

At Home

Come in & Chat Awhile

-Ruth Raeburn.

HOW TO LOVE MUSIC

by William Lyon Phelps,
in The Delinquent

Why do average, healthy, respectable men and boys hate good music? The majority of them are bored by classical music, and will not go to a symphony concert unless there is some famous soloist.

Why do they hate good music? It is because they do not listen.

I was once myself in that condition of ignorance and darkness. With no teachers, with no explanatory books, with no musical education, I became a passionate, discriminating lover of the best music.

Today I had far rather hear good music than hear anything else on earth. No music is too elevated for me.

When I was a sophomore at Yale I had no liking for real music. I enjoyed a comic opera and brass band. Then Theodore Thomas came to New Haven with a large orchestra, and announced a series of concerts composed of the works of Beethoven and Wagner. To me this sounded terrifying; but being willing to educate myself I enquired of a cultivated lady if she thought it would be worth my while to attend.

"It will be heavenly!" she said. I thought she was lying. Music breeds liars. Talk about religious cant—I have heard much more artistic and musical cant than I have heard of the sanctimonious brand. Then I went to another woman, and she told me it was my duty and it ought to be my pleasure to go.

I went. Never shall I forget the boredom. Thomas was a great conductor, he had a competent orchestra, and the compositions were by Beethoven and Wagner. I suffered horribly. "Oh, if they would only stop, or play a tune!" After a while they did stop. I whispered, "That's over!" My neighbor said, "That's only the first movement."

I had no idea what a movement was, but I was sure two would be worse than one.

Some of my fellow sufferers in the audience were asleep. Some other men had awakened suddenly from a nap to sit up straight and glare defiantly round, as if to say, "I dare you to say I have been asleep!" Others were trying to look intelligent, exactly the way people look when a lecturer quotes something in a foreign language. But instead of looking intelligent, they looked depressed. Apparently they thought that music should produce melancholy and that if they only looked sufficiently sad, some one might think they were appreciating it. But I knew they would be relieved when the concert was over.

However, I observed here and there persons who were in bliss. It was no pose. I could not endure the thought that something splendid was going on and I was missing it. And I began to believe it was not the fault of Beethoven and Wagner.

What an idiot I should have been if I had gone home that night and said, "Never again! I am not musical." Then

I might have missed one of the richest sources of happiness. When I think what enormous and exquisite delight I have received from music, with what passion and intensity I love it, it seems strange that the very music I have enjoyed for so many years, should on that first evening have bored me.

Thinking it over after that concert, I said to myself, "There must be something great here. I don't get it." I went to the next concert. It was almost as bad. I was bored again, though perhaps not so hideously as on the former occasion. Well, I kept going. After repeated listenings, I reached the tent orchestra play Beethoven or Wagner than hear anything else. And I reached this state of bliss not by study, not by reading books, but by listening with all my might.

Suppose a business man is sitting in his office and a visitor in whose judgment he has confidence sets forth a scheme by which the business man will make a million dollars. The business man gives the matter his entire attention. He is not thinking of women, or of golf, or of any other matters. He gives the visitor his attention because there is "money in it." Well, that is the way a man should listen to music. He should concentrate his entire listening power. Listening in that way is not passive, it is active. It is the outpouring of the energy of the mind.

Professor Horatio Parker, a distinguished musical composer, told me he thought I enjoyed music more than he did. He could not hear music without analyzing it; whereas I simply listen to the collective effect of the harmonies. Furthermore, he had that very rare gift, absolute pitch, so that the slightest deviation by any player in the orchestra tortured him. I do not know how that is. All I know is that I have never seen any one who loved the best music more than I, or who got more delight from it. Thus, while I wish I were a musician, I know that neither a knowledge of the theory of music nor the ability to play an instrument is necessary to one's enjoyment. Any one may have this happiness in his life who will take the trouble to listen.

RUINS OF ANCIENT CASTLE UNearthed BY EXCAVATORS

Workmen preparing a foundation for the monument which will be erected to the United States Army at Montfaucon (Haute Loire) have uncovered the ruins of a castle built in 1066 by Godfrey of Bouillon, Duke of Bassel-Lorraine, who led the First Crusade in 1096-99 and became the first King of Jerusalem. Thus, in commemorating the exploits of modern warriors, an accomplishment of an ancient hero is revealed. The ruins, which are in some respects well preserved, consist of galleries and a staircase. They were uncovered at a depth of about ten metres. Earthen pots and stores of calcined grain were also found.

First Irishman: "Pat, what's that piece of blank paper you have in your hand?"

Second Irishman: "Oh, that's a letter from my wife."

F.I.: "How do you mean a letter from your wife? Sure there's no writing on it."

Second Irishman: "Of course not. The missus and myself are not on speaking terms."



NOTED TRIO AT LONDON CHARITY PARTY
"Big Bill" Tilden as he appeared with Elinor Glyn, authoress (left) and Lady Waverley, at the latter's annual tennis tournament at Sussex Lodge, Regents Park, London. The ornament is an annual event of the fashionable London season and was in aid of charity.

FINE JAPANESE MANNERS ARE BEING UNDERMINED

Among the various things we have recently learned which are well calculated to arouse profound emotion of one sort or another is the fact that hara-kiri is declining in Japan. The American movies are responsible for it rather than the American missionaries. Contrary to common belief, suicides in Japan are not greater than in some other countries. The average rate is 220 per million inhabitants a year. In Saxony the rate is 392, and in Switzerland 239. In the United States it is 180, in England 75, in Scotland and Ireland 17. Why more Irishmen do not go away with themselves is a problem that has often puzzled sociologists and others. The usual explanation is that Ireland is a Roman Catholic country and that the Roman Catholic Church encourages its adherents to bear those ills they have rather than to fly to others that they know not of. But Belgium, whose rate is six times as great as Ireland's is also a Roman Catholic country. The answer would appear to be that after all Belgians are Belgians and Irishmen are Irishmen. The Japanese rate, nevertheless, is shocking enough. The wonder is that it is not higher since the tendency in Japan is to pay honor to the suicide, especially to the suicide who chooses hara-kiri, and thus gives his life to vindicate his honor. Between the ordinary suicide and the ceremonial hara-kiri, a vast gulf is set.

The Way Out

The origin and development of the custom is traced by Oland D. Russell in the American Mercury. While the word itself is often poetically translated as "the happy despatch" it comes from the Chinese and means literally "belly cutting". The tonier Japanese prefer to speak of it by the synonym "seppuku", just as Englishmen prefer the Latin "abdomen" to the Saxon "belly". It was in the Twelfth century that hara-kiri came into existence and then was merely the means seized by vanquished warriors on the field of battle to save themselves from falling into the hands of the enemy. It spread through the military and samurai classes and gradually became thoroughly established and took on new connotations. As time passed a ceremonial developed with it, and now hara-kiri has become a ritual as rigid as that of marriage or a funeral. It is no impulsive act like the ordinary suicide but a carefully considered one to achieve a certain definite end apart from the mere ending of a life that has become insupportable. It is invariably the vindication of honor, a final proof that the victim or exemplar chooses to sacrifice life rather than to abate a jot or scrap of honor which felt "that chastity of honor which felt a stain like a wound." Incidentally, if one were searching for some lesser magic in prose this is a good example of the gems of thought he might come across.

Forced Suicide

In course of time, hara-kiri became divided into two classes, that which was voluntary and that which was in ef-

fect an alternative to a more shameful death.

Members of the samurai class who had got into serious trouble were permitted to kill themselves rather than suffer the ministrations of the public executioner. The same principle held good in China until recently, when high officials, suspected of treason were sent a silken cord with which they were expected to strangle themselves. The true hara-kiri is preceded by a specially prepared meal, ablutions, and a garbing of the victim in ceremonial fashion. He chooses a position in the best room in the house with his gods looking auspiciously on, and usually reinforced by a photograph of the emperor. He squats on the floor, with his heels under him in such a manner that he cannot fall back. Then he bares the upper part of his body, and takes in his hand a short sharp knife with the handle wrapped in a towel. The point of the blade protrudes barely an inch below the towel.

Then with a final salute, the suicide plunges the knife in the left side of the abdomen as far down as possible, and draws it across to the right side in one horizontal stroke. He then draws it upward at right angles for several inches. Having done this he leans forward with great resignation, permitting his intestines to fall from the body. Death comes from loss of blood and exhaustion. In earlier days it was customary for a friend to stand behind with a sword gripped in both hands. As the body fell forward after the final upward slash of the knife, the sword would fall on the neck of the victim decapitating him. But of late years some theories to the effect that this might almost be regarded as murder have put an end to the practice and the Japanese his own quietus makes. It will be recalled that Gen. Nogi and his wife thus destroyed themselves when they heard of the death of the emperor in 1912. A short time ago Ryunosuke Akatagawa, who was called a man the Edgar Allan Poe of Japan, a man happy in his home, without financial worries and apparently in good health, committed hara-kiri because, as he committed hara-kiri because, as he said, "suicide was a legitimate means of completing life beautifully. However, he somewhat departed from the tenets of the older school by swallowing poison."

Vulgar Suicide Lessens Hara-kiri

Last year a Japanese naval captain attached to the embassy in Moscow was taunted by a woman communist for his loyalty to the emperor. In his rage he threw a chair at her, injuring her hand. The female communist made a fearful hullabaloo about the incident and distasteful notoriety was brought upon the captain, to whom it then became an affair of honor. So he committed hara-kiri with a photograph of the emperor before him. At his funeral services in Japan he was honored as a hero and representatives of the imperial household attended. The custom of betrothing two Japanese who may never have seen each other until a short time before the ceremony is another fruitful cause of honorable suicide, which is generally the case, to have already exchanged vows with another. Lovers bind themselves together and leap high places into the sea. They rush together in front of oncoming locomotives, and there is one railway station outside Tokio where a special mass is said every year for those who have thrown themselves under train wheels in the preceding twelve months. It is said that the movies are responsible for such crude methods of self-destruction. The fact that the hot polls are killing themselves off in such alarming fashion is having the inevitable tendency of disgusting the true aristocrat, and on this account the old-fashioned hara-kiri is declining. — J. V. McAree in Mail and Empire.

MOVIES

BREEZY SEA MELODRAMA WITH BIG FIRE THRILL

A melodrama—three parts comedy, one part thrill, a romance and the breezy atmosphere of the sea (in more senses than one)—that is the composition of "You Know What Sailors Are," a Gaumont British film directed by Maurice Elvey from a very free adaptation of W. E. Townend's novel, "A Light for His Pipe."

The story is that of a row which develops into a feud between the rival crews of British and Spanish cargo boats and is accentuated by the Spanish mate's jealous guarding of his skipper's daughter from the wandering gaze of the English mate. On a race to London the Spanish ship catches fire and the tradition of the sea proves stronger than any feud—the British ship turns back to answer the S.O.S. and give the two mates an opportunity of fighting for the hazardous risk of rescuing the Spanish skipper's daughter.

The picture is, as it should be, typically breezy and a very large proportion of the scenes were filmed on board two cargo steamers specially chartered for the purpose.

All Goddard is very much his usual breezy type and Cyril McLaglen gives and takes hard knocks in a manner which does justice to the McLaglen tradition. Chill Boucher—Britain's rivalto Clara Bow—it should be added, is certainly worth fighting for.

A Big Order

An old colored man was arraigned before a justice on a charge of assault. During the proceedings the judge asked him if he wanted a lawyer to defend him.

"No, no, Judge," he replied. "I don't want no lawyer, but I suitinly would like a couple o' good witnesses if you could get 'em."

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