

the same direction.' We live in an age which is hard on the politician. Every flatulent scribbler joins in abusing men whose only crime is to devote their lives to the service of their country; one may yet live to hear the Ministers of the Crown ascribing their troubles to the pernicious literature of Lord Beaconsfield. Trollope was an anti-humbug, and like most anti-humbug men was rather inclined to think anything beyond his personal horizon was humbug. He had read *Coningsby*, and resented Sidonia. He struck him as a fantastic and absurd creature. He certainly was not the Jew that Trollope knew, so he pokes fun at the character in *Barchester Towers*. The erratic Bertie Stanhope had met in Palestine 'one of the family of Sidonia, a most respectable man' who had lent him money, but was also 'a wonderful prophet.' Sidonia, recommended to the Stanhope family, arrives at Barchester, but is neither 'uncommon nor grand.' 'The Jew did come. . . . He was a dirty little old man who positively refused to leave the villa till he had got a bill from the doctor on his London bankers.' This was not mere malice on Trollope's part, he is convinced that this was what Sidonia, apart from the Disraeli glamour, really was. He sees him as Thackeray saw Louis XIV — stripped of his tinsel. To him the *Coningsby* portrait was not merely absurd, but insincere.

It was perhaps due to Trollope's sincerity of outlook that there was little of the sensitiveness of the author about him. He did his best, and if people did not like it and said so, he did not take it much to heart. His own books he discusses with a curious detachment. On the whole, he rather under-estimates their value. This very unusual quality explains his happiness and contentment. His early troubles never soured him. Of all writers he

was surely the most friendly, just as his works are the most comfortable. He lived long as a prosperous and popular figure, and enjoyed it frankly. Slightly altering his epitaph on himself as a rider, he could say without fear of contradiction of his life as a whole: 'I have gone through a long run to the finish, keeping a place sometimes of glory, always of credit.'

[*The New Statesman*]

THE BARREL ORGAN IN THE RAIN

BY W. J. TURNER

It is not always in concert halls that one has the most delightful musical experiences — hardly ever, some would even say; but I do not go so far as that. None the less, everyone who has any instinct for music will remember chance occasions when some song or instrumental air, heard, almost accidentally, at some friend's house or, in some countries happier in this respect than our own, in the street has made a vivid impression that remains in the memory long after we have completely forgotten the recitals of an Elena Gerhardt, a Paderewski, or a Kreisler.

I remember when quite a boy that by some freak of fortune Paderewski came to my native town for the first time; my mother, wishing me to hear the famous pianist, procured me one seat at what appeared to me — and for our part of the world actually was — an enormous price. At any rate, I went alone, considerably affected by a consciousness that in being there at all I was rather 'going the pace.' My seat was very near to the great man, and I remember how his hands trembled and how nervously he clasped his knees. I also remember being more excited by his face than by

his playing. He played first of all something by Bach — very likely a prelude and fugue — and then a Beethoven sonata; the rest of his programme I have forgotten.

I do not think I was in the least moved by the music, but I returned home in a state of great excitement, and with a feeling that the concert was an event in my life that ought in some way to be celebrated, and that the presence of such a great man in our town must be brought to the notice of the inmates of the house who should not be allowed to pass away into sleep that night as if nothing out of the ordinary had occurred. Accordingly, I crept round to the back of the house and rummaged about in a shed until I had found — what is unknown in this country — an old kerosene tin. Taking a stick, I then marched into the house, beating the kerosene tin for all I was worth.

Now, musically, this event meant nothing, or very little, to me. I had been often far more touched by the very same music I had heard that night, played by amateurs; and although this experience of the contrast in the pleasure got from amateurs and from professionals is not true of orchestral concerts, it is especially true of singers, for I do not remember ever hearing a professional singer before I was twenty who gave me any pleasure at all. I believe this is a common experience. It is due partly to the fact that in Anglo-Saxon (and to a lesser degree one might almost include German) countries professional singers have no feeling for music whatever. They are simply the possessors of voices that have a marketable value, and they hire out their voices to concert givers and to music publishers who need them to display their wares. They painfully acquire the minimum of technical musical knowledge neces-

sary to enable them to sing an average ballad, or to take part in the half dozen oratorios that are the staple musical diet of large masses of the population. They meet the average church organist on the common ground of complete insensibility and almost complete ignorance. They are far more illiterate than the ordinary dock laborer, and their vanity has to be encountered to be believed.

These wretches — I could name a lot of them if the law of libel permitted one such an artistic luxury — are even to this day, in spite of the great improvement that has taken place in England during the last ten or fifteen years, going up and down London, the provinces, and the suburbs singing and spoiling the taste of the people. Their mainstay and sheet anchor is human sentimentality — the sentimentality of people who have had no opportunity to learn to appreciate finer qualities, but who, if left alone, would perhaps get out of the trough of sloppy emotionalism in which the modern urban population wallows.

For years, whatever singing I heard worth the hearing was from amateurs, and from them I heard, before I was eighteen, nearly all Schubert's songs, and a great number of other German *lieder*, which, until I went to Germany, I had never heard from the concert platform at all. One of my most pleasurable recollections is that of going suddenly into a drawing room where someone was singing Schubert's 'Wohin.' It was one of those exquisite moments when we are by some happy combination of physical and spiritual health extraordinarily alive, and for both singer and listener the music, though familiar, had a beauty which they had never felt so intensely before. I have never heard 'Wohin' sung since either in public or by an amateur, but it is one of those melodies that I can

always recall at will. The singing of amateurs is, as a whole, on a far higher level than professional singing, and in speaking of amateurs I am thinking of musical amateurs, not of the people who go to ballad concerts and buy the last song about roses to take home and strum upon the piano, although I should imagine that their interpretation by their own fireside had merits unknown to, and beyond the capacity of, the professional singer to whom the song was dedicated.

In Latin countries, however, the art of singing has never been lost by the people. I believe that of all European countries Spain is the most wonderful in this respect, but I have never been there, and English musicians as a whole know very little about the academic music of Spain and practically nothing about the popular music. As for ancient Spanish music, I do not think I am far wrong in saying that it is absolutely unknown — which is hardly surprising when we consider that 70 per cent of the works of our greatest and most famous English composer, Purcell, are unknown to musicians. His *Fairy Queen*, for instance, which was given at Cambridge from February 9 to February 14, with Mr. Clive Carey as producer and Dr. Rootham as conductor, had not been performed since 1693. There are four volumes of his harpsichord works edited by Mr. William Barclay Squire, — never played except by amateurs like Mrs. Gordon Woodhouse, — and I forget how many volumes the Purcell Society has published, all of which, however, appear to be totally ignored by the professional musicians who give concerts. However, that is by the way, and only illustrative of how immeasurably more important the amateur in music is than the concert-giving artist who is so much more in the limelight.

In Italy, of course, you may still hear plenty of good singing, even in the streets, and I dare say it would be possible to hear to-day, in parts of the country, many of those wonderful old Italian folk songs which Madame Geni Sadero has spent her life collecting. Although I once walked through a large part of Central Italy, it was never my good fortune to come across any old folk songs, but I must confess that they were not the object of my tour. I do remember, however, going into an old wine cellar with walls about fifteen feet thick in a small town in a little frequented part of the country and suddenly hearing, to my amazement, a gramophone burst forth into the waltz from *The Merry Widow*. The gramophone rang the death-knell of folk song wherever it penetrated. There are musical critics — even good ones — who have a kindly word for the gramophone, but I have nothing for it but execration.

It was, however, in Italy that I received the most poignant musical impression of my life. A friend and I had arrived one day at Como, which we had never seen before. It was a most miserable day: one of those only too frequent days among the Italian lakes when the rain pours down as if it had set in for months. In utter wretchedness we walked along the comparatively deserted streets looking for a suitable restaurant, when suddenly, turning a corner, we heard a barrel organ grinding out Lohengrin's Narration. It is a curiously beautiful melody, but at that moment, pouring out into the empty town among hills and buildings almost blotted from our sight with the steady, down-streaming rain, it was simply marvelous. If Richard Wagner had been there to hear it he would have wept. For it had become part of the earth; it was in some wholly inexplicable sense real —

real with that reality that all good creative art has but which we cannot always feel, and that certainly we do not feel once in a hundred concerts.

[*Land and Water*]

THE MORTAL IMMORTALS

BY J. C. SQUIRE

At breakfast, with an author more venerable, I opened a bookseller's catalogue which had just reached me from America. It contained many interesting things: manuscripts of Spaniards of whom I had never heard, early editions of old English writers of whom I had barely heard, desirable editions of the classics, this, that, and the other, and some first editions of illustrious contemporaries. I knew — I usually know as much — that I should not bother to write for anything from that catalogue, and could not pay for it if I did, nevertheless, I proceeded like a caterpillar through the items. As I turned the tenth page I had a slight shock — it was n't really surprising — at seeing six times repeated the name of my companion. He is a man of genius, and it is all quite fit and proper that the collectors of America should give, or at least be asked to give, considerable sums of money for the first editions of his books. 'Hallo,' I said, 'they seem to be paying through the nose now for your first editions.' 'Ah?' he said. 'Of course,' I went on — and I was merely stating a fact — 'the prices are nothing like so big as our grandchildren will pay.' His answer was 'Bigger — fools they!'

There suddenly flashed on me a vision of those grandchildren — a vision, be it admitted, based on the assumption that our civilization will endure, which is not certain. I saw a spacious room with glazed bookcases, and a young bibliophile showing an-

other his rare editions and tooled bindings. They fingered one after another, and at last they came to the first scarce work of my friend. I heard the conversation. 'What did you give for that?' 'Eighty-five pounds.' 'It's nice to have it with his signature in, knowing that he handled it. If he knew he might be consoled for the way people underrated him when he was alive.' Probably there will be such conversations. There may be a Life of my friend; the Life may include some of his intimate correspondence and alleged specimens of his 'table talk.' They will have a pretty good idea of his character and his genius, they will know his pedigree, the state of his finances, his goings to and fro upon the earth. But with their inadequate information and their incorrigible romanticism they will have no notion as to what his real daily talk was like, as distinguished from his more intense conversation.

Do we really know any dead man in his daily life? Dr. Johnson, some would say. We know his voice and his habits of mind better than most people's; but even Boswell did not take down anything unless it seemed to be a little above the ordinary level, to have some special point or value. A gramophone record of Dr. Johnson's words through a whole day would supply us with something quite new. It would also diminish a little Dr. Johnson's apparent stature. We see the great dead as larger than human because we have of them, however much we have, only a refined essence. When we do really meet an ordinary fact — such as the fact that when Mary Shelley interrupted Shelley (in the throes of composition) by asking him to fetch her cotton-reel from the place where it had rolled — it stands out as something very illuminating. Meditating thus I attended a literary dinner, a regular