Review

Source: *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, Vol. 19, No. 424 (Jun. 1, 1878), p. 337

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

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3357337>

Accessed: 26-11-2015 22:51 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Musical Times Publications Ltd. is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

biography of this artist by M. Fetis, to which we recently referred in our reviewing columns. The article upon Berlioz, too, fully proves that the editor of this work, although pledged to complete it within a couple of volumes, is resolved not to grudge space for those who are worthy of it; and we are glad indeed to see that the claims of a composer of such decisive originality as Hector Berlioz—whose influence, as is here stated, “has been and will again be felt far and wide”—have been fairly set forth and ably urged in this Dictionary by so zealous a champion. Bellini, Sir Henry Bishop, and many others, have also sufficiently prominent positions in the work. It may be remembered that in our February number we called attention to the fact of Mr. J. A. Novello having supplied the English text to Mendelssohn’s “Lobgesang,” instead of Mr. William Ball (as stated in the first part of the Dictionary); but in the notice of Mr. William Bartholomew in the second part, this error is repeated. Let us hope, therefore, that a supplement at the conclusion of the book will rectify this and some other mistakes almost inevitable in a work of so comprehensive a nature; and whilst pointing out minor inaccuracies, it may be well to state that Dr. Bexfield’s Anthems were *not* posthumous publications, but were issued in November, 1849—four years before his death. Musicians will, we think, be surprised to find the name of Antoine Edouard Batiste omitted altogether, considering how many of his compositions are constantly before the public, and that a whole column is devoted to him in the recently published Supplement to Fetis’s “Biographie Universelle des Musiciens;” and it seems strange, also, that we miss any mention of Dr. Armes (of Durham), Dr. G. B. Arnold (organist of Winchester, composer of the Oratorio, “Ahab”), Frederic Archer, and some others we could mention. Of course we do not deny the privilege of the editor to reject any names he may think proper; but when, for example, in the first part of the Dictionary Signor Agnesi has no place, and a column is given to Belletti in the second part, we cannot quite see the principle of selection. The few woodcuts and musical illustrations in the second part are exceedingly clear; and although so large a space is devoted to the biography of Beethoven, the work has advanced as far as Boieldieu.

A Book of Musical Anecdote; from every available source. By Frederick Crowest, author of the “Great Tone Poets.” 2 vols. [Richard Bentley and Son.]

THE title of this work conveys but an imperfect idea of its contents. Mr. Crowest is already known as the author of a book on the “Great Tone Poets” (as it is the fashion now to term the high-class composers), and feeling, we presume, that he has not there said as much as he wanted to say upon his favourite art, he has collected his opinions in two fairly sized volumes, and preceded or followed them by anecdotes, “many of which,” he says, “are new, many old; some have been in print before, and some have not.” Now we cannot but think that Mr. Crowest would have done more justice to himself, and earned a fairer hearing from those whom he addresses, had he allowed his well-considered remarks to appear without the stories, or the stories without the remarks; for in the work before us it is difficult to know whether the anecdote is hunted up to give force to the opinion, or the opinion written to give force to the anecdote: in either case we are inclined to believe that both are materially weakened by the union. Take for instance the following: “Lully lost a leg on this wise. The King of France, Louis XIV., was once ill and nigh unto death. He recovered, however, and the Court musician was directed to compose a *Te Deum* in grateful celebration of the event. On the night of its first performance the composer himself conducted, and, finding that the band was getting a little unsteady, in his excitement he struck his foot with the *bâton*, with which he was conducting. The blow caused a blister, which became so violently inflamed that his physician advised him at once to have a toe taken off, and, after some days, his foot, and at last he had to lose the whole limb.” A little incident like this is interesting enough as far as it goes; but on such slender materials our author thus moralises: “Now this is worth the attention of Conductors. There is no prescribed style of conducting, a fact well known to all frequenters of concerts or operas. On the other hand, we all know there is all the

diversity of styles that could be wished for. One Conductor treats us to a definition of the circle in indicating common time, another patronises the statuesque style, and goes through the whole performance ‘as cool as a cucumber;’ another is frantic or fearfully agitated, and taxes to the utmost the stability of the stool on which he sits. Between these two latter we may see every variety; and in making our choice of any one style we shall probably do well to avoid both extremes, not forgetting the warning of the consequences of Lully’s over-vehemence.” Artistically there can be no doubt that an orchestra should be directed firmly, yet quietly; but avoiding “over-vehemence” for fear you should lose a leg reminds us of the man who, not being able to find boot-hooks when about to put on his boots, used two forks, one of which sprang upwards and destroyed the sight of an eye, and so—he never wore boots afterwards.

But although we may take exception to the general design of the work, we cannot but express our admiration at the industry of the author in collecting so vast a number of anecdotes upon the art, some of which are admirable, and all indeed well worthy of being preserved. Of course we cannot hold Mr. Crowest responsible for the authenticity of every story; but, as he truly says in his preface, “they are all characteristic of the persons of whom they are told.” Amongst the musical opinions, too, we light upon many truths which are generally conveyed in forcible language, and are good enough indeed to be published apart from the anecdotes with which they are connected. With some of these remarks, however, we cannot agree; as, for instance, where, after “following Bombet’s fancy,” as our author says, of comparing painters with composers, he places Wagner with Millais, Mendelssohn with Turner, and Spohr with Constable; but Mr. Crowest of course speaks solely from the impression upon himself; and the history of music will prove to us the different effect of “tone-poems” upon different individuals, even upon those whom we should imagine the most competent to judge. It would be impossible from the 253 anecdotes contained in these volumes to name even half of those which we think especially entitled to attention; and as our reviews do not include extracts, save in illustration of our remarks, readers will not be surprised that, in recommending the work, we do not partially forestall their pleasure in reading it by transferring a number of Mr. Crowest’s anecdotes to our own pages. A very commendable feature in the arrangement of the stories is their division into four classes, Book i. containing those relating to Composers, Book ii. to Singers, and Book iii. to Instrumentalists, Book iv. being miscellaneous. We have also a carefully compiled index, in which reference is made to the page in which an artist’s name is mentioned. In conclusion we may say that the work is in every respect so well got up that, in addition to the attraction of its contents, it will make an elegant book for the drawing-room table.

Novello’s Music Primers. Edited by Dr. Stainer.

Counterpoint, by J. Frederick Bridge, Mus. Doc., Oxon., &c. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

DR. BRIDGE has performed with great dexterity one of the most thankless tasks that can fall to the lot of a modern musician. He has added yet another compilation of the ancient rules of counterpoint to a wearisome list of predecessors reckoned almost by thousands. The author of the Primer on “Counterpoint” discovers at once his special aptitude for the work he has undertaken. In a few introductory observations, he not only provides for us a condensed history of the art, exhibiting its growth from the embryotic *diaphony* to the highly organised modern fugue, but allows us to see that, imbued with the modern spirit he is thoroughly prepared to meet the inquiries of a too sceptical student. When he tells us that, instead of reproducing examples from Fux and the old contrapuntists, he has written more modern examples for the Primer himself, we are to understand that the art of counterpoint has passed through two remarkably distinct periods, known in music as those of the old and new Tonality. We have therefore in collating the traditional rules to separate, not exactly the wheat from the chaff, but the rules which are suited to modern requirements from those that are not. The examples Dr. Bridge has given are such as would naturally be expected from a writer of his position and