school and in favour of a return to the saner methods that produced the great music of the past.

'A few years ago a view of this sort would have been scoffed at as "fossilised"; to-day it is held on all sides, and even in some quarters where one wouldn't expect to find it! Here, again, it is largely a matter of practical politics. We hear complaints of the prohibitive cost of orchestral concerts and rehearsals, and of the neglect of new orchestral music, yet young composers persist in writing works that call for all kinds of extra instruments, and of such complexity that their adequate rehearsal is a financial impossibility. Can we wonder that those responsible for such concerts so often prefer to stick to standard works?'

Reverting to the Academy, he said:

'I am proud of the fact that the Academy has been able to add yet one more link to the chain of "home-bred" Principals. It guarantees a blend of progress and unbroken tradition that means much to a great training school such as this. I am sure its future welfare is safe in the hands of my friend McEwen, and I am no less certain that he will receive from his colleagues the loyal support they have always given me, and to which I have owed far more than I can express.

'Of the kindness I have received from all and sundry outside the Academy it is of course impossible to speak in detail. I should like, however, to make one special reference. Ever since I began work in London I have been greatly indebted to the house of Novello, and I gladly take this opportunity of acknowledging the helpful kindness of the Littleton family. My acquaintance with them dates from 1881, when I brought my first little Cantata, The Bride, from Italy, and was asked to stay with my late friend, Alfred Littleton. La belle dame sans merci was written at the Littleton home, Westwood House, Sydenham, in 1883, and from the year 1881 to the time of my taking office here (1888), when I was a bird of passage between Florence and London, I received from the family the generous hospitality and friendship without which I could hardly have accomplished that which friends are kind enough to give me credit for. The Novello Oratorio Concerts were founded in 1885, and I was appointed conductor. These concerts gave first performances of many important works. I single out for mention Liszt's St. Elizabeth, because its performance gave me and others of his English admirers an opportunity of renewing our friendship with the composer. He had repeatedly declined tempting offers to visit London, but he readily accepted the invitation of Henry Littleton to be present at the performance, and to stay at Westwood House. It was his last visit to England.

'I should like to end by acknowledging here, with grateful thanks, the many kind and affectionate letters I have received since my retirement was announced. I am still in the midst of work, so I cannot do more at present than express my deeply-felt thanks in this way.'

The above represents but a small part of a long and extremely interesting conversation. As so often happens in an interview, the best things cropped up casually, and were followed by an admonitory "but that's not for publication, remember!" We have duly remembered, yet looking back on our two hours' chat we cannot but think of the rich material Sir Alexander has up his sleeve if ever he feels disposed to write his memoirs. Perhaps he will feel so disposed, for when reference was made to his coming leisure, he replied by saying that there were "a great many things" that he wished to get done. His host of friends will wish him many years of happy ease in which to do them.

THE CONDUCTOR AND HIS FORE-RUNNERS

BY WILLIAM WALLACE

VII.—THE DAWN OF MODERN CONDUCTING

(Concluded from February number, page 116.)

The practice of leaving the direction to the first violin aroused objections on all sides. It was ridiculous for a violinist to move the neck of his fiddle up and down while playing, as lute-players had done with theirs before him, or to stop playing and beat time with the bow. That smacked of Charlatanerie, as Mattheson said. One style of conducting was described as 'convulsive dumb-show,' another as 'pure caricature.' Mozart complained of bad rehearsing at Paris, and declared that if things went wrong he would take the violin from the 'leader' and conduct himself. This was in 1778. The beat with the bow had this advantage, that it was silent. It could not be used without damage if the prevailing fashion were followed of beating with the stick.

Says Quantz, Flute-Player in Ordinary to Frederick the Great:

The Concertmeister or Director is he who makes movements and gestures in the performance. Time, movement, fire, light, and shade, must be given partly with the bow, partly with the head, and partly with the whole body.

But, further:

The Kapellmeister [at the clavier] must conform with this observance, and particularly must his movement be still more pronounced, so that often with the head, the hands, and feet must he work, for it is frequently necessary to abandon the direction at the clavier, and with both hands to saw (dervikäbeln) the air.

This—shall we call it nuance?—out-Hamlets Hamlet. A pretty show they must have made of it, with the first violin giving one beat and the frenzied clavier-player calling to mind Pistol's 'All Hell shall stir for this!'
A curious light is thrown on musical conditions towards the close of the 18th century by Dr. Burney in his account of the Handel Commemoration performances in 1784, given in Westminster Abbey. There were 525 performers, comprising a chorus of 274 and an orchestra of 250, with one conductor. The voices were 59 sopranos, 48 altos, against 83 tenors and 84 basses. These had to wrestle with 48 first and 47 second violins, 26 violas, 21 'cellos, and 15 double-basses. The wind section included 6 flutes, 26 oboes, 26 bassoons, 1 double-bassoon, 12 trumpets, 12 horns, 6 trombones, and 4 drums.

A pair of the last were called the Tower drums, lent by the Ormance from the Tower stores: they were captured by Marlborough at Malplaquet in 1709.

It will not do to challenge Burney's enthusiasm and good faith, but we are somewhat sceptical about the balance of tone being all that he describes. Even if the violins and oboes played the voice parts, the trebles and altos must have been overwhelmed by the solid phalanx of tenors and basses.

The 'conductor' was Josiah Bates, Esq., a musician of considerable parts to have controlled from his seat at the organ this large body of chorus and orchestra, not a few of whom sat with their backs to him, and this with only one full rehearsal. Come, come, Dr. Burney!

He says that 'almost' every performer was in full view of the conductor, but in the plan of the platform and in the copper-plate of the view of the whole body, with the fabulous double-bassoon 'featuring' in a space almost as large as that given to the organ, it is quite clear that more than half the 'cellos and double-basses, as well as all the principal singers, could not possibly have seen the beat, if there had been one.

To be sure Burney does mention 'eminent and respectable professors of great experience,' whose duty seems to have been that of 'conveying signals to the several parts of that wide extended Orchestra, whose parts were not the less useful for being silently performed.' This silently would appear to indicate that these professors acted as sub-conductors without batons, but this is contradicted by Burney's own words:

This Commemoration is not only the first instance of a band of such magnitude being assembled together, but of any band, at all numerous, performing in a similar situation, without the assistance of a Conductor, to regulate the measure.

He dwells upon the point:

Foreigners, particularly the French, must be astonished at so numerous a band moving in such exact measure, without the assistance of a Coryphæus to beat the time, either with a roll of paper, or a noisy baton, or truncheon. Rousseau says, that 'the more time is beaten, the less it is kept,' and, it is certain, that when the measure is broken, the fury of the musical-general, or director, increasing with the disobedience and confusion of his troops, he becomes more violent, and his strokes and gesticulations more ridiculous, in proportion to their disorder.

He says that 'the most sudden and surprising effect of this stupendous band, was, perhaps, produced by simultaneous tuning,' and we can well believe that it was so, especially when we are told that twelve oboes played a solo as one man, and that a bassoon solo was . . . performed by twenty-four bassoons, of which the unity of effect was truly marvellous. The violon-cellos were very judiciously ordered to play only the under part of the strain.*

Another performance on a large scale was that of Handel's Messiah, given in the Domkirche, at Berlin, in 1786. The chorus had 37 sopranos, 24 altos, 26 tenors, and 31 basses. The orchestra contained 38 first and 39 second violins, 18 violas, 23 'cellos, and 15 double-basses. There were 12 flutes, 12 oboes, 10 bassoons, 8 horns, 6 trumpets, 2 trombones, along with percussion, organ, and harp. The conductor, in our sense of the word, was Johann Adam Hiller, who at one time held the appointment of conductor of the Leipsic Gewandhaus Concerts, and from this we may assume that he was not content with one rehearsal only.

In this, as in the Abbey Commemoration, it is likely that the violins and oboes played voice parts and supported the 'perilously' weak trebles and altos.

Reference may be made to the 'kolossal' production, sixty years later, of Haydn's Creation, at Vienna, in 1843. This shows, in numbers at least, that chorus and orchestra were approaching the balance and proportion of modern times. There were 200 sopranos, 150 altos, 150 tenors, and 160 basses, in all 660. In the orchestra there were 59 first and 59 second violins, 40 violas, 41 'cellos, and 25 double-basses. With them were 13 flutes, 12 oboes, 12 clarinets, 12 bassoons and 4 double-bassoons, 1 ophicleide, 12 horns, 8 trumpets, 9 trombones, and 13 percussion, in all 320, with a first and a second conductor, chorus conductor, and leaders of the first and second violins. As is usual on the Continent, the chorus was placed in front of the orchestra, but with this odd variation that five first violins and seven 'cellos were separated from the rest of their respective forces by the tenors and basses.

The tyranny of the contínuo held the clavier a permanent prisoner in the orchestra, and stood in the way of freedom in instrumentation. In one of the orchestral plans quoted by Schoenemann, a single double-bass was placed at the conductor's left, in front of singers and orchestra, grinding out the bass. In this plan the first violins were to the conductor's right. In another plan the conductor,

* The double-bassoon were made by Stanely, junr. (or Stainsby) for Handel in 1727. It was played by F. Lampe in 1739 (see Cecil Forsyth: Orche8tration, p. 947, n.). At the Abbey it was in the hands of Ashley, a bandsman in the Guards, who sat below the conductor,' with his back to him.
at the clavier, has the 'cellos behind him. The first violins were behind the seconds, and the solo singers were to assist the viola when they were resting. We are not told what the viola thought about this.*

It is likely that arrangements had to be made to obtain the best results from the instrumentalists available.

The pitch was taken from the harpsichord—not our A, but C for 'cellos and violas, and G and D for the violins. No definite rule was laid down as to the players sitting or standing. Violinists were cautioned not to insert non-existent graces—notes, and not to leave them out when others were playing them.

As for nuances, from Mazzochi's introduction in 1640 of the crescendo and diminuendo marks, an interesting chapter might be written about their evolution.

Towards the end of the 18th century, as Schoenemann shows so completely, every writer on music seems to have felt it his duty to discuss at length the method of the Kapellmeister, and from the constant repetition of advice on all hands we may infer that there was ample need for it. Space will not permit of references to his voluminous researches, but his quotation from Junker (1782) on the Primary and Special Duties of the Kapellmeister is worthy of notice. One chapter is headed, 'Von der Politik des Kapellmeisters'—on Tact, in other words. It is strange to read that the conductor must not be abusive or insulting. Mattheson proceeds in the same strain. The conductor must not be behindhand with genuine praise; interruptions should be made gently and courteously; he should be sociable, companionable, and obliging.

Such hints were lost upon a compatriot who in our own day, and not so long ago, with true Teutonic want of tact so belittled, from the conductor's desk, the orchestra of the Paris Opéra, that the musicians in a body rose and left.†

Although he could be severe enough in criticising the 'Manu-dorctor,' Burney remarked of a rehearsal by Hiller, already mentioned:

The instrumental parts went ill, but as this was the first rehearsal, they might have been disciplined into good order if M. Hiller had chosen to bounce and play the tyrant a little; for it is a melancholy reflection to make, that few composers are well treated by an orchestra till they have first used the performers roughly and made themselves formidable.‡

But perhaps Hiller was afraid to 'bounce' in presence of so formidable a critic.

Before we leave Burney we may note what he says about music in Italy. At Turin he heard three separate orchestras in different galleries playing without a conductor. At Milan, in the Duomo, the choir consisted of one boy, three sopranos, two tenors, and two basses. The Maestro di Cappella beat time, and sometimes sang. In another place the conductor was so fussy that 'the violins especially are never suffered to sleep.'

Exhibitions of bad temper seem to have been the special privilege of the great. Lulli would smash a violin, pay its owner for the damage, and then carry him off to dine with him. Handel would brook no interruption by prima donnas or virtuosos. Gluck was insupportable: a true tyrant, who flew into a passion at the faintest glimmer of a mistake. It is related of him that on one occasion he crept under his desk and pinched the calf of the double-bass so that the player gave a yell and came to earth along with his instrument.

The description of Beethoven as a conductor is well-known, and need not be repeated here (see Grove, vol. i., p. 226). Reference, however, may be made to some performances of his works. When the C minor was given for the first time at the Paris Conservatoire, Habeneck, one of the most profound admirers of Beethoven, cut the rapid passages for the double-basses as too difficult. At Leipsic, in 1826, the Choral Symphony was performed from the band-parts 'alone,' the conductor never having seen the score. We are told of performances of the C minor and the Pastoral which were 'infamous,' and there was a breakdown in a performance of the Choral Fantasia.

Although Berlioz was explicit in his instructions about the beat, he could not have been far behind Beethoven in excess of movement, for according to Seidl (quoted by Schoenemann), he leapt into the air, ducked down under the desk, threatened the bass-drum, wheeled the flute, dragged tone from the fiddles, and thrust at the double-basses. We can but faintly picture his fury when, at the first performance of his Messe des Morts, Habeneck the conductor, at a point where the beat was imperative, coolly pulled out his snuff-box and took a pinch.

The first reference to conducting in modern style, according to Schoenemann, appeared in 1807, when Gottfried Weber wrote:

*I know of no more boorish strain than that over the instrument which is the most historical for producing polyphonic music—none more than that over the baton. That is my firm conviction.

But the stick did not come so easily or so quickly into its own. There was opposition. The banishment of the harpsichord left the uncertain and slipshod singers without a prop. They had depended wholly on the instrument to keep them in tune and time, and to give them their cues. Its disappearance merely hinted to them to study their work better. No doubt the stick was too mechanical in one hand—in another, an untruly
member, distracting enough to those who had yet to become accustomed to its use.*

The Choral Symphony seems to have been treated with some indignity, for in addition to the Leipsic performance there was another, described by Wagner (My Life, English translation, London, 1913). He said that Pohlenz, who used a blue baton, started to conduct the first movement, but was ordered by the double-bass to sit down, and did not resume the beat till the choral part. What the rest of the performance was like we can surmise from this incident. When Spontini was to conduct, he asked Wagner to procure for him a stick of ebony with a fairly large knob of ivory at each end. This he griped like a field-marshall's baton. He was very shortsighted, but would not wear glasses as he said he conducted with his eye!

In a summary of this kind, which might be extended indefinitely, it is hoped that the reader, accustomed to the finish and perfection of our orchestras, will have gained some idea of the conditions that prevailed while this most sacred Art was quietly stealing into the hearts of men. Rome was not built in a day: neither was Music. The contemporary criticisms that have been quoted, blistering in their opprobrium, present to us a picture of music which we to-day can but faintly envisage.

A ship without a navigator or compass will founder; there is no aspect of life that can dispense with leadership, no matter how insignificant or obscure the leader may be.

From small beginnings, the conductor has grown into his present dominant position. Witnessing, as we do, and experiencing his minute—we might well say, his ultra-microscopic introspection—we have to reckon also with the widened intelligence and enlarged technique of the players, and with the mechanical improvements in their instruments. So the question arises, If Mozart and Beethoven were to come to life to-day, would they recognise their own music as played by a modern orchestra? We who look back on the early efforts to obtain all that the composer meant and desired may congratulate ourselves that we have not to deal with a handful of men knowing 'something' of their instruments, but with highly-trained and expert forces who give us great thoughts, all with singleness of endeavour. They enable us to hear these thoughts in their opulence of sound, and to them are our thanks.

[With this issue Mr. William Wallace ends his valuable series of articles on the historical side of conducting. We are glad to be able to announce that he has acceded to our request for a second series dealing with the modern and practical side of the subject. Mr. Wallace is peculiarly well qualified to treat of conducting, partly as a result of his own practical experience, but even more because he has long enjoyed and made the most of his unique opportunities for observing the methods of many eminent conductors. We hope to begin the new series of articles during the summer.—E.DIT.R.]

* For an account of The Baton in England, see the Musical Times for June 1, 1896, p. 372.

LUDVIG VAN BEETHOVEN
BY ALEXANDER BRENT SMITH
PART I

For many years there have been grave questionings about Beethoven's position upon the hill of Parnassus. Until the beginning of this century he sat enthroned beside Shakespeare and Michael Angelo upon the highest peak. Then one day an eminent critic startled an unthinking world by declaring that the Violin Concerto showed some signs of wear. No one knew exactly what he meant, but all of us felt that we could hear within the palace walls the beating of the wings of the Demon of Revolution. This critic's words passed Russian-scandal-wise throughout the music-loving world. Beethoven's pre-eminence was questioned—not publicly, but, with true revolutionary tactics, in dark corners and secret places. For several years the murmuring and grumbling has grown in intensity, and now the younger generation, throwing discretion and secrecy to the winds, has set up its banners bearing the awful and hideous words, 'Beethoven is dull.' To-day, Beethoven's shame becomes their glory. One young man (probably a descendant of Sim Tappert) announced that he would not cross the road to hear a work of Beethoven, even if he was paid. Another conspirator confessed that Beethoven's music drove him mad (his subsequent compositions have proved that his opinion of his mental condition was only too correct).

This accusation against Beethoven, though serious, does not mean that his case is hopeless. I have heard similar accusations made against Sir Walter Scott, and, 'curiouser and curiouser,' Jane Austen. How anyone can wade through the ephemeral rubbish that circulates through the libraries, and yet find Jane Austen dull, is to me incomprehensible. Perhaps those glaring yellow notices which booksellers affix to the best-sellers, notices bearing the persuasive but meaningless words 'two hundred and tenth thousand,' predispose the reader to an imaginary enjoyment. Why could not the same persuasive methods be applied to the classics? How I should like to see Pride and Prejudice surmounted by a yellow card bearing the words 'Three hundred and fifteenth thousand'; or Emma coaxing the traveller to take her with the words 'Just the thing for a long journey'; Persuasion might be labelled 'Very choice' or 'Sure to please.' But to return to Beethoven, the charge is made against him that he is dull, and we cannot ignore it.

Beethoven is awkwardly placed by reason of his two-fold appeal and his consequent two-fold rejection. He was a composer who was intended by Nature to work instinctively and emotionally, but who by diligent application attempted, not wholly successfully, to intellectualise himself; a Shakespeare turning himself into a Schopenhauer. Bach is not so unfortunate. He is an intellectual, and by his intellect he is judged. Chopin is not