Review

Source: *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, Vol. 20, No. 440 (Oct. 1, 1879), p. 539

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

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3356782>

Accessed: 24-12-2015 13:39 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>

Handel Festival is of course not (as would be implied from the above statement) annual. But it is in the concluding summary of the present condition of music in this country that we find the strangest statements. For instance, the list of recent or living distinguished composers is as follows: "George Perry, E. Murdie, John Hullah, Horsley, Onslow (who, by the way, was a Frenchman), Sterndale Bennett, H. H. Pierson, Macfarren, W. F. Taylor, Henry Smart, H. Leslie, Oakley, Cowen, Will. Callcott, Stephen Glover, Arthur Sullivan, G. A. Osborne, Barnby, H. Gadsby," &c., a list equally remarkable for some names which it does contain as for others that it omits. No less curious is the list of distinguished vocalists, which however is too long to quote. Four lady pianists are named—"Mrs. Anderson, Madame Dulcken, Madame Arabella Goddard, and Mdlle. Bondy"—only two of whom are English. Most comical of all, however, is the list of our leading conductors or, to speak more accurately, "music directors"—Messrs. Alfred Mellon, Dr. Wylde, Hullah, John Ella, G. Grove, and G. Mount. Surely there must be some fatality attending the best meant efforts of foreigners to do justice to the state of music in this country!

It is when we come to examine the technical portion of the present work that we find the most cause for admiration. In this respect the dictionary may be fairly said to be unique. Hardly anything seems to have been omitted; and many articles treat of their subjects in a really exhaustive manner. Such are the elaborate essays on Acoustics (48 pages), Consonance and Dissonance (42 pages), Harmoniesystem (32 pages), Intervallenlehre (26 pages), Organ (19 pages), Violin (20 pages), and many others of less extent. The articles on the various orchestral instruments give not merely a history, but in most cases an account of their mechanism and hints as to their use, which will be found of great value to the composer. In one instance an entire separate article, under the heading "Posaunensatz," is devoted to the proper method of writing for the trombones. An immense amount of miscellaneous information, much of which is difficult to obtain elsewhere, will be found in this department of the work.

No less interesting are the æsthetic articles, and those which, from inability to classify them, we may call miscellaneous. Among these are the papers on "Besetzung"—the composition of orchestras and military bands; "Direction"—the art of conducting (an admirable essay of twelve pages); "Pianofortestil," "Romantik," "Tonmalerei"—a most fascinating article on tone-painting; "Unterricht in der Musik" (teaching music), and others too numerous to mention. Our notice has already extended to such length that we have only space to refer to two highly characteristic articles—those on "Zeitschriften" and "Literatur"—as showing the enormous amount of labour expended in the preparation of the work. The former contains a nearly complete list of all the musical newspapers past and present of all languages. The titles are given of 155 different publications, with the names of the publishers, frequently also of the editors, and, in the case of many of the older and rarer journals, some account of their contents. The article "Literatur," which occupies forty-one pages, gives a list of all the more important works on music published in Germany, France, England, Italy, and even Spain, with the place and date of publication, the name of the publishers, except in the case of older works, and in some instances a short notice of the contents. The subject is divided into twenty-one heads, in the following manner:—

- (1) Origin of Music. (2) Beauty and Use of Music.
- (3) Moral Effects of Music. (4) Physical Effects of Music.
- (5) General Musical History. (6) Music of the Hebrews.
- (7) Music of the Greeks and Romans. (8) Writings on Music in the Middle Ages. (9) Works on Modern Music. (This section, as also some of the following, give references to important articles in musical newspapers, as well as to separate books.)
- (10) Church Music. (11) Theatrical Music. (12) Military Music. (13) Biographies and Obituary Notices. (14) Dictionaries and Cyclopedias. (15) Æsthetic, Critical, Explanatory, Controversial, and Periodical.
- (16) Singing Methods and Instructions. (17) General Musical Instruction, Harmony and Composition. (18) History of Musical Instruments, and Methods for the

same. (19) Acoustics; Physiology of the Voice. (20) Temperament, Keys, Rhythm, &c. (21) Miscellaneous.

This voluminous Catalogue is founded on C. F. Becker's "Systematisch-chronologische Darstellung der musikalischen Literatur;" but as that work was published as long ago as 1836, the labour of completing it by adding all the more important works issued during the last forty years must necessarily have been very heavy. The list, of course, does not pretend to be complete; but it contains a mass of information, which for purposes of reference is exceedingly valuable.

Though we have necessarily dealt in a most inadequate manner with the work before us, we believe that we have said enough to show that it is, in spite of inevitable omissions and errors, a dictionary which, as a whole, it would be difficult to overpraise. There is, we fear, no probability of an English translation being produced; the labour and the cost would alike prevent this. But every musician who can read German would do well to place the book upon the shelves of his library. It should be added that the price, considering both the quantity and the quality of the contents, is ridiculously low.

The Mechanism of Voice, Speech, and Taste (Throat and Tongue). By G. J. Witkowski, M.D., Membre de la Faculté de Médecine de Paris. Translated and edited by Lennox Browne, F.R.C.S.E.

[Baillière, Tindall and Cox.]

MR. LENNOX BROWNE has materially added to the many services he has already rendered to the public in connection with the subjects of the throat and vocal organs by the translation of Professor Witkowski's work. The information contained in this treatise is made doubly valuable by an accompanying "Movable atlas, showing the positions of voice, speech, and taste, by means of superposed coloured plates," reference to these illustrations being made by letters. Regarding the various theories of the active agent in voice production, the author says, "Some attribute this important function to the air, others think that it devolves exclusively upon the vocal cords. The partisans of the latter hypothesis rest upon a pathological proof of great value, viz., that a lesion, however slight, of the mucous membrane of the vocal cords is sufficient to modify the purity of the voice. Yet Helmholtz seems to have demonstrated by the aid of the vibration microscope, that while complex sounds of the voice are due to the vibrations of the air, simple sounds are produced by vibrations of the vocal cords." However this may be, the treatment of these organs by experienced singing-masters has been much improved lately through the light of medical science; and we quite believe with the author of this work, that although we are now tolerably agreed to compare the vocal apparatus to a reed instrument, "it is well to consider the larynx as an instrument *sui generis*, the oldest, the simplest, and the most perfect which exists; nor is there any reason for seeking its analogue in any instrument with which we are acquainted." It is impossible to praise too highly the execution of the elaborate coloured plates in the "movable atlas" already referred to; although perhaps such praise would carry greater weight in a medical than a musical journal.

The Old Grenadier. Song. Words by Edward Oxenford. Music by A. C. Mackenzie. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

MR. MACKENZIE is known as a song-writer chiefly by his thoughtful compositions in the style of the classical German *Lied*, but that is no reason why he should wholly refrain from works of a more popular character. A "people's song" need not be rubbish, though it so often is rubbish as to make the distinction difficult. It may have the characteristics of good music, such as truthful expression, melodic beauty, and elevation of style, in common with the properties that most attract attention from the many. If any doubt existed upon this point, we should refer for assurance to the song before us, which is the work both of a musician and of a writer for the people at large—a combination, by the way, most desirable in every case, and one, for many reasons, to be encouraged. The subject of Mr. Oxenford's verses is true to actual life, and this must at once explain and justify its sanguinary nature. Our grenadier belongs to the old fighting school, in which