Review

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these laws to those who are thinkers rather than workers. The present, which is the third, edition of this work has been much more altered than the second, for in the meantime the author had been enabled to make use of the new physiological and anatomical researches on the ear, which has led to a modification of his views respecting the action of what are termed "Corti's arches." In the preface to this edition we have some well-considered replies to some of the strictures of critics upon Herr Helmholtz's views. After noticing many objections, he says: "To those who think I have not gone far enough in my physical explanations, I answer that, in the first place a natural philosopher is never bound to erect systems about everything he knows and does not know." With this assertion we perfectly agree, and also with the following paragraph respecting the Minor Mode: "Musicians have found fault with the manner in which I have characterised the Minor Mode. I must refer in reply to those very accessible documents, the musical compositions of A.D. 1500 to A.D. 1750, during which the modern Minor was developed. These will show how slow and fluctuating was its development, and that the last traces of its incomplete state are still visible in the works of Sebastian Bach and Handel."

The main design of the book may be best gathered from the following passage, with which the Introduction commences:—

"In the present work an attempt will be made to form a connection between the boundaries of two sciences, which, although drawn together by many natural relations, have hitherto remained sufficiently distinct—the boundaries of *physical* and *physiological acoustics* on the one side, and of *musical science* and *aesthetics* on the other. The classes of readers addressed will consequently have had very different cultivation, and will be affected by very different interests. It will therefore be best for the author at the outset distinctly to state his intention in undertaking the work, and the aim he has sought to attain. The horizons of physics, philosophy and art have of late been too widely separated, and, as a consequence, the language, the methods and the aims of any one of these studies present a certain amount of difficulty for the student of any other of them; and possibly this is the principal cause why the problem here undertaken has not been long ago more thoroughly considered and advanced towards its solution."

It is perfectly true, as our author asserts, that hitherto the *physical* part of the theory of sound has been almost exclusively treated at length, although it is essentially but a section of the laws regulating the motions of elastic bodies: the *physiological theory of acoustics*—the investigation of the processes which take place within the ear itself—has been but imperfectly investigated, and this, as the title of the book indicates, is what Helmholtz asserts to be the true basis for the theory of music. The First Part of the volume is essentially physical and physiological, and contains a general investigation of the phenomenon of harmonic *upper partial tones*, the nature of which is established, and its relation to *quality of tone* proved. The Second Part is devoted to an enquiry into the disturbances produced by the simultaneous production of two tones, namely the *combinational tones* and *beats*. The Third Part treats of the construction of musical scales and notes. As we have already said, we can but acquaint our readers with the general scope of a work of such gigantic dimensions, for were we to give pages of extracts, but the faintest idea of the masterly manner in which all these subjects are handled could be formed. Mr. Ellis's share in the production of this English version of Helmholtz's labours must not be passed over without the warmest praise. For this task not only a thorough knowledge of the language in which the philosopher originally clothed his thoughts is absolutely necessary, but a deep insight into the subjects upon which he treats, and these qualifications the translator has thoroughly proved that he possesses in the highest degree. It may also be said that his notes, which are plentiful throughout the volume, are of the utmost value; and the Appendices, for the opinions in which Mr. Ellis is alone responsible, contain a large amount of interesting matter bearing upon the views of Helmholtz, amongst which we find a re-arrangement of his four papers read before the Royal Society in 1864 and 1874 respecting the difference between just and tempered intonation.

NOVELLO, EWER AND CO.

Iphigenia in Tauris. An Opera, in four acts; composed by C. von Gluck. Edited by Berthold Tours. The English version by the Rev. J. Troutbeck.

In explaining the views which it was his aim to carry out in his operas, Gluck says: "I wished to confine the art of music to its real object—that of aiding the effect of poetry by giving greater expression to the words and scenes; but without detriment to the action of the plot, and without weakening the impression by useless ornamentation; and I was of opinion that this ought to be effected in the same manner as brilliancy of colour and judicious contrast of light and shade heighten the effect of correct and well-designed drawing, and give life and expression to the figures without effacing the outline." When we find that Wagner, acting strictly upon the principles here laid down, has not only created a revolution with a large portion of the artistic public, but has had an opera-house expressly built to display his lyrical productions to the greatest advantage, it might reasonably be imagined that Gluck, in his operas, had failed to perfectly illustrate his theory. Let those who believe this study the opera now before us, and we have little doubt of the result. *Iphigenia in Tauris* is not only a mine of wealth, considered as abstract music, but is in every respect as perfect an embodiment of the composer's opinions upon operatic art as any work of Wagner's. But the public was not to be so easily moved in the days of Gluck; and when Herder said, "Some one will before long advance on him," he spoke truly, for the prophet of the "future" has but moulded himself upon the prophet of the "past." We may say that this recent addition to Novello's Operatic Library is most carefully edited, and that the English translation is excellent.

Dixit Dominus. Motett for Double Choir. Composed by Samuel Wesley.

If this were the only composition of its author, it would be sufficient to establish his reputation, not only as a producer but as a man of the profoundest knowledge. As a study of contrapuntal and vocal effects and a guide to the limitations of tonality, aspirants to musical degrees at the Universities might well avail themselves of such a model, at the same time observing the consummate art with which some fresh application of the themes is always held in reserve to sustain the interest; and what a climax may be reached by refraining from the use of chromatic chords and extreme modulations, until the surprise of their sudden appearance in the coda proves that their best effect lies in a sparing use of them. The work is entirely founded on three principal themes, of great interest in themselves and well contrasted with each other; these are combined in various ways and interspersed occasionally with a few bars of sustained harmony. A new point is introduced in the coda, for which, as already hinted, are reserved powerful harmonic as well as vocal effects. Before concluding these remarks, as we have particularly recommended this composition for purposes of study, it may be well to point out features which we do not think should serve as precedents to students. The effect of the dominant seventh, p. 8, score 1, bar 3, is wonderfully fresh, but loses force when it recurs on page 11. The effect of the progressions, p. 14, score 1, bars 3 to 4, and p. 15, score 2, bars 6 to 7, is of a seventh descending to the root and of octaves between extreme parts. To the eye everything is regular, while our sense of hearing detects that the spirit, if not the letter, of the law is infringed upon. Not that this is to be esteemed a fault in the work we are considering, but an error in judgment, through following too closely and faithfully the traditions of the great contrapuntists. No one would blame a citizen of 500 years ago for believing that the earth was stationary, while a persistent avowal of the facts now-a-days would be a sign of bigotry or ignorance. The forbidden progressions of consecutive 5ths and 8ths are now in some cases considered legitimate with the ear as umpire, while the means taken by early writers to avoid them can only be regarded as clever impositions.