

From My Study

Source: *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, Vol. 33, No. 596 (Oct. 1, 1892), pp. 586-589

Published by: [Musical Times Publications Ltd.](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3362415>

Accessed: 29-12-2015 22:30 UTC

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Swords are a thousand times more dramatic, and everyone hates the sound of firearms. Besides, it is so unmusical.

Act III. takes place apparently some years later, as the characters find a difficulty in recognising one another. We are in another and more aristocratic ball room—this time in St. Petersburg, so there is a Polonaise for the entry of the company. *Eugene Onegin* wanders restlessly about, a prey to remorse for the slaughter of his friend. He perceives among the guests a familiar face, and on enquiring of a friend, *Prince Gremin*, finds it is the latter's wife. It is *Tatjana*. At this point, *Gremin* indulges in a song as irritating and serio-comic as that of *Daland* in the second act of the "Fliegende Holländer." *Onegin* then has a solo, in which he gives us to understand that now *Tatjana* is beyond his reach he finds he loves her desperately. This is all very well, but what becomes of the unhappy *Olga*? We never hear of her again. In the original story there is doubtless a great deal of interesting matter which the librettist failed to work in, but the last scene seems terribly disconnected. It is a room in *Princess Gremin's* house, and consists of a Rhoda Broughtonish scene between the hero and heroine. He tries hard to get her to run away with him—there is one fine melodic phrase in their powerful duo—



but with a last effort she refuses, and rushes from his presence. He exclaims, "Despised, rejected! O what misery is mine!" and the curtain falls. Of course fine acting and singing may put a different complexion on this climax, but it does not look strong on paper.

Musically, however, the work seems decidedly interesting, there being plenty of clear outline to the melody, variety in the accompaniment (even in the bass), and life in the rhythm. Mr. Lago has our best wishes for the success of his enterprise.

#### FROM MY STUDY.

WITH reference to Dibdin's share in the proceedings at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, a valued correspondent has sent me the following extract from Dibdin's "Musical Tour," letter lxx., April 23, 1788—

*The Jubilee*, written by Mr. GARRICK, and performed in October, 1769. It would be an endless task to go through the variety of circumstances which distinguish this memorable business; but nothing deserves notice more truly than that SHAKESPEAR might have laid very quietly in Stratford Church—nobody would have disturbed his ashes—had not such a popular measure been the probable means of insuring a plentiful harvest to *Drury Lane* on the following season. And yet, it was *managed* with so much caution, so much wariness, that, according to the representation of the matter to everybody who was concerned in it, there did not appear any such thing in agitation. This cautiousness answered two purposes—it not only drew many to STRATFORD who would otherwise have suspended their curiosity till they should see it in London, but it served as a feasible excuse for requesting everybody's trouble and attendance for nothing. Thus, among the rest, I took unwearied pains—not seeing that I should materially assist in filling the coffers of *Drury Lane* treasury—without any emolument to myself. All this, however, I could have forgiven, if I had not been obliged to sustain fifty humiliations. I venture to say that had it not been for *my* music the audience would have shown much more dissatisfaction. They were not in very good humour as it was. They heard, certainly, Dr. ARNE'S beautiful oratorio of *Judith*, and his charming music of the Ode—and what was the most exquisite and inexpressible

treat that ever transcendent abilities could convey, or longing ears experience—they heard GARRICK repeat that Ode. Yet, being disappointed of the Pageant—being wet through at the Masquerade\*—they were certainly very much discontented; which dissatisfaction would more than silently have manifested itself had not "The Warwickshire Lads," &c., brought them into good humour—yet was that very song privately set by Mr. AYLWARD, and the "Mulberry Tree," by Dr. BOYCE, and had my kind friend, Mr. GARRICK, been told at a rehearsal, where I was *not present*, that mine were the best for effect, he would have waived all delicacy to me, and have had theirs performed. GEORGE GARRICK, who, where DAVID'S immediate interest did not clash, could be just to all the world, informed me of this fact. In short, GARRICK, in relation to the *Jubilee*, manœuvred everywhere. He procured abuse to be inserted in the papers, which he got all his friends to answer. He enlisted a prodigious number of volunteers, whose exertions he pretty liberally extracted at their expense; and at length performed the same entertainment ninety-five times in one season at *Drury Lane* which he sent people an hundred miles *not* to see. The music of the *Jubilee*, having sold it, previous to the performance, at STRATFORD—except some trifling part of it—yielded altogether about forty-three pounds.

Reference was made in a former paper to a collection of traditional tunes† by one of my correspondents, Mr. Frank Kidson, of Leeds. The book is of such interest that I am induced now to give it fuller attention.

In his introduction the editor says—

The collection of songs here given claims nothing heroic in association. They are simply homely ditties, such as were sung by the humbler classes in England round the fire-side of farm-kitchens or at the plough-tail, and the little wit or brilliancy they may possess must not be judged by a very high standard. . . . This class of song is fast disappearing before the modern productions, and any ploughboy who should sing the songs his father or grandfather sang would be laughed to scorn. Before easy means of transit existed, the songs of a country-side remained unaltered for a great length of time, and people delighted to sing the songs which were venerable with age. Now, however, cheap trips to the larger towns enable the country lad to compete with the town's boy in his knowledge of popular musical favourites. The old traditional tunes are fast dying out, never to be recalled. They are now seldom or never sung, but rather *remembered*, by old people. I have found in the course of my search how quickly this class of old airs is disappearing, for I have frequently been told of some old man, then dead, from whom I could have got certain songs had I been a few months earlier in my enquiries.

In a preface, Mr. Kidson observes—

The Editor believes that all the airs here set down, with the exception of two or three (which he has himself contributed to the *Leeds Mercury Weekly Supplement*), are now printed for the first time. In this belief he may, perhaps, in some instances, be mistaken; he, however, has made diligent search among early collections, and, for reasons which he gives in the introduction, he feels sure that this class of melody is purely traditional.

The foregoing quotations indicate the special value of Mr. Kidson's book. Many—perhaps most—of the ballads it contains are known, but the tunes seem to be of purely local origin and *habitat*, taking their rise among the people as wild flowers of song which no man, save the Kidsons, *et hoc genus omne*, regardeth.

\* The booth being built on a swamp close to the river, and nobody having considered that sometimes in the month of September it rains, the company had scarcely assembled when the wet began to ooze through the crevices; in five minutes after they were paddling in the wet; five minutes after that it was over their shoes, and presently they were obliged to take to the benches, then to the orchestra, and then to the windows—thus there was not a creature out of about four hundred people that escaped being wet through.

† Traditional Tunes. A Collection of Ballad Airs, chiefly obtained in Yorkshire and the South of Scotland; together with their appropriate Words from Broad-sides and Oral Tradition. Collected and Edited with illustrative Notes, by Frank Kidson. Oxford: C. Taphouse and Son.

Turning to the first piece in the book, I come upon what is, as far as I am concerned, a new setting of the "Three Ravens," obtained from a gentleman who remembered it as sung by his mother, in a remote village among the Derbyshire hills. The same air is said to be current among the people of Denmark—

There were three ra - vens on a tree, A -  
- down, a-down, a der - ry down, There were three ra - vens  
on a tree, Heigh - ho! The middle-most ra - ven  
said to me, There lies a dead man on yon tree,  
A-down, a-down, a der - ry down, Heigh - ho!

Mr. Kidson prints three versions of a tune set to "Barbara Allen"—the air itself being different from those usually given with the words. One of these versions was taken from the lips of an English girl at Ghent some forty years ago—

In Read - ing town, where I was born, There  
was a fair maid dwell - ing, Made ev - 'ry youth cry  
"Well-a day!" Her name was Bar - bara Al - len.

Mr. Kidson prints a ballad, "On Board of a Man-of-War," which, he says, is much thought of among the seafaring classes round about Hull. It tells of a young damsel, Susan by name, who, being valiant, stout, and bold, put on the dress of a sailor and accompanied her lover to sea, all unbeknown to the "sweet William" in question. Susan quickly distinguished herself:—

When in the Bay of Biscay, she aloft like lightning flew,  
Respected by the officers and all the jovial crew;  
In battle she would boldly run, not fearing wound nor scar,  
And did her duty by her gun, on board of a man-o'-war.

In his next stanza the poet tells us that Susan "faced the wall of China, where her life was not insured," and there received a wound. Young William, seeing her fall, ran to offer aid. To him, Susan—

My jolly sailor, I've for you received a scar,  
Behold your faithful Susan bold, on board of a man-of-war.

William gazed "with wonder and surprise," remarking, in a not very original vein, that he would rather have received the scar than that she should suffer it.

At length to England they returned and quickly married were  
The bells did ring, and they did sing, and banished every care.

Mr. Kidson reminds us that the ballad of "Billee Taylor" chronicles a like adventure on the part of a love-sick maid, and observes: "The incident of a girl going to sea disguised in sailor's attire during the last century's naval wars was really not an uncommon one; there are many such recorded." It, of course,

appealed strongly to the ballad-maker's imagination and moved him, time and again, to sing the praises of dauntless females. In my collection of Catnach broad-sheets is a ditty called "The handsome cabin boy," telling how an adventurous damsel shipped herself in a humble capacity, not for love but out of simple frolic, and met with a disaster which called forth the sympathy rather than the reprehension of the crew—

Then each man took a bumper and drank success to Troy,  
And likewise to the cabin boy, neither man nor boy;  
And if the wave rise again our sailors to destroy,  
We'll ship some pretty fair maid like the handsome cabin boy.

That the sailors drank success to Troy is, perhaps, explained by the poet's need of a rhyme to boy. At any rate, no other reason appears on the face of the ballad.

Another broad-sheet tells of a "Female Rambling Sailor," who lived at Gravesend—

Her lover, he was pressed away,  
And drowned in a foreign sea,  
Which caused this maiden for to say,  
I'll be a female sailor.

The young lady distinguished herself, as all female sailors seem to do—

When in a storm upon the sea,  
She was ready at her station;  
Her mind was calm as calm could be,  
She loved her occupation.

From stem to stern she'd freely go,  
She braved all dangers, feared no foe, &c.

At length her sex was discovered—

This maiden gay did a wager lay  
That she would go aloft with any,  
And up aloft she straight did go,  
Where times she had been many.

This maiden bold, O sad to tell!  
She missed her hold, and down she fell,  
Then calmly bid this world farewell,  
Did this female rambling sailor.

The necessary attentions being paid to the body—

She proved to be a female frame,  
And Rebecca Young, it was the name  
Of this female rambling sailor.

Moral—

So all young men and maids around,  
Come listen to my story,  
Her body is anchored in the ground,  
Let's hope her soul's in glory.

On the river Thames she was known well,  
Few sailors could her excel,  
One tear let fall as the fate you tell  
Of the female rambling sailor.

A third and less tragic story is that of "Caroline and her young Sailor bold." Caroline was the only daughter of a nobleman with thirty-five thousand a year, and she—

One day from her drawing-room window,  
Admired a young sailor so bold.

The youthful tar, whose name, of course, was William, had such a profusion of manly charms that Caroline rushed forth and accosted him—

She said, "I'm a nobleman's daughter,  
Possessed of ten thousand in gold,  
I'll forsake both my father and mother,  
And wed my young sailor bold."

William appears to have been rather taken aback at the suddenness of this proposal, and presented to her mind various prudential considerations—

Said William, "Young lady, remember  
Your parents you are bound to mind,  
On sailors there is no dependence,  
When they leave their true lovers behind.  
Be advised, stay at home with your parents,  
And do by them as you are told,  
And never let anyone tempt you  
To wed with a young sailor bold."

But the wilful nobleman's daughter would have her way—

She dressed herself like a young sailor,  
Forsook both her parents and gold,  
Two years and a half on the ocean  
She sailed with her young sailor bold.

## On the return of the ship to England—

Caroline went straightway to her father,  
In her jacket and trousers of blue,  
He received her, and that moment fainted,  
When first she appeared in view.

## In the end—

Her father admired Young William,  
And vowed them in sweet unity,  
If he could be spared until morning,  
Together they married should be.  
They are married, and Caroline's portion  
Is twenty-five thousand in gold,  
Now they are happy and cheerful,  
Caroline and her young sailor bold.

Those who admire the quaint touches and delightful *naïveté* of the people's poems quoted above will thank me for directing attention to Mr. Kidson's book, which is a valuable contribution to the literature of its subject, and distinctly worth possessing.

The Editor of this journal has favoured me with the following communication:—

A month or two ago I picked up (at a bookstall near the British Museum) a quarto vol. (about 400 pp.), lettered on back "Bystander," but without title page. The first page is headed "The Bystander," and against this someone has written in ink "1789." This page commences with an "Introduction" showing that it belonged to the first number of the publication, which appears to have been issued weekly. The contents are of considerable literary and artistic merit and comprise articles on the history of the Drama, &c., a novel, poems, letters, and a "Weekly Retrospect," chiefly theatrical and operatic. But my reason for bringing it to your notice is that at the end of the vol. there are 24 songs by Dibdin, most of them "written and composed for Mr. Dibdin's new entertainment called 'Oddities,'" and from their size and the fact that the first song is called "The Bystander," I imagine that a song was given away each week with the periodical. I can find no mention of this publication in any of my books, but I have taken no special pains to look it up yet. One of Dibdin's pieces is a catch—

Here lies a Philosopher, knowing and brave,  
From whom Madam Nature ne'er hid the least wonder;  
Who, looking to Heaven, fell into his grave,  
And disdained that same earth which he rotting lies under.

At the moment of writing I am far away from my books. Perhaps some of my correspondents know the "Bystander" and can communicate further information, especially as to Dibdin's connection (if any) with that journal.

I have before me a little book of thirty-six pages, entitled "The Burlettas, Duets, Interludes, &c., as performed at the Spa Gardens, Bermondsey, since the Commencement of a LICENSE granted by the WORTHY MAGISTRATES of the County of SURREY in the Year 1784, pursuant to an ACT of PARLIAMENT, granted in the reign of GEORGE the SECOND. To be had in the Exhibition Room or at the Bar." Where were the Spa Gardens, Bermondsey, and what is their history? There were several such places of amusement on the Surrey side, and, within my recollection, one of them flourished amid the market-gardens through which the Greenwich Railway ran in days before the builder absorbed all that low-lying region. The books about London which are accessible to me at the present moment are silent with regard to the Bermondsey Spa. Malcolm tells me nothing about it, and Leigh Hunt does not condescend to say more regarding transpontine regions than is incumbent upon a chronicler of doings in more exalted neighbourhoods. Perhaps some of my correspondents can furnish particulars of the Gardens in question.

The little book contains nine musical sketches, the most important of which is "The Friars," a burletta by a writer whom it is not thought worth while to name. These pieces are of interest as showing what kind of musico-dramatic entertainment was popular in the closing decades of the last century. We cannot

suppose that the Spa Gardens, Bermondsey, were a resort of the aristocracy, or even of the well-to-do citizens. They were frequented, most probably, by persons of the class still abounding in that hard-working neighbourhood, and, if so, I can only say that the taste of such people a century ago was, at least, equal to that of their successors who, in our own time, applaud the songs and sketches of music halls. To show this I will give "The Friars" in outline.

*Friar Peter* and *Friar Gosmo* enter. They remark that cloistered individuals are thirsty souls, and forthwith proceed to drink. Then the brethren sing a song, decidedly Anacreontic in character:—

*Peter.* Some think we lead a life that's sad  
Because we look so thin—  
What! though our outsides look so sad,  
Yet we're well lined within.—  
So, brother, here's to thee.—  
*Gosmo.* And, brother, here's to thee.—  
*Both.* Good wine, we know, will banish woe,  
So, brother, here's to thee.

From the dialogue ensuing, we learn that the Friars have arranged to set free certain nuns who, finding a religious life not to their liking, have bribed the reverend men with gold. When the two brethren have retired, the nuns, Mrs. Byrn and Miss Pay, appear. From the last-named we learn that both ladies have been made to take the veil by a wicked guardian, and that their lovers are far away in foreign climes—

Had I the pinions of a dove,  
I'd fly these gloomy cells;  
Ne'er rest till I had found my love,  
Though distant far he dwells,  
I'd soar aloft, my wings expand,  
And dart down on his breast;  
To perch upon his lovely hand  
Would set my heart at rest.

Their discourse is overheard by the *Abbess*, who reproves them—

I am sorry, dear children, love does your minds taint,  
You never, I fear, will be loved by our saint;  
Your talk plainly shows that the world's your delight,  
And by such imprudence our order you'll spite.

*Mrs. Byrn* retorts with spirit—

You're wrong, Lady Abbess, so cease to upbraid,  
Had we ne'er been in love, we had ne'er been betray'd;  
Yet while 'tis return'd, 'twould be sinful, you know,  
E'er to be ungrateful, pray would it not so?

The *Abbess* retires, expressing a belief that her fair charges are not fit to be nuns, and presently enters *Friar Peter*, who leads the ladies off as they sing—

Happy, happy we shall be  
When from here we are set free.

The *Abbess* and a third nun meet on the stage with exclamations of surprise and fear. The sisters have escaped, and when *Friar Peter* re-appears he is told of the disaster. To them enters immediately and in a passion the ladies' wicked guardian—

O whither shall I fly from my fate?  
O zounds! I could break my own pate.  
They'll sue me, I fear, for forcing them here,  
Go, seek them, I say; or, by gad,  
My passion I'll vent and make ye repent;  
Odzooks, I shall surely go mad!

All go off, save *Friar Peter*, who is joined by *Friar Gosmo*, and the two proceed to share the bribe. A third Friar, *Benedict* by name, interposes:

*Benedict.* One third of that, I say, belongs to me,  
Or else, I swear by holy Becket's shrine—  
*Peter.* Soft, brother, soft! here, take it, it is thine.  
*Gosmo.* Mind now, be secret—  
*Peter.* The secret ne'er disclose—  
*Benedict.* No, no, don't fear, 'tis all beneath the rose.  
*Peter.* Well, to our convent let us all retire,  
And drink success to every jovial Friar.

A concluding chorus follows.

Upon this harmless stuff were the leather-dressers of Bermondsey regaled when Farmer George was King. Inspired it is, no doubt, but that is the worst which can be said against it. X.

P.S.—Since writing as above with reference to the Bermondsey Spa, I have met with the following in Knight's "London":—

In a road called the Spa Road, leading eastward to Bermondsey New Church, we meet with the Spa from which the road derived its name. A chalybeate spring was discovered here about seventy years ago (Knight's "London" was issued in 1851), and the place was converted into a sort of tea-garden by an ingenious man, who had exhibited some talent for painting and who decorated his house of entertainments with subjects from his own pencil. The following description, from Hughson, compared with the "Mount Heclas" and "Mount Vesuviuses" of modern exhibitions, will make us doubt whether there is really anything "new under the sun." Mr. Keyse, the proprietor, established a sort of Vauxhall at the Bermondsey Spa, and, finding this to succeed, his ingenuity "suggested various improvements, and, amongst others, he entertained the public with an excellent representation of the siege of Gibraltar, consisting of transparencies and fire works, constructed and arranged by Mr. Keyse himself; the height of the rock was fifty and the length two hundred feet, the whole of the apparatus covering about four acres of ground." X.

BEETHOVEN'S SKETCH BOOKS.

By J. S. SHEDLOCK, B.A.

(Continued from p. 525.)

VARIOUS SKETCHES.

MANY connecting links have from time to time been shown by Mr. E. Dannreuther and others between the various movements of certain of Beethoven's pianoforte sonatas. How far they were conscious, how far unconscious workings of genius will probably for ever remain a mystery; the process was undoubtedly a compound one. There is a page in our Notirungsbuch which sets one meditating on this problem. This page (50) is full of brief sketches, and Beethoven seems as if he were trying to present one thought in various shapes. We have—

*Allegretto.*

u.s.w.

and then immediately after—

*Finis.*

and again lower down on the page—

*Adagio.*

both of which metamorphoses may have been workings of the intellect. But just above the first of these three quotations we find the opening of the "Nel cor piu" theme—

etc.

The similarity of figure will not escape notice. Reducing the last to its simplest expression, and comparing it with the first of the above three we have—

The interval from the first to the second note is different, key and measure are so also, but there is a likeness between the two, and this may well have shaped itself unconsciously. Certain figures, indeed, in other writers besides Beethoven seem to have become, as it were, part of the stock in art of the composer. Let us name only one—the little turn to be found in Wagner from the *Rienzi* Prayer to the *Brünnhilde* theme in the "Ring des Nibelungen." In Beethoven this often happens. Thus in the very case before us, of the two figures—

the first reminds us of the opening theme, and still more of a subsequent passage in the *Finale* of the Sonata, Op. 27, No. 1, while the second recalls a long sketch in our Notirungsbuch of some unfinished piece; it begins thus—

etc.

Judging from many places in the Notirungsbuch Beethoven was fond of jotting down ideas in sequential form. Thus, to pick a few instances out of many, we have—

and—