JOHN S. DWIGHT AND HIS MUSICAL CRITICISM IN THE HARBINGER

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THESIS

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JOHN S. DWIGHT AND HIS MUSICAL CRITICISM IN THE HARBINGER

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FOREWORD

In every great literary period in history, certain writers of distinction are seized upon by the critics to be considered. Succeeding generations follow suit, and these same literary geniuses are re-considered. But, surrounding great men of letters, are many lesser luminaries whose contributions are important to the time in which they lived; and,thus, become worthy of subsequent consideration. Such a man was John Sullivan Dwight - a man whose steady influence for the cause of music in education cannot be measured. His musical criticisms today make interesting reading, because of both the literary merit and their content. His musical reviews in The Harbinger laid the foundation for his later significant Journal of Music, which for thirty years was the outstanding publication of its kind in this country.

The Michigan State College Library has been most cooperative in securing the necessary material for this thesis. I want to acknowledge, also, the kindness of the English staff of the College, particularly that of Dr. Claude Newlin, and Dr. Anders Orbeck.

C.P.H.

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CHAPTER I

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

To appreciate fully the writings of any author, it is helpful to follow through his life and activities, for therein lies the answer to many questions of style, reasoning, philosophy and purpose. Environment bends the personality, and the personality in turn molds events. The personality of John S. Dwight is indelibly stamped on cultural events of Boston during his long life span; and his influence, spreading out from there, undoubtedly affected events and destinies of which he was totally unaware. However this may be, it appears now that he accomplished much through his persistent idealism; and the dedication of his life to one high goal - - the full realization of the best in music in America - - was definitely instrumental in achieving universal acceptance of music as a part of our educational curriculum. This would be difficult, naturally, to measure. However, the story of Dwight's life is demonstration enough of this point.

To George Willis Cooke, who published a biography in 1898, we are indebted for whatever information is available on the life of Dwight. Since this publication, no further notice seems to have been taken of him except for brief entries in musical encyclopediae and biographical dictionaries. And these entries base their information on

the biography of Dwight by G. W. Cooke, which seems complete and detailed and is sympathetically written. Appearing as it did within a few years of the close of Dwight's life, it seems sincere, authentic, and well documented with contemporary opinions and side-lights.

Mr. Cooke dedicated the biography of John S. Dwight,

> To the Harvard Musical Association with which the subject of this biography was intimately connected from the day of its inception until his death, serving it in every official capacity, being its president for twenty years. . . with the hope that it may help to indicate how intimately the man, the association, and the art they aimed to serve were united to each other.[1]

James Russell Lowell, a friend and neighbor of Dwight's for many years, immortalized him in his Fable for Critics with a keen insight into his character and personality when he wrote:

> When Nature was shaping him, clay was not granted
> For making so full sized a man as she wanted.
> So, to fill out her model, a little she spared
> From some finer-grained stuff for a woman prepared;
> And she could not have hit a more excellent plan
> For making him fully and perfectly man.
> The success of her scheme gave her much delight
> That she tried it again, shortly after, in Dwight:
> Only, while she was kneading and shaping the clay,
> She sang to her work in her sweet, childish way,
> And found, when she'd put the last touch to his soul,
> That the music had somehow got mixed up with the whole.[2]

[1] George Willis Cooke, John Sullivan Dwight. Brook Farmer, Editor and Critic of Music. A Biography, (Boston, 1898)

[2] James Russell Lowell, The Complete Poetical Works, (Cambridge, 1924) p.135.

That Dwight's biographer, Cooke, held his subject in high and affectionate regard is well expressed in his preface when he says,

> So important was Dwight's connection with the development of musical interest and taste in Boston that it was desirable some account of his work for music should be given the public. His Journal of Music was a pioneer in its chosen field, and he made it an educational power in securing a just recognition of the classics of music as an art. He was intimately identified with almost every movement made in behalf of music for nearly a half-century in the city of his birth, and the history of that art in Boston cannot be written without frequent use of his name. In his time everyone looked to him for the right interpretation of music, and musicians trusted him as sincerely as did the general public. His work was therefore unique, and never likely to be repeated on the part of any interpreter of music. He was a fit man for the time, that time when music was securing its public, when musical culture was finding its opportunity, and when a man of literary skill was needed who could mediate between the art and the public.[3]

Distinguished men often come from distinguished families and J. S. Dwight had a fine heritage. A large number of judges, statesmen, authors, college presidents and professors, as well as other men of prominence and influence bearing the name Dwight are descendants of Mr. John Dwight, one of the original settlers of Dedham, Massachusetts.[4]

[3] Ibid., p.xi.

[4] Ibid., p.1.

The home environment often indicates a path of thought and action for an individual. Dwight's father, John, was a free thinker and a radical for his day. Human affection to him was paramount and he refused to accept what was unworthy of God and Love. Dwight's mother, Mary Corey, found reading a pleasure, was fond of poetry and had good literary judgement. Aesthetic and artistic in her nature, she had a remarkable appreciation of beauty, and as to its character and quality showed fine discrimination.[5]

So we have a young man surrounded with free, independent, intellectual parents - - his mother devoted to the aesthetically beautiful. Dwight's life speaks eloquently of these influences.

John Sullivan Dwight was born May 13, 1813, in Court Street, Boston, the eldest of four children. At a tender age he attended "the infant school of 'Marm English', who was patronized by many of the ministers and the best families". After that he "went to the grammar school in Derne Street, where he won a Franklin prize". Later he "attended the Latin School, then taught by Benjamin Gould, where he took prizes whenever there were any, and secured a Franklin Medal".[6]

There was no formal musical training then in the schools but the "boy was passionately fond of street music,

[5] Ibid., p. 2.
[6] Ibid., p. 3.

and found delight in a street organ, even in later years". Music of any sort inspired him then, and later he "devoted much time to the piano and flute". His mother gave him "an exquisite love of the beautiful and a fine aesthetic sensibility".[7]

In 1829 young Dwight entered Harvard College, "carrying thither," according to his own statement, "perhaps more Latin and Greek (technically as to grammar, at least) than I he brought away." Being so well prepared discourage further exertion on his part but "he kept a respectable standing in his class". His major interest was always in music "more than in any prescribed college study, and it is because of that interest he is chiefly remembered by his companions."[8]

> Music was then no part of the college course; but Dwight early joined the Pierian Sodality, a club of students for musical study and practice. It furnished music for the exhibitions, which was thought to be very good. It was then the rule of college that prescribed study hours should be kept by the students. From 12M to 2 P.M. was a time of intermission; and the moment the bell rang the noon hour Dwight caught up his flute,on which he played until the bell rang again for study, taking barely time to eat his dinner in the interval.[9]

That Dwight became an accomplished writer is not surprising for at college his "love of poetry and the best literature was only less than his love of music."

[7] Ibid., p. 4.
[8] Ibid., p. 4.
[9] Ibid., p. 4.

When a Junior "he read an original poem before the Hasty Pudding Club, in the middle of the senior year he lectured on music before the Northborough Lyceum, and a few weeks before graduation he gave a paper on poetry before the Harvard Union." To add to his laurels "on graduation, July 17, 1832, Dwight furnished the class poem, which contained thirty nine-line stanzas." That he was outstanding becomes apparent for his class contained names of brilliant men, among whom was John Holmes, brother of the poet.[10]

In 1832 he entered Divinity School of Harvard College, where as in College, Dwight's one interest was music.[11]

In July, 1937, on Exhibition Day, "a number of graduates, who had been members of the Pierian Sodality, met with the students who were then members", and discussion was held of the work of the Society. A circular was "sent out to all former members of the Sodality, inviting them to attend". Dwight prepared the report of the committee and read it.

[10] Ibid., p. 7.
[11] Ibid., p. 8.

> He proposed two objects for the society contemplated, the first that of holding an annual meeting on Commencement Day of those interested in music, and second that of securing the advancement of the cause of music, particularly in the university.
>
> The society took the name of the General Association of the Members of the Pierian Sodality. Henry Ware, D.D., was elected the president, and Dwight the vice-president. In 1840 the name changed to the Harvard Musical Association. In 1845 the society was incorporated, and in 1848 it began to hold its meetings in Boston. From the beginning the society took the position that "the science and art of music is worthy of a place in a system of liberal education, and deserving of cultivation by educated men". It took for its definite object to secure "the introduction of music as a regular branch of instruction, and the cultivation of musical taste and science in Harvard University.[12]

It is interesting to note that Dwight, in 1838, wrote reviews of Tennyson's "Poems" for the Christian Examiner, the Unitarian periodical. "His review of Tennyson was the earliest published in this country, and was marked by his independent and appreciative spirit".[13]

> In the letters of these years there are hints of various activities and interests, hymns written for the ordination of Theodore Parker and on other occasions, a visit full of satisfaction to Dr. Channing at Newport, attendance upon the meetings of the little company of Transcendentalists,

[12] Ibid., p. 8.

[13] Ibid., p. 20.

> intimate friendship with Ripley, a cordial correspondence with Brooks, Parker, Samuel Osgood, Bellows, Hedge, Elizabeth Peabody, Mrs. George Ripley, and others.[14]

Dwight, in 1840, was called to the pastorate of the Unitarian church at Northampton. George Ripley ordained and installed him, preaching the sermon, also, and William Ellery Channing delivered the charge.

Activities at this time, he describes informally in a letter.

> Writing to one of his sisters under date of Jan. 12, 1841, Dwight gives an account of his work in detail: "Shall I give you the orders of performances for one week? Sunday evening, a conversation or a teacher's meeting; Monday, Shakespeare; Tuesday, Glee Club; Wednesday, choir meeting; Thursday, the Ladies' Whist Club, alias 'The Sociable'; Saturday, singing-school for children, - - not to mention parties and such like. Then there are things to be written, things to be read. I incline to books, and would pass the day with them if it were possible. They give me more satisfaction than men just now. The Dial I have nearly devoured since Sunday. It even clipped the borders of my sermon some it was so irresistible a dainty. It is a splendid number; and I cannot but thank the good souls who wrote in it, they have given me so much of inward comfort and beautiful thoughts.[15]

His observations here serve in some measure to clarify his later withdrawal from the church. For, his heart was in music, and the cause of music. Further, he says,

[14] Ibid., p. 30.

[15] Ibid., p. 38

> I have doubts about the Church. I agree with Parker mainly as to the essence of Christianity. I disincline more and more to the forms, especially public prayer. I have less sympathy than I had with the prevailing spirit of the churches, and less hope of ever being able to mould the church and the profession to my idea, so that I could be true to my conviction while continuing in them; and, in this state of mind, while I cannot go heartily and with my whole sould into a pulpit, I feel that it would be false to do it at all. . . [16]

Dwight was a member from the first of the Transcendental Club when it was started in Boston, where he entered into the spirit of it with great enthusiasm. In many ways "he was a child of his time in the truest sense, sharing its hopes, joining in its aspirations, and ready to labor for the realizations of its ideals".[17]

The Dial, the official publication of the Transcendentalists, found Dwight a contributor. Two sermons under the titles "Religion of Beauty", and "Ideals of Everyday Life" found a place in this journal, as well as a poem called "Rest".

Rest

Sweet is the pleasure
   Itself cannot spoil!
Is not time leisure
   One with toil?

[16] Ibid., p. 47.
[17] Ibid., p. 48.

Thou wouldst take it,
   Still do thy best;
Use it, not wast it,
   Else 'tis no rest.

Wouldst behold beauty
   Near thee, all around?
Only hath duty
   Such a sight found.

Rest is not quitting
   The busy career;
Rest is the fitting
   Of self to its sphere.

'Tis loving and serving
   The Highest and Best!
'Tis onwards! unswerving,
   And that is true rest.[18]

Following his friends toward idealistic transcendental and associationistic goals, Dwight became a member of Brook Farm. Here

> Dwight directed the musical life of the community. His entusiasm for the musical art found scope for expression at this time. The materials he had at command were not of the best, but he made the most of them. He cultivated a taste for the better kinds of music, talked so enthusiastically about the divine mission of music, and gave so much time to bringing out the best musical qualities of the members of the community that he succeeded in impressing his own tastes and convictions upon all around him.[19]

Dwight contributed much to Brook Farm and was "practical in suggestion and fertile in plans and wise in counsel". Ripley even, was not "superior to him in the work of distinctly shaping the future plans of the community".

[18] Ibid., p. 44.

[19] Ibid., p. 61.

He had, however, "no financial skill and his administrative gifts were limited".[20]

> But he had in him a deep strong, practical common sense, a capacity for touching life on the side of its every-day interests,and he greatly admired men of common sense and executive power. While of a most refined and sensitive organization himself, delicately alive to every aesthetic interest, and of exquisite tastes, he was no dilletante, and in no sense over-refined or finical. He mingles freely with the people of the Farm, keenly sympathized with the toils and deprivations of workingmen, and was eager to do what he could to improve the condition of those hard beset in the struggles of life. He had an inclination to despise those who were not cultured, but freely appreciated the genuine gifts of all persons. He loved genuineness and thoroughness wherever they were found, and he exercised a large and wholesome influence in putting these virtues into the working policy of Brook Farm.[21]

The Harbinger received the constant contributions of Dwight "during the whole period of its publication". Editorials on association, he wrote, as well as on music and literary topics; he reviewed many books, and sometimes contributed poems.[22]

In the first number of The Harbinger Dwight pointed out that in America "we have no composers; no great performances in our churches; no well endowed and thorough academies to train the artist, or to educate the public taste by frequent hearings of the finest compositions, except in a very limited degree". In answer to this need he promises to

[20] Ibid., p. 83.
[21] Ibid., p. 83.
[22] Ibid., p. 107.

devote his column to the promotion of musical taste and knowledge. Thus

> . . . The Harbinger became one of the best musical journals the country has ever produced. The criticisms were strong and effective; and the interpretative articles were in good literary form, incisive with keen artistic insight, and adapted to give the art real meaning as a source of culture.[23]

On February 12, 1851, John S. Dwight married Mary Bullard, a member of the choir of the Religious Union of Associationists. The ceremony was performed by Rev. W. H. Channing.[24]

> Mary Bullard was a beautiful, winning, unselfish woman, a fine singer and a person of many attractions of body and mind. She had a serene and charming face, was a fine talker, and had a most gracious and attractive manner. At Brook Farm her coming was hailed with delight by all; for she was a superior singer, and she lent herself pleasantly to all the interests of the place . . . Wm. H. Channing said that without being morbid, she was the most thoroughly conscientious person he ever knew.[25]

Brook Farm dissolved, Dwight sought means of support. Turning to music Dwight issued the first number of Dwight's Journal of Music in April 1852. A guarantee fund was generously contributed for this purpose by several of his Associationist and Musical friends. The Harvard Musical Association "lent its aid to the project and made it financially possible."[26]

[23] Ibid., p. 108.
[24] Ibid., p. 143.
[25] Ibid., p. 143.
[26] Ibid., p. 49.

> Our motive for publishing a Musical journal lies in the fact that music has made such rapid progress within the last fifteen, and even the last ten years. Boston has been without such a paper, and Boston has thousands of young people who go regularly to hear all the best performances of the best classic models in this art. Its rudiments are taught in all our schools.
>
> All this requires an organ, a regular bulletin of progress; something to represent the movement, and at the same time, help to guide it to the true end. Very confused, crude, heterogeneous is this sudden musical activity in a young utilitarian people. A thousand specious fashions too succesfully dispute the place of true art in the favor of each little public. It needs a faithful, serene, friendly voice to point out steadfastly the model of the true, the ever beautiful, the divine.
>
> We dare not promise to be all this; but what we promise is, at least, an honest report, week by week, of what we hear and feel and in our poor way understand of this great world of music, together with what we receive through the ears and feeling and understanding of others, whom we trust, with every side-light from the other arts.[27]

Dwight decided on a trip to Europe to travel and study. His wife was taken ill shortly after he left and died within a few weeks.

> Dwight spent a few days in England, was for a fortnight in Paris, went through Switzerland, and then on to Germany . . . In Berlin some months were passed, and visits were made to Leipzig, Dresden,Munich, and other cities . . . He then went on to Italy, passed on to France, and reached England in July 1861. . . Dwight . . . finally returned home in November.[28]

[27] Ibid., p. 49.

[28] Ibid., p. 51.

The ensuing years found Dwight engaged continuously in his literary and musical pursuits. The Dictionary of American Biography tells us that

> Dwight was for eighteen years a trustee of the Perkins Institution for the Blind and gave to it enthusiastic service. He was one of the earliest members of the Saturday Club. . . He was vice-president of the Harvard Musical Association from 1855 to 1873 and president and librarian from 1873 to his death. In 1865 he was instrumental in the formation among its members of the Philharmonic Society; and in 1876 with the establishment of a professorship of music at Harvard he saw the accomplishment of the Association's stated object. After the death of his wife in 1860, while he was in Europe on his only trip abroad, he made his home for awhile with his mother and sister, then in an apartment near the Journal office, and after 1873, in the rooms of the Harvard Musical Association. Here he died in his 81st year.[29]

Music, however, had formed the very center of his life and activity. Cooke remarks that "a biography of John S. Dwight on a comprehensive sacle, would be a history of music in Boston from 1840 to 1890".[30] For not only did Dwight discuss the musical events in his journal for the about thirty years of its existence, but he participated in their "inception and direction".[31] There were several instances in which this was emphatically true: "the Harvard Musical Association and its symphony concerts, the professorship of music in Harvard University, the giving

[29] Dictionary of American Biography. p. 568.
[30] Cooke., op. cit., p. 214.
[31] Ibid., p. 214.

of musical instruction in the public schools, the building of the Boston Music Hall and the securing of its great organ".[32]

John S. Dwight welcomed enthusiastically all musicians, especially young men of "talent and genius". As a critic he "urged their claims upon the public" by praising their work. And, "not less sympathetic was Dwight's welcome to musicians from other countries who came to reside in Boston".[33]

Boston accepted Dwight for many years as the "musical dictator" and "what he approved was accepted as right and good".[34] An autocrat of musical taste was he and

> . . . none questioned his opinion, at least with any probability of getting his heresy accepted. He had a remarkable gift for interpreting a musical composition, bringing out its salient points as a work of art, and putting its leading motives into literary form. His aesthetic perceptions were keen, his artist judgment sound, and his poetic appreciation of a high order. These qualities, along with a vivid imagination, and a charming gift for literary expression, made him an able critic, and one capable of impressing cultivated persons with the value and correctness of his opinions.[35]

In summation of Dwight's literary rank, Cooke evaluates his writings on a high level. And on the basis of the caliber of the Musical Reviews of The Harbinger, I concur in his evaluation. Says he,

[32] Ibid., p. 214.
[33] Ibid., p. 223.
[34] Ibid., p. 230.
[35] Ibid., p. 230.

> Dwight translated music into literary form, showed the public what to find in it, and how to discover its profound spiritual charm and power. This is what no one else had done with anything like such beauty of language or such skill to convince and enlighten. A score or more of his essays on general topics connected with music, scattered through the pages of the Journal of Music and other periodicals, deserve a place alongside the best writings of Ruskin. They have power, insight, grace, charm. They are not less needed today than when they first appeared; for they discuss the primary and eternal significance of music as an art, its power to enlarge the meaning of life and to purify the soul.[36]

Dwight liked people and went much into society where he received a welcome from the people of culture who admired his literary and musical gifts. He was a "quiet, sunny, beaming person".[37] However, he "had very little practical talent, was almost helpless about details of daily living".[38] Money, apparently, meant little to him for he had little appreciation of its value, was all his life poor, and not capable of getting on in a thrifty and saving way of life".[39]

The day he was eighty, May 13, 1893, the "Harvard Musical Association gave him a large birthday party, and his friends gathered in large numbers".[40] One can imagine the pleasure he had on this red-letter day.

During his last illness which occurred that same year he "had the constant and tender care of relatives, and his brother Frank was with him in the last hours".[41] From all

[36] Ibid., p. 236.
[37] Ibid., p. 266.
[38] Ibid., p. 266.
[39] Ibid., p. 266.
[40] Ibid., p. 294.
[41] Ibid., p. 294.

around came friendly messages during these last days. He died on September 5, 1893.

As a tender parting tribute to a dear friend, O. W. Holmes wrote a poem which was read at the funeral service by Mrs. J. W. Howe.

To John S. Dwight

O Presence reverend and rare,
Art thou from earth withdrawn?
Thou passest as the sunshine flits
To light another dawn.

Surely, among the symphonies
That praise the ever-blest,
Some strophe of surpassing peace
Inviteth thee to rest.

Here thou, a watchful sentinel,
Didst guard the gates of Song,
That no unworthy note should pass
To do her temples wrong.

Dear are the traces of thy days
Mixed in these walls of ours;
Thy footsteps in our household ways
Are garlanded with flowerw.

If we surrender earth to earth,
The frame that's born to die,
Spirit with spirit doth ascend
To live immortally.[42]

[42] Ibid., p. 296.

CHAPTER II

The Harbinger: Its 'raison d' etre'

A consideration of the Musical reviews, contributed to The Harbinger by John Sullivan Dwight, would fail of completeness without a survey of the social climate which produced such a publication. America, the new world of hope and opportunity, became the testing ground for countless social theories propagated by the visionaries of a new social order. Foremost among these 'visionaries' at this period, the mid-nineteenth century, was the school of Transcendentalism which "yet remains the most important influence that has affected American literature".[1] In New England it "was democracy in contact with Puritanism, to define it historically".[2] Clarence L. Gohdes says that although "contemporaries of the movement were not able to say that transcendentalism was they know who the transcendentalists were".[3] Dwight, although not a charter member of the Transcendental Club, became a later member, and identified himself with the movement.[4]

George W. Cooke tells us that transcendentalism "was a movement of inquiry, revolt against conventionality, and assertion of the worth and dignity of man. It declared

[1]George Willis Cooke, The Poets of Transcendentalism, p.3.
[2]Ibid. p. 4.
[3]Clarence L. Gohdes, The Periodicals of American Transcendentalism, p.9.
[4]Harold Clarke Goddard, Studies in New England Transcendentalism, p.38.

that religion is natural to man, that he may trust his own instincts, that individual freedom is essential to a large and wise living, and that spiritual insight is a direct revelation from God".[5] Dwight reflected such idealism in his reviews. He sought his goal through music, and, as a transcendentalist, believed that "when the individual so wishes, when he keeps his mind clear and his heart pure, and when his soul is freely open to the life of the Spirit, inspiration will come to him according to his need . . . when his soul is open and his life pure he can always have the indwelling of the Spirit".[6]

The Dial, transcendental organ, had its day just preceding the appearance of The Harbinger. Of it, we learn that

> The literary achievements of Transcendentalism are best exhibited in the Dial, a quarterly "Magazine for Literature, Philosphy and Religion", begun July, 1840, and ending April 1844 . . . George Ripley, James Freeman Clark, Theodore Parker, Wm. H. Channing, Henry Thoreau, Eliot Cabot, John S. Dwight, the music critic, C. P. Crouch, the artist-poet, Wm.E. Channing were liberal of contributions, all,in characteristic ways.[7]

In a transcendental vein in this early publication, we find Dwight, in his late twenties at this time, pouring forth his views.

[5]George Willis Cooke, op. cit., p. 7.
[6]Cooke, Poets of Transcendentalism, p.7.
[7]Octavius B. Frothingham, Transcendentalism in New England,p. 132.

> The religious man lives for one great object; to perfect himself, to unite himself by purity with God, to fit himself for heaven by cherishing within him a heavenly disposition. He has discovered that he has a soul; that his soul is himself; that he changes not with the changing things of life, but receives its discipline from them; that man does not live by bread alone, but that the most real of all things, inasmuch as they are the most enduring, are the things which are not seen; that faith and love and virtue are the sources of his life, and that one realizes nothing, except he lay fast hold on them. He extracts a moral lesson, a lesson of endurance or of perseverance for himself, or a new evidence of God and of his own immortal testing, from every day's hard task.[8]

The Brook Farm enterprise developed as an outgrowth largely of the ideals of transcendentalism. It "was projected on the purest transcendental basis . . . The jealous regard for the rights of the individual is not the least characteristic feature".[9] Dwight, being identified with this group, early became a member of the Brook Farm Community. "It was felt . . . that in order to live a religious and moral life in sincerity, it was necessary to leave the world of institutions, and to reconstruct the social order from new beginnings".[10] The George Ripleys established their community and

[8] Ibid., p. 147.
[9] Ibid., p. 158.
[10] Ibid., p. 158.

> The reputation for gains, accomplishment and wit, which the founder of the Brook Farm enterprise enjoyed in society, attracted towards it the attention of the public, and awakened expectation of something much more than ordinary in the way of literary advantages. The settlement became a resort for cultivated men and women who had experience as teachers and wished to employ their talent to the best effect; and for others who were tired of the conventionalities and sighed for honest relations with their fellow beings . . .[11]
>
> The Transcendentalist was satisfied with nothing so long as it did not correspond to the ideal in the enlightened soul; and, in the soul recognized the power to make all things new.[12]

That J. S. Dwight became an important member of the Brook Farm community, as music teacher and writer is a matter of record.

> Brook Farm was a transcendental movement without doubt, but only, after all, in that it was a speculation of pure idealists, and that its inspiration came from the sources so imperfectly outlined. These 'sources' included Immanuel Kant, and the schools of Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and Schleiermacher - "German philosphers". Their (the members of Brook Farm) features were composed and their minds attuned to the Immensities and Eternities . . . Indeed these Transcendentalists often found themselves enjoying seraphic moods. Philosphy, foreign and domestic, was only a part of what they considered. They were reformers in that they were dissatisfied with any ideal less exalted than their own, and though far from a contentious or an unamiable set, they had the reformer's capacity for making others feel a sense of ineptitude. The relative fewness of their members made this unconscious loftiness seem arrogance.[13]

[11] Ibid., p. 166.
[12] Ibid., p. 182.
[13] Lindsay Swift, Brook Farm, p. 11.

The Ripleys had achieved their wish: "to insure more natural union between intellectual and manual labor. . . to guarantee the highest mental freedom . . . to do away with the necessity of menial services by opening the benefits of education and the profits of labor to all." [14]

To further the interests of the community abroad, The Harbinger came into being. The Pilgrim House became the location of the editorial office of this organ.[15] "The barrenness of its appearance was the more marked because there were no trees about it; and standing, as it did on high ground, it proclaimed, in its oblong shape and white paint, an austere New England origin".[16]

Here, in 1845, The Harbinger was started,

> . . . a weekly journal devoted to Social and Political Progress; published by the Brook Farm Phalanx. The Prospectus, written by Mr. Ripley, made this announcement: "The principles of universal unity taught by Charles Fourier in their application to society, we believe are at the foundation of all genuine social progress; and it will be our aim to discuss and defend these principles without any sectarian bigotry, and in the catholic and comprehensive spirit of their great discoverer.[17]

Frothingham then goes on to tell us that

> In the four years of its existence the paper was faithful to this grand and high sounding promise. A powerful company of writers contributed their labor to help forward the plan. The Journal was

[14] Ibid., p. 15.
[15] Ibid., p. 32.
[16] Ibid., p. 32.
[17] Frothingham, op. cit., pp. 327,328,330.

> affluent and sparkling. The literary criticism was the work of able pens; the musical and art criticism was in the hands of the most competent judges in the country; the aesthetics were not neglected; the verse was excellent; but the social questions were of first consideration. These were never treated slightingly and the treatment of them never deviated from the high standard proposed by the editors.[18]

An imposing array of contributors impresses us even today.

> The list of its contributors contained the names of Stephen Pearl Andrews, Albert Brisbane, W. H. Channing, W. E. Channing, Walter Channing, James Freeman Clarke, Geo. H. Calvert, J. J. Cooke, A. J. H. Duganne, C. P. Cranch, Geo. W. Curtis, Charles A. Dana, J. S. Dwight, Horace Greeley, Parke Godwin, F. H. Hedge, T. W. Higginson, M. E. Lazaries, J.R. Lowell, Osborn Macdaniel, Geo. Ripley, S. D. Robbins, L. W. Ryckman, F. G. Shaw, W. W. Story, Henry Janes, John G. Whittier, J.J.G. Wilkinson - - a most remarkable collection of powerful names.[19]

A variety of different subjects was sometimes contributed by the same writers and the departments were not "systematically arranged".

> Mr. F. G. Shaw published, in successive numbers, an admirable translation of George Sands' "Consuelo", and wrote against the iniquities of the principle of competition in trade. C. A. Dana noticed books, reported movements, criticized men and measures, translated poetry from the German, and sent verses of a mystical and sentimental character of hiw own. C. P. Cranch

[18] Ibid., pp. 327, 328, 330.
[19] Ibid., p. 329.

> contributed poems and criticisms on art and music. J. S. Dwight paid attention to the musical department, but also wrote book reviews and articles on the social problems. W. H. Channing poured out his burning soul in denunciation of social wrong and painted in glowing colors the promise of the future. G. W. Curtis sent poetry and notes on literature and music in New York . . . Mr. Ripley, the managing Editor, supervised the whole; wrote much himself on the different aspects of association; reported the progress of the cause at home and abroad; answered the objections that were current in the popular prejudice, and gave the paper the encouraging tone of his cheery, earnest spirit.[20]

The actual appearance of The Harbinger was scholarly, being a generous quarto, with three columns to a page.

> The good of all mankind was the keynote . . . The artisan and the cultured were ready to hand at Brook Farm, not so much to read as to make The Harbinger, which owes its existence to this combination . . . It not only gave immediate work to compositors and pressmen, but it brought forward in a definite way literary aptitudes which needed soil for a start, and which grew sturdily after the paper had stopped . . . Of the articles, Dwight wrote three hundred and twenty-four.[21]

The Dial and the Present, which had preceded The Harbinger, left a clear field for the new paper which "could not have been started during the life of either of these precursors, for the reason that there would have been no room left for it".[22] Ripley seized one advantage in making a recognized organ of The Harbinger of a far larger

[20] Ibid., p. 329.
[21] Swift, op. cit., p. 265.
[22] Ibid., p. 264.

purpose than the financial return of an isolated experiment. The cause of Association gave him reason to hope for a modest success for the country at large was taking a great interest in this, one of the absorbing questions of the time. An able corps of writers, a great vantage point, and a wide program characterized it. The Harbinger occupied also the field left open by Brisbane's paper, the Phalanx, which terminated in 1845.[23]

The Harbinger lived a comparatively brief existence. However,

> That the "Harbinger" should have lived no longer than it did, with such a corps of writers and so great a cause, - - the last number is dated February 10, 1849 - - may be accounted for by the feeble hold that Socialism had in this country.[24]

Other influences were being felt and Frothingham says that "The decease of the Harbinger was the end of that phase of Transcendentalism".[25]

[23] Ibid., p. 264.
[24] Frothingham, op. cit., p. 330.
[25] Ibid., p. 330.

CHAPTER III

THE MUSICAL REVIEWS

1.

PROLOGUE

The musical reviews of John Sullivan Dwight, published in The Harbinger, reflect a many faceted personality, a personality admirably adapted to his chosen role of music critic. A cultural background found in his early home training, later profoundly broadened and deepend by his education at Harvard, served to bend all of his efforts to promoting the best in music at a time when such efforts were of inestimable value to a locality and to a nation.

An idealist, trained in the service of the church, Dwight was quick to sort the wheat from the chaff. Lacking in the fundamental discipline demanded by organized religion, and loving music and the cause of music, he entered on the high mission of educating the musical taste of the masses toward the highest attainable goal. He believed in the "gospel according to Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven!"[1] And he spread the gospel far and wide, serving faithfully, and fruitfully for more than a half a century in its cause.

[1] The Harbinger, III, 395.

We discover in Dwight's exposition, criticism, evaluation, and exhortation, evidences of the man as idealist, poet, educator, philosopher, crusader, theorist; a man who tinges his comments with a bit of humor; a man who, though genial and fair, clearly and boldly penetrates to the core of the composition or performance; recognizes the real merit of the performer.

Dwight states his own criteria for criticism:

> "It is no doubt an important province of musical criticism to weight in the appreciating scales of true taste, and sound knowledge of the principles of art, the merits of performers; most of the newspaper criticism seems confined entirely to this, or rather to the poorer business of recommending or disparaging the one or the other virtuoso, orchestra, or company, in the pure pride of criticism, as if each would show his ability to sport a notion of his own as well as anybody else, But after all, is this the highest satisfaction to know how much, or even wherein one singer is better than another? to settle or to meet the question of personal precedence between two rival cantatrice (forced by critics to <u>be</u> rivals) as if between two steamboats? We feel we labor to a better purpose when we call attention to the standard <u>works</u> in music, to the artistic beauties of the composition in itself, and when we urge those who would know the real joy of music to cultivate all opportunities of hearing compositions which are good, of studying them for their own sakes even through the medium of imperfect representation". [2]

[2] Ibid., IV, 299.

2.

EXPOSITION OF MUSICAL IDEALS

Surrounding all of Dwight's Musical Reviews in the Harbinger is an ethereal halo, lending an otherwordly glow to his expositions of the masterpieces. In 1845, more than a century away from this age of naked realism, the 'new world' was reflecting the European Romanticism with the lyrical approach to the worship of 'nature'. Dwight, fruit of the new world harvest of culture, exhibits at times tendencies to wander far from the path of the ordinary into the realm of the heavenly. A golden thread of sincerity and a true insight into intrinsic musical values, however, ties them all into a gift package which we now open with pleasure and satisfaction. For the intrinsic musical values which Dwight recognized a century ago have been the values the world still acclaims.

Let us first regard Dwight as an early educator in the realm of music through his Reviews. Beethoven, who was still composing and receiving the adulation of musicians for fourteen years after Dwight was born, receives full honors in these columns, and we discover lengthy and detailed word descriptions of the Fifth, the Seventh, and the Ninth Symphonies. For those who read these expositions of the symphonies, this was a true bit of instruction, for the sugar coating hides much real information and valuable

instruction. For instance,

> Let it be understood then that every Sumphony is cast in a certain uniform mould, that its form is conventional. Hayden invented, at any rate, perfected it; and Beethoven could accomodate his crowded thoughts to it without much sacrifice; just as Byron declared that the stream of his inspiration leaped and sparled all the more vigorously within the rocky bounds of rhyme and the Spenserian stanza. In the Symphony it is the first movement only which is strictly symphonic. This is commonly allegro; consisting of two divisions. The former contains all the simple themes or motivi, and is always repeated. The latter is the working of these themes into all manner of transformations and combinations, and it is here that the skill and science of the artist are put in requisition; his problem being to stick to his text, and never repeat himself, to develop the motivi of the first division into inexhaustible novelties . . . [3]

This is information about symphonic form which all interested musicians would have read avidly, for musical text books were not then what they are now. Continuing, we read,

> Then follows the slow and thoughtful Andante or Adagio, which is commonly in the Rondo form; that is, an air repeated three or four times, only each time with a more florid accompaniment. Awhile it dallies in the graceful, playful form of the minuet and Trio, or fantastic Scherzo; and then it gives full reins and lets excited fancy spend itself in the rapid wild finale. [4]

[3]Ibid., V, 329.
[4]Ibid., V, 329.

A true educator informs his learners also of what is new and valuable in his sphere of interest, constantly urging an appreciation of the very highest and finest available. This J. S. Dwight did, constantly and persistently. With fine discrimination he writes encouragingly of the groups which were endeavoring to promote the classics, so dear to his heart.

> The friends of Mr. William Keyser, the leader of the Boston Academy's orchestra, have lately arranged a couple of concerts of Chamber Music for his benefit. They took place at the rooms of Mr. Chickering . . . The music was exclusively for stringed instruments, Quintetts and Quartetts, with the addition of a violin Solo. This seemed to us at first an unfortunate arrangement; we could not but lament the want of a Trio with piano, (one of the grand pianos of Chickering) or the introduction (which would have been practicable enough) of one of Beethoven's Sonatas, for the piano; or say, of one of Beethoven's Sonatas for piano and violin, . . [5]

Reading on in this same review, we find that

> First a Quintette from Beethoven, a reproduction in that form by himself of a portion of his famous Septuor. The violincello part was strengthened by the addition of a double bass, and, all the other instruments being effective, the whole made out a rich and powerful combination; and the impression of the music was indeed sublime [6]

[5] Ibid., IV, 295.
[6] Ibid., IV, 295.

Classical and theological training at Harvard plus the influence of his associates made of Dwight a philosopher. Throughout we find profound observations concerning man and his relation to the universe, a further reflection of the age in which he wrote. Music to him was symbolic of a possible harmony in human life, and he maintained this point of view even in attending an unsatisfactory performance.

> It will be seen we did not go to this concert with a critising spirit, but glad enough of the opportunity to bathe our wearied soul and senses in the renovating music of the great masters, and to share the sympathies of a genial and delightful audience. If there were faults in the performance, there was enough of the true spirit of music to throw them into the shade, and to transport us as we wished to be in spite of them. Oh! when shall life answer to this prophecy of harmony in music? [7]

In other ways, also, Dwight related his music criticism to his general views of life and the times. For instance, he says,

> It is true that the whole rate and standard of time has accelerated lately, in perfect keeping with the restless character of the age; we live fast. [8]

[7] Ibid., IV, 296.
[8] Ibid., IV, 185.

And, if this remark is not up-to-date enough, we discover Dwight anticipating Einstein in his theory of relativity when again in a philosophical frame of mind he states,

> . . . it is true that time is rather relative than positive, and that the most rapid prestissimo seems to glide on without hurry when the tempo of our own nevers and feelings and whole system corresponds. Thus familiarity with any piece will make what was once very fast, seem very moderate. [9]

Tying in his views always with music, he compares the "diminished sevenths" with their lack of repose to the restless age in which he finds himself.

> . . . the most unpleasant thing about this music is that it is too true to the age. It shows the feverish intensity, the highly spiced qualities, the straining for effect, which reign in French novels, in politics, in Mexican Wars, in everything; the disease of a corrupt, and overconscious age, in a false and miserable dilemma between practice and profession, and like those same diminished sevenths which are the truest type in music of universal transition from one true concord to another. [10]

[9] Ibid., IV, 185.

[10] Ibid., IV, 300.

From the philosopher to the poet is but a short step. It is true that Dwight actually composed poetry which was printed as such in the Harbinger. But poetry in his prose is abundant also; figures of speech, onomatopoeia, alliteration, and rhythm are everywhere, while the soul of the true poet is nearly always present.

Performers of great music, he compares to a pilgrim in this very nice metaphor, "We can excuse any lameness in the execution of such (magnificent) music, as we would in the gait of a pilgrim who has gravel in his shoes".[11]

Onomatopoeia and alliteration and a subtle rhythm are found in the following:

> There is music in the very motions of the arm by which this poetry is wooed and won from the strings - - a music in which the eye too finds its share of pleasure. How gracefully the bow lifts upon the string and then glides smoothly down the current, like a leaf dropping on a river, as if the spirit of the melody were imprisoned within the instrument, and siren-like drew the bow after it, controlling its graceful motions, as the tide sways the boat upon its surface". [12]

[11] Ibid., IV, 300.
[12] Ibid., I, 380.

Again we find rhythm and poetry in his writing of Mendelssohn's "Songs Without Words" - where he writes,

> Before the quiet summer is all gone, and the bustle of the "musical season" is upon us, with concerts, oratorios and operas of all sorts to claim our notice, we will try to pen some grateful recognition of the musical spirits which have gladdened our retirements. Gliding subtly through whatever troops of cares and sorrows have at any time beleaguered the sick soul, these gentle spirits have gained entrance even to its inmost recesses and made peace and sunshine there. [13]

How the sibilant S's slide, and how the rhythms rise and fall! A simile later insinuates itself, then a metaphor.

> Each melody with its accompaniment, is like a pure stream flowing through rich scenery. The stream is the souls consciousness, the scenery is the world of mingled associations through which it flows, time's shadow on its surface. [14]

[13] Ibid., III, 218.

[14] Ibid., III, 231.

Another example of alliteration we find in Dwight's writing of Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony.

> Beethoven composed it in the long summer afternoons, which he spent in a rural spot just outside of Vienna, seated upon a style, and surrendering himself to all the sounds, sights, and sensations of the country, so grateful to the tired denizen of the city. [15]

The poet and the idealist are one. So with Dwight. In him, we find an idealist of the first water, idealizing all the best in music. To him Haydn and Mozart were ideal. Of their works which were performed in Boston at this time, he writes;

> The next piece was one of the most characteristic Quartettes of Haydn, full of his brightest and his deepest moods; played with spirit, with precision and with unity. Then came a most celestial Andante from a Quartette of Mozart's; which the audience could not let pass with a single hearing. Bathing your senses in its most fluid, warm and love-inspiring melodies, you became all soul, and the world one perfect element of love. It was like a disembodied, pure existence, like being caught up into a celestial state; and yet not disembodied,

[15] Ibid., I, 329.

> except of the unnatural clog
> of this false mortal being;
> it was rather like inhabiting
> a perfect body, true and pliant
> to the least motion of the
> spirit, in a world entirely
> harmonious. As its last chords
> floated away, and as it were
> aloft, our spirits with them,
> we would gladly have closed
> our eyes and known no more of
> conscious life that night. [16]

His idealism leads him to find beauty everywhere; beauty, nature, and music - - these to him are as one. An early member of the Transcendental Club, Dwight subscribes to the idea of God revealed in nature; and, further, he sees nature manifested in the truly great music. In referring to Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony, he writes,

> 'Sensations on arriving in
> the country', is the title which
> he has prefixed to the first
> movement, the Allegro. And in
> this he is true to the genious of
> music, in not attempting to
> describe the country, but only
> the sensations with which its
> blithe free air, its cool green
> spaces, its far spread smiling
> landscapes, and its myriad
> intermingled voices of birds,
> insects, cattle, men, with the
> thousandfold accompaniment of
> wind and water and the universal
> hum, inspire one. The melody has

[16] Ibid., IV, 295.

> a light tilting motion, which calls up at once that almost dizziness with which the too strong pulse of nature overpowers us . . . the minglind harmonies swell and subside like a crowd of waves; now it is an overfull and stunning rapture, and then it reels and ebbs away, the fainting of too much ecstacy.[17]

Such an excess of rhapsodic revelations sounds quaint, hackneyed, or even a little funny today. And yet, with a bit of tolerant imagination, and calling to mind the strains of the symphony, we find in the description a sincerity of feeling and a depth that obscure the redundancies. Nature sings in the key of F, so comments our critic further on this same symphonic work:

> . . . the ground of the all-pervading hum in the open air is what is marked in our scale, F natural. The Allegro of the Pastoral commences in F. if now it were possible to detect, not only the ground tone, but, also the ground theme or melody, not only the key note, but also the tune of Nature's music, it would be no more than what the instinct of genius has done in the opening theme of this Allegro. Beethoven seems to have caught the very tune of the fields. That is, he has caught their spirit; and in him it passed into melody. The spirit,

[17] Ibid., I, 329.

> the breath of Summer, in the mild June afternoon, came over him, as over her own harp (for such he was, a harp of Nature by his whole organization) and drew from him her whole melody. [18]

The individual, to the Transcendentalist, above all must be exalted; the individual in God, and in nature, and (to Dwight) in music. Says he, in continuing his exposition of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony:

> Buoyantly and lightly it creeps up over us and whirls out thoughts away with it in graceful dance over the sunny, grassy plains and hills afar, till we forget ourselves in blissful reverie, mingling our essence with the healthy universal air, blending with the scenes, and feeling the whole landscape with as much thrilling sense as we feel our own body. There is a slight drowsiness in the melody: the going to sleep of disturbing individual thoughts, while the mind wakes to the sense of universal harmony, the closing of the eyes upon vulgar glare, and escaping into the milder halo of beauty. [19]

In the exposition of many compositions which Dwight found worthy of his musical reviews, nature plays an outstanding part consistently. It was the fashion, the order of the day in which he lived. In a highly

[18] Ibid., I, 330.
[19] Ibid., I, 330.

poetic vein he writes further of the Pastoral Symphony, reflecting transcendental and romantic ideas.

> The cloud sails over, a shadow scuds across the plain, which we dreamily watch till it is lost. In a third phrase, a jubilant rapturous strain, we exult in the fullness of wild life. The lord of this sweet pastoral creation is no lighthearted Adam in Paradise, no idle swain cheered by bright weather, but rather Endymion, the shepherd prince, who pined in secret for a goddess, and found sympathy only in the woods and fields. Haydn's descriptive pieces are Idyls, simple cheerful pictures out of common life. They paint the actual merely. Beethoven's make the outward world a mirror of the soul. He does not copy the form, but communes with the spirit of nature. We feel that this symphony answers the whole question about the descriptive or imitative power of music. It shows us how far, and in what way, outward nature may be conveyed in music . . . In strict truth, music cannot imitate nature, since nature imitates music. [20]

This last remark places the emphasis on music as it was to Dwight - the most important consideration in his life. Carrying his love of nature into the philosophical realms, he lyricizes:

[20] Ibid., I, 331.

> Nature gives out her deeper meaning and her music only to those who have a corresponding depth of life. Nature is more to the poet, than to other men; and it took all the mystic depths and soulstirring knowledge of Beethoven, so to feel the spirit of nature, until it became a melody in his mind, as he has done in this Pastoral Symphony.[21]

Nature, the soul, and music are mingled in Dwight's review of Mendelssohn's "Songs Without Words" when he sings;

> Without words, and without names, even! It is music speaking for itself, or rather, speaking to the human heart, disdaining any other interpreter. . . Sometimes . . . the accompaniment suggests unearthly scenery, enchanted regions, and the soul is like the life of a soul disembodied, or translated where it knows no more the fretting bounds of time . . .
>
> The atmosphere, the limpid coolness of the water, the rhyth of its motion, and the soft, sad, yet voluptuous coloring of all things; in short, the very volatile essence of all that is life, is, as it were, caught and perpetuated in these subtle, accomodating forms of melody. What is the meaning of Venice in history, is a question which might perhaps be answered if we could only tell what influence this music ministers to the mind.[22]

That musical keys have a special connection with phases of nature, is again brought out when he theorizes:

[21] Ibid., I, 332.
[22] Ibid., III, 231.

> The gentle key, G minor indicates soft moonlight or starlight, and presently the song floats off, in loving thirds and sixths full of tenderness and musing sadness which has more of longing in it than of regret or actual suffering. [23]

Furthering his cause of nature and music, after a beautiful exposition of Mendelssohn's "Songs Without Words", Dwight concludes;

> You feel that no soul ever conversed more intimately with nature than did Mendelssohn when he composed this music. And music only could reveal what is here revealed. [24]

[23] Ibid., III, 231.
[24] Ibid., III, 232.

CRITICISM OF PERFORMERS AND PERFORMANCES

It seems probable that no musician of any note who visited Boston during these brief years of The Harbinger escaped the notice of J. S. Dwight's critical pen. He held the pen gently but firmly, and consistently prodded and needled in the cause of Art - - the high Art of music. Perfection his goal, he nevertheless bore tolerantly the imperfections of the aspiring artists who labored toward the mark of 'human best'. A warm appreciation of well invested efforts toward a better understanding of the glorious classics marks his critical reviews, while a subtle urging for higher attainment may be read in every line. A fine balance, well designed to stimulate the taste toward a visualization of great music as it should be realized; and to indicate the path of its consummation. A new world, ready to be led someway - - and so fortunate at that crucial time to have the steady firm hand of a great man to lead it even for a time on the high way.

As a critic, Dwight appears consistently fair but searching. A flash of humor used in a gentle kindly way adds flavor to his writings; a crusading spirit lends force to his reviews. And finally, he is a promoter of musical organizations destined to fill a great need, such as the Harvard Musical Association, the Boston Academy of

Music, and the Boston Philharmonic Society. Always, he kept the high goal of human perfection in performance and program, never deviating from it. When the performance fell short, the artist was gently taken to task; and when the standard tenor of the program slipped below the ideal standard, suggestions were made concerning a remedy. Dwight was an informed critic; he did not just write - - he wrote to a purpose.

After proclaiming criteria for criticism as Dwight did, it must follow that using them as a basis of judgment the resulting reviews would then become impartial. And so it appears. For regardless of the wordly standard of any group or artist, Dwight kept his eye only on the goal of the best - - always. He would not compromise his ideal for either worldly show or material gain. He became the prophet of music in a New World. When even as famous an artist as Ole Bull receives notice, we find the review fair but searching, gradually educating his readers to a point of discrimination.

> Ole Bull has been taking his farewell in a series of three concerts. As usual, he was unfortunate in his orchestra, and was obliged to dispense with the accompaniment so essential to the bringing out of any of his greater works. The reduction of his price to the Boston standard of half-a-dollar, much increased his audiences. But the furor of the public here for any prodigy of art never survived the first visit. Still the impression of the Norwegian has been deep

> and will be lasting in many minds. He is certainly a man of genius, although he moves in that unfortunate and dissipating element of Virtuoso-dom, which is more full of seductive temptations to ambition, than it is to inducements to slow and deep creation. Where prodigies succeed and eclipse one another so rapidly, who does not contrast the solid, eternal foundation of a Mozart's or Beethoven's fame, with the utmost that Ole Bull, or Ole Bull's successors can possibly gain in such a sphere? [25]

That "Virtuoso-dom" and outward show are regarded with suspicion by Dwight appears here and in many other instances. Always, however, he assuages the feelings by an appreciatory thought such as:

> We take leave of him (Bull) however with sincere respect and admiration for his many noble and fascinating qualities. He has called out and purified the latent enthusiasm of this wide spread and diversified people, as few could have done, and America will owe him her thanks.[26]

The artist who probably received the most genuine applause from J. S. Dwight of any in these reviews was Camillo Sivori. Of him we read,

> We were present at the first concert of the pupil of Paganini in Boston, when he drew tones from his violin as sweet and silvery as his name. The story that his violin was Paganini's, is one which, whether true or not, seems not incredible when you have felt its magic. And having believed this much, you not unwillingly extend the circle of romance, for fitness' sake, that there may be like instrument, like player, and credit also what Jules Janin says: that - - this young artist in his mother's womb was daily made to

[25] Ibid., I, 329.
[26] Ibid., I, 329.

> thrill to the vibrations of that arch-wizard's playing, and thus that Paganini's spirit moulded and attuned the child before he saw the light. This may be fable; but fable has its truth as well as history; in this case it is at least a very good poetic way of setting before us this young man as the lineal representative not of Paganini's blood, but Paganini's genius. [27]

Paganini, a true colossus to our critic, through his pupil, Sivori, brings true appreciation from Dwight couched in the following eulogistic phrases.

> We were delighted with the playing of Sivori, as were the musical nucleus of Boston, as were the musical crowds of New York, and the crowds on crowds who have acknowledged his mastery in Europe. It was unmingled, pure delight, and not astonishment alone. Astonishment came afterwards when we coolly reflect on the performance; but while we listen the art is too perfect to betray itself; the end is as fully realized as to be like nature, and your spirit finds repose in its familiar wonders. [28]

That Virtuoso-dom is superficial and an appurtenance rather than a true ingredient of Art finds expression in the following:

> The difficult feats and tricks and tours de force of modern violin virtuosity had grown so common, from the hearing of great and would-be-great performers, that we scarcely dared to expect much more than a moment's repetition of that kind of intoxication of the sense, which constantly grows weaker, though the means of excitement may

[27] Ibid., III, 363.
[28] Ibid., III, 380.

> be stronger and more cunning. But here indeed was something different in kind, as well as degree. To be sure, the three pieces he played were essentially such music as Vieuxtemps, Ole Bull, all of them dealt most with; they were show pieces, written for effect, to show the instrument, and not classic compositions. But they had a greater unity of purpose than these things commonly have, and were not loaded with forced ornament. [29]

Following this appraisal is a detailed, delightful description of the artist:

> The features of his face were delicate and finely marked . . . the quiet deep fire of his dark Italian eyes began to light up his face. [30]

A distinguished review of his technique is contained in the following figure of speech:

> The greatest difficulties were accomplished with an ease that made them seem familiar things; the wonderful passages, which astonish the vulgar, which we should call tricks in another, did not come to an end in themselves so as to be separable from the rest like added jewels; but like the delicate tracery of nature's foliage they all vanished into the whole, as naturally as they developed from it, and left the impression of something chaste, harmonious, and complete. [31]

On and on go these words of adoration. Yet in the final paragraph come the searching words which point up the whole review for his readers. The artist was above reproach but, ah! - - what of the program?

[29] Ibid., III, 364.
[30] Ibid.,III, 364.
[31] Ibid.,III, 364.

> The whole performance leaves a feeling of unmingled satisfaction. We only wish to hear Sivori more, and hear him also in more classical music. Should he play to us again, we trust that "Kreutzer Sonata" of Beethoven, which he performed in New York ("at the request", as the bills said "of some lovers of classical music!") will make part of the feast. We have yet to learn by what right these modern brilliancies are allowed to reign with undivided and exclusive sway in every public concert, while of the real works of genius only the merest tastes are now and then afforded us; and then they are prefixed with an apology for being "classical", or in other words too good for us! [32]

Even Sivori, in Dwight's eyes one of the chosen few - - yes, even he caters to public taste. And, as always, Dwight will not accede to less than his ideal 'best'. However, before we leave these reviews of Sivori, here is a poetic figure used in his description which certainly bears quoting.

> Wine shaken in a golden chalice seeks its level but more gracefully, than were those witching chromatic modulations swalled up in the yesty (sic) waves of his inimitable tremolos; and never shall we forget the indescribable effect of those splashes of sound, like big rain drops, which fell fitfully ever and anon amid the wind-like rushing and gliding of his melodies, nor how they chased each other off at the close of the passage, making a sort of melody themselves. [33]

The reviews of the performers are also touched now and then with humor. Dwight maintained that the flute and

[32] Ibid., III, 364.
[33] Ibid., III, 380.

the horn were no solo instruments, and he proceeded to write his views in a humorous vein. Perhaps his best example is the letter to Mr. Phunniwistle, signed from C. Sharp. We read,

> Every concert-goer will understand C. Sharp's advice to his friend on the eve of playing a grand Flute Concerto Solo:
>
> My advice to Mr. P.
>
> My dear Phunniwistle, as soon as your turn arrives you will of course keep the audience waiting some little time in expectation - - it does them good, whets the appetite, and makes them curious; stay until they are tolerably fidgety, and then make your appearance. Now mind! a Grand Concerto always begins with a row - - or else it cannot be grand; so tell your friend who "just scored it" for you, not to spare the brass. Well then, you commence with a crash, key of C, all the instruments starting in unison. Now the strain moves onward, Andante Maestoso, you standing watching your music with your flute cast negligently into the hollow of your arm, and your head gracefully on one side as you can manage to get it. [34]

Dwight's humor here may have a sting to it, merited no doubt. How it was regarded, we may only guess. That it may have been fruitful, in a degree at least, we have reason to believe. Proceeding with the letter:

> Having told your friend on what popular air you have composed your Concerto, or fantasia, he will, if he be a clever fellow, touch upon it a little during the introduction, which you occasionally, only occasionally mind you - - will put the flute to your lips and play a bar or two of it just to show the folks you <u>could</u> play the introduction, if it was not "infra dig", and you happened to be in the humor. The

[34] <u>Ibid.</u>, I. 380.

> orchestra are reaching a climax, climbing, climbing, climbing,bearing your flute on the top of their accumlated harmony, until you all come together upon another crash, more stupendous if possible than the first ...[35]

A lengthy, very amusing description in this vein follows.

Then comes a reference to the "anything goes" idea, in a manner which cannot be misread!

> Now as to this tune, I will suppose you have chosen one of the popular airs of the day - - "Polly put the kettle on" for instance - - for in composing either a fantasia or concerto, it is not essentially necessary that the air, any more that the scoring for the orchestra, should be bonafide your own work. "Polly put the kettle on" will make an excellent theme and from the rarity with which it is heard in a concert room will doubtless be more strikingly effective.[36]

The humor here, we note is full of sarcasm. This letter to Phunniwistle is referred to by Dwight again in a later review, in which the flute again meets with disparagment, in a humorous, sarcastic vein.

> . . . a Flute Concerto. (pardon us Signor Rametti!) was a most remarkable and most laughable production after the very pattern of "C. Sharp's advice to his friend Phunniwistle" . . . Such a composition. Why it was an elaborate, and tedious de-composition of the smallest minimum of a melody, through a series of mechanical variations, made on the principle of having each contain more notes to the measure than the one which went before.[37]

A crusader and promoter is fortunate indeed to be blessed with a sense of humor to lighten his long-range and

[35] Ibid., I, 380.

[36] Ibid., I, 380.

[37] Ibid., V, 187.

often discouraging task. Only through persistence and insistent information over many years are such ideals as Dwight sponsored finally realized, and then usually, only in part. That some of his dreams did eventually materialize is, now, part of Boston's glorious history. Wherever any part of history is glorious, one is sure to find in its inception and moulding the mind and spirit of a great personality.

The cause of "The Handel and Haydn Society" came close to Dwight's heart. Toward this society, as toward other worthy musical organizations of his time, he was half tender-concerned parent and half counselor-advisor. As if they were his children they received his life-long support and gentle admonitions. Of the "Handel and Haydn Society" in Boston, he writes

> This is the oldest musical association in Boston and devotes itself almost exclusively to the production of great oratorios. To its efforts we owe our blessed acquantance with those comforting, soul strengthening strains of Handel's "Messiah", the pure return of childhood's cheerfullness in the "Creation", as well as sweet confirmation of life's deepest consciousness with the hearing and receiving into our inmost souls the highest utterances of so many other inspired composers. [38]

After these eulogistic words he continues with paternalistic concern;

[38] Ibid., II, 76.

> We continue to urge upon all to support the Handel and Haydn Society by their presence. It is due to the society for their faithful effort to fulfill (sic) high ends, and every lover of music owes it to himself to put himself in the way of that which is intrinsically best, and which will bear fruit in his mind the longest. [39]

As is nearly always his habit, after his crusading for high causes, he leaves his readers with a word of appreciation and encouragement.

> The Society has acquired new life and energy under its present conductor and president, Mr. Chickering, know to the world by his admirable piano-fortes, the generous friend whom all musicians in these parts know and love, and the best man to unite in enthusiastic cooperations the elements too numerous and so difficult to harmonize, of so large a musical association. [40]

Also, dear to his heart, was the Harvard Musical Association, of which he was a charter member, and to which he devoted his life. The Association gave a series of six chamber concerts in the year of 1848 of which Dwight writes

> The first two of this series of six concerts were given at Mr. Chickering's rooms, in Boston . . . We prize too highly our rare opportunies of hearing music of this stamp at all, to be too fastidious about the manner in which it is performed. We trust the music in itself as the composer's soul bequeathed it to us; the real life we know is in it; we cannot be content to have it shut up from us like a sealed fountain, waiting until perfect artists shall appear to

[39] Ibid., II, 76.

[40] Ibid., II, 76.

> play it. All we ask of our musicians is: Try it, study it, do the best you can with it, even through bungling repetitions, if you have any soul, such music will inspire it, and the inspiration will ere long flow into your fingers, and will have conveyed the meaning of that music to your audience, if they are fit to hear it.[41]

Almost on his knees, pleading and begging for those who care to rise to the high calling of music he says -

> If a partie carre of musicians can be found, who aspire to render divine Quartettes and Trios of the great composers for the sake of music, and not for the sake of displaying their own individual powers of execution, we sympathize too fully with their purpose to listen very critically for false notes, or an occasional scraping of the strings, or any little awkward turn of a difficult corner.[42]

Then, offering rewards, intangible of course to the faithful, he continues,

> If their aspiration be a true one and if they will only resolutely adhere to the highest order of compositions, there will soon be virtues in their performance which will far outweight these minor defects: and even these will gradually work out and disappear. [43]

Then as a final parting word of admonition he says,

> Music of this sort needs repeated hearings. If the Programma for each evening were to consist, half of pieces performed before, and half of new ones to be repeated in their turn, we think it would be an improvement. [44]

[41] Ibid., III, 394.
[42] Ibid., III, 394.
[43] Ibid., III, 394.
[44] Ibid., III, 395.

It must be that the Boston Academy of Music was a sort of problem child to Dwight for he speaks very plainly in writing of it in his reviews. Between the lines we read for ourselves many unspoken criticisms. Our crusader and promoter finds here, however another essentially high-minded organization. Says he,

> The Boston Academy of Music presented an exceedingly good programme of performances, and the excitation of the different pieces was matched by a degree of spirit which is quite unusal at the Academy. It is somewhat a matter of wonder that the concerts by this society are of so moderate a degree of excellence, when we consider how select and well qualified are the different members of the orchestra,and how many good pieces are performed. Yet it is true, that in spite of this, the concerts are tame although they are fashionable, and that they who can appreciate good music are the most dissatisfied part of the audience. The high rank which this society bid fair to take, has not been realized. . . [45]

This seems quite frank to be sure, and further on Dwight says,

> The Directors of the Academy began with the design of elevating the standard of musical taste, by the performances of classical music in a thorough manner and although their concerts were ill-attended at first, they soon got a hold upon the people, and nourished a better taste, and finally became fashionable. [46]

Our crusader warns us of the impending statements by the word "fashionable", which word portends a lowering of

[45] Ibid., II, 204.
[46] Ibid., II, 204.

standards.

> No sooner were they fashionable than they ducked to fashion; their popularity became their bane; their original object was lost sight of, and the whole view of the directors seems to have been to make pleasing and popular concerts, which in their opinion could only be done by pandering to a medium and uneducated taste.[47]

In the same high-minded vein, we find extensive penetrating reviews concerning the Boston Philharmonic Society, which seems to have been a rival of the Boston Academy of Music. Then, opera came to Boston and received its due share of criticism.

Nothing escapes our critic, J. S. Dwight, regardless of the size, social weight, or monetary wealth producing the concert. Regardless of such values, we find him fair but searching, a bit humorous at times, and always a crusader for the highest in music and a promoter of the greatest intrinsic music values.

[47] Ibid., II, 204.

4.

EVALUATION OF MUSICAL COMPOSITIONS

The new world had a very difficult time assuming any importance on its own merit musically. A raw, wild land required human faculties in keeping. The fine arts fought a pitiful battle to gain a foothold, and then only reflected the glory of the old established European culture. In 1845, a republic, then only eighty years independent, was asserting itself in every way possible. But music, like a child, held the hand of mother Europe, and modeled its ways after her ways.

Several musical publication companies, however, were putting down roots in Boston and New York, and as new compositions were announced, J. S. Dwight carefully examined them and wrote in his reviews his evaluation of them. Anxious to help establish a worthy culture in his country, he was quick to write appreciatively of native compositions; he was cooperative with the publishers in bringing their publications to the notice of his readers; he studied methods and theories of vocal and piano-forte training in an endeavor to point the way to the best available material.

Of particular interest to present day pianists are the reviews concerning William Mason, at that time a young aspiring musician, who has taken a notable place in American musical history. Concerning a composition of Mason's,

"La Capricieuse", published by Oliver Ditson of Boston, we read:

> We have examined this graceful and rather original little production with much pleasure. It is composed in good taste, with more than ordinary knowledge and command of harmony, and by its freedom from mere commonplaces proves its author's familiarity with and preference for the higher styles of music. It seems to us to lack warmth, and has the appearance of being somewhat studied, - - which last, however, is a good quality in a young composer who has talent. [48]

Here is encouragement plus a bit of sage critical advice also:

> Mr. Mason has rightly named it "La Capricieuse": in its conception it is rather an ingenious fancy, than an inspiration; but it is wrought out with no little art, and is indeed highly creditable to the young pianist who is rapidly mastering all the difficulties of the New School Writers, while he sits with becoming reverence at the feet of Bach and Beethoven. This promises something and we watch each step of the fulfilment with interest. [49]

A typical list of publications appearing in Dwight's musical reviews at this time follows:

> New Publications
>
> Oliver Ditson
>
> 1. Tarantelle, Chopin
> 2. Beauties of Rossini's Opera "Semiramide", arranged for the Piano-forte, by William H. Callcate.
> 3. One hundred and one Preparatory Lessons, Czerny
> 4. Le Pianiste Moderne, Felix Mendelssohn
> 5. The Death of Asceola, A Song by J. Phillip Knight
> 6. Son Vergin Vezzosa, Polacca. [50]

[48] Ibid., V, 346-7.
[49] Ibid., V, 346-7.
[50] Ibid., III, 76.

Following such a list, our critic takes each composition, indicating its degree of difficulty, its effectiveness and its value as true music.

Another list by George Reed Publishing Company follows:

1. On Mossy Bank Reclining, by Schubert.
2. The Gallant Comrade, by Kreutzer
3. Farewell, Forever. Weber
4. The Quail. Beethoven [51]

Writes Dwight concerning these particular compositions:

> Four more members of the most valuable library of song, which has ever been printed in this country. They are songs for the few, but they will reach the many. They came from the heart and the heart will answer. "Jim Crow" may sell faster today; but then these songs will always sell. The truest personal obligation to Mr. Reed. We are happy to say, that the general character of the music which bears his name as publisher shows that his only motive was not private profit but also an ambition to do well his part, an enthusiasm for music, and public spirit enough to show our people what good music is, and put it within their reach. If all, who minister in any way to the public taste would pursue the same enlightened and liberal policy, both public taste and they would be the gainer in the end. [52]

Here is the encourager of the best in music, musicians, and music publishers, philosophizing and moralizing as a true minister of the gospel according to the classics truly should. A paeon of praise is later, in this same review, raised to German songs; says Dwight,

[51] Ibid., I, 26.
[52] Ibid., I, 76.

> German songs; such as are only born and sung in Germany; for where else is the life of men deep enough, strong enough, and free enough? and that too in spite of the worst and most petty forms of political tyranny. The whole of German life is a triumph of the mind over what Robert Owen might call "most inferior circumstances". Your German is always inspired with a sentiment. Rough and rugged and bearded as he is, he has a great loving heart and is himself beloved of all the muses . . . [53]

In praise of Schubert, we read;

> One, (song of Schubert) is more than we can exhaust in a lifetime. He died very young, bequeathing his whole soul in songs; his music took no other form; that one inspiration filled him until he was called away. His symphonies and oratorios are for the angelic ears. How we are tempted to speak of his "Serenade", his "Ave Maria", his "Fisher Maiden", his "Nimmer, das glaub mir, erscheinen die Gotter, nimmer allein". (Never, believe me, appear the Immortals, never alone) [54]

After dealing with Beethoven's "The Quail", in which he says,

> It is in the key (of F) which is the keynote of the general hum of things around us. The Quail strikes in the accord of the fifth, or C. It is worthy of note, that in the natural scale of tones and colors, as shown by Fourier, the great analogist, side by side with the scale of the Passions, the fourth or F, corresponds to green, the color of variety, of the "Alternating Passion", which preserves the general balance, by effecting wholesome changes and saving from one sided excess" [55]

[53] Ibid., I, 26.
[54] Ibid., I, 26.
[55] Ibid., I, 27.

Dwight sagely says,

> Let genius and science never quarrel. [56]

Then, in a witty fashion, he concludes,

> They will be disappointed who listen to this German bird for the song of our Yankee Quail, "More wet!" [57]

Verdi was at this period among the new composers in the realm of opera. Upon first hearing the operas from his pen, Dwight considered him of the "tribe of Donizetti", whose works appealed to him as lacking in greatness. Upon further hearing Verdi's works, particularly "Ernani" which became very popular in Boston at this time, Dwight became entranced with his different style and harmonic handling. He writes,

> Verdi's music wins our respect. The weakness of Donizetti-ism and mere modern Italian sugary sweetness it has entirely put away. It is full of strength. Its melodies, so far, wear well. Its Harmony fills and satisfies the ear. [58]

But can an Italian composer even approximate the height of a German?

> And yet we cannot speak of harmony as his distinctive excellence, in the same sense as when we say that of Germans generally. Compare him with Beethoven. In the latter everything is woven into one continuous web of harmonies from first to last; the fugue principle predominates, and that is the very soul of unity in art. The different parts are born together, and are

[56] Ibid., I, 27.
[57] Ibid., I, 27.
[58] Ibid., IV, 346.

> evolved from one another, as branches germinate from one stock. Verdi's harmonies, rich and broad as they are, seem either added to the melody to enrich it, or coolly laid as a foundation to rear the vocal structure upon. [59]

If Verdie merits so much consideration, wherein does his real merit lie?

> His greatest art, therefore, is the art of effect; he combines everything with reference to the best effect, consecutive or simultaneous. Nothing is ever lost; one part does not cover up another, and each one prepares what follows so that it is sure to strike, and surely his effects are magnificent. [60]

Once again we find music compared to color, a very vital element in Dwight's appreciation of music. Says he,

> Unison is tame and weak with over-much-ness as we commonly hear it; but this writer (Verdi) understands its use; he uses it only as a painter would pure white, only where there is the richest mingling of all colors, deep or gay, around it; and it marks the boldness of his genius that, being wealthy, he can resort to such simple means to heighten the effect of wealth. [61]

Books of instruction are promoted eagerly by J. S. Dwight, who writes reviews of the new books as they come off the presses of the native publishing houses. George P. Reed, of Boston, published "The Musical Class Book for the use of Female Seminaries, High Schools,

[59] Ibid., IV, 346.
[60] Ibid., IV, 346.
[61] Ibid., IV, 346.

Adult and Juvenile Singing Schools, Private Classes, etc.". Although this title seems a bit broad today and optimistic in its scope, we find Dwight supplies a scholarly appraisal of the work. Says he,

> The teaching of singing in classes has become so methodized and uniform, since the Boston Academy's Manuel, based upon the Pestalozzian system, that what is now most needed is good teachers, and good exercises . . . But there are things which systems cannot teach. Such are good taste, a true deep feeling, and, in the highest sense of the word, style. [62]

It is in his very nature to point the way to the highest attainable goal, no matter of what or whome he may speak. And here, he points out that the teacher will find a "double" difficulty is his effort to lead the pupil to that which is "high and beautiful and true". First, "he has got to teach those how to study, who perhaps never studied in their lives. And he has got to inspire the very love he seeks to gratify". The text book under consideration, he tells the reader, "offers all the aid to the teacher, which a teacher ought to have". After a thorough review of the book's offerings, our critic-promoter recommends the volume saying, "the book indicates the faithful experience of a teacher, and affords conveniences for teaching and for studying which have long been desired in vain".

[62] Ibid., I, 264.

In spite of the fact that Dwight deplored materialism and mechanics, seeking always the "soul" and "depth" in performance and composition, yet he rose with admirable grace to give due credit to the New School of pianists and violinists. A musician from this new school

> will inspire and move, as well as, astonish; seeking applause, he will find the heart of his audience. [63]

Warming to his subject he says,

> Seeking the heart of his instrument he (the musician) finds his own heart. There is nothing like the excitement of exertion in overcoming difficulties; to fire one's whole soul and rouse into action his best genius and so the mechanical finger-school in music has produced soul-stirring fantasies and true pictures of marvelous beauty. Springing from an ignoble source,the steam is swollen in its winding way with many a mountain brook from purest heights. The fashion of becoming great players opend a market for great genius too. Paganini, Thalberg, Chopin,Lizt are no mere montebanks; they have not stifled the divine fire in working at the finger trade; but have occupied with light and beauty, as fast as they have conquered, the stubborn world of matter. [64]

Is not this a generous gesture to the New School? Time has indeed placed three of the four composer-virtuosos mentioned in the category of the world's great - - in the hall of immortal fame. And our critic, Dwight, recognized, as was his ability to do, the true merit of the New School.

[63] Ibid., I, 363.
[64] Ibid., I, 363.

The theory of music was a subject which claimed Dwight's attention also. A "Theory of Musical Composition" by Godfrey Weber, translated from the German edition by James F. Warner, and published by Wilkins, Carter, and Company, of Boston, received a careful evaluation. After congratulating "the musical world and Mr. Warner"[65] upon the completion of such a lengthy task, we read,

> These two large volumes formidably learned as they look, should be in the hands of every musical student. For the first time a work has been presented to us in English, which has some pretensions to the character of a complete theory of the musical art. . .
>
> By theory of Composition in the work is meant, not all that pertains to the various forms of art, as Canons, Fugues, Symphonies, etc., but only that essential grammar of music, without which there can be no composition at all.[66]

As a further recommendation to help assure a market for the work, Dwight continues,

> From the fame of the composer and the very elaborate character of the work, we presume that we have here the last word of the Germans, the most learned and most musical of all men, on this subject. Indeed Godfrey Weber is considered to be the head of the musical theorists now living, and to have worked up the multitudinous materials furnished by all earlier writers, into a clearer, more consistent, and more complete whole, than they have ever yet exhibited.[67]

[65] Ibid., III, 266.
[66] Ibid., III, 266.
[67] Ibid., III, 266.

And, as if needed to be more explicit about the great value of this new book on musical theory, he concludes,

> Nothing can exceed the practical thoroughness of this work. Thoroughness, clearness, and progressive order are its merits . . . every friend of music has good cause to thank him for a real and lasting service. And the publisher should come in for a share of the public gratitude; for nothing but a real zeal for art could have dictated so expensive undertaking in which he must wait years for his remuneration. The two volumes are furnished bound, at the very reasonable price of five dollars. [68]

A Philadelphia publisher, Thomas Cooper Thwait and Company, issued a collection, called the "Cantus Ecclesiae", of sacred numbers, "Comprising a selection of the best standard compositions, and a large number from the works of Haydn, Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, Sarti, Sabbatini, Naumaun, Graun, Rossini, Donizetti; together with many original compositions by American Authors; and a System of Instruction in Vocal Music, by L. Meignen. [69] Such collections were just beginning to appear in this country under American names; and to Dwight, it was an event of importance. Regarding this volume of songs he writes,

> We regard this as a very superior collection of church music. Indeed, it may safely be asserted that compositions of so much character as the majority of these show, have never before crept into an American

[68] Ibid., III, 266.
[69] Ibid., III, 153.

> Psalm book, if we make the single exception of the "Beethoven Collection" published in New York. And the Cantus Ecclesiae has the advantage over that, for practical uses, from the fact that its arrangements are more simple and do not task the ordinary voice so painfully. It has already been in use sufficiently long to test its excellence; and age is a greater recommendation than novelty, when the article is good. [70]

Always on the alert for an edition which would be readily accepted and used by the average musician, this Cantus Ecclesiae appeared to satisfy this requirement as Dwight saw it. To further recomend it to his readers he extolls the contents, though at the same time he rather belittles American music.

> There is a goodly number of the best of the old familiar tunes, such as Old Hundred, Nuremberg, Surry, Swanwick, Wareham, Seasons, Hamburg, etc. No collection can be complete in itself, supplying what all seek, who have any associations of their childhood's sabbath mingling with the new emotions of a steadily improving musical taste, if it omit the best, and best remembered of these tunes. They are far too ingrained into such musical organizations as Americans may be said to have, to be entirely laid upon the shelf; and that they are really good is proved by their universality. The present collection seems to have retained of this class only such as show intrinsic excellence, and not to have cherished any Pusly-istic partiality for the vulgar, canting sort of strains which always found too great a part of New England Psalmody. [71]

[70] Ibid., III, 153.

[71] Ibid., III, 152.

Frequent references to the plain, homely American taste are made in Dwight's Musical Reviews. Continues he,

> Upon this homely basis are superinduced copious draughts from the true well-heads of son, from the classic composers of Europe. Handl, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, furnish some half a dozen pieces each. Naumaun, Graun, Plegel, Hummel, Winter, also appear. Giardini, Donizetti, of the Italians. These compositions evidently give the tone to the collection; the influence of their style is visible both in the selections of the old psalmody, and in the original compositions and arrangements of the whole. This is as it should be; there is more religion in the instrumental Quartettes and Sonatas from which these classic psalm tunes are derived, than the so-called Sacred music of any but the Catholic church has ever manifested. [72]

It is interesting to notice the reference again to religion in music - - that is, in classic music, and also his appreciation of, and respect for the Catholic music. Music and worship, he felt, were closely knit if the music were properly chosen.

> Let us draw the music of our worship from the deepest fountains, from those who poured out their inmost lives in music, and who did not deal with it as a ceremony or as an amusement merely. [73]

Speaking of the original compositions themselves, Dwight says that they are "not too many, and not too unworthy of the high company in which" they are presented.[74]

[72] Ibid., III, 152.
[73] Ibid., III, 152.
[74] Ibid., III, 152.

If they are not of such high caliber, at least they display "a reverent congeniality, a real disposition to resemble the nobler friends with whom they stand. That is, there is a certain classic learning to be perceived in them".[75] All tastes are catered to in this Psalm book, but still it has "one pervading tone of a Psalm book suited to the times, and bidding fair to last, mingled in very just proportions".[76] This work is arranged to be easily read; "the accompaniment is written out in full, instead of merely a figured bass; the poetry, though not remarkable as poetry, it must be confessed, is not crowdedly printed for the sake of giving a number of verses to each tune; and generally, the style in which the work is got up is generous, beautiful and clear."[77]

The second part was made up of Anthems, Chants, Sentences and so forth, which he calls the "distinguishing feature of the book, and what gives it higher value than a homely Psalm book even if carried to the perfection of the thing".[78] This feature was the "collection of pieces drawn from the sublime Masses of Mozart, Naumaun, Sarti, etc.".[79] One fault, however, was "the occasional patching out of one piece with another, as where a funeral

[75] Ibid., III, 152.
[76] Ibid., III, 152.
[77] Ibid., III, 152.
[78] Ibid., III, 153.
[79] Ibid., III, 153.

anthem is made by adding to the first measure of the stately Kyrie in Mozart's Twelfth Mass, a part of the Agnus from another".[80] Even allowing for such inconsistencies, Dwight adds he trusts "that music of this stamp will become familiar in our churches.[81]

Always open minded to receive the finest regardless of race or creed he cries,

> Indeed we know not why our Protestantism should exclude the real vital piety of the Catholic worship, the natural religion of the heart which never clothed itself in such immortal warmth and beauty as in the music of the Mass. [82]

The "Systems of Instruction" included in this collection of sacred music by Mr. Meignen seems to the critic to be

> . . . clear and comprehensive and well thought out; a good guide for teachers, who of course must fill in the necessary amount of exercises at each step at their own discretion. The exercises here given are necessarily few; but there is one, in the shape of a Fugue, which is not absolutely difficult, and which combines so many of the points of elementary study in the art of reading music, that it cannot be practiced too much. [83]

Anything in such a classic form merits an appreciative remark;

> We are glad to see something in the truest form of composition mingled with the musical student's very first ideas and habits. [84]

[80] Ibid., III, 153.
[81] Ibid., III, 153.
[82] Ibid., III, 153.
[83] Ibid., III, 153.
[84] Ibid., III, 153.

Going into the system which Mr. Meignen employs in his System, Dwight continues,

> Mr. Meignen drops the American absurdity of changing the application of the Sol-Fa with every change of key. In his explanation of the minor scale, however, he gives only one of the several forms, and that by no means the most philosophical one. It makes pleasanter melody, no doubt, to make both Sixth and Seventh sharp ascending, and natural descending; but the laws of harmony evidently justify only the sharp Seventh in both cases, with a long interval between it and the Sixth. [85]

Very few compositions or theoretical treatises escaped the interest and comment of J. S. Dwight in his musical reviews. Another volume of songs published about this same time, called New Collections of Psalmody was criticized by him. Concerning these he says,

> So far as they go, they indicate a degree of musical culture which would have been deemed extraordinary here only a few years ago. And we doubt not, choirs who will practice, and congregations who will listen to this music, will find the average taste among them not a little raised; and realize more of the true influence of church music, than commonly could be expected from the plain and barren, though with us, most popular form of it. [86]

Here again, New England taste is deplored as so many times in these reviews. And then, in a rather ranting vein, he says,

> Ingenuity is puzzled to find names for so numerous a progeny. The names of saints, of great men, of notable

[85] Ibid., III, 153.
[86] Ibid., III, 230.

> old places, had long been exhausted, before gazetteers and directories at large were researched for every sort of uncouth name of town or person wherewith to christen a new psalm-tune. Into this book an altogether new and lovlier company are introduced; the graceful names of all the flowers. There is some sentiment in this, besides a review on botany. [87]

Somehow this last paragraph appears to be heavily sarcastic - - and no doubt with good reason, for Dwight was a perfectionist and faint approximations came in for their just reward!

Of a song of which he wished to judge in a manner acceptable to both the publisher and the reader, he writes,

> This song will, no doubt, be welcome to any pair of sister voices, who wish for something elegant, inspiring, and not too difficult. [88]

Wishing to be fair and also encourage sales for the publisher, he says,

> Whatever Donizetti and his tribe may lack, they have always beauty, always a graceful flow of melody; and such music will reign in concert room and parlor, until the national sentiment and character are deepened altogether. [89]

Of some more popular type compositions published in America and written by an American, Dwight tosses a little bouquet of recommendation by saying, "Tyrolian airs, as like each other as they are, seem always fresh. They constitute

[87] Ibid., III, 230.
[88] Ibid., II, 91.
[89] Ibid., II, 91.

one of the cardinal forms of melody".[90] And, finally, in speaking of his composition evaluations, here is a typical statement designed to placate the composer, assuage the publisher and to vindicate his own sensitive conscience;

> There is a certain simplicity and pathos in it (Dempster's composition) which suits those who could not enjoy more, and a vein of melody which preserves its constancy throughout. So too of Russell, another contemporary American composer, you always know where to find him; which to critic saves much concert going.[91]

[90] Ibid., II, 91.
[91] Ibid., II, 91.

5.

EXHORTATION

The word exhortation used in connection with J. S. Dwight's musical reviews takes on special significance. The word exhortation is peculiarly a propos, for, Webster tells us it means the "act of inciting to laudable deeds; language intended to incite and encourage". This is exactly the import of Dwight's writings. A measurement of the influence exerted by this remarkable man and critic will probably never be possible. However, inasmuch as his ministry in the field of music extended over a period of about half a century, and constantly and persistently in the cause of the best and highest, it is safe to assume that his influence was the greatest single musical factor in America at that time. Dwight set out to amass a fortune - - a fortune in incalculable treasures of musical ideals. Boston received freely from this donor during his lifetime, and became heir to a rich inheritance when his mission was completed.

The period around 1845 saw America involved in a dispute with Mexico which culminated in war. National tensions and attitudes were reflected in types of programs presented; but to Dwight, music should never reflect the lower passions. When the Boston Academy of Music gave its first concert for the season in 1846, it was

"rich and clean and penetrating".[92] He had "seldom heard an orchestra with so fine a voice."[93] Yes, "The selection of music on this occasion was certainly a rich one"; but, says he, "there was a little too much of the warlike for our taste".[94]

Not only here, but elsewhere Dwight indicates himself to be a pacifist. Continues he,

> We allude to the first piece, a grand thing in its way, the Overtue Guerriere, by Lindpainter, containing a battle piece; and to Donnizetti's Overture to La Fille du Regiment, which is also warlike and full of the foll of drums. In times like these, when a nation has gone mad with the old fever of conquest, and the demoralizing process has begun of attuning the popular sentiment to false and barbarous excitement, and blunting the sensibilities to tales and scenes of blood and horror; when there is no good thing to be hoped from government or the press, it certainly is desirable that music should not prostitue its divine faculties to the same base uses. Let it not lend itself to the false work of nourishing the brutal passions, however they may shield themselves under the name of an unprincipled patriotism.[95]

A pacifist in the extreme, pleading of the cause of universal harmony, Dwight cries,

> Compared with our boasts of civilized refinements and high moral culture, the time should have already come when it should be disreputable for a man to hold military office; when he should lose caste by it, far more than if he became a

[92] Ibid., III, 381.
[93] Ibid., III, 381.
[94] Ibid., III, 381.
[95] Ibid., III, 381.

> constable or common hangman. And martial music should be odious to our ears except so far as its tone of triumph may be dis-sociated from war, and regarded as the expression of nobler passions than those war can nuture now. Indeed these "battlepieces" are the cheapest sort of music and no great composer should descend to them. Beethoven tried it once in his "Victoria Symphony", which is his only failure. But Beethoven's music is nearly all expressive of great moral struggle, of the everlasting warfare between darkness and light. This, however, has a meaning for the soul, and makes us greater while we listen. Not so with your "battlepieces", which would awaken an imagination for the mere animal excitement. [96]

War, selfishness, and "mere animal excitement" should yield to the higher impulses of the soul, and music should minister to its salvation. It was the glory of German music that "having scaled the heights of art, it is still a child, true, warm hearted, generous, and trusting".[97] Songs from Germany "haunt the soul as strangely. . . associate themselves as readily and permanently with our feelings and seem as much a part of the household treasures of humanity . . . as if they were of as antique and obscure as origin as any old Scotch songs or oldest Christian chants; the same simplicity, with all the fullness of modern art to boot". [98] An yet, "we weary of the bluest sky which breeds no clouds".[99] Philosophizing further he says,

[96] Ibid., III, 381.
[97] Ibid., I, 26.
[98] Ibid., I, 26.
[99] Ibid., I, 26.

> These are not prosaic times. This is not the reign of literal reason. In such a transition period as this, amid the symptoms of such a mighty revolution; when every day is a surprise and a miracle even to the unimaginative; when through the yawning cracks of the old gigantic walls of the past, flashes ever and anon in dazzling contrast, the light of the eternal morning, scaring away old forms of selfishness and evil, like limping demons of darkness; - - in such an age, are not this music and this marvelous vein fast yielding us an explanation? Do we not see how prophetic is all true music? and that the airs from the coming Era are first felt by those finely organized natures, creeping over all the harpstrings of their sould, murmuring and whispering such music a riddle even to themselves, which they write out? [100]

In a passivistic vein, in speaking of Beethoven's Choral Symphony, Dwight says,

> Give us the privilege to celebrate the things which make for peace and progress without fear of their growing old. A triumph of Art in our land of money-makers is morally entitled to be ranked among such things. Hours spent with multitudes enjoying the grand works of music, are hours of which conscience never accuses us. [101]

Further, philosophizing in this vein, Dwight urges that although America's serious business is money making it should be pursuit of higher pleasures such as enjoying the art of Beethoven and Mozart. Beethoven's music (Symphony number nine) is "the music of the high hour of Human

[100] Ibid., I, 26.
[101] Ibid., III, 9.

Brotherhood, the triumph of the grand unitary sentiment, into which all the passions and interests of all human hearts are destined finally to blend". [102] Losing himself in the exaltation of the moment Dwight continues,

> No words can describe the grandeur with which all of this is worked up, till it becomes perfectly stupendous towards the close. Nothing but the grandest thought which yet has visited the human mind is adequate to the explanationof such music, nothing but the faith which sees the languages of discord and misery, Humanity's wintry transition time, completed in the joy of perfect Unity and Love; nothing but that profound acquaintance with the human heart which reads in men's conflicting passions the elements of a future glorious Harmony; nothing but religious reverence for attraction and for joy, the "main spring of Creation", (as Schiller has it) can enter into communion with such music, or guess why man should be inspired to write such. [103]

Exhortation for peace and harmony, the end to be sought through music of the masters, is the burden of much of Dwight's reviews. Music structure finds a parallel in life for,

> To the struggling impatient Seventh note Beethoven has been more than once compared; it cries out to be resolved into a crowning octave, the completion of the melodic circle. Just so his boundless yearning and aspiring tell of a glorious "resolution" such as men have heard promised in that Gospel they revere,but hitherto have heard only with their ears, and read only with their eyes. [104]

[102] Ibid., III, 11.
[103] Ibid., III, 11.
[104] Ibid., III, 11.

Dwight felt that music had the power to change the individual. In speaking of Mendelssohn's Songs without Words, this sentiment is urged in the following,

> Refined and delicate as they are, deep and intellectual and even mystical in tone, and utterly without the "taking" qualities of more popular and brilliant things, they would not fail to grow upon one's liking, and insensibly . . . refine and exalt his whole life,musical and moral. [105]

"Inciting to laudable deeds" is truly descriptive of Dwight's efforts throughout his life for the Harvard Musical Association, of which he was a charter member. Universities were not then blessed with departments of music where a talented and interested student might secure a formal musical education. It was only through the persistent and consistent efforts of selfless men of vision that such dreams became realities and today are accepted as ordinary affairs. A hundred years ago, the status of music in this country was far different. In presenting an address of C. P. Cranch to his readers through his musical reviews we read of dreams still in embryo.

> Its (Cranch's address) doctrines are so true, its spirit so exalted and so pure, its feeling of music so profound and genuine, that it would be read with profit and delight by everyone,whose experience has given him the slightest suspicion of the depths of mystic meaning which underlie the sphere of tones. Feeling it is our duty to circulate such views, as far as in us lies, we have

[105] Ibid., III, 18.

concluded to present the whole of this address to our readers.[106]

What of this Harvard Musical Association? Was it then so vital in Boston's and New England's musical history?

> The Harvard Musical association was formed some five or six years since, by those graduate of Harvard College who had musical remembrance of their Alma Mater and one another. Its objects were, first, to enjoy a musical reunion among other festivities of the annual commencement, secondly, to accumulate a fund to be applied at some future day to a musical professorship in the college and thereby procure an academic sanction to the indispensableness of this beautiful art as a branch of education; and thirdly, and generally to elevate the taste for music in our land, by making it an avowed and corporate interest of men of intelligence and education, by attaching respectability to the musical profession, equal to that enjoyed by any literary profession,by collecting libraries, establishing schoos, concerts, critical reviews, etc.... Whether our ancient university are destined to become centers of musical taste and science; whether it is still reasonable to look to colleges for what is due to Humanity and Art, whose cause is one, and whether the musical enthusiasm of these gentlemen gainsay any awakening in, life or any length of lever, from this marriage of their music with the esprit de corps of a college; are questions which we shall not stop to discuss at present. We are interested in every effort which is made for the deepening and purifying and informing of the general taste for music.[107]

Dwight was a pioneer, a voice crying in the wilderness, "Behold! the kingdom of music is at hand". And urgently he

[106] Ibid., II, 88.

[107] Ibid., II, 88.

exhorts those around him to listen and hear; to arouse themselves and lend a hand to the highest cause of music, the cause of universal harmony.

SUMMARY

A view of the literary personalities and events during the life span of John S. Dwight is breathtaking. Ralph W. Emerson and David Henry Thoreau, surrounded by many other brilliant names, created an immortal literature, and by their thoughts influenced the path of history. These transcendentalists were not mere contemporaries of Dwight; they were his close friends and neighbors, with whom he visited, dined and planned. Together, one goal was sought: the universal uplift of man. Each contributor to the common end was important, for only through united effort over a long period of time can any great good be effected. It is not every man's privilege to see his dreams come to fruition; to realize that through his own patient cultivation of an almost hopeless ideal, the world had become richer. But, it was so with Dwight.

Never a self-seeker, always a generous friend to those whom he considered worthy, beloved by many, and esteemed by all, John S. Dwight stands as an important man of his time.

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