantabile* of a singer—gentleness, sweetness and such like graces.

Now, with his aim set upon the realisation of such desires, he naturally depresses the notes with the most

sensitive part of his fingers, which he feels can exert the most delicately varying degrees of pressure; he naturally pulls or presses down the keys in his anxiety to sustain each tone to its fullest extent, and this act of pulling down often lowers his wrist, while the desire for *legato* leads him to continue his pressure on the keys lest the dampers fall and break the continuity; he thus naturally and unconsciously acquires these gentle, lingering, gliding, pleasing methods of movement. And is it any wonder, then, that, wrapt up in his absorbing desire, the artist may go on unconsciously adding one mannerism of movement to another; or that by reacting influences—the mental desires first affecting the manner of depressing the keys, and afterwards the manner of depressing the keys affecting the desires by strengthening in the mind of the player the points which he wishes to emphasise and make clear—such mannerisms may be confirmed; or that finally, the player, mistaking the real import and power of his subjective impressions, attributes his results largely to a fanciful theory of subtle modes of touch for eliciting varied qualities of tone; and that the would-be teacher, hearing the lovely effect, and utterly incapable of clear analysis, seizes upon the most tangible apparent points —those mannerisms of position and movement—and proclaims upon the housetops that in these he possesses the esoteric mystery of the "melody-touch"?

X.—DIVERSE KINDS OF "TOUCH."

As the limits of one short essay on the subject of "touch" do not allow of the possibility of entering with detail into many branches of the subject, the "musical" or "sympathetic" touch may be rapidly noticed as the popular expression for the touch of a cultivated artist where varieties of tone force are infinite and appropriate, whose rendering of the music shows intelligent phrasing, correct feeling and a musicianly appreciation of the character of the work played; the "heavy" or "thumping" touch, as the popular expression for the playing of one whose groundtone is generally too loud, and too continuously loud, whose perceptions are not delicate, and whose expression lacks the nice and appropriate gradations which should give intelligence and beauty to the rendering; while other varieties will furnish useful subjects for the cultivation of the student's own power of analysis. There remains, however, one large and important school of "touch," a short analysis of whose principles will further elucidate the general principles already enunciated.

XI.—BRILLIANT LEGATO PASSAGE "TOUCH."

I refer to the school of those who contend that high wrists, percussion, and not pressure, with high and rapid finger action, is the right method for eliciting tones from the piano. It is to this school that the chief exponents and advocates of the "brilliant," the "rippling," the "pearling" touch, belong.

Now, why should this school arise, in opposition to, and often in utter confusion with, the school of melody-touch, with their low wrists, their pressed notes, their *cantabile* tones? If all tones are of the same quality, and differ only in force and length, will not the same method, having right regard to the required gradations of force and length in each case, suffice for all? I have already explained the *rationale* of the so-called melody touch, and have shown what was the tendency of the mental desire of the player in developing his modes of producing the tone. By applying the same method of analysis for a moment to the desires of him whose ambition is to play rapid passages with clearness and brilliant effect, we shall in like manner discover the *rationale* of his technique.

His mental aim is not at all to produce tones whose chief characteristics are prominence, *sostenuto*, richness, multitudinous and delicate shading, but rather rapid tones whose beauty lies in their clearness, their accuracy and in the even rapidity of their succession; tones often requiring the utmost flexibility and power of finger. What is the natural tendency of such aims upon the mode of producing the required tones from the piano? Is it not the tendency to raise the fingers rapidly, high and to an accurate position over the key, that they may be ready on the instant to strike and produce any required gradation of force, or to stop the tone at any moment; is its tendency not to eliminate all hampering

intrusion of weight from hand or arm, and to train the finger alone to the power and flexibility desired?

There is then a basis of appropriateness in the broad principles of these two great schools of touch, but there is neither rhyme nor reason in the notion that their individual object is to develop power to accomplish the impossible task of producing tone qualities essentially distinct. This view will at once clear up the perplexities of many students who have heard, in the playing of various artists, tones elicited by some mode of depressing the keys quite opposed to their theories of orthodoxy.

XII. TWO BROAD VARIETIES OR SCHOOLS OF "TOUCH."

But though the required tones may be produced by many modes, and though the student and the listener should always keep the end in view, steadfastly refusing to make a fetish of the means, and never forgetting the first article of his rational Creed of touch, that "given equal rapidity and force in depressing a key, no varieties in the modes of its depression can in any wise alter the quality of its tone," yet still it will be found generally convenient to make the broad, natural distinction in the mode of production which we have discovered as differentiating the two great classes of touch —the melody touch and the brilliant passage touch.

XIII. RECOMMENDATION OF LUCIDITY.

Finally, I should strongly urge every teacher never to give a direction which he does not clearly and ex-

actly understand, and which he cannot express in clear, accurate and intelligible language to his pupil; and every student resolutely to set his face against accepting from a book or from a teacher, any direction until it is clearly, accurately and intelligibly explained to him. And if the student be desired to elicit from a piano key, by various curious devices of finger, hand and arm movement, a "broad" tone, a "liquid" tone, a "singing" tone, an "entreating," a "caressing" tone, a "passionate" tone, or even a "floating" tone, let him repeat the first article of his tone creed to his teacher, and then ask him respectfully to illustrate the doctrines of his more advanced creed by producing the required qualities of tone himself. Insist upon simplicity and clearness, even if you have to thrust any pet romance, or any imposing or mystifying theory out of doors, and simplicity, clearness and true enlightenment will, in answer to your earnest summons, most surely come and help you.*

Remember Naaman the Syrian.

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* For practical directions on this subject, see the author's work on technique, "How to Strike the Keys of the Piano."

II.

On the Mystery of Phrasing in Piano-Playing.

I.—THE CANT OF PHRASING.

It may seem strange to call so familiar a term as "phrasing" a mystery; but very often it is unintelligent familiarity that makes mysteries of things. This word "phrasing" is one of those most frequently heard in the mouths of teacher, pupil, listener and critic; it is an indispensable word for the article writer and book-maker; it is a sort of universal charm word for the would-be musician. Indiscriminate usage, unintelligent usage, cant usage, "devitalises" words, and makes mysteries of them. In the previous chapter something has been shown of the effect of familiar and unintelligent usage upon the apparently simple expression "piano touch." And a very cursory examination of the history of art or of religion will show how very often the effective expression of yesterday becomes the universal cant of to-day—a cant usually mysterious

and devoid of meaning. For there is nothing that is so destructive to the vital energy of a suggestive word, full of thoughtful import, as the familiar use of it by those who do not understand and realise its meaning. Yet, though such a word may become a conventional commonplace, there is still in it a kernel of life which may be called its esoteric mystery. The purpose of this article is to expose the cant of phrasing and to make clear its mystery.

"He phrased divinely." Who is not familiar with such a remark as this from the would-be musical enthusiast whose enthusiasm is proportionate to his ignorance, whether such an one be pupil, teacher, listener or critic? How many there are whose philosophy of composition is so rudimentary that they conceive of a piece of music as a sort of formless fancy of a musician's brain, and who, nevertheless, have no hesitation in commenting upon the "phrasing" of the player? And, again, how many pupils are there who after informing you that such a player phrased beautifully, will, at the piano, favour one with such a practical example of complete ignorance of the subject, by an easy flow of unpunctuated rubbish, that he hardly knows whether to laugh or be indignant? The *cant* of phrasing—that affectation of knowledge and attempt to veil ignorance by the use of a high sounding or impressive shibboleth not clearly understood by the user —is as plentiful in musical highways and byeways as are blackberries in summer hedgerows.

With a teacher, above all people, vagueness or cant, either in himself or in his pupil, should not be for a moment tolerated. His business is, to learn, to analyse, to understand clearly, and to present the result of his knowledge and analysis before his pupils in some form which will not alone be clearly understood by them, but which will also appeal forcibly and effectively to them. The analysis must be clear; the expression must be lucid; the appeal must be forcible. Such a systematic method among teachers would go a long way towards lessening the prevalence of cant, by bringing upon its ignorant users the ridicule of a public educated sufficiently to prevent its toleration.

II.—WHAT IS PHRASING?

Upon a careful analysis of this term *phrasing* as it is understood and used by scholarly musicians, what exactly do we find its meaning to be? We find it used in three senses: first, as referring to a clear perception of the formal division of music into well-defined sentences and their parts; secondly, as referring to the right method of marking those divisions so that in the rendering of the music they may be evident to the hearer; and, thirdly, as referring to the correct and expressive rendering of each division. When these three aspects of the subject are thoroughly understood by us we shall have no further use for phrasing cant, and our mystery will be entirely solved.

III.—CLEAR PERCEPTION OF THE FORMAL DIVISIONS OF MUSIC.

This branch of the subject, which treats of the division of music into motives, phrases, sections, periods, and the building of the various musical forms out of their constituent parts, belongs more properly to the general subject of Form, upon which there is now quite a small library of excellent manuals published.

No earnest teacher or student, however, should be content simply to recognise the fact that such manuals are published. The books should be in his library; their matter should be in his mind. An intelligent understanding of phrasing should be a living faith with him, and one of his first principles as a teacher or player. Intelligence, lucidity, sense, in the rendering of music, depend largely upon an adequate knowledge and use of right phrasing. Teach a Chinaman who does not know a word of English, or the signification of a single sign of punctuation, to repeat mechanically —regardless of punctuation, rhythm or sense—the first twenty verses of "Paradise Lost." This will best give you some notion of what the performance of that player is like, who understands nothing of the construction, the phrasing rhythm, the punctuation, the emotional significance—in a word, the *phrasing* of his music. And the case is even worse for music than for the words of Milton. For while, on the one hand, these

words, however mechanical, however unpunctuated, their recitation may be, convey some meaning to the mind, although the roll of the verse be destroyed; the music, on the other hand, wordless and idealess, loses its all when it loses the intelligent exposition of that form which alone furnishes the key to its expressive content, and becomes little better than a senseless succession of empty sounds.

IV. THE FOUNDATION OF PHRASING.

If phrasing is to be intelligent and intelligible, it must be based upon some intelligent and intelligible principle; and that principle should be not only clear to the teacher, but it should be lucidly set forth to the student, and should be impressed upon his mind by some effective appeal. Now, the foundation of all correct phrasing is, the complete analysis of the music, the broad analysis of its general form and the minute analysis of its motival development. Much of this analysis may now be learned by the pupil without the labour of profound study. For whereas in past days there was little help to be found on the pages of the music, since the constructive phrasing was not specially marked, and the player was therefore often left to the tender mercies of an ignorant master, or as often to discover the phrasing for himself, or to make nonsense of the music by its neglect; now, on the contrary, the best editors take great pains to annotate the music

minutely, so that the form in its broad general outline, as well as in its motival detail, may be easily followed. Curved lines and marks innumerable, tend to the elucidation or the complication of the music, just in proportion to the knowledge and care, or the ignorance and carelessness, of the player. But although the pathway is made comparatively easy for the piano student of to-day, surrounded as he is by aids to learning, still, he cannot altogether escape from the necessity for careful study if he is to become competent to use rightly these educational aids. What then is the minimum of knowledge required to enable a player so to understand the constructive phrasing of a piece of music, elaborately annotated by such a modern critic as Bülow or Reimann, that he may be able, in the interpretation of the music, to make its formal beauty clear? (1) A knowledge of harmony is needed, sufficient to enable him to recognise in a moment all those natural punctuating cadences by which music is commonly divided into sections or phrases of four measures, and into periods or sentences of eight or sixteen measures. His full close or perfect cadence; his half close or imperfect cadence; his inverted and interrupted cadences, must be familiarly recognised the moment they are seen. And beyond this, his knowledge of harmony should be sufficient to enable him to follow easily, as he played, all the modulations of the music. (2) There is needed such a thorough knowledge of the constructive analysis of music into

its motival elements, into its sections and periods, whether of regular or irregular length; and into its larger divisions, whether subjects, episodes, bridge passages, development sections, codas, and the like, as will enable him to recognise at once the construction and development of each piece as he plays. Unless this motival foundation, this sectional division and this larger formal plan, be clearly and familiarly perceived by the player, his rendering will lack lucidity, intelligence and logical unity. Doubtless, in a cursory way, many a teacher instructs his pupils about the general constructive outline of the music, and perhaps calls their attention occasionally to the conclusion of a phrase or period; but it is evident from the average playing, the average practising, and the average conversational criticism of music, that neither is the analysis clear or minute, nor the appeal of the teacher forcible. A wrongly punctuated phrase never seems to strike most pupils as a ludicrous absurdity; nor does the lack of delicate motival phrasing, which deprives all playing of real intellectual charm, cause them the slightest inconvenience. Often a pupil may be heard practising a short passage over, taking as his starting point the last note of one phrase and for his concluding point the penultimate note of some other phrase, especially if by such division he makes sure of proceeding from the beginning of one measure to the end of another, blissfully unconscious of his reiterated nonsense. One is reminded of the "Aus-

tralian musical magpie," which after learning a comically incomplete portion of a tune, continues its repetitions in the same happy ignorance of the ridiculous effect. And yet, while, as it were, swallowing the camel, wrong punctuation, you often find these pupils and teachers exceedingly eager to strain out the gnat, a wrong note. The musical ignoramus may promptly and with much assurance be recognised by his wincing and grimacing at the sound of a wrong note, while, in utter tranquillity, he flows along regardless of punctuation or expression. And yet, the average pupil is not a fool. He would not do these things if he understood his work so clearly that the nonsense would strike him as nonsense. As a matter of fact, his analysis is not intelligent enough to make the nonsense evident. The teacher is neither lucid in his explanations nor effective in his appeal.

There is a radical error to be combated at the outset, an error which prevents the pupil from regarding music with intelligence from a constructive point of view: the error of looking upon the formal divisions of music as if they coincided with, and were marked by, the bar lines.

V. ERRONEOUS NOTION OF BAR TO BAR CONSTRUCTION.

The idea that the limits of each phrase of music are marked by bar lines; that the phrases run from bar

line to bar line; and that, by starting at the beginning of any one measure and ending at the end of some other measure, a nicely rounded and correctly divided portion will thus be selected for study and practice, is one of those utter absurdities which prevent the average pupil from gaining any intelligent conception of the construction of his music. Instead of being thus hewn out in lengths gauged by the measure, music is usually divided into and built up from small fragments called *motives*, whose limits may not at all coincide with the bar lines. A motive very often consists of an unaccented leading up to an accented beat. It is a common habit, arising from that of regarding music in lengths of a measure, from bar line to bar line, to think of musical rhythm as consisting of a strong beat followed by a weak beat; whereas the most usual normal rhythm consists of a weak beat followed by a strong beat. And since this is so—since the normal musical rhythm is the rhythm of the upbeat followed by the down beat, is it any wonder that those who look from the note following a bar line to the note ending a measure; from strong to weak; often miss all the delicate motival punctuation of their music, and jog along quite satisfied with the mechanical swing of metrical monotony. If therefore the interpretation of music is to be intelligent and interesting, the player must cease to regard the bar lines as the dividing points of his music, and must instead turn his attention to its motives and phrases. To this

end it will not suffice for the teacher to suggest this new point of view. Each piece under study should be minutely analysed; nor should the analysis and consequent explanations cease until the student is so possessed of right rhythmical and constructive principles that any practical exposition of the former wrong view will at once strike him as ludicrous. But even if the teacher does take the trouble to make a careful analysis for his pupil, he may yet find that his explanations do not constitute an effective appeal, and that they therefore fail to produce good fruit. How then is a fruitful appeal to be made?

VI.—APPEAL MADE EFFECTIVE BY INTELLIGIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS.

The only effective method of appeal about the unknown is through the known. By the medium of a familiar language you may teach the significance of a language not yet understood. Your pupils are familiar with English prose and verse, and through illustrations from prose and verse you may make your appeals forcible and effective.

Suppose that after having explained to your pupil something of the constructive phrasing of his music, you find that so little impression is yet made upon his intelligence that a wrongly punctuated phrase does not strike him as a ludicrous absurdity; turn for a forcible illustration to the realms of verse. Make utter non-

sense of a simple verse by wrong punctuation, and you will find him ready enough to laugh at the blunder. Thus, for example:

> "A chieftain to the Highlands;
> Bound cries boatman do.
> Not tarry and, I'll give thee a,
> Silver pound to."

The sense is gone; the construction is gone; the phrasing rhythm is gone; the beauty is all gone Now explain to your pupil that his wrongly punctuated music sounds exactly like this gibberish. Such an appeal as this will, by a little patient reiteration, probably cause any intelligent pupil to pause and ponder, and will induce him to seek a sounder knowledge of his work. Each time you notice a wrong punctuation in any musical performance where you have carefully explained the construction of the music, be persistent in trying to stimulate the intelligence of your pupil by reading aloud to him a verse or two of poetry, omitting all correct punctuation, emphasis and rhythm; sometimes stopping just before the last word of one sentence; and then, starting afresh with that last word, go straight on without a pause into the middle of the next sentence. You will astonish your pupil. Then drive home the truth, that however senseless such mistakes may be when reading verse, they are still more sense-destroying in the case of music, because having no word ideas, the beauty of its ren-

dering depends all the more upon the clear exposition of its formal construction. Or if, when you direct your pupil to repeat or practise a short passage for the purpose of correcting some error or overcoming some technical difficulty, you find that he makes the bar line instead of the phrase the measure of his excerpt—that he so little regards his form and punctuation as to repeat his fragment again and again, beginning with the last note or notes of one phrase and going straight on without hesitation or break into the middle of the next phrase in total unconsciousness of his absurdity; promptly suppress him by asking him what he would think of the child who when told to learn the verses:

> "And sweep through the deep,
> While the stormy tempests blow;
> While the battle rages loud and long,
> And the stormy tempests blow."

kept repeating part in such fragments as "Blow while the battle, Blow while the battle," or "The deep while the stormy," "The deep while the stormy." Then when he repudiates with scorn the possibility of his doing anything so idiotic, gently tell him again that in this illustration you are imitating as closely as possible his method of practising. And clinch your appeal by again and again reiterating that such rhyming nonsense is not really half so senseless as his fragmentary practice when he ignores the limits of his phrases.

It may be well here to suggest to young teachers one or two ways by which they may clearly and familiarly mark the punctuation of the music so that the pupil may not err. One plan is, to adopt the familiar signs used in punctuating literature. Write a comma at the end of a short two-measure phrase; a semicolon at the end of a sectional or full phrase of four measures; another comma at the end of the third short phrase; and a colon or full stop at the end of a period marked by a full close. The other simple device is, to draw a light pencil vertically across the stave or staves at the end of each phrase. Besides this, it would be well to induce the pupil always to get scholarly editions of their music, editions which carefully and elaborately show the phrases, figures and motives, by curved phrasing lines or other punctuating devices. Of these there may be mentioned as examples, Riemann's Bach, Germer's Beethoven, Klindworth's Chopin and Germer's edition of other classics. And as not every teacher is either competent or over-studious, the earnest learner may be cautioned *to insist on having a teacher who will patiently and untiringly make clear to him the analysis of every piece: the analysis of its general formal outline; the analysis into its sections and periods; and the analysis into its smallest motives. And whatever else he neglects, let him never neglect the punctuating phrasing, without which his playing can never be intelligent or intelligible.*

Having now shown the importance of this division

of our subject, and having suggested the following essentials of effective teaching: first, a full and detailed analysis of the piece; secondly, the cultivation of the habit of regarding music as divided, not by bar lines into metrical measures of equal length running from accent to accent, but into motival fragments of various lengths whose rhythm usually consists of weak leading up to strong beats; and, thirdly, the constant use of a forcible appeal by illustrations from a familiar language, in order to show the absurdity of wrong phrasing—the next step is to offer some clear and practical directions upon the second division of the subject:

VII. THE RIGHT METHOD OF MAKING PHRASE DIVISIONS CLEAR IN PIANO-PLAYING.

If a pupil understand harmony sufficiently to be able to recognise the cadential points of the music the moment they are seen; if he is familiar enough with form to be able to say at once where each motive, phrase, period, subject ends; and if, further, he possess such excellently phrased editions of the piano classics as those already mentioned; how exactly is he to turn this knowledge to practical account when, during his performance of a work, he wishes to make the results of his analysis quite clear to the hearer? *The great secret of intelligent phrasing in music is, the clear separation of the phrases.* In many cases long notes, rests, the resolution of discords, emphasise the caden-

tial points and constitute a natural break, partially defining the limits of the phrase; but the distinctness will be made the more evident by the faintest emphasis near the entry and a corresponding softening of tone towards the close of the phrase. And when there are no natural breaks in the flow of the music there must always be the early emphasis, however slight; the almost imperceptible pause, and the delicate shading of tone at the close, which clearly indicate the divisions between phrase and phrase, between motive and motive, and clearly distinguish the end of one from the beginning of the next. But in all cases it must be distinctly understood that the normal rhythm must never be disturbed by the slight increase of tone used to mark the entry of the new phrase. Just as in reading, the great point that makes for intelligibility is the distinct separation of the sentences and their parts, so likewise is it in music. As to the initial emphasis, it must be very delicate, nay, almost imperceptible, while the rhythm must flow on undisturbed.

It has now for a long time been customary among a large class of teachers whose equipment of knowledge is of scant proportion, to inculcate the practice of introducing a noticeable accent at the commencement of each new phrase. The first note of each phrase is so emphasised and thrust at the hearer by the followers of this method, that the logical flow and the even rhythm of the music are destroyed. Judge of the effect by imagining a piece of prose or poetry read aloud with an un-

pleasant prominence given to the first word of each new sentence. No such device is wise or desirable. Distinct separation, and a slight reinforcement of the first rhythmical accent in the phrase, or rather, a very slight prolonging of the normal length of the first normally accented note in the phrase, are all that is required.

No expressive device, no interpretative art, which has not, as one of its basic principles, this phrase punctuation, will effect anything except to add to the ludicrousness of the result. Let us once again take an illustration from the language with which we are familiar. Repeat that rolling sentence of De Quincey's:

"Beyond the art of Phidias and Praxiteles; beyond the splendours of Babylon and Hekatompylos." Imagine for a moment the construction of this passage such a mystery to a reader that he hopelessly bungles the cadential points and misplaces the punctuation, thus: "Be, yond the art of Phid; ias and Praxitel," and so on; would any beauty of voice or any display of elocutionary expression, however complicated and detailed, make such a rendering sound aught but rank gibberish? Certainly not. Then reflect how unpunctuated, or wrongly punctuated music must sound in the ear of an educated musician.

An important fact, too often unobserved, is, that a motive or phrase may begin on any beat or on any division of a beat in the measure. Indeed, it begins more often at the end or middle of a measure than at

the beginning; and the punctuation between successive phrases usually occurs at a corresponding division of the measure. For although the phrases may not correspond with the bar-lines, still, they very often correspond in length with the length of the measure. The recognition of musical metre as consisting of weak beats leading up to and ending on strong beats, as has already been suggested, will often make it easier to discover the form and limits of phrases and motives, and will enable the pupil to avoid the error of confusing the beginning of a measure with the beginning of a phrase.

The following practical counsels may here be offered to the student as helpful towards cultivating a habit of intelligent phrasing in the rendering of his music:

(1) When repeating or practising a fragment of a piece, never begin with the note or notes which end a phrase, whether they be at the beginning of a measure or not. (2) Lift your hands clear of the keys at the end of all well-defined phrases whenever a natural break in the *legato* allows. (3) If there be no natural break at the end of a phrase or motive, introduce a slight caesural pause, slightly soften the tone at the end of the one phrase, and reinforce, with an almost imperceptible emphasis or by a slight prolongation, the first normal accent of the new phrase or motive, but in no wise disturb the natural rhythm of the music. Thus may the construction and punctuation, to the nicest detail, be made evident to the hearer.

VIII.—MOTIVAL PHRASING.

Much as the study and practice of phrasing, even in its more general aspects, is neglected and misunderstood, that most important of all its branches, motival phrasing, is perhaps the least understood and the most neglected. Even where the larger articulation of the music is examined and made clear in the performance, its finer divisions, its elementary foundations, are quite ignored, as if they did not really matter. And yet without the requisite knowledge and the requisite skill to put this knowledge to account, by showing the development of music from its elemental motives, it is impossible to give any really fine or delicate interpretation of a great work in musical art. But while it is necessary that this motival construction be as clearly disclosed as the larger articulation of the music; and while the means used for the purpose are the same in both cases, it should be borne in mind that the utmost delicacy is necessary when defining the motival limits. The initial emphasis, the caesural pause, the final shading, must be infinitesimal.

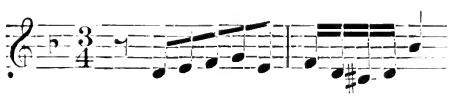
In order to illustrate the importance of this motival punctuation, look once again to poetry. Take a line from Milton's blank verse, a line unpunctuated even by a comma:

"And what most merits fame in silence hid."

(Perhaps the poet was here speaking prophetically of the treatment of the motive in musical performances.)

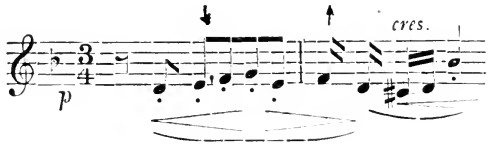
Although there is not even a comma in this verse, still, a caesural pause is needed to make the meaning, the rhythm and the construction clear. And this caesural pause can be applied at but one place only without turning beauty into nonsense. Experiment for yourself by introducing the pause after each successive word except the right one, "fame," and you will at once appreciate the importance of a correct caesural punctuation. And if needful in poetry, how much more so in music!

A single example from music will illustrate the principle here discussed. The following fragment is taken from the subject of number six of Bach's "Forty-eight Preludes and Fugues."



How many varied interpretations may be applied to these few notes, and of these how many are usually unintelligent; how many ignore the delicate construction of the piece! The rhythm may be altogether ignored by striking every note with equal force; or the first note of each divided crotchet beat may receive an equal accent, thus illustrating the mechanical jog of metrical monotony; or the construction of the fragment may be minutely analysed, and the result of the analysis be made evident in the rendering. Here is the same fragment thus analysed and luminously anno-

tated by that profound scholar of motival analysis, Dr. Riemann:



The first elemental motive is the weak D leading up to the strong E, at which point Riemann draws a tiny vertical line partially across the stave, to call the attention of the student to the completion of this first foot of the music. The articulation may here be made evident in the rendering by an infinitesimal prolongation of the E. The completion of the second elemental motive at the first semiquaver F of the next measure is shown to the eye by its detachment from the remaining three, as well as by a curved phrasing line. Thus F, in the rendering, instead of being the first accented note in a connected group of four, is the note requiring slightly softened tone, and it should be separated from the second semiquaver by a hesitation so slight as to be little more than observed, as it were, in the thought of the player. In the next little phrase, the semiquaver D leads up to the very slight accent or infinitesimal prolongation on the C sharp, so as to prepare the way for the forcible entry of the coming B flat. Such a treatment as this deserves the closest study and the nicest care; for it substitutes intelligent for mechanical accentuation; it substitutes a thoughtful

exposition of the construction for a meaningless succession of notes; and it substitutes tender pathos for the cold rhythm of unpunctuated nonsense. More than this, it is the key to the motival or elemental construction, it sheds much light upon the expressive treatment of the whole fugue, and it reveals many beauties which otherwise must remain hidden from the view.

(It may be well to notice here that some prejudice still exists among a certain proportion of musicians of ability, education and position, to whom all this interesting matter comes as too new to be accepted very easily. Conservatism almost always prevents the elder generation from letting in the light which reaches them after the notions received in the days of their early education have become semi-petrified. In such a case as this, the virtues of the fresher knowledge have but to be tried to be found good. It is simply a case for the hearing ear to hear.)

Such a simple illustration will suffice to show how all-important is that right phrasing which comprises, first, a searching and intelligent analysis of the work; and then, in its performance, a clear separation of all its phrases and motives, so that the beauty and thoughtfulness of the design may be made manifest. But, mark: just as surely will exaggeration mar the beauty of the work, as the contrary fault, neglect.

Beyond all this there still remains the weighty question of the correct and expressive rendering of each

phrase and fragment, after the analysis and practical separation of the parts have been thoroughly mastered.

IX.—EXPRESSIVE TREATMENT OF PHRASES.

In a short glance at a subject so comprehensive and varied as this of phrasing, it is impossible to do more than give a suggestive outline of the principal divisions of the subject matter. Yet during such a glance the supreme importance of the theme may be demonstrated, and the attention of the pupil may be directed to right lines of study, as well as to such right principles of interpretation as may enable him to discriminate between teacher and teacher. For further enlightenment he will study able treatises and first-rate editions of music; and he will put himself under the guidance of one whose knowledge and enthusiasm will impel him to inform his pupils in greater detail regarding the principles of phrasing and their individual application.

As in the other divisions of the subject already treated, so here, some bare suggestive outline for guidance as to the expressive treatment of phrases may be given. And at the outset it may be observed that the very attempt to make clear in the performance the general and elemental analysis of the music will of itself help to expose the expressive content of the fragment or phrase.

The simple general rules of expression must be applied, wherever they are evidently appropriate, to all phases or fragments of phrase or motives. Some of these

general rules are: (1) Play a phrase which ascends throughout, *crescendo* to the final note. (2) Play a descending phrase *diminuendo*. (3) Play an ascending phrase and descending *crescendo* and *diminuendo*. Most phrases, and most figured passages, as well as figured fragments of phrases, are best rendered by a *crescendo* towards the middle and a *diminuendo* towards the end. (4) Never fail to give each accent, emphasis, *legato*, *staccato*, slur, or other mark of expression noted on the music, its accurate rendering in each phrase. And you will find quite a wealth of detailed expressive suggestions elaborately annotated on the best modern editions of the classics. (5) Look for imitative phrases which are repeated, and for melodic figures, whether repeated or not, and to these give especial prominence. (6) Watch for the dominant theme or the primary motive, and emphasise its entry at each of its repetitions. (7) By similar expressive treatment of a motival fragment at each of its appearances, however it may be modified in the course of thematic development, you will often make its genealogy the more apparent, and thus elucidate the construction of the music. The limit of the motive may be defined on the printed page by a curved line, or by a break in the normal rhythmical grouping of the notes; and if such a fragment be often repeated its thematic importance may be realised. Out of the simplest motives of a very few notes, Bach and Beethoven have developed the most marvellous and expressive movements. (8) Beware of the common fault

of displacing the normal rhythmical accentuation by unnecessarily emphasising the first note of a phrase which begins on the unaccented beat. Remember that the phrase entry of an unaccented part of the measure or beat does not displace the normal accent; it simply increases the first natural accent that occurs. (9) See that the expressive device of the slur be fully utilised in every piece. The phrasing slur over two notes of a different pitch, or over a number of notes the last of which ends a motive, occurs very frequently in all good music; and a finished player may readily be recognised by the delicacy with which he shades off the tone at the end of his slurs. The most common fault made by those who attempt to interpret their slurs is, to make the final note too loud or to bounce it up with a jerk as if it were a sharp *staccato* note. The right way is, to play the final note so softly that it may seem to but catch up the dying vibrations of the previous note, and to release its key gently. (10) Observe with care the varying shades of emotion depicted. Mark the introduction of an expressive *cantabile* by a slight slackening of the *tempo;* and the change to an emotionally exciting passage by a slight *accelerando*; but do not let freedom of movement degenerate into violent exaggeration. (11) At well marked cadential points; at changes of subject or movement; at cadenzas leading up to a pause; and wherever the emotional or constructive aspect of the piece may be the better elucidated by so doing, introduce a slight *rallentando.* (12) See that

by a scholarly analysis, and an intellectual grasp of each work, you are enabled to show in your playing its logical coherence and continuity as an organic whole.

Even a few hints such as these should lead the student to seek fuller information, and should awaken in him a desire to elucidate in a worthy manner both the intellectual and the expressive content of the music he has to play. And this he will not fail to do if, first, he study diligently the general plan or formal outline of the work at which he is engaged; then, its divisions into periods and sections; then, the minute structure of its motival elements; and after that, the part in the total development of the piece which each motive plays; if, secondly, he clearly defines this construction by an intelligent separation of all the manifest divisions of the music, that is, if his punctuation be adequate; and if, thirdly, he uses every device of expressive significance to interpret the emotional content of the whole and all the parts.

No student who makes himself master of the principles here outlined need ever swell the numbers of those whose use of the word *phrasing* is cant; for its mystery will, by him, have been fully penetrated, and its kernel of life have become a living guide.

Note.—For further practical information upon the whole subject of phrasing and expression, see the author's concise textbook, "The Art of Expression," published by Weekes and Co.

III.

Hints on the Right Interpretation of Bach's Woltempirirte-Clavier on the Piano.

"*Grammatici certant et adhuc sub judice lis est.*"

Should any argument still be needed to urge upon every student who aims at excellence or at competence as a player of the piano, the importance of the study of these immortal works of Bach, the judgments of some great musician may be quoted to show the esteem in which they are held by those who knew them well, and are trustworthy critics of their excellence. There is no doubt that those who by such eulogiums are led to a personal acquaintance with the works, will soon be persuaded, by the genius speaking in them, to become themselves advocates as ardent.

I.—EULOGIUMS OF EMINENT MUSICIANS.

"Music owes almost as great a debt to John Sebastian Bach as a religion owes to its founder."—SCHUMANN.

"Eternal youth and unsurpassed perfection stamp every piece in the collection."—RITTER.

"Bach's 'Woltempirirte-Clavier' is the Old Testament, and Beethoven's Sonatas are the New Testament, of piano literature."—BULOW.

"Of all existing musical forms, that of fugue, as we find it in the works of a great genius such as J. S. Bach, is certainly one of the most perfect, and to an earnest musician, one of the most interesting. As has been often said of the Bible and Shakespeare, every time we read Bach we find some new beauty in him that we had never discovered before."—EBENEZER PROUT.

"No collection of equal interest and variety exists in the whole range of music. These works have been subjected to the closest scrutiny by numberless musicians of the keenest intelligence for the greater part of a century, and they bear the test so well that the better men know them the more they resort to them: and the collection is likely to remain the sacred book of musicians who have any real musical sense so long as the present system of music continues. Bach's musical constitution being the purest and noblest and most full of human feeling and emotion ever possessed by a composer, the art of music is more indebted to him than to any other composer who ever lived, especially for the extension of the art of expression."—SIR HUBERT PARRY.

II.—BACH'S CONFLICTING INTERPRETERS.

Great as are these works, great as is their fascination, they are not at all easy to understand fully or to inter-

pret rightly. However minutely and however often they have been examined, criticised and explained by scholars, there is still abundant scope for keener criticism and more enlightening commentary. So far, diversity and opposition would seem to an observer to be some of the animating principles of those who seek to solve the difficult problem of giving a clear exposition of how rightly to interpret upon the piano the clavier works of Bach.

III.—THE SIMPLE RULE OF THE TRUSTING DISCIPLE.

Here, first, it may be well to epitomise, for the sake of many an unsophisticated student, the progress, from trust to doubt, from doubt to bewilderment, which is often engendered by the sudden acquisition of a more critical knowledge of these works. For there is many a youthful pianist, and many a poorly equipped teacher, remote from the great sources and centres of educational criticism, and destitute of a library adequate to any fair scholarship, who has, nevertheless, been brought up in a musical atmosphere; who, in a superficial and mildly appreciative way, has become to some extent familiar with a number of the masterpieces of piano literature, and who reads his Bach and Beethoven as a half-educated student might read his Virgil and Horace, or as the trustful but unlettered man acquaints himself with the magnificent though mysterious language of Isaiah. Such students and teachers, who as yet have heard nothing of the diffi-

culties which perplex the scholar, nothing of the intricacies and diversities which appear before the searchlight of the higher criticism, simply take for granted that this book of fugues from which they play contains nothing more or less than the plain and indisputable text of Bach, for which there is but one method of interpretation: the straightforward method of going over the written notes and making sure that they are all sounded correctly and in time. Should their copy be, for example, that of Kroll, published by Peters, or of Pauer, published by Augener, they will find, as a rule, no phrase marks, no signs of expression, few *tempo* directions; nothing, in short, to divert them from their straightforward plan of going through the sacred book of the great musician in their quiet, *legato*, monotonous, non-lucid, uncultivated and contented manner. It never occurs to them that there is anything more to be said on the subject, just as it never occurs to them to look for textual varieties, or esoteric mysteries in their Shakespeare, or in the apparently simple language of their Bible. Nor are their appreciative or critical faculties yet educated sufficiently to perceive that there are ideal interpretations far beyond their present grasp. But, by and by, upon leaving their quiet spheres of trustful and superficial acquaintance, and after entering college or meeting and falling into discussion with some critical scholar, they soon learn that there are, and have been, keen students and patient investigators, who spend not a

little of their life's labour scanning edition after edition of this ancient musical classic, reading volume after volume of scholarly commentary upon it, studying text after text and interpretative theories manifold, in the hope that out of all this toil they may discover some more enlightened views of text and meaning than those who toiled before. Our trustful student and teacher awake to find that doubt takes the place of faith; complexity, the place of simplicity; conflict and obscurity the place of the old straightforward method of interpretation.

Now, when the old illusion is dispelled, that this cherished book contains a faithful transcription of the notes set down by the great old master, all ready to be as simply interpreted as the running reader may think fit; when the placidly ignorant musician becomes an humble disciple of the devoted critics, and joins the ranks of the searchers; how may we best describe the condition of mind in which he approaches his new methods of study; and what conclusion is he likely to come to in the turmoil of this new phase of faith or doubt? Surely the words of the ancient preacher are as apt to-day as ever: "He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."

IV.—SUBJECTS OF CONFLICTING OPINION.

Chief among the subjects which bewilder the young student, nay, which still harass many an old one, are: first, the text; secondly, the general interpretation,

viewed from three standpoints: *(a)* from the antagonistic standpoint of clavichord playing and piano playing; *(b)* from the standpoint of how, generally, polyphonic music should be rendered on the piano; and *(c)* from the standpoint of the right principles of phrasing, expression, *tempo*, and all those details which fall under the general heading of style; and thirdly, there is the eternally vexed and vexing question of the ornaments.

The important consideration is, whether, on all these vital questions, the earnest seeker may find any sound basis or principle upon which to build a new and finer interpretative faith; and whether, if there is no absolute certainty to be attained, there is ground for probability stable enough for guidance, and worth the seeking.

Let us examine. First, then, there is the text. And it is very clear that if there is not some fair certainty about the text, the foundations of the whole matter are hopelessly insecure.

V.—THE TEXT.

Instead of there having been a neatly and carefully written manuscript of Bach's works sent to a careful and competent publisher, which often happens with the works of composers of to-day, Bach's "Forty-eight Preludes and Fugues" were found, often very badly written, some in one place, some in another, in different

and differing copies. Of these, some were manuscripts transcribed by himself, some were copies made by his friends and admirers. Numerous, and often considerable, were the corrections and re-corrections made by himself; numerous were those made by strange hands; numerous were the variations and interpolations of copyists and publishers. Which corrections and variations were authorised or approved by Bach himself, and which manuscripts, in each case, he preferred, were points by no means easy to decide. Again, the ornamentation was a further difficulty. Signs whose meanings are now quite distinct were used as carelessly by Bach and by his editors, as if their meanings were interchangeable. And further, no interpretative directions, or very few, to aid the player, were given by Bach himself. Thus, the text was a tangle of confusion in writing; the ornaments were a tangle of confusion in writing and in the tradition of performers; and the interpretation was entirely a tangle of contradictory tradition. Out of such materials had the editor to prepare his copy for the printer; and in proportion to his conscientious care, his critical acumen, and his musical insight, was his work likely, either to discover light and order, or to make confusion worse confounded. A detailed account of the chief sources available from which a text might be selected is to be found in the preface to Vol. XIV of the Bach-Gesellschaft edition, and in the preface to the Bischoff-Steingraber edition. These

may be studied in conjunction with the observations on the subject in the biographies of Bach by Forkel and Spitta. For our purposes it will suffice to state that amongst the early non-critical publications of Bach's "Woltempirirte-Clavier" were those by Nagëlli, of Zurich, by Simrock, of Bonn, and by Peters, of Leipzig, edited by Czerny. These were issued about the year 1800, but were of little value in determining the correct text as no mention of any careful examination or comparison of original sources was made by their editors. Czerny's edition has, however, this claim to distinction, that it was the first attempt to transcribe the works so that they could be interpreted, not as clavichord, but as piano compositions.

The first really critical edition of the text, compiled after a most scholarly and laborious examination of all the available originals, was made by Franz Kroll in 1862-3, and was published by Peters, of Leipzig. Not long afterwards the same Franz Kroll was appointed by the Bach-Gesellschaft to edit the XIVth volume of their monumental issue of the complete works of Bach, begun in 1850, completed in 1900, and published by those princes among publishers, Breitkopf and Härtel. Vol. XIV was set apart in 1864 for the "Well-Tempered Clavichord." A careful examination of the numerous differences between the two editions, compiled by the same scholar within a short time of each other, affords an eloquent testimony to the difficulties encountered by the textual critic of

Bach. A large proportion of the passages printed as variants (or marginal readings) in the Kroll-Peters edition, are incorporated into the text of the Bach-Gesellschaft edition; while the variants of the Bach-Gesellschaft will be found in the text of the Kroll-Peters. In a prefatory note to the later edition, Franz Kroll informs the student that both his critical texts are founded upon the same original sources; and he states that the fact of their not always agreeing arises partly, because in preparing his later edition, he considered it wise, after further comparison of the differing originals, to introduce some textual modifications; and partly, because his Peters edition was intended rather as an instructive edition for the student, while that published by the Bach-Gesellschaft was prepared solely for the purpose of textual reference. The number of original sources quoted by Kroll in the Bach-Gesellschaft edition, and the huge list of textual variants given at the end of the volume, again force upon the student's notice the grave doubts which existed as to the authenticity of the text, and the magnitude of the labour of the textual critic.

This Bach-Gesellschaft edition was for a long time generally accepted as containing a fairly authentic text, and nothing further was done in the matter until in 1883. Dr. Hans Bischoff, another accomplished scholar and keen critic, issued, through Steingraber, a new textual edition of Bach's clavier works. He went once again through the old labour of examining and

comparing all original sources, and through the new labour of comparing these again with Kroll's texts as well as with the texts of all editors recognised as of any importance. His conclusion is, that the only critical texts of any value published before his time were the two texts of Kroll; *and of these two he unhesitatingly prefers that of the Bach-Gesellschaft as the more accurate.* His own variations from that text are derived partly, he says, from further original sources not possessed by Kroll; and partly, but only after the most careful study, from a different critical view of the text generally, and of varieties and corrections in the originals in particular. His variant notes, given at the foot of each page, show great scholarship, and are proof of the most minute investigation.

It may be mentioned here that a further autograph copy of the second book of the Preludes and Fugues, discovered in England, and mentioned in Grove's Dictionary, gives still further variations in the text.

But it is generally held now that the text of Dr. Hans Bischoff is about the most reliable extant. Later critics may perhaps differ in small points upon the comparative correctness or value of some of his readings and variants; but the teacher who checks his pupils' editions, whatever they may be, by a careful comparison with the texts of Kroll in the Bach-Gesellschaft edition, and of Bischoff in the Steingraber edition, may feel confident that he has the materials for

a text which is probably not far wrong. These are the two standard textual editions.

Professor Germer, who, in 1896, thought fit to supplement the labours of his eminent predecessors, remarks, in his critical edition, published by Litolff, that while Kroll and Bischoff were able textual critics, they, as well as other editors, were guided too largely in their choice of text by concentrating more of their attention than was wise on the notes as the all-important part of the music. His opinion is, that error is sure to result from the mistake of magnifying, in textual selection, the importance of what might be called the mechanical view; and of minimising the importance of musical taste and insight guided by careful motival analysis. He endeavours to avoid this "letter-killing" frame of mind, and thus indirectly claims superiority over all others. His edition may be cordially recommended for its many excellent qualities. And it may be mentioned that he generally calls attention to his tamperings with the text, in a footnote. But such a view as his involves too much risk to be greatly valued as a safe guide to a text; for it has to reckon far too much with the caprices of individual taste and interpretation.

From this short glance at the subject of the text, we have concluded that the student is not left without the foundations for a finer faith. And in corroboration of this conclusion it may be well to add the testi-

mony of some eminent modern musicians as to the relative value of the various editions of Bach's works.

Ehrlich says: "The Steingraber edition by the late Dr. Hans Bischoff is incontestably the best one." Bülow strongly disapproved of the Czerny text, as well as of Tausig's or any other edition based upon so vitiated a text; and with equal urgency he commended the Kroll-Peters edition. Rubinstein used the Bach-Gesellschaft edition in preference to any other. And yet, incredible as it may seem, Professor Rudthardt, of Leipzig Conservatorium, who has latterly been editing Bach's clavier works in a third Peters edition, designed principally for phrasing purposes (on this point not always reliable) bases his edition upon the text of Czerny, of which he says, in the preface: "Numerous as are the editions of Bach's 'Well-Tempered Clavier,' none of them have succeeded in displacing Czerny's meritorious work!" While of the utterly incorrect text of Czerny, Professor Dannreuther, a great Bach student, remarks: "Czerny's edition of Bach's fugues is now justly superseded by that (?) of Franz Kroll in the edition of the Bach-Gesellschaft, and in the edition Peters." (Lest the student might confound the texts of these two editions as identical, it would perhaps have been wiser to say "those" editions, not "that" edition.)

The various publications spoken of in this section of the subject are specially mentioned in reference to the text. In a further section some of them will be

again discussed in reference to interpretative questions. It may be noticed here that it is a pity that so accomplished a scholar as Dr. Riemann should have been careless regarding his selection of ornamentation, and not averse to tampering with the text occasionally.

VII.—INTERPRETATION.

Though the text of Bach's works be so fairly well established, this is but the first of the difficulties and conflicts solved. For, given a text absolutely certain, a second great question immediately arises: How should these works be played so as rightly to interpret Bach's intentions? In attempting to answer this question we are confronted by quite an array of opposing theories. Some assert that we should play them on the piano in the same manner in which Bach played them on the clavichord; and that, upon a study of the traditions of his playing, we should formulate our method. Some again, assert that we should play them on the piano, not as clavichord works are played on the clavichord, but as modern music is played on the piano, with the aid of all modern devices of expressive and instrumental resource. Some say that these preludes and fugues are highly emotional works, and that every device of touch and tone must be used to elicit their expressive content; others again declare that they are purely intellectual compositions, to be interpreted best with as uniform a touch and tone, and with as little emotional expression as possible. Some

affirm that such prominence should be given to the subject of a fugue throughout each of its repetitions as to throw all the other parts into evident subordination; while others as urgently affirm, that to give special prominence to any one theme or part in polyphonic music, destroys the very intention of polyphony. Some decide for an almost continuous *legato;* others attack this principle as a monstrous absurdity. Some found their phrasing upon one method, others upon quite a different method. And even if there are to be found those who agree upon some general plan of modern expressive interpretation, yet it will soon be discovered that this common ground is turned into a fresh battle field. For the details of style, upon which all differ, are as numberless as the sands of the sea, while the points of agreement are not very easy to discover. Where, in one edition, you will find such directions as *forte*, *crescendo*, *staccato*, in another, you will find *piano*, *diminuendo*, *legato*. Nor is this the end of the matter. There still remains the crowning glory of the combatants—the ornaments.

These differences are not slight; on the contrary, they are so vital that the works would hardly be recognisable as the same when interpreted according to some of these opposing theories.

Again, the earnest student, discouraged afresh by the discovery of all this conflict, asks himself whether there is indeed any sure clue to the maze; whether he

can, by seeking, gain a fair probability, even though certainty be hidden from his view.

VIII.—CLAVICHORD OR HARPSICHORD.

A careful analysis of the matter may help us to discover some guiding principles which may throw some light on these puzzling questions. A glance at the capabilities of Bach's own instrument, and at the traditions of Bach's own playing, should prove a useful starting point for such an enquiry.

It was for the clavichord Bach wrote. The tone of that instrument was soft, sweet, delicate. This tone could be slightly graduated by the gentleness or strength of the key depression, though the range of tone gradation was as nothing in comparison with that possible on a modern piano. Yet the clavichord, however weak in tone, still answered sympathetically to the finest and most tender gradations of the touch of the player, and admitted of the nicest shading and phrasing. The manner of playing the clavichord had been "to creep and glide over the keys with flat hands and inactive arms." Pressure, not percussion, was its general style of technique. Here, then, is one strong argument against the interpretative theory of those who demand a monotonous quality of tone when rendering the works of Bach on the piano. Bach himself, it may be noted, did not care to play on the harpsichord because it did not admit of any delicacy of phrasing or shading; and even after the invention of

the piano (in his day but a rough instrument) he was always faithful to his Ariel of instruments, the expressive clavichord.

IX.—BACH'S CLAVICHORD PLAYING.

The striking characteristics of Bach's manner of playing the clavichord were, quietness, dignity, perfect lucidity, absolute correctness and precision. Each finger was equally trained, and the training was complete. But though quiet dignity and the entire absence of any attempt at a vehement demonstration of passion, were noticeable features of Bach's playing; yet still, he never failed, so adequate was his technical training, his intelligence, his constructive knowledge, his poetic nature, to introduce such delicate shading and phrasing of each part and of the whole composition, as would make the work glow with beautiful emotion. Here, then, we have strong traditional evidence, both in the expressive capacity of the instrument, and in the expressive beauty of Bach's own renderings, against the advocates of the doctrine of mechanical and monotonous interpretation. Three arguments supported the advocates of the mechanical theory: first, they regarded Bach's fugues as marvellous expressions of architectural beauty, examples of intellectual ingenuity, but nothing more; secondly, when, with ears accustomed to the piano, they contrasted with its capacity for tone variety, the capacity of the clavichord, they concluded that the proper

theory of interpretation was, monotony, or almost monotony; and thirdly, they concluded that if Bach had intended the use of expressive devices he would have clearly indicated those intentions on the music. How easy it is for the truly poetic musician who enters fervently into communion with the great soul which he cannot help but discover in those works of genius, who feels the personality of the man behind the book, to reply to these contentions!

X. EMOTIONAL ELEMENT IN BACH'S FUGUES.

Against the mechanical theory which regards these fugues as simply an ingenious intellectual form, Sir Hubert Parry has spoken strongly and well. He says: "Considering how infinitely capable Bach was of every kind of ingenuity, it is surprising to find how small is the proportion of those things which are purely mechanical to those which have a genuine musical basis. But there was an amount of human nature about Bach which prevented his wasting his time on ingenious futilities. Most of his fugues illustrate such states of feeling and of mood as music is especially fitted to express, and they do so in terms of the most finished art. There are merry fugues; strong, confident fugues; intensely sad fugues; serenely reposeful fugues; tenderly pathetic fugues." Rubinstein, also, in his "Conversation on Music," gives expression to similar views.

Thus our answers to the advocate of the mechanical

theory are clear. To his first statement, that the fugue is a product of intellectual ingenuity, and nothing more, we answer, yes, nevertheless *we feel* the expressive beauty animating the form. And perhaps this reply may carry as little weight as the reply of a religious man to an intellectual sceptic, when he says, "Yes, but I know, by personal communion, Whom I trust." To the second argument, that the insignificance of the shading possible on the clavichord may be regarded as equivalent to monotony on the piano, the replies are equally clear: first, that while the shadings of tone used by Bach himself on the clavichord were held, by those accustomed to this delicate instrument, to be fully adequate, the variety of shading on our piano, whose range of tone is far greater, is surely that which elicits the requisite musical effect; and that if we, with ears accustomed to a wide range of tone-shading, were to attempt to reproduce on the piano the minute *nuances* of the clavichord, the result would be, not an imitation of Bach's expressive interpretation, but an original monotony. And, secondly, Bach produced from the clavichord all the variety of which it was capable, as an example to us that, whatever were our instrumental resources, we should do the same. And in reply to the third argument, that Bach left few directions as to style to guide the performer, it might well be retorted, neither did Shakespeare for the dramatic exposition of his plays. Both left their works, and the works of both will for ever make an

emotional appeal to every human being finely educated. It is the business of great interpreters rather —of actors, performers, æsthetic editors—to introduce such marks of guidance. Besides, it must not be forgotten that in the days of Bach the custom of annotating the music with marks of expression, of phrasing, of style, had not yet started. This is a device of modern growth, fairly begun in the time of Haydn, and gradually developed until it reached the wonderful elaboration of detail which we find in the works of Beethoven or Chopin, as edited by Lebert, Bülow, Germer, Klindworth or Riemann.

XI. CLAVICHORD OR PIANO INTERPRETATION.

"Benefacta male locata, malefacta arbitror."

There are those conservative people in the world who act as barriers to progress, nay, who seem to look upon progress as a dangerous heresy, which it is their duty manfully to withstand. And they think to give some fair countenance to their action by including all progress under the title of unwarrantable innovation. Of such are evidently those players who insist that Bach's fugues should be so played on the piano as to resemble, as far as possible, their idea of them, as interpreted by themselves on the clavichord or harpsichord. They cry out against the heresies of *piano* and *forte*, of *crescendo* and *diminuendo*, of accent and *staccato*, of minutely expressed phrasing, of any well-marked differentiation of the parts, or strong

colouring of the whole. They preach in reality the soulless doctrine of a general monotony of tone and touch, and of a cold, unintelligent, and unmusical interpretation of the works. The heresies of a modern piano rendering are to them what the beauty of an ornate ritual in a splendid cathedral would be to a Puritan of the strictest type. Now, what is the commonsense of the whole matter: what is the stable and rational principle underlying the confusion caused by the erroneous standpoints of half-educated critics? Surely it is this. If there be real beauty, expressive of human emotion in these fugues—and what a consensus of eloquent testimony is to be found on this point—then let that interpretation, whatever be the instrument chosen, be accounted the best interpretation, which elicits most of that musical expression, and most clearly exhibits the beauty of the form. If the old methods were the most musical methods for the clavichord and harpsichord, then adopt them when playing on those instruments; but if the more modern methods of Bülow, Rubinstein, Riemann, Germer, and such artists, are the most musical methods for the piano, then away with the pedantic folly of conservative tradition, and welcome progress. For Bach's fugues are not the soulless formulas of a bygone musical tradition, to be interpreted in accordance with the rules of an antiquated school: they are the living expressions of a genius whose being possesses the same inexhaustible freshness, the same perennial beauty and vitality,

as nature herself possesses. And throughout the years there will be unfolded to us more and more of their immortal beauty, as our understanding hearts are quickened by earnest study to comprehend them better; as the capabilities of our instruments become richer and more delicate; and as the range of our interpretative ideas grows wider.

Before concluding this section of the subject where that progressive principle of interpretation is advocated in which every modern expressive device available on the piano is recognised and fully used, it may be wise to confirm this view by an appeal to the judgments of some eminent musicians.

"Beethoven is said to have tried to dissipate the absurd tradition which implied that what was right for the harpsichord was right also for the piano."

Kullak and Dr. Marks; Rubinstein and Bülow, recognising the emotional element in Bach's fugues, advocate, against the older theories of interpretation, the doctrine that all modern devices in modern expressive music, should equally be adopted when endeavouring to interpret Bach's expression rightly on the piano.

Hipkins, the eminent clavichord and Bach scholar, says: "It is not too much to insist that all J. S. Bach's works have to be virtually submitted to transcription, at least in the rendering, when transferred to the piano." Germer, than whom now we have few abler expressive commentators, considers that it is

useless to try to interpret the fugues as if they were played on the clavichord or harpsichord of ancient times. On the contrary, he affirms, in a spirit of progressive liberality, that there is no resource of modern instruments, or of modern methods of interpreting musical expression, which may not legitimately be utilised in order, the more adequately, to realise on the piano the intentions of Bach. And Klindworth emphatically gives his judgment "that Bach's fugues, with their wealth of manifold emotion, demand an expressive interpretation as detailed and individual as Beethoven indicated and demanded for his own works."

Here again is found for the earnest student a reliable basis for a finer faith amidst the perplexities which beset his path. But no sooner is he thus reassured than at the next step he finds himself unfortunately entering a new wilderness of difficulty. For the puzzle of how polyphonic music should be played at all on the piano, bars his further enquiry as to which modern guides and exponents should be chosen by him from many opposing claimants.

XII. HOW TO INTERPRET POLYPHONIC MUSIC ON THE PIANO.

By what methods of interpretation is the meaning of a fugue to be made clear on the piano? There is the simple, straightforward method of our friend the young student,—that is, striking every note correctly

and in time; and there are not a few old students, too, who pin their faith to this unsophisticated style. There are, moreover, those who regard the principal subject as of supreme and dominating importance; who require for it prominence at each of its repetitions during the progress of the fugue, and the subordination to it of all other parts. There are again those who believe in the doctrine that there are so many equally important melodies running against one another, each of which deserves a like treatment. And there are, lastly, those who go further, and regard the fugue as a perfectly arranged whole, made up, and developed upon an artistic and logical plan in which every note and every part has its just place, which it is the duty of the player, by some means, to make clear to the listener. Franklin Taylor, one of England's greatest teachers, advocates the second view. Hear his counsel: "In part playing one of the parts is of greater theoretic value than the others, and must be made prominent accordingly. Thus the notes of the subject of a fugue must be played with much fuller tone than the notes of the parts by which it is accompanied." Czerny, Bülow and Germer, give expression to the same view. Dr. Gordon Saunders, on the other hand, makes the following comment on this method: "In reference to the modern practice in fugue playing of giving prominence to the subject at each recurrence throughout the fugue, and reducing the other voices to accompanying parts, it may be at once conceded that this method shows ex-

cellent technique but that it destroys polyphony. It is not carrying out the composer's intentions." And yet so little regard does Dr. Saunders pay to his own views in the matter, that one finds in his edition of some of the fugues, the notes of the subject printed in large type at each of its repetitions, and the notes of the "accompanying voices" printed in small type! Thus, again and again, we find that the spirit of combat so often possesses the exponent of these works, that rather than be at peace he will turn round and fight himself.

Now, is it possible for our teachers and students to find a safe road out of this new wilderness? First, let them hearken again to the tradition of the great old master's playing. What was his method? We are told that his finger training was absolutely perfect; that his constructive knowledge was equally perfect; and that in his playing every note of every melody had the perfect interpretation due to its individual place in its own melody, to its place in relation to all the other melodies and to its place in relation to the artistic whole. So that the hearer could observe, either each melody separately as if it were a perfect whole, played by a separate player; or a combination of melodies wrought together so as exactly to express their inter-relation; and he could, at the same time clearly discern the logical development of the whole fugue. Surely this is a beautiful clue to the maze. But how few there be who are able to follow it. First, the technical requirements

are great; secondly, the intellectual requirements are equally great; and thirdly, the musical and artistic requirements must not fall one whit behnd. It is said, that with all the astonishing displays of acrobatic virtuosity of to-day, the fingers of our modern players are not trained to such perfect independence and delicacy as to enable them to distinguish, to justly proportion, and to interpret, each melody of a fugue as it moves in combination with the others; and that herein lies the secret of failure in lucidity, inspiration and charm, when rendering Bach's fugues. Therefore it is the first duty of the Bach student diligently to train his fingers to perfect independence and delicacy, in order that he may be able to play every note in each part with a nicety of phrasing and expression as if that part were an important melody played by a separate individual, or as distinctly as if there were as many instruments as there are parts in the fugue. Each part should therefore be at first thoroughly studied, singly, motive by motive, until it is perfectly known. Then when practising the parts in combination, the student will find it a helpful plan first to listen to one single part at a time, then to another, then to two parts at once, and so on, until he can watch all parts equally. Or it might be better at first to watch the *subject* especially, at each of its repetitions; then the countersubject with it; then the accompanying melodies; and after a full acquaintance with these, to listen to each part as already sug-

gested. And for this perfect training of the fingers there are no studies so suitable and so effective as the fugues of Bach themselves. Secondly, the intellectual requirements are great. Dr. Prout well says that "just as it is quite impossible to play these great polyphonic works before the fingers have been trained to entire independence and to the utmost delicacy; so it is equally impossible to interpret them adequately, nay, even to understand their beauty as a listener, before they have been analysed with the most scholarly and minute care. Without ability to analyse the construction and trace the developments of a fugue, neither player nor hearer can expect to derive pleasure from such a composition." So again, Dr. Lebert insists that the distinctness and intelligibility of the performance of a polyphonic composition depends upon the completeness with which the player understands its construction; upon his perceiving every repetition, inversion, diminution or augmentation of the subject; every episode, its origin and development; every *stretto;* and the right relation of all parts to each other and to the whole. He points out further, that the development of the work, and the mutual relation of the parts, must be kept constantly in view by the player throughout the progress of the fugue, and must, by every device of touch and by every shade of tone, be properly elucidated. Bülow's direction is, that the technical study of every fugue should be preceded by careful analysis.

Of this analysis there are two kinds, the one is, the broad constructive analysis of the fugue into its principal parts, exhibiting the subject, answer, counter-subject, episodes, *stretti* and the like, so that the skeleton plan of the composition is clear as shown on a fugue chart.

Books are published giving an analysis of Bach's "Woltempirirte-Clavier." Of these, Iliffe's published by Novello, Riemann's published by Augener (somewhat obscure by reason of an overlay of emotional rhapsody) and Reinecke's annotated edition of the fugues themselves, published by Breitkopf and Härtel, deserve mention.

The second kind of analysis, though equally important, has not heretofore received any adequate attention. The minute analysis of the *motive* and of motival development, stage by stage, showing the whole construction of the work microscopically, as it were, had never been treated with desirable care and scholarship, until it found a capable exponent in that able and indefatigable critic, Dr. Riemann. No earnest student of Bach can afford to neglect the most careful study of Dr. Riemann's masterly analysis, as set forth in his edition of the fugues themselves. There he will find nearly all difficulties of construction made clear; there he will acquaint himself with many beauties of which formerly he had not dreamt. At the same time, it must be remembered that even the ablest theorist is mortal; that all his practical applications of his doctrines are

not necessarily correct even though the doctrines themselves be sound; and that, without the safeguards of great musical insight and feeling, he may fall into pedantic error, especially when he is enthusiastically developing and illustrating his favourite theory. Dr. Niecks of Edinburgh, while speaking in terms of the highest praise of Riemann's work, adds the caution that the desire to make every difficulty of construction square with his theory, occasionally led him into palpable error. Yet notwithstanding this, there is no doubt that, by his great study and exposition of motival development, he has immortalised his name. His inadequate theories respecting the interpretation of ornaments, and his lack of a sufficiently artistic perception of the expressive beauty of a musical composition, prevent his being, on these points, at all so safe a guide as Germer or Klindworth, although in his own special department he is unrivalled as a commentator.

So far, then, our student finds himself extricated from this wilderness of doubt. But as the oppression of doubt is dissipated, a fresh oppression is begotten by the laborious demands of his new faith—demands for such patient and minute study, for such persevering application of brain and fingers, for such elaborate and thorough workmanship, as, in his untutored days, he had never imagined to be needful. "*Nil sine magno vita labore dedit mortalibus.*" After having travelled thus far he will find further, that there must be added

to the needful equipment of brain and finger, musical insight and emotional power. And for these there is necessary a liberal education of the understanding heart, and some able guide for the right directing of their aims and impulses.

XIII. INTERPRETATION REGARDED FROM THE STANDPOINT OF STYLE.

We have now arrived at a decision of satisfactory probability regarding the text; at a decision in favour of a rendering of the fugue which does justice to every melody and every note; which avoids giving undue prominence to any theme or any part; which never distracts the attention of the hearer from the consideration of the piece as a polyphonic composition and an artistic whole.

But where shall we find a safe guide to all those points of *tempo*, tone, touch and expressive phrasing, which add beauty to intelligence and thus make for perfection in the rendering? Who is to decide upon the legitimate place for *legato*, *staccato*, *forte*, *piano*, *rallentando* and those many indications of accent and phrasing, which express in detail the elements which combine to give finish to an artistic interpretation? Upon these questions, where something must be left to individual taste; where minute directions would require a detailed review of each prelude and fugue; where the views of eminent commentators are as numer-

ous as the commentators themselves; it will perhaps accord better with the scope of a short essay to give some general rules for guidance. That some directions on this subject of style are needed, is evident from the fact that many a student of Kroll cannot imagine upon what principles he should proceed. Where Bach has been so very chary of explaining his intentions concerning pace, phrasing, expression and everything falling under the heading of "style," some definite guidance is surely helpful.

The first comprehensive rule regarding the whole subject which may safely be laid down, is derived from our previous study thus far. It is this: *Use every device of touch, of tone, of tempo and of phrasing, which, upon a liberal study of the subject, seems to you to render more lucid the exposition of the fugue, and to enhance the beauty of the effect.* But mark, only long and careful study, combined with some natural musical taste, will qualify your judgments to be, as Ruskin more forcibly than elegantly puts it, "worth a rat's squeak." During this study you should weigh and compare the annotations on style contained in the editions of such critics as Czerny, Riemann, Ruthardt, Germer, Klindworth, Busoni and others; for even those students who are happily gifted with good natural taste and a keen intelligence, should always form their own opinions by filtering them, as it were, through the laws and principles of those able scholars who preceded them.

XIV.—ANALYSIS OF THE RIGHT FOUNDATIONS FOR PHRASING.

The second comprehensive rule of expressive interpretation is also derived from our previous study; and through its right comprehension, more than through anything else, will light be shed upon the proper application of the first rule. It is this: *Let the basis of your expressive interpretation be, both the general constructive analysis, and the minute motival analysis, of the whole fugue.*

But do our accepted editions agree upon any uniform basis for their phrasing? Not at all. On the contrary, there is much conflict and little agreement. This state of discord is readily to be accounted for in the neglect of many editors heretofore to base their phrasing and expressive annotations upon a clear and rational system of analysis. Yet, in spite of the discord, comparison of their differing results, weighed and checked by a consideration of their distinctive points of view, will afford much valuable guidance. No student who is master of the fine motival analysis of Riemann, and who modifies Riemann's conclusions by the musical insight of Germer and Klindworth, can go far astray. A cursory review of the analysis, constructive and motival, is not sufficient; the study must be thorough and minute. Then the student will understand clearly where to introduce the infinitesimal distinctions

in time and tone required to make the motival construction apparent and the more pronounced distinctions required to define the larger phrases. And then, by the application of the regular rules of musical expression to the results of his analysis, the exposition of the whole work becomes as clear as day.

The constructive analysis will likewise exhibit to the student some guiding principles for his general tone phrasing. He will observe the effectiveness of a gradual increase in tone as the exposition of the fugue progresses and fresh parts are added, and its value often in leading up to the climax of a completed *stretto*, or during the course of an ascending sequence. He will notice, again, the effectiveness of a fall of tone at a cadential point, or where, after an episode, the thematic work is again taken up. He will notice the character of the episodes, and readily discern by their construction—often a sequential construction—what should be the quality of their tone-shading. To such considerations he will add the application of all the ordinary rules of musical expression, such as the *crescendo* and *diminuendo* of rising and falling phrases; the softening of the tone as a restful cadential point is approached, and as the thematic work gradually ceases; the special emphasis required by notes of exceptional length or position. But no general principles will, in this branch of the subject, take the place of a detailed study, and a minute comparison of accredited critics.

XV.—TEMPO.

One subject of much contention in this sphere of style is the *tempo*. Take, for example, Prelude 3 of the first volume. Some metronomic indications are, Czerny, dotted crotchet equals 92; Bischoff, 84; Klindworth, 66; Germer, quaver, 160. The succeeding fugue shows, Czerny, crotchet equals 104; Bischoff, 100; Klindworth, 72; Germer, 69. Now, these are no slight variations; they are the difference between fast and slow; they change the entire character of the work. What is correct? General principles may partly guide; but the power, skill, taste and method of each artistic player must constitute the final court of appeal for him. The greater the general and the detailed beauty he is able to elicit in his performance, the less, most probably, will he think of speed. That *tempo* which seems *to the educated player to render most lucidly the exposition of the fugue, and most to enhance the beauty of the effect, is probably the right tempo for him.* But exactly the same *tempo* is not necessarily the same for all players.

A general rule for guidance may be found in the consideration of the modern tendency to a greatly increased speed as the technical skill of performers developed. So that if one desires to approximate to the *tempi* of Bach's day he will be most likely to succeed by lessening the conventional speed of to-day considerably, even though, from the effects of a vitiated custom, the slower *tempo* may at first seem strange to

his ears. Our modern *virtuosi* are so accustomed to homophonic music and to the display of *bravura* performances where there are few thoughtful details to elucidate, and where the rule seems to be, the greater the speed the greater the brilliancy, that it is little wonder they import some of their unsuitable agility into the profound, nice and thoughtful works of Bach.

But Kullak, Spitta and other authorities, affirm that Bach himself played his own pieces in animated *tempi*. Doubtless, where the mood of the piece required an animated *tempo*, of course Bach suited the playing to the mood; but whatever *tempo* he chose, there was no detail of construction, no point of beauty however minute, but had its just rendering. And again, the animated *tempo* of Bach's time was slower than the rapid *tempo* of Germany. Professor Dannreuther, after condemning the modern tendency to speed, offers the following useful suggestion: "If the ornaments throughout can be rendered truly and without curtailment, so as to chime with the text, without any wrench or sense of effort, it is more than probable that the pace chosen for a movement will prove the right one in the end."

The fact of Germer setting himself up as a drastic reformer on this question of pace, may act as a caution to the student not to accept his conclusion in any given case without careful examination. "*In vitium ducit culpae fuga si caret arte.*" In many instances the safe *tempo* will no doubt be found by adopting the Irish-

man's historic plan of "splitting the difference" between Germer's metronomic indications and those of Czerny. Klindworth, in his admirable edition of 1893 (Schott), appears to have happily adopted this plan.

XVI.—LEGATO, STACCATO, USE OF PEDAL, TIME VARIATIONS.

Again, there is the vexed question of *legato* and *staccato*. In one edition you will find marked the injunction, *sempre legato;* while, on turning to another, you will find the same phrase or passage marked *staccato*. There is no doubt that the majority of modern authorities are in favour of the device of *staccato* as a means, in some cases, for clearly differentiating a phrase or portion of a melody; in some, for defining the phrasing clearly; in others, for enhancing the general expressive effect. But the fact cannot be too strongly emphasised that no expressive device can be rightly used unless it has as a basis for its use an accurate analytic view of the motival development of the work. Bülow protests against the adoption of what he calls "the inconceivably false maxim of Czerny of the inadvisability of the *staccato*"; and insists that "it is precisely by introducing every variety of touch that one clearly interprets the intricate combinations of melodies." "And especially by the *staccato* the player is enabled to mark distinctly the entrance of the principal motive in a middle part without that thumping which so

often mars the beauty of the delivery." It should, however, be distinctly understood that the *staccato* which is recommended as a help towards lucidity, and towards individualisation or prominence of the part, merely signifies a *non-legato*, such as is sometimes used to mark the notes of an emphatic portion of a melody.

In reference to variations of time, and the use of the pedal, the best plan is to be sparing of such liberties. Occasionally, at a full, and especially a falling, cadence, where the thematic working of all the parts ceases, a slight *rallentando* is effective; and it may often be used at the end of the whole piece. But except in these instances, some part is sure to suffer by any deviation from strict time. And as regards the use of the pedal, though Germer indicates a few places where it may be thought to improve the effect, the rule that it should never be used so as to run two successive melody tones into one another, should never be forgotten. And since Bach's works consist, for the most part, of successions of melody tones, and combinations of tones of varying lengths in the several parts, the legitimate use of the pedal must be very small indeed.

In concluding this cursory review of some of the elements of style in interpretation, the student may be specially reminded that the most difficult of all the accomplishments of the player, and the most effective for keeping clearly before the mind the differentiation of the parts, is the special phrasing and expression

which belongs to each separate part, and each separate fragment of each part. In modern music the phrasing and expression of the whole are largely determined by the phrasing and expression of one single part. In these fugues, on the contrary, each part has its own distinctive phrasing. One melody may be *staccato*, another *legato* at the same time; one *crescendo*, another *diminuendo;* one *forte*, another *piano;* one divided into small well-defined motival fragments, another a fairly continuous whole. And all this expressive variety must be combined in a simultaneous movement of many complicated parts, each and all of which must be equally clear and artistic in its rendering, whether regarded separately or in combination. And in connection with this separate phrasing and expression of the individual parts, the student must keep constantly before his mind during the progress of the fugue the thematic development of the work. Not a passage should be left unanalysed, and every one should be so phrased that its origin will be at once apparent to the listener. And this genealogy of each portion will be made manifest by adopting for it the same accentuation, rhythm, shading and general expressive treatment, as was used for its parent phrase. Thus, the inversion of a theme, or a theme motive, will be treated; thus, the fragment of any theme singled out for episodical or thematic development, however its form be modified in the process of development. Who then is equal to the burden of so

delicate and complicated a task? "By toil is the way upward; upward therefore toil."

We have now led the student through many a labyrinth. We have shown him the way to a faith which will prove neither hurtful to his artistic individuality, nor fettering to his freedom. But, alas, we have yet left his darkest riddle untouched. And if he or we can find a clue to the final maze of ornamentation, great indeed will be our light.

XVII. INTERPRETATION OF BACH'S ORNAMENTS.

This is, without doubt, the happy hunting ground of critics. That the difficulties of the subject are great, no one familiar with the opinions of those who have studied the subject most deeply will deny. Professor Dannreuther, who was probably the most profound, thorough and able student of the subject who has yet appeared, or is likely to appear, thus affirms the importance of the subject, and thus states the difficulties which confront the player: "Let any player who is not fully conversant with Bach" (and what player is so conversant may pertinently be asked) "try to render the Prelude in C sharp minor, Volume II. He will find the ornaments indicated in almost every bar a source of doubt and difficulty. They form an integral part of the master's design, and it is impossible to play the piece without them. Yet in very many important instrumental pieces by Bach, players are confronted with a series of puzzles of a like nature."

That there is to be found any stable solution of such puzzles upon general principles is pretty widely regarded as hopeless. The following expressions of opinion support this depressing view.

"There are not to-day two musicians of the same opinion in regard to the rendering of embellishments." —RUBINSTEIN.

"The subject of graces is one of the most difficult imaginable, too complicated to be treated briefly and fully at the same time; too obscure to be treated satisfactorily under any circumstances. To speak dogmatically on this subject, to lay down hard and fast rules, argues ignorance, not knowledge."—DR. NIECKS.

"The subject of ornamentation seems so clouded in mystery, and opinions when expressed are so varied and conflicting as to cause the average musician to allow the question to remain unsolved otherwise than by the dictation of individual taste or indeed of caprice. To-day there is really no standard of rendering which, even among the masters of the art, is universally recognised and applied in all cases of musical embellishments of any particular genius."—LOUIS A. RUSSELL.

"*Appogiature* are indisputably, in the majority of instances, matters of taste. To decide on general rules, it would be necessary that the greatest masters of interpretation of ornaments should show reliable taste; but, as is well-known, there exists no reliable taste." —TURK.

And even if we narrow the field of ornamentation down to the case of Bach's works, we shall find that the battle waxes as furious as ever. It is rather amusing to contrast the *dicta*, on this subject, of the two greatest authorities in England, both at one time professors of the same College, Mr. Franklin Taylor, the author of the articles in Grove's Dictionary on ornamentation; and the late Mr. Dannreuther, the author of the monumental treatise on the subject, published by Novello. Speaking of C. P. E. Bach's work on graces, Mr. Franklin Taylor emphatically states that: "We have unimpeachable evidence as to what J. S. Bach intended to represent, in this work by his son. It is to be accepted as an entirely reliable guide." Mr. Dannreuther, on the other side, proceeds promptly to impeach this unimpeachable evidence, and then declares, with equal confidence, that: "It would be a mistake to accept C. P. E. Bach as the sole guide to his father's works, even in the matter of graces. He does not profess to be a guide to any man's practice other than his own, and he quotes his father's words simply to enforce his own views." It may be added that so eminent an authority as Ehrlich, who for fifty years studied Bach's ornaments, and treated the subject in a masterly essay recently published by Steingraber, endorses the view of Dannreuther in these words: "The directions contained in C. P. E. Bach's book are absolutely authoritative as regards his own works; but they are not so in respect of the works of his great father." Professor

Naumann, of Jena, exposed the root of the whole difficulty when he affirmed that J. S. Bach: "Evidently moved with considerable liberty in the then not slight confusion which existed in the field of ornamentation, so that the strict rules of C. P. E. Bach, Türk, or Marpurg, would fare badly with him."

Franz Kroll has devoted much labour—often useful labour—to the elucidation of this subject; but one feels dubious about accepting his guidance as final, upon discovering that he does not always agree with himself for twenty bars in succession regarding the interpretation of exactly the same ornament in the repetition of exactly the same passage.

Here, then, is a labyrinth indeed; and one may well exclaim that if the light of our guides be darkness, how great is that darkness!

Still, although Bach was rather careless in expressing his intentions; although signs which have now significations quite distinct, were often used by him and by his interpreters as interchangeable equivalents; yet there is a fairly satisfactory process of solving the difficulties, however laborious it may be. Naumann suggests the right direction when he states that: "One's best musical perceptions must serve as guide in deciding as to the manner of executing Bach's numerous embellishments." There was no one fixed law. Bach was not fettered by the labour of being consistent in this unsettled sphere; and therefore the creators of fixed laws are but increasing the difficulties. There

must be diversity of interpretation; and each case must be tried on its own merits. Yet this does not suggest the lawless liberty of caprice; but the well-thought-out decision of a mind fully equipped with all the knowledge available on the subject. The interpretation of Bach's ornaments is not so entirely capricious that general laws—not rigid as those of the Medes and Persians, but pleasantly pliable, and not averse to the inclusion of many exceptions within their scope—may not be laid down to serve as fingerposts. Professor Dannreuther has been eminently successful in formulating such guiding laws. And again, it is only by a minute study of such scholarly principles that the student may wisely determine upon the exceptions and upon their appropriate treatment. Therefore the most valuable course is, to keep a well-furnished library, both of good editions of Bach's clavier works (and here it may be noted that Germer's is one of the only editions of Bach's Forty-eight Preludes and Fugues which rigorously excludes all doubtful ornamentation) and of treatises or essays on ornamentation, such as those by Dannreuther, Klee, Wagner, Ehrlich, Russell, Germer, Taylor, and others. Then, in the case of doubtful or complicated ornaments, decide, after a careful study and comparison of all authorities, upon that interpretation which seems the most musical. For —it cannot be emphasised too strongly—so-called natural taste, without this careful study and comparison of first-rate authorities, is little short of the valueless

caprice of ignorance. A final caution against the pedantry of bigoted attachment to any ancient precedents or conventional rules on the interpretation of ornaments may be added. Dr. Riemann, though a pioneer of progress in many ways, and Franz Kroll, though an able scholar, offend against musical taste and liberality of view in this matter. They are so infatuated with the authority of ancient precedent that they must needs, for example, almost invariably begin their trills with the upper auxiliary. Whereas Ehrlich upon this point observes: "As touching the execution of the various kinds of shakes, the old instruction books agree upon one point only—that the long shake must always begin on the upper auxiliary note. This rule has, with full right, been rejected by all great pianists since the beginning of the present century." And Professor Dannreuther brought the force of a wide intelligence and a musical knowledge to bear upon the discussion, in his excellent suggestion, that where the use of the upper auxiliary would blur the melodic outline it should not be used.

A study of the opposing views of pedants and liberal scholars about a single typical example will suffice to show the wisdom of tempering rigid rules by the application of musicianly taste.

XVIII. CONCLUSION.

The student is now in possession of the main principles and theories of interest and importance in connection with the interpretation of Bach's "Woltem-

pirirte Clavier" on the piano. The method of elucidation aimed at throughout this essay has been the offering of suggestive hints which indicate the right path of study. It remains for the student to enter upon the patient, thorough and liberal examination of this great subject for himself, so that some day, haply, by his interpretations, or his interpretative views, he may awaken wider interest in, or add something fresh to the knowledge of, this sacred book of all earnest musicians.

IV.

Educational Editions of Piano Classics.

1.—MODERN EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS IN MUSIC.

Though, in the domains of semi-literary writing on musical subjects, the sins of commission be many and the sins of omission be few; though clear information and sober statement be almost as scarce as snakes in Iceland; though fads and foolish fashions be the happy cult of a self-complacent set; still, beyond all this, there remains a widely different field to be surveyed by the lover of educational progress in music. Side by side with all that may justly be deplored, there has been as splendid an advance in many departments of musical scholarship, during the past thirty years, as in any other province of human learning. Invaluable textbooks on harmony, counterpoint, form, orchestration and kindred subjects, have been written by men whose knowledge and whose ability to systematise and give lucid expression to their information, have been

further enhanced by years of experience as successful teachers. And what is of still greater interest than all this to the student of piano literature is, the recent progress in the art of adding to the printed page of the music itself such elucidatory annotations as must help largely to make clear its expressive interpretation. During the past thirty years or so, most of our finest editorial work of this kind has been done, and it is work which shows the keenest insight, the soundest scholarship, the nicest musical sense, the most subtle powers of analysis.

And yet there are to be found, even in the ranks of our eminent teachers, not a few who look back wistfully to the good old days when no new-fangled complications were heaped upon the master's bald or scantily annotated text; men, who, while they resent the printed comment of any critic, however able he may be, regard with full satisfaction the oral comments dictated by their own free fancy; men, who, not content themselves to lag behind in the race of progress, decry that progress; men so enamoured of the old order, that every new device, after a mock trial before the prejudiced court of their minds, is condemned as an unwarrantable innovation. Thus, and not in music alone, do conservatism and ignorance, yoked together as a well-matched pair, trot round and round in the narrow circle of conventional routine.

This whole subject of editorial work is well worthy of a careful examination; for its progress has been one

of the most important factors in revolutionising the art of teaching piano-playing.

Those of us who are appreciative witnesses of the application of intelligent and liberal principles to the study of music in English speaking countries during recent years, no doubt, sometimes look back wonderingly to the happy-go-lucky ways of five-and-twenty years ago. In the province of piano study this happy-go-lucky style reigned supreme. What were called "lessons" were given then as they are given now; but in the old days, while the lessons were given, nothing was taught. Such superficial dabbling as was then the rule would have been regarded as disgraceful had it been permitted in any other province of human learning. Music was not, however, part of a serious education; it was a fashionable accomplishment. Method, instructive books, useful analysis, scholarly comment, were not needful for the acquirement of this accomplishment. Where a teacher was fortunate enough to pick up scraps of technical or interpretative information through hearing the playing of foreign artists, his pupils gleaned some traditions at second-hand, by hearing and imitating the performances of his teacher. But in the vast majority of cases, where the teacher had no such opportunities, the pupil paid his fees for the glorious privilege of "being under a master."

Variety of technical skill, accuracy, constructive knowledge, principles of expressive interpretation, adequate or systematic study of any kind, were un-

dreamt of, in those dark days upon whose memory we now look down and smile.

Such a method, if method it may be called which was none, is now changed for a full, rational and liberal study, carried on just as thoroughly, as intellectually and as systematically as in any other serious branch of learning. The great musical classics of the piano are now examined historically, biographically, textually, grammatically, analytically, constructively, æsthetically and in the light of the comparative annotations of eminent scholars and interpreters. And our instruction is given, if we are wisely discriminating in the choice of our teachers, by men of broad and nice scholarship, by men who are themselves earnest and progressive students, by men who have analysed their subject and who work upon thoughtful and well-ordered principles.

Those of us who have had to grope through the darkness for our knowledge, and are therefore inclined to scorn the past, as well as to envy the rising generation their many advantages, may discover some compensation in the reflection that while the modern habit of specialising, of minute analysis, of laborious examination in small areas of learning, were not the methods of days gone by; we, on the other hand, roamed with a fuller sense of liberty, though perhaps somewhat carelessly, through wider fields. And thus we gained a general cultivation and a fuller acquaintance with good works, which may now be missed by

closer and more minute application to more limited and specialised spheres. As our time was not taken up with the nice details of technical, formal, grammatical learning, there was the ampler leisure left to catch more of the general spirit of musical literature. Our taste was formed somewhat as the taste of the desultory reader is formed, by freely familiarising our minds, for the pleasure of the acquaintance, with the classic literature of our favourite art. To-day there is, however, no valid excuse for such superficial study; and whatever its attractions, it ought not to be tolerated. Besides, though the range of pleasure be wider, perhaps, in the case of the superficial student; what is lost in range is by far more than compensated for in quality and intensity, where the study is full and nice.

In the magnificent modern editions of the piano classics alone, a wealth of detailed scholarship is contained, which, rightly known, and fully appreciated, would deepen our knowledge of good music, and turn us, once and for ever, from any other than serious and effective study.

Upon looking for guidance in methods of scholarship to the students of the ancient literary classics, we shall find that it has long been their custom to examine and compare, with the nicest scrutiny, the annotated editions of eminent critics. And since those who are of old versed in the arts of learning adopt this plan, it is surely wise for us who covet like skill and knowledge in music, to devote similar care to a minute

and critical examination and comparison of the editions of the piano classics annotated by the finest critics. The aim of this essay is to summarise the methods of various editors, and thus to furnish a concise and clear guide to him who wishes to pursue an effective course of study.

II. SOME USES OF GOOD ANNOTATED EDITIONS.

Different scholarly editors of classical music aim at different objects in their editing. One devotes his knowledge and ability to the establishment of a correct text. Upon such work rests the fame of Kroll and Bischoff. Another, such as Riemann, for example, devotes himself to the clear exposition of the construction and development of the music by an elaborate system of analytical signs; others, again, strive to make clear, each in accordance with his own personal temperament, musical insight and ability, the general construction and the expressive interpretation of the music, by minutely indicating the phrasing, the tone shading, the fingering, the *tempo*, as well as by drawing special attention to special points, such as half hidden melodies, imitative passages, special climaxes of force, effective tone contrasts, passages of reposeful or animated character—points which might otherwise escape due attention. Amongst such editors Bülow, Lebert, Germer and Klindworth deserve honourable mention.

III. OBJECTIONS TO ANNOTATED EDITIONS.

(a). It may be, and very often is, objected, though the objection is seldom raised by the really learned, that it is more profitable to spend one's time reading and pondering over the author's unexplained text for oneself, and from it to gather ideas and impressions, than to seek them at secondhand in the suggestions of critics, however eminent. There is, no doubt, a glamour of originality about such a scheme of study. But which of us is equal to the task of accomplishing unaided what has taken able and learned men lifetimes of patient labour and investigation? Nay, is not our patience too often exhausted by even so comparatively small a labour as the accurate technical study of a small selection of concert pieces, or the very superficial study of those works which we would feign teach our pupils? What would be thought about the competence of the university professor who ventured to lecture upon Homer or Æschylus, upon Horace or Virgil, or to give a minute exposition of their works, when he had not examined with care the information brought to light, and the elucidatory annotations made, by his predecessors and contemporaries? The learned professors who lecture ably on these works, and the famous scholars who give up their life to a minute study of the classics, those who edit the classics with varied and elucidatory commentaries, evidently think that the results of their careful scholarship are needful for the

enlightenment of the average reader, student and teacher. And are not such scholars far more competent to judge in this matter than the unlearned? And further, do these objectors to annotated editions decry all instruction; do many of them not presume themselves to teach? If so, what are these annotated editions but the printed instructions of some of our greatest teachers? And if interpreters are needed in the case of the foreign languages of many classic literatures, how much more are they needed in the case of the foreign language of music. For while there is some relationship between all the languages of the earth, and while one of them at least is familiar to us in speech and thought, the language of music, as a medium of expression, is utterly foreign to us.

(b). It is again urged in objection, that as many composers did not themselves annotate their music with interpretative signs, and as others employed some such signs, each evidently thought he had made his meaning sufficiently clear. On this ground it is affirmed that additional signs and notes are probably a superfluity diverting the mind of the student from the intention of the composer to some subjective impression received by the particular critic. It may fairly be replied: (1) That a thing is clear only to him by whom it is understood. The fact that a writer sets down signs or symbols to express his ideas, or emotions, or imaginations, does not necessarily imply that anyone who reads those signs or symbols can interpret them aright.

Else how could there be, even in the case of the writings in many books, the thousand and one opposing meanings extracted which engender endless error and disputation? And, in the case of music, the manifold inadequate and erroneous interpretations which are taught by ill-equipped teachers, are proof positive that he who runs—or even practises all day—may not necessarily read aright. (2). That so long as some meaning is better than no meaning; so long as the interpretations of great players throughout the world are admittedly and really great; so long as we are blessed with the counsel of large-hearted and large-minded men of wide and liberal culture and of scholarly attainments; and so long as we familiarise ourselves with the thought, the suggestions, the annotations, the performances of those interpreters; so long are our own interpretations of the great musical classics likely to gain in breadth, in strength, in beauty of feeling, and in approximation, not alone to the interpretations of the admittedly great artists, but also to the intention of the composers themselves. Do we never take ourselves to task for this strange inconsistency, that we should in one breath express our admiration of a great player with uncontrollable bursts of applause at each of his performances; and that we should, in another, decry his work, when, with the utmost care, he explains as nearly as he can on the printed page the means by which he attains to the interpretation which excites our enthusiasm?

(3). This objection may be urged with equal force, or rather with equal futility, against all interpretative annotations of ancient classical literature; and (4), it may be pointed out that the art of making the true significance of the music clearer by additional marks and signs is of comparatively modern development, and was not therefore within the reach of many of the older composers. Hence it would be unreasonable to expect interpretative comment from those to whom its art was unknown; but that the great composers entirely approved of such comment is clearly shown by the fact of their adopting the several new methods of expressive annotation so soon as their significance was generally understood.

(*c*). Further, it is said that the study of the suggestions and interpretations of able scholars and cultivated men tends to stifle originality and to cramp or paralyse the mind. On the contrary, it will be found to give breadth of view, to suggest new directions for thought to the original thinker and to offer to the appreciative, who are themselves devoid of original interpretative power, aids to a fuller perception of the beauty of the music. And may not this objection be urged with equal weight against all teaching? Those who are without the power to interpret adequately for themselves (and surely these are the vast majority) are mightily aided by the counsel of great interpreters, and great teachers; while, on the other hand, the original conceptions of original minds (and surely these

are the exceeding few) are not easily cramped, overborne or obliterated, by the suggestions of others, which serve but to hint at fresh points of interest, to tone down angularities and to add the grace of a more richly cultured and maturer thought. Then, if after patient study of our eminent predecessors and contemporaries, we think we have ourselves something fresh to add, some new interpretative suggestions to offer to the world, we shall know whether our suggestions are really fresh and yet unstated, and we shall be fully equipped to speak. While there is a liberalising education in the study and comparison of the ideas of great scholars, it may be remembered that there is still full liberty for a cultivated judgment to accept any or to reject all with which there is no sympathy.

(d). It is objected, finally, that the varied and conflicting interpretations of different editors, are far more likely to confuse the mind of a student than to guide his judgment towards clear and just interpretative views. At the outset it may be remarked that throughout every great sphere of human life progress is made through the conflict and through the association of differing and of varying opinions. The man whose mind is developed by contact with differing modes of thought, and varying schools of opinion, is the liberal man; while the man who is reared upon one exclusive set of ideas, or upon one single book, is usually narrowminded and a bigot.

Besides, in the special case of various editions of the

musical classics, it should clearly be borne in mind that all editions are not intended to serve exactly the same purpose. Each should therefore be suggested for use, and be judged, upon a consideration of its excellence in the particular matter which it purports to elucidate. The student must not look into the pages of Kroll or Bischoff for a minute or æsthetic commentary; or into Bülow for a critical text; or into any of these for such a constructive analysis as that of Riemann. Go to Kroll and Bischoff for a comparison and critical estimate of texts; and be content to judge of them by their great work in this single sphere. Go to Riemann, the great modern exponent of the musical motive, whose scholarly, though very elaborate phrasing marks, while at first puzzling to the reader, make the dark places of the construction plain and the crooked ways straight, for information on minute constructive development; judge him by this work, and do not condemn him on the ground of errors in text, or because we cannot always endorse his æsthetic suggestions. Go to Bülow for an interpretation of the poetic life which has been breathed into the music by its great composers.

Again, in the case of less specialised or more generally annotated editions, such as those of Klindworth or Germer, Kullak or Mikuli, the student will not usually be perplexed by many glaring diversities of opinion. For as regards the main principles of interpretation there is a general agreement among all the greatest editors and pianists. Not striking contradictions, but

nice distinctions, bearing witness to delicate insight and a keen appreciation of apparently small points of interpretation, which seemed of more or less importance to the several editors, one point appealing more strongly to one and another to another, will be found to be the rule. Some particular points of interest emphasised by one editor and passed over by another intent on some other point of view, is often the explanation of a seeming difference.

But besides all this, let us be thankful that there are minor diversities of interpretation. These there must always be, so long as the personalities of men differ strongly. All of us are variously impressed by the same object, or thought, or imagination; and the more powerful our personality, the more characteristic will be our impression. Hence many minor differences of interpretation. By a careful examination and a critical comparison of these characteristic impressions of great minds shall we be enabled to select, at length, that adequate interpretation which seems to us to be the most appropriate. This is the path to a liberal and cultured judgment. It is not so much the broad and general characteristics which distinguish the accomplished teacher, or the accomplished player, as those fine points of interpretation—the particular phrasing, the shading, the tone given to certain notes and passages—which differentiate and which engage the attention of the great editors whose work we are reviewing. And especially to these seemingly minute points, which

make for the development of musical insight and for artistic finish, shall our attention be directed by the comparative study here suggested.

IV. COMPARATIVE RANK OF PIANO CLASSICS.

The number and value of the editions of a work universally regarded as a classic, as well as the care which is bestowed upon the selection of its text and upon the exact significance of that text, by eminent scholars, teachers and artists, is very often a reliable guide to the real value of the work itself. For the world of great men does not, as a rule, spend its time on that which is not of enduring worth. Of course, this test of rank does not apply to the case of works of the present day or works of the near past, regarding whose merit there is a turmoil of opinion and a torrent of criticism, which, by its bulk, might lead the beholder to an entirely wrong estimate.

Now, if we are to estimate the comparative rank of our piano classics by applying this test, in what order shall we place the chief of them? Possibly in the following order: Bach's Woltempirirte-Clavier; Beethoven's Sonatas; then the works of Chopin, Mozart, Haydn, Schumann, Mendelssohn. A cursory review of some of the main characteristics of the principal editions of some of these classics may perhaps not only prove of interest to the student, but also enable him the better to discover what particular edition of any composer may best suit his individual needs.

V.—EDITIONS OF BACH'S WOLTEMPIRIRTE-CLAVIER.

Bach's clavier writings are amongst the earliest and the very greatest of our piano classics. And not only so, but also because of their severely logical and contrapuntal or polyphonic style, as well as because of the almost entire absence of any interpretative suggestions by Bach himself, they seem to us most of all to stand in need of able interpreters. Many earnest labourers have entered upon this rich field of study and the editions of many of Bach's works which are now available leave no difficulties unexplored, and offer to the student valuable directions and suggestions on many points of interest. It will suffice for the purposes of our examination here to select the principal editions of the "Woltempirirte-Clavier," as this is his best known and most popular set of compositions. And the comments upon these editions refer equally to any of the other works of Bach which are edited by the same critics. The chief editions of any educational value are, those (1) by Franz Kroll, published by Peters; (2) by Franz Kroll, in the Bach-Gesellschaft edition, published by Breitkopf and Härtel; (3) by Dr. Hans Bischoff, published by Steingräber; (4) by Riemann, published by Augener; 5) by Germer, published by Litolff; (6) by Klindworth, published by Schott; (7) by Carl Reinecke, published by Breitkopf and Härtel; (8) by Czerny, published by Peters; (9) by Busoni, published by Hofmeister.

No. 1, by Franz Kroll (Peters), published in 1852, purports to contain the correct text selected from many conflicting sources: this text is supplemented by a number of illustrations showing the method in which the editor claims that the ornaments should be rendered; and it supplies a useful fingering for the learner. Its chief disadvantages are that its text is not always correct; that its rendering of ornaments is not always the most suitable; and that it supplies no suggestive phrasing, and no interpretative signs, except of the baldest and most sketchy description. In its day it was regarded as a great and scholarly work, but the scholarship of its day has now been greatly superseded. Nevertheless, as it was the first edition of any scholarly repute ever published, it is still regarded by some conservative musicians as a "standard" work, of no little value for purposes of comparison, and indeed for the practical use of the player.

No. 2, also by Franz Kroll, published in 1854, as the fourteenth volume of the great edition of Bach's works in fifty volumes, published by the Bach-Gesellschaft, is a most valuable critical text, chosen after much further and diligent research. This text is supplemented by a long appendix of textual variants carefully collated, together with some remarks upon the ornamentation; and it is prefaced by a detailed list of authorities and a few general remarks upon points of interpretative interest. The body of the work is without fingering, phrasing or interpretative annotations of any kind, as

its intention is simply to supply a pure text for scholars. It may well be used by the adherents of Kroll in conjunction with his former edition fingered for the student's use.

No. 3, by Dr. Hans Bischoff (Steingräber), supplies the most valuable critical text now extant. Dr. Bischoff had access not only to all the authorities upon which Kroll based his text but also to much additional information brought to light afterwards; and his ability as a selective textual critic, was at least equal, if not superior, to that of Kroll. Bischoff's numerous textual variants are conveniently arranged in the form of footnotes to each page; and these notes contain, in addition, helpful suggestions for the interpretation of the ornaments. His preface, just as Kroll's, supplies a list of authorities for the text, and some remarks upon the ornamentation. Furthermore, Bischoff adds metronomic indications for the *tempo*; and offers a little suggestive phrasing, as well as a convenient fingering, for the guidance of students. His edition deserves the highest praise as far as it goes.

No. 4 by Dr. Hugo Riemann (Augener), is a work of a quite different kind. In it there is adopted a most ingenious and exhaustive system of analysis, laying bare the secret form of the compositions in their smallest details. This minute motival analysis furnishes the student with a rational basis for his interpretative phrasing. In the field of analytical research Riemann is without a rival. Even though the preludes

and fugues, as viewed in this edition, appear, at first sight, to be further complicated by the network of lines, figures and punctuating signs used; still, a little patient study shows that the complication is but a superficial appearance, and that the system reveals clearly and logically the constructive process of these works. It seems a pity that any of our leading teachers should be content to pass by, with a superficial glance, so enlightening a commentary as this, simply because they lack the zeal to search beneath the necessarily complicated annotations for the simplicity there revealed to the earnest searcher. Nor should this work of Riemann be decried on account of the occasional extravagances into which his enthusiasm for squaring everything with his theory, occasionally led its learned author. This edition contains, moreover, a system of fingering admirably adapted for the further elucidation of the construction; and there are besides, the most minute directions, by signs, for the expressive interpretation of every phrase. These interpretative phrase marks, as well as the directions for the rendering of the ornaments, may be regarded with caution by the student, since Riemann's musical insight is not at all equal to his faculty for clear analysis. But whatever points may be wisely disregarded in this edition, no earnest student can afford to neglect the careful and constant use of the work, so far as it bears upon constructive phrasing, of this profound scholar.

No. 5, by Germer (Litolff), 1890); and No. 6, by Klindworth (Schott), 1893, are, upon the whole, the most generally instructive for an average student, of all the editions of these great works. In the case of Germer, the text is good; the editor makes a few alterations but quotes the original in his footnotes. He desires to avoid what he considers a lack of musical insight and a mechanical pedantry, as shown in some of the textual selections of Kroll and Bischoff. (A slightly dangerous doctrine, however.) Germer's fingering is good; his very full phrasing indications, analytical and interpretative, are specially and musically suggestive; his directions of the rendering of the ornaments are very sound; and his metronomic indications, although they perhaps err a little, in the case of the brighter compositions, on the side of slowness, are often wise. Germer is not only a scholar, but also a skilled teacher, and a musical musician. The result of these combined qualifications is admirably displayed in this edition, which has the further advantages of being cheap and well printed.

In the case of No. 6, Klindworth, the text is very fairly correct, based as it is upon that of Kroll in the Bach-Gesellschaft edition; the fingering is helpful; the phrasing exhibits very musicianly taste, upon the whole, though it does not, in this or in the Germer edition, take the place of the profound and microscopic research of Riemann. Indeed, it may be said that the expressive suggestions of Klindworth are better adapted to

elicit the grace and beauty of many of these works than the interpretative suggestions of any other editor. The parts intended to be played by the right hand are carefully chosen and are printed on the upper stave, and those for the left hand on the lower stave, wherever it is possible. The rendering of each ornament is given in small notes; and in the case of the very complicated ornamentation of the C sharp minor Prelude, No. 4, book one, an alternative copy of the whole prelude is added, giving the rendering of every ornament incorporated with the alternate text. With regard to the metronomic indications, there is a fairly close agreement between them and the slower *tempi* suggested by the modern expressive school of commentators. A much slower *tempo* on the whole is approved than that adopted by Czerny and his more technical school of interpretation. Klindworth is without doubt an able editor, and in the case of this work, he has evidently taken the utmost pains to produce a scholarly, practical, elucidatory and suggestive edition.

No. 7, by Carl Reinecke (Breitkopf and Härtel), is a beautifully printed folio edition, and at the same time is very cheap. Its speciality is the annotation of the general form on each fugue, so that the unlearned player may easily see the broad analysis of the work as he reads. The phrasing is not at all minute and no metronomic indications are given.

No. 8, by Czerny (Peters), is of much interest as the first edition of the Preludes and Fugues to which the

modern system of piano interpretation was applied: it was a starting point in this direction for latter editors. But Czerny was so careless in his selection of a text that the value of his work is now rather historic than practical. Strange to say, Ruthardt, of Leipzig, has re-edited Czerny's text with additional phrasing directions in a new Peters publication.

No. 9, by Busoni (Hofmeister), deals more especially with the works from the point of view of modern piano technique and modern transcriptive interpretation. The great pianist-editor has given an immense number of technical exercises for enabling the student to deal the more effectively with technical difficulties. And many of his interpretative suggestions are highly illuminating.

Amongst these various editions every student may make a selection suitable to his special needs. The average student may content himself with Klindworth or Germer; the enquiring enthusiast will not be satisfied to be without Bischoff and Riemann, in addition, at the least; while everyone who aspires to any fine standard of scholarship will diligently examine and compare every edition to which reference has here been made.

It may be well in this place to mention Bülow's transcription of Bach's Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue, a work profoundly beautiful and very difficult to interpret adequately. Bülow, with the knowledge and ability of a musical scholar, and with the enthusiasm of a poetic interpreter, has literally transcribed this

work, so as to elicit, and to enhance, as he hopes, all the wonderful beauty of the work, when played on the modern piano. In his preface he insists upon the necessity of properly rendering a poem by eloquent declamation. This is well. But the admirers of Bach, or of any great poet, will agree that while eloquent declamatory suggestions are one thing, a wholesale tampering with the text is quite another. The one is deserving of all praise; the other is a liberty most reprehensible. And there is no doubt that Bülow's textual alterations detract from the dignity and grandeur of Bach's work, although they may, in some measure, add a superficial brilliancy to the general effect. With this caution the student may be advised to study Bülow's interpretative comments with care and then to play from the text of Bischoff or of Naumann of Jena.

As the player of Bach's fugues cannot rationally hope to interpret them with any intelligent insight except he first thoroughly understand their form, he may be glad to know of the easy and short cut to this end in the detailed analysis of every prelude and fugue by Iliffe, in Novello's series of Educational Primers. Unfortunately, the rhapsodical and involved literary style of Riemann militates against the usefulness of his work on the same subject published by Augener.

Brooks Sampson also, has recently published through the Vincent Company, a most interesting, scholarly and exhaustive analysis of these works—an analysis so

complete and detailed that there seems little left to be said on that subject.

VI.—EDITIONS OF BEETHOVEN'S SONATAS.

The modern art of indicating the phrasing and general expression of piano music by various signs was invented and was developed considerably during the period that elapsed between Bach's day and that of Beethoven. And no composer was more careful than Beethoven to try to make as clear as possible, by the use of all available signs, the expressive interpretation which he desired, so that in the case of his works there would at first sight seem to be less room than in the case of Bach for the further annotations of critics. Yet still, the expressive interpretation of such poetic works is so delicate and so difficult to represent to the eye; and a desire for a really nice appreciation of the best music has so widely increased, that, to meet these needs, the art of suggesting the *minutiæ* of an adequate rendering has further developed, and able scholars and players have found means to add to Beethoven's directions must fresh elucidatory comment. Indeed, this expressive annotation of music has now developed into so finely elaborated an art that any critic who thoroughly understands its principles is able to indicate on the printed page, with wonderful nicety, many of those small points of interpretation which differentiate the readings of individual artists.

Chief among the educational editions of Beethoven's sonatas are those (1) by Lebert and Bülow, published by Cotta; (2) by Dr. Riemann, published by Simrock; (3) by Germer, published by Litolff; (4) by Reinecke, published by Breitkopf and Härtel in their Teacher's Folio Edition, and in their Popular Edition.

The highest praise, and the chief place, will doubtless be given by many musicians to the edition of Beethoven's piano work from Op. 53, by Dr. Hans von Bülow. He was the right man to engage upon such an undertaking. For besides possessing rare musical scholarship generally, he was a particular and devoted student of the works of Beethoven, as well as one of the finest players of those works which the world has ever seen. His natural endowments were exceptional, and these were developed by nice and liberal study. Intellectually, he was great, and his nature was singularly appreciative of the æsthetic beauty of Beethoven's music. He was keenly analytical and he possessed too, in a considerable degree, the power of expressing his views lucidly, an endowment unhappily not conspicuous among writers upon musical subjects generally.

The earlier piano works of Beethoven in the Cotta edition were carefully edited by Dr. Lebert, of Leipzig Conservatorium. The memory of Dr. Lebert will ever be held in grateful rememberance by the lovers of piano music; for he was one of the founders of the modern methods of editing, with insight, scholarship and lucidity, our piano classics. The volumes of the

Cotta edition will doubtless seldom be found to be absent from the library of the earnest piano student.

In his Beethoven volumes Dr. Lebert has added metronomic indications, has suggested a rhythmical interpretation for irregular passages, has given renderings for all the ornaments, has largely added to Beethoven's original expressive and phrasing annotations, by further signs for the elucidation of the punctuation and the expressive phrasing of the music, and has given clear analytical indications of the formal construction of each sonata at its main divisions.

But it is an unfortunate circumstance that a large part of the phrasing annotations made in the Cotta-Lebert edition of Beethoven, and indeed, in all editions before those of Riemann and Germer, are utterly incorrect and misleading. The confusion of editors was caused by the lack of distinctive signs for indicating a simple *legato*, and for defining the extent of a phrase. The same curved line was used indiscriminately for both purposes; and so those editors whose knowledge of the formal construction of the music from its motives and phrases was not minute and accurate, failed to recognise the purpose intended in each particular case, and so fell into hopeless error and absurdity. Beethoven himself, when writing down a composition, would, no doubt, at one moment be thinking of emphasising the fact that a certain measure or passage of complete measures, was to be played *legato;* and here he would draw his curved line over each com-

plete measure or passage of measures. At such a moment he was not thinking of the phrasing construction at all and quite overlooked the misconception which his *legato* slur might occasion in the unlearned. At another time, the construction of the phrase would be his chief consideration; and in the desire to make its limit clear, he would carefully draw his curved line to the very note which marked its end, quite regardless of the former use of the very same sign to emphasise the *legato*. Therefore clear guidance is not to be hoped for by any examination of Beethoven's own original slurring. Nothing short of an accurate formal analysis of the music can be effective. But a fairly safe working rule is, to regard those curved lines which cover a complete measure or a passage of complete measures, as *legato* directions solely; and those which end on the first beat, or throughout the course of a measure, as phrase indications. (See the references to this subject in the essay entitled "On the Mysteries of Phrasing in Piano Playing.") Lebert, Reinecke, Klindworth and many others, when editing Beethoven, either left the slurring as it was, or mistook many simple *legato* directions for phrase indications; and in many cases their slur lines fall short, by one note, of the end of a phrase. It is for his invaluable labours in this important field of investigation that Riemann deserves fame; and the student need not fear to accept the guidance on this subject given in the editions of so progressive and appreciative a scholar as Germer, who has used, with

thoughtful discrimination, the principles set forth by Riemann.

Hans von Bülow, who continued the editorial work of Beethoven's compositions from Opus 53, added, to the editorial plan of Lebert, a running commentary of footnotes which show the highest critical acumen, and the most artistic appreciation. Occasionally he lapses from sober sense into rhapsody; but what German writer on music is free from this fault, unless it be the philosophic Dr. Hanslick? And sometimes, too, Bülow's analytical sagacity fails him, as when he suggests the possibility of varying the tone quality of similar passages by mysterious powers of "touch" so as to imitate the *timbre* of various orchestral instruments, in Op. 53, for example. Here he thinks he translates imagined sounds into reality, and suggests to players the impossible task of producing the orchestral tones which were to him such a vivid memory that he really believed he reproduced them in his own piano playing. This mistaking of subjective impressions for objective realities has been indeed a fertile source of error in musical doctrine.

To Bülow's credit, however, it may be remembered, that while he was one of the first great poetical editors of any fine piano compositions, and while the art of interpretative annotation fell short, in his day, of the completeness of that used by critics of to-day; still, he executed his task with such scholarly insight and such artistic delicacy, that it is yet regarded as an invalu-

able guide to those who desire to elicit, by the help of printed annotations, the expressive content of these piano classics. And here it may be well to add, in reply to those pedagogues who decry the value of any profusely annotated editions of the great piano classics, the dictum of that master artist, Liszt, that Bülow's edition of Beethoven excels, by reason of its wealth of technical and æsthetic commentary, a dozen conservatoriums in instructiveness!

The next edition of real value is (2) that by Dr. Riemann (Simrock). Dr. Riemann, an indefatigable and prodigious worker, has here again, made an exhaustive analysis of Beethoven's sonatas, from a constructive point of view. In this he shows clearly how they are developed from the most elementary motives. And here, as has been said, is furnished the only scientific basis for the phrasing. It is in the power of defining and illustrating this basis of phrasing that the chief value of Riemann's work lies, in all his editions of the musical classics. Very justly, all his expressive annotations are made with two objects: (1), to make clear the constructive phrasing (or articulation of the music as it is sometimes called); and (2), to illustrate his æsthetic principles. But in so far as his musical insight falls short of his analytical skill, so far may his original expressive annotations be accepted with some caution, and especially where they are in conflict with so poetic a writer as Bülow. But before deciding against Riemann in any particular case, the student

should give full consideration to the influence of the construction as the chief factor in determining the right expression.

Riemann has been rather unfairly and harshly criticised more than once by those who do not rightly appreciate his nomenclature. Where, for example, he uses the sign for a "dash" *staccato* or *staccatissimo*, over the note at the end of a phrase, he does not intend that the note so marked should receive an accent, or that the key should be sharply released. His aim is to emphasise the point of separation between the phrases; and this separation is to be clearly shown by a soft tone and the gentle release of the key.

Again, the charge of being "over-phrased" is constantly urged against such carefully elaborated editions as those of Lebert, Germer, and especially, Riemann. So often has this charge been reiterated that one is tempted to think the scorners hope by their scorn to be regarded as exempt from or superior to the labour of a careful examination of so much learned research. The ambitious pupil or the aspiring teacher should perhaps be warned that most of those who are content to pass by these learned editions of music belong to one or other of two classes—those who do not trouble to study with nice care the import of these annotations; or those whose artistic perceptions are hardly fine enough to enable them to appreciate the delicate beauties of the music, even when specially pointed out to them. Any thoughtful student may

easily learn for himself the unique value of Riemann's "over-phrasing," if he is at the pains of a little careful labour. And when once he has gained the confidence of his own ripe judgment, he will no longer be at the mercy of the *dictum* of any hostile critic. The work is its own ablest advocate.

No. 3 by Germer (Litolff), is a most useful work, showing scholarship and taste. The same characteristics which were noticed in his Bach are again conspicuous here. The constructive phrasing is clearly and reliably marked; the ornamentation is artistically rendered; irregular passages are rhythmically divided; metronomic indications, making for a slower than the conventional *tempo* of to-day, are given; and numberless minute signs are added, by the help of which it is hoped that many delicate touches of beauty may be the more easily seen and the more adequately interpreted. In an able preface to the whole work Germer gives a full account of his principles of fingering, his *tempo*, his liberal pedal indications, and his expressive interpretation. And this preface is supplemented by a paragraph devoted to each sonata, in which are noticed points of interest connected with its interpretation, analysis, or publication.

One expressive sign deserving special comment is used largely in the Cotta, the Riemann, and the Germer editions—though with exceptional ability in Germer. This is a slight mark of prolongation over a note (-) which indicates the delicate give-and-take in the pro-

portionate length of notes adopted by all really great players. This is an indication used often and with much nicety, to show that the shape of the notes is not and cannot be an exact indication of their relative lengths, but that the stiff relations of half, quarter, and eighth notes, must be finely modified by infinitesimal shades of lengthening and shortening in order to elicit fully the beauty of the music. This subject has never received the prominent or persevering attention which its great importance requires, or else utterly mechanical monotony in piano playing would hardly be so prevalent as it is. The common point of view, that all crotchets, or quavers, or minims, in a piece of music are exactly the same length, is entirely wrong. Theoretically, as in the case of the feet of verses, mechanical equality is the rule. But ask any orator to declaim a fine stanza of poetry, and see whether his feet are declaimed with mechanical regularity. On the contrary, his variations are unceasing, and these, with his ever varying gradations of force, and rise and fall in pitch, interpret the musical roll of the poetry. So it is in music—the proportionate lengths of notes vary for ever, but exceedingly delicate are these variations. If they are exaggerated the result is a caricature, but if they are rendered as the spirit of the music impels, with the utmost delicacy, then they are the finest aids to expressive interpretation that it is possible to find. Therefore the student should give careful attention to the use of the sign for indicating the delicate lengthen-

ing of expressive notes, as marked in good editions. And to the clear indication of this device none has devoted more care and skill than Germer.

There is little doubt that for the wants of most students the editions of Riemann and Germer should suffice; the one offering, as it does, a really scientific basis for the phrasing; the other offering many thoughtful and effective directions for an expressive rendering, nice in all its details.

No. 4, by Carl Reinecke, published by Breitkopf and Härtel, both in folio edition, as their critical text, specially revised for the use of teachers, and in their Popular Edition, purports to contain a reliable text selected after much patient and careful research. (Ehrlich holds that the reproduction of the originals is more precise in the text of the Steingraber edition; but both are for general purposes reliable enough.) For Reinecke's interpretative views the student must not rely on this edition alone, but must examine, in conjunction with it, the "Letters to a Lady," published by Augener, in which the editor gives, in some detail, his comments upon each sonata. Some of these views will seem rather strange, coming as they do, from so eminent and thoughtful a musician. Who would have expected him to urge, for example, that all the variations in the first movement of the Sonata, Op. 26, in A flat, should be taken at the same *tempo*? Beyond the authority of any pedagogical arguments, there is the artistic sense within, which irresistibly urges most great players to

adapt their *tempi* to the varying character of the different variations. And this sense, when it speaks in a widely cultured and musical mind, should never be stifled by pedantic argument, any more than the high moral sense of a noble nature should be urged to revolt against its instincts in deference to the authority of any plausible theory or school of thought. Reinecke, in this case, evidently over-rules his artistic conscience by theoretic arguments, and thus falls into error. On the other hand, his suggested interpretation for the *pralltriller* in the first movement of the sonata "Pathétique," as a passing shake, together with the reasons he adduces in support of his view, show a refreshing freedom from pedantry and a musicianly taste which is very welcome in the sphere of ornamentation where the tyranny of tradition so oppressively prevails.

Besides the editions already noticed, there may be mentioned, the careful work of Epstein, published by Cranz and used for teaching purposes in the Vienna Conservatorium, and the not very enlightening editions of Klindworth, Charles D'Albert, Liszt and Buonamici.

The critical student will, of course, have his library well stocked with the works of many commentators for the purpose of minute and comparative examination; and from these, by selection and by musical insight, he will at length arrive at his own individual and artistic rendering; while the average pupil or teacher may be guided by these hints to the choice of that edition, or those editions, best suited to his particular needs.

Four useful books on the interpretation of Beethoven's works may here be named: Czerny, Vol. IV. of the Piano School, Op. 500; Dr. Marx on Beethoven's Piano Works; Kullak on Beethoven's Piano Playing; and Beethoven's Pianoforte Sonatas by Elterlein.

VII.—EDITIONS OF CHOPIN'S WORKS.

Chopin is by far the most interesting piano composer of the modern romantic school. His dreamy, refined, languid, poetic personality has infused itself into his works, so that if one can but fall a captive to his moods he is sure to be charmed, nay, fascinated, by the emotional beauty of the music. While you miss in Chopin the strength and catholicity of the five great kings of the world of music: Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, still, if you can, you may feel the magnetism of a rare and delicate personality. His touch is as distinct and exquisite in its own way as was the touch of Lamb in *his* sphere. It is this dreamy, tender, *spirituelle*, half-feminine, passionate, romantic, personality, which differentiates the music of Chopin from that of all other composers. And throughout his works there is a vein of melancholy, far different from the strong sorrow of a great nature such as Bach's, which makes his music not an entirely wholesome influence, especially for those who fall most fully under its spell. Now, this peculiar note of dreamy romanticism, which is such an essential characteristic of

Chopin, does not appeal to everyone, nor is it at all an easy quality to interpret effectively when playing his music. For although the professing devotees of Chopin are legion, and though many play and many teach the notes of his music, still, it is not often that the voice is the voice of Chopin. So rare are the effective players of this romantic dreamer that even such eminent musicians as Bülow candidly admitted their inability to interpret his music adequately; and in these days there are some who regard Pachmann as his only just interpreter.

The moods of his music for ever vary; and to interpret these varying moods aright there are needed a thousand delicate changes of *tempo* and expression, which only the true initiate into the Chopin circle can master without aid. The right interpretation of Chopin's peculiar individuality, of his strongly marked national characteristics, of his dreamy romanticism, of his ever changing moods, as embodied in his music, is so difficult a task to the ordinary student, that there is the more need in his case for profuse annotation by sympathetic and able critics. There have been many editors of Chopin's works, but few of them have achieved any marked success; few have made the dark places of the student plain. For in few of them are combined those essential qualities of an effective Chopin critic: delicate sympathy, the power of subtle analysis, and ability to express lucidly the result of that analysis.

It is interesting to notice here a curious difference be-

tween the method of some able editors of the days of profuse editorial annotations, and the method of some of the well-equipped editors of to-day. Bülow, for example, might be called a one book critic. He was a profound student and lover of Beethoven, and he devoted his best energies to the elucidation of the finest part of Beethoven's piano works. This was to him evidently a labour of love. He felt that he could point clearly to the student world, manifold beauties, and explain manifold difficulties, in those great works. This was his one great editorial work; and it does not appear to have been done for the purpose of exemplifying any special editorial principles, but simply to note, explain and comment on, with the enthusiasm of a hero-worshipper, as well as with the sagacity of an acute critic, such points of interest as specially struck him. His other editorial work is, as a general rule, characterless; if we except the admirable hints given in his edition of some of Chopin's studies and impromptus.

Such another sympathetic critic was Klindworth when elucidating the beauties of Chopin. He was another musical enthusiast and scholar, brimful of appreciation for the works of his hero, and anxious that the world should see all the points of beauty which so strongly appealed to him. But such men as these spent their chief care upon one single work; they laboured for the love of the thing rather than as apostles of editorial theories or as well-trained pedagogues.

On the other hand, some of our modern editors, such as Riemann, Kullak and Germer, appear as if they worked systematically upon carefully formulated editorial principles which they apply with equal fluency and felicity to every work they edit.

In the one case, the student may generally be satisfied with the single classic of criticism done as a labour of love; in the other, he may safely expect a fairly high and equal standard of editorial excellence throughout. The one is the inspired critic, as it were; the other, the well-trained journalist.

Of course, in work such as Germer's, done upon fixed editorial principles, one must not be surprised to find a certain degree of what might be called a mechanical element. He is too prone to apply his method with a slight monotonous regularity. And pieces of music are quite too individual in their character to show to the best advantage when they do not receive that individual delicacy of treatment which they require. But still, the general principles are good, and beyond them the ardent student can seek to discover more delicate and individual treatment for himself.

Some of the best editions of Chopin's works are (1) by Karl Klindworth, published by Bote and Bock, or as revised by Scharwenka, and published by Augener; (2) by Mikuli, published by Kistner; (3) by Kullak, published by Schlesinger; (4) by Spiedel, in the Cotta edition; and (5) by Scholtz, published by Peters.

No. 1, by Karl Klindworth, is generally regarded and

rightly regarded, as the classic edition of Chopin. Throughout Chopin's works there are innumerable figured passages of irregular rhythm, there are many cadenza-like graces, and there are many half-hidden melodies wrought into the harmonic and florid parts of several of the pieces. Besides these, there are numerous delicacies of phrasing, and shadings of tone, as often implied as expressed in the notation; and further, there are continually changing moods which call for endless variations in the *tempo*. The annotator who is to be of any real service to the student will therefore suggest some tasteful rhythmical division for such irregular passages as require this treatment; will discover and make apparent these half-hidden melodies, which, being so artfully woven into the harmonic structure, into the accompaniment, into the figured passages, easily escape the notice of the uneducated learner; will give some approximate hints upon the changes of *tempo* appropriate to the changing moods of the music. For, however strongly some teachers may decry the use of such interpretative aids; however strongly it may be affirmed that those who cannot at once feel and appreciate these points without interpretative comment can never be guided to a sympathetic appreciation; still, it is a fact of common experience that a suggestive clue often opens the way for a flood of light upon any perplexing subject of study, whether it be in philosophy or in art. And thus it happens that former explanations, accepted as the *dictum* of authority but never really

understood, are now recognised and incorporated into one conceptions as vital parts of a properly proportioned and luminous whole.

Annotations such as these Klindworth undertakes in his edition of Chopin. But in not a few cases he oversteps the bounds of sober criticism. Occasionally a "half-hidden" melody, in reality non-existent, emerges from the shadowland of his own imagination and turns up as a sort of materialised ghost, to divert the student and to add to the difficulties of a task in itself quite difficult enough. Sometimes again, the arbitrary rhythmical divisions of what were intended to be dainty, even, rippling runs, misdirects the student; and very often the directions for expressive variations of *tempo* are so indefinite as to be almost valueless. Klindworth had neither the analytical acumen, nor the perspicacity of Bülow; and where copious interpretative footnotes would have proved most useful they are altogether absent. So that notwithstanding undoubted merits in Klindworth's edition, and notwithstanding the fact that it is the ablest edition yet published, there is really so much left undone, so much that, by its omission from every edition, seems as if it were not easy to accomplish, that the student is in this case left in great need of a born gift in himself for Chopinesque interpretation, of the instructions of an able teacher, and, above all, of the traditions of the finest interpretative artists in their renderings of the music.

It seems strange that Reinecke's valuable teaching

commentary upon Beethoven's sonatas, or the sketchy notes of Czerny, Marx or Kullak, on the same subject, have not suggested another editorial method by which much interpretative light might be permanently shed by our ablest teachers upon works commonly found to be difficult to read aright. For it is not alone, or chiefly, by giving examples for imitation that the finest teaching results have been achieved. To example are added, not only an exposition of broad principles of interpretative art, but many definite and lucid directions upon matters of detail. What splendid commentaries, therefore, could be compiled from the oral explanations of our ablest teachers! Thus, a Chopin volume, embodying the most enlightening instructions of our chief Chopin exponents, arranged in detail, classified and compared by some competent scholar, would surely prove to be a valuable contribution to our educational literature of music, and might help to supply the place of that adequate edition which does not at present exist. If some such plan as this were adopted generally, an unbroken line of valuable traditional teaching, dating from the composers themselves, might be compiled and handed down as a growing heritage of inestimable worth. And this, in spite of the fact that tradition is apt to become too tyrannical a ruler, that it is opposed to the plasticity of living beauty, and that it is liable to harden into a stereotyped and spirit-killing form.

No. 2 of the editions of Chopin, by Mikuli, published

by Kistner, is a beautifully printed work. Mikuli's chief qualification as an editor seems to be that he was a favourite pupil of Chopin. He maintains that his edition contains a fairly sound text corrected in parts by Chopin himself; that the fingering adopted is, for the chief part, that authorised and used by the composer; and that the expressive annotations of Chopin are given without addition.

Concerning exact texts of Chopin's works there appears to be no absolute certainty. The manuscripts were very carelessly written, and in many cases hardly legible, besides being full of mistakes of all kinds. Under these circumstances it will readily be admitted that there is abundant justification for the remark of Mendelssohn, "In Chopin's music one does not really know sometimes whether a thing is right or wrong." But still, in the main, the texts in the piano works in the editions of Breitkopf and Härtel, Mikuli, Mertze, Klindworth, Scholtz, Kullak and others, are sufficiently correct for all practical purposes.

No. 3 by Kullak, published by Schlesinger, is an excellent example of modern careful editing. There are numerous expressive directions, there are alternative fingerings—those of Chopin himself, and those of the editor—and there are metronomic indications. In addition to the ordinary signs of modern up-to-date editing, there are many grandiloquent prefatory notes, purporting to express in words something of the emotional content or drift of the works they precede. A full dis-

cussion of the futility of all such writing, with copious illustrative quotations, would require a separate chapter. But not a little amusement may be derived by examining the quality of such "analytical commentaries," with their glaring contradictions, their obscurities and inanities, their grandiloquent verbosities, their passionate raptures of arrant nonsense. This species of musical analysis, so-called, is largely a German and American product, which may be seen in the perfection of its absurdity by anyone who is at the pains to read the work on this subject by E. Baxter Perry, lately published in America. It would indeed be a pity if a taste for this folly were to be cultivated in England.

No. 4 by Spiedel, in the Cotta edition, is one of the carefully prepared volumes in that celebrated series. The editor claims to provide an authentic text, and he adheres closely, in all the technical studies, to Chopin's own fingering. His phrasing marks are intended "to elucidate the meaning and form of motive and figure"; and he supplements the metronomic indications of Chopin himself, which include the Etudes, Op. 10 and 25, the Mazurkas, Op. 6, 7, 17, 24, 67, 69, and some other pieces, by adding to the remaining works approximate indications of his own.

There are many other useful editions of Chopin, amongst which may be mentioned that by Hermann Scholtz, an excellent scholar, though a great faddist in fingering; and that by Kleczynski, published by

Gebethner and Wolff. But there is still room for much lucid and enlightening commentary.

Two literary works of some interest in this connection are "How to Play Chopin" and "Chopin's Greater Works," by Kleczynski (published in translation by Reeves). In these little books there are a few useful hints, but there is a great overlay of rhapsodical nonsense which is intended for æsthetic analysis. Ashton Jonson's "Handbook to Chopin's Works" contains some interesting notes about the character of many of the piano pieces in detail. It is published by William Reeves, and is quite worth reading, or rather for using, as a book of reference.

VIII. EDITIONS OF MOZART, HAYDN, SCHUMANN, MENDELSSOHN.

Enough has now been said about the chief schools of editing, and it will therefore suffice to name some of the most useful editions of these composers.

Mozart: Riemann (Simrock); Breitkopf and Härtel (Critical Text); Lebert (Cotta); Graham P. Moore (Bosworth).

Haydn: the Cotta and Riemann editions.

Schumann: Clara Schumann (Breitkopf and Härtel); Bishoff (Steingraber); Neitzel (Tonger).

Mendelssohn: Kullak; the Cotta edition; Epstein (Kranz).

And all Germer's editing may once more be commended.

IX.—CONCLUSION.

The student will now understand the necessity for a careful examination and comparison of the various editions of our piano classics by great interpreters and scholars; and he will now be guided in his choice of editions so far that in future he may be able to select wisely for himself.

APPENDIX.

Curiosities of Doctrine on Piano Touch.

Contradictions, involved expressions, fantastic notions, mysterious doctrine, appear to be the heritage of those who have any dealings with the preposterous fallacy that "it is possible to repeat a note on the piano, of given loudness and given length, so as to produce difference of *timbre*, tone-colour, tone-quality, or any other similar variable, by whatever name it may be called." This doctrine is the outcome of unconscious self-deception caused by comparing the beautiful effects of delicately varied combinations and successions of notes with the harsh effects of insufficiently varied and over-loud succession and combination of notes; and then attributing the differences perceived to varying *timbres* produced by varying modes of touch. The many palpable absurdities in the following quotations upon this subject may be accounted for by the fact that it is quite impossible to have this "bee in your bonnet," and at the same time be capable of making a clear analysis, or of expressing lucid ideas on the subject.

The quotations are made in a desultory fashion, and contain, intermingled with much curious doctrine, some able views of great pianists of the past.

As a counterblast to Mr. Matthay's sermons against the "fell-disease of key-striking" it is interesting, for example, to read Von Lenz's account of his playing for Liszt: "When I tried to strike the three A flats, I found it quite impossible to make the instrument give forth a sound. Then I struck *hard;* the A flat sounded, but quite *piano.*" Liszt's remark was: "I ordered this piano myself; one scale played on this piano is equal to ten on any other." Liszt thoroughly understood both the need for, and the right mode of acquiring, muscular strength, and a powerful technique.

Levensohn, again, the Russian critic, speaking of Rubinstein's octave playing, says: "His fingers, instead of falling sideways on the keys, *strike as with a hammer.*"

Mr. Matthay would reply that Liszt, Von Lenz, Levensohn and Rubinstein either simply *imagined* they were striking, or else that they were incapable of producing "tone of good quality." Let the public make their choice. Probably this factor has helped to mislead Mr. Matthay and his school: pupils have come to them who have been taught, by high finger action, by strong striking, by well-developed muscular power, to produce loud tones fluently; but who have not been taught to modify this tone at this right time and to the

right degree; who, in short have been trained to play loudly, but not musically. Mr. Matthay may have proceeded to remedy this defect, and then finding that the remodelled playing was sweeter and more beautiful, he imagined that he had taught them, by subtle modes of touch, to produce subtle modes of tone. What happened was, they came with their technique ready; and he proceeded to show them how to temper strength with gentleness.

Mason, in his "Memories of a Musical Life," is another example of a worthy man with this bee in his bonnet. And his astonishment in finding that some of the greatest players in the world were able to get along without the benefit of his doctrines makes rather quaint reading: "At the time of which I write very little seems to have been known of the important influence of the upper-arm muscles in the production of tone-quality and volume. In the Tomaschek method, as taught and practised by Dreyschock ("the greatest octave player of his day") the direction to the pupil was simply, to keep his wrist loose. So alike the pupils of Leschetizky pay but little attention to the upper arm muscles."

Here, again, we find the craze for complication in the methods of touch. "Touch in all its Diversity" must be urged at all costs. Mason had heard the finest octave players and the finest teachers in the world; and it seemed lamentable to him to think that none of them knew anything of his elaborate theories of the "upper-

arm muscles," and their "influence on tone-quality." The pity is that he had not the humour to see how damning it was to his complications to show that, by their use, nothing has yet been accomplished equal to what was accomplished before their invention!

Could unconscious humour go beyond this further remark of Mason's: "There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that Liszt was the greatest pianist of the nineteenth century. Yet his wonderful effects, strange as it may seem, were produced without the advantage of a genuinely musical touch." (Poor soul, he had never heard of the Mason-Matthay technique!) Mathews, the disciple of Mason, of America, an ardent enthusiast in the new theories of tone and touch, has some very amusing examples of the lengths to which a passion for these complicated doctrines will drive a man: "Note that the point of the finger remains holding the key quite earnestly, in a friendly manner, a living manner, and not in a merely limp and passive manner!" "The pupil should spring up and with his wrist hit the hand of the teacher which is to be held about ten inches above the keys. This should be done quite spitefully, as if to crack the varnish on the teacher's hand. This sudden springing up *is the act which*, combined with the slight forward motion, *produces the tone*!" This is a delightful variant upon Leschetitsky's pupil teacher: "A chord will sound more brilliant with less expenditure of strength, if

immediately *after* striking it, the hand is withdrawn sideways," or again: "If immediately *after* striking the chord the hand is thrown well upward, this movement will give the chord a more brilliant tone!"

These tone theorists are very amusing also in the epithets they use to denote their "tone-qualities." Our friend, Mr. Mathews, proceeds: "The fingers merely reinforce the arm, and make the tone more intelligent and less brilliant." "If you push instead of giving an inward pull of the fingers the brutal arm element appears in the tone. (Probably he means to say, that some pupils sometimes play rather loudly; but while this is a simple way of saying a simple thing, he may imagine that a more complicated expression necessarily makes the thing to be expressed more complicated too.)

How curious it is to observe that these theorists first make up their theory, and then tell you quite calmly that they cannot explain why what they assert happens at all. We had the case of Mr. Matthay asserting that it was most certainly a fact that different modes of touch produced varied "tone-qualities"; and then his naive remark that we could not tell how it was that the hammer communicated these various modes of touch to the string so as to produce these qualities. Mr. Mathews, again, is in the same trouble. He tells us that if we play melody notes "with a stiff arm the resulting tone will be singularly unsatisfactory; with finger raised and elastic wrist the quality will be much more amiable. Why? This is one of the points I

do not know. On the other hand, if the finger be raised high, and force be sought, occasionally an element of *actual brutality* appears in the tone!" Then we have that large class of piano theorists who go in boldly for rich development of the doctrines of "tone-quality." Fillmore, in his "Piano Music," tells us gravely that "the problem Liszt set for himself was, to reproduce, with the limited resources of the piano, the effects of the full orchestra with all its different families of instruments. He varied the colour of his tones by different kinds of touches." So also are the same doctrinal developments to be found abundantly in the works of Goodrich, McArthur and others. Why not? If you admit the absurd error of any possibility of varying the *timbre*, and then stop short of the full developments of the doctrine, you are straining out the gnat and swallowing the camel. As has been pertinently said: "The *timbre* is as the piano maker made it."

Then we have the delightful and absurd confessions of the excitable Amy Fay: "Deppe says that you may have the soul of an angel, but if you do not sit on a low chair, the tone will not sound poetic!" I cannot profess to intimacy either with "the soul of an angel," or to "tone" that "sounds poetic"; but I do know that given equal force and length in the depression of a piano key, the tone will be of exactly the same quality whether you sit on your head, or stand on your feet, or use chairs of varied height.

And then we have Bettina Walker giving us the clue to the fact that Mr. Matthay's pupils are not "quality-deaf." "After Mr. Clarke had played several studies to me, he changed the position of his hands, and then began to play with great brilliancy several grand concert pieces, saying as he did so: "I am not now playing in the Deppe technique, but in the manner which I had before I ever went to him." "But you are playing very well," I replied, "brilliantly, and with great effect." "But don't you observe the difference of tone? Don't you perceive that, although I am playing much louder now than I did before, yet the tone I produce has little or no *timbre* or ring? *I remember feeling in a sort of maze as I looked at him and listened to him.*" Little wonder, poor soul! So, as Mr. Matthay tells us, he will not accept a pupil till he finds by trial that he is not afflicted with deafness as to "tone-quality." What can the intending candidate for tuition do? If Mr. Matthay says to him: "See now how I *strike* this key; do you notice how thin and harsh the quality is? Again, notice that I "follow-on," and push the key down; now do perceive how full and musical the tone is? He may be "in a sort of maze"; but if he wants the tuition, and knows that upon his reply depends his chance of getting it, he has no option.

America is a huge field for the propagation of these modern "touch" fads. Louisa Hopkins, writing for "The Etude," says: "Clementi, Cramer, Czerny, Mos-

cheles, Kalkbrenner, Herz, Thalberg—their auditors seem not to have detected in their playing any variety of tone-quality or as we say, a range of tone colour. Many famous pianists of to-day have little or none." In other words, in the grand old days of piano-playing, before people allowed their imagination and their language to run riot, players used to busy themselves getting the tone of the piano out of the piano, and hearers when they heard the piano played knew they were listening to the piano and not to the trombone or the piccolo, or any other instrument. Miss Hopkins goes on to tell us that "by varying the intensity of the finger-clutch a great variety of tone may be made, the lightest almost like the throwing of flowers." "In Paderewski's playing, at an emotional climax of tremendous force, they are swept up with a ferocity of attack that throws his arms high above the head!" Dr. Hanchett informs us of "the hammer touch, the pressure touch, stab touch, elastic touch, hand touch, arm touch, finger touch." In all his diversity he does not approach Mr. Matthay, but what in the name of wonder is the use of tormenting students with a grotesque array of "touch" species, when all the piano is capable of may be attained more easily without any such torment? The teacher should make it his business to simplify, not to complicate, the work for the student. Francis Yorke, in "The Musician" has cultivated his imaginative ear to such an extent that even Mr. Matthay would, I fear, appear to him "quality-deaf." He tells us that: "Paderewski is the

greatest tone-colourist in the history of piano-playing. Wonderful varieties of tone quality come up from under his fingers—at times harsh as an over-blown cornet, again as velvety as the middle tones of a flute; now we hear the muffled roll of the kettle-drum, now the twang of the *pizzicato* strings, now the clear tones of silver bells." It is a wonder he did not add to this wonderful list—or show the nocturnal eloquence of the domestic cat. I too have heard Paderewski; I have noticed that he sometimes played very softly, sometimes very loudly, that he used the pedal with great skill; and that his tones were beautifully graded and blended. But then, I heard him solely on the piano, and no other instrument was called to my remembrance while I listened. And, forsooth, I am "quality-deaf" because, when listening to the piano, I hear *it*, and not the flute, the fiddle, the trombone and the bells.

If we would but direct hearers and students to the truth and the simplicity of the whole matter, there would be an end of all this nonsense at once. If we would learn our elementary catechism on the subject from Riemann, for example, we would find that: "A peculiar quality attaches to every tone, *according to the instrument by which it is produced. There only* we arrive at what is commonly called tone-colour. One single note sounded by violin, bassoon or flute, gives a different tone-colour." And we should understand the commonsense of Krehbiel, in his "How to Listen to

Music," when he says: "The most unmusical person in the world can learn to produce a series of tones from a piano which shall be as exact in pitch, and as varied in dynamic force as can Mr. Paderewski. He cannot combine them so ingeniously, but in the simple matter of producing the tone with the attributes mentioned, he is on a level with the greatest *virtuoso*. Very different is the case of the violinist and singer, who both form and produce the tone. The 'tone-quality' or *timbre* of the piano is as the piano maker makes it." But the most powerful factor in the possession of the pianist for influencing the tone, is the damper pedal.

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