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**BROWNING'S "ABT VOGLER."**

In a quaint museum in the Tyrol may be seen among relics of antiquity, a bust labeled "Abt Vogler," a name conveying little meaning to the average tourist, but well known to the citizens of Vienna, who may still hear a performance of his compositions every Christmas, though his career ended over a century ago. During his life he held important positions at various courts of Europe and founded several music schools. Original and eccentric, his influence was so strong as to draw to himself the greatest geniuses of his time, and he numbered among his pupils many composers, including Weber and Myerbeer. He was mainly noted for his skill in extemporizing, a gift, which, imploving the highest musicianship, should not be ascribed to those who merely ramble from chord to chord, without theme, progression, or balance of parts. The art of extemporizing, "phantasieren," as the Germans poetically call it, began as long ago as the middle ages, when music and poetry went hand and hand, and minstrels rehearsed deeds of chivalry, composing both words and music at the time. The "instrument of his own invention" which Vogler used as the vehicle of his inspiration, was a kind of organ, consisting of four keyboards, beside a set of thirty-six pedals. It must have possessed abundant resources, and was called an orchestrion, probably on account of its likeness to the orchestra in producing variety of tone.

Thus we see that it was no mythical personage whom Browning chose to express, through a monologue, the highest conception of music, its power over the soul, and its relation to life. Such an expression has never before or since been attempted by any poet. It differs from other rhapsodies on music in this, that Browning's flights of fancy had their origin in his own knowledge, for his own training in the art had been most thorough, and he knew whereof he spoke.

The first five verses of the poem contain a description of the wonderful music, assisting the imagination by presenting objects of sight rather than sound. The music evoked by touching the keys of the instrument is called a "structure brave," comparing it to the legendary palace that Solomon reared by means of his magic ring. The deep tones forming the foundation, are called "demons that lurk," the high tones are "angels that soar," while the intervening ones are all other created beings which rush into sight, and act as slaves to aid in completing the work. The progression of the music to a climax seems to be figured in the third verse by describ-

ing these minions mounting one above another, raising walls of gold till a pinnacle is reached in the sky, vying in beauty with St. Peter's Cathedral at Rome, when, on a festal night, an illumination reveals its dome in full glory.

In verses 4 and 5 Browning attempts to describe the experience of a soul that had reached the highest point of exaltation, and is no longer subject to laws of time and space. The palace is peopled by spirits of those who had lived or were to live, satisfied to dwell in this house not made with hands.

In verses 6 and 7 we find a song of gratitude and joy for the wonderful faculty of the soul to express itself in sound, a medium so much more subtle and intangible than that of poet, painter or sculptor, that the musical composer seems more than they to attain to creative power—

"All through my keys that gave their sound to a wish of my soul,  
 All through my soul that praised as its wish flowed visibly forth,  
 All through music and me! For think, had I painted the whole,  
 Why, there it had stood, to see, nor the process so wonder-worth;  
 Had I written the same, made verse—still, effect proceeds from cause,  
 Ye know why the forms are fair, ye hear how the tale is told;  
 It is all triumphant art, but art in obedience to laws,  
 Painter and poet are proud in the artist list enrolled;  
 But here is the finger of God, a flash of the will that can,  
 Existent behind all laws that made them, and, lo! they are!  
 And I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed to man,  
 That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound, but a star.  
 Consider it well; each tone of our scale in itself is naught;  
 It is everywhere in the world—loud, soft, and all is said;  
 Give it to me to use! I mix it with two in my thought;  
 And, there! Ye have heard and seen. Consider and bow the head!"  
 (Continued in next issue)

**PERSONALS.**

Mr. and Mrs. S. H. Mendenhall spent Sunday with their son, Fowell.

Messrs. Avery and Morris, of Salisbury, were visiting friends here Sunday.

Mr. Arthur Moore was on the campus Sunday.

Prof. E. J. Coltrane, Mr. R. E. Bundy, Misses Kirkpatrick, Henley and Haynes, of Jamestown, attended the Sunday School Convention Saturday.

Mr. Paul Nunn was here Sunday afternoon.

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