Review

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Those who, from weakness or slovenly carriage of the body, habitually stoop, or let their limbs hang with a too æsthetic limpness, will find it advantageous to commence their breathing exercises whilst lying on the back. Both inspiration and expiration should be practised." This is valuable advice, and should be rigidly followed by all, at least, who make exceptional use of their vocal organs. The chapter on "The care of the formed voice" is one of the most important in the book, and cannot be too much commended to vocalists. "It need hardly be said," writes our author, "that the voice must not be abused, either by being forced beyond its natural compass or by excessive violence of production. If the strings of a fiddle are screwed up too tight they will snap, and severe physical injury to the vocal organs may be the consequence of straining the voice beyond the limits of its capacity. Loss of elasticity of the vocal cords from over-stretching, rupture of some of the muscular or ligamentous fibres, or even of a blood-vessel in the throat, paralysis of one or more of the laryngeal muscles, are some of the ways in which nature occasionally avenges too rough handling of her delicate machinery." A chapter headed "Special Hygiene for Singers" contains valuable hints on temperance, clothing, diet, exercise, and many other matters absolutely necessary to be carefully studied by vocalists. "Women," it is said, "should walk out not less than *three*, and men not less than *six* miles a day. The dread of taking cold through the feet is unfounded if people will only consent to wear boots of sufficient thickness." The necessity of training the speaking voice is also very properly enforced, and singing as a help to speaking well, not of course, as Dr. Mackenzie says, that he would wish "to add to the afflictions of life by letting loose on society a host of tuneless minstrels," but simply that all may speak freely and with a clear articulation.

It is a great merit in this book that the author rather builds up theories of his own than attempts to demolish the theories of others. Temperately, and with admirable clearness of style, he writes the result of his own practice upon some of the best known vocalists; a table, showing the shape of the glottis and condition of the vocal cords in singing, being given in the Appendix, which we are certain will be studied with much interest. In every respect the work is an invaluable contribution to the physiologist and musician, and most thoroughly fulfils its mission as a "Handbook for Singers and Speakers."

Fifty Lessons for the Medium Part of the Voice. Forty Lessons for Contralto. Forty Lessons for Bass or Baritone. By J. Concone. Edited, with Marks of Expression and Phrasing, by Alberto Randegger.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

WE are glad to find that so distinguished a Professor as Mr. Randegger has so far recognised the inestimable value of "Concone's Lessons" as to supervise these editions just issued, and to add to their usefulness by indicating the method in which they are to be practised. After stating that no edition yet published seems to him as correct, complete, and reliable as it should be, Mr. Randegger says: "I have endeavoured to rectify this deficiency by adding in the present edition signs of expression and phrasing, where I considered it expedient to do so, completing, and in some cases altering, the breathing marks, and altogether carefully revising the whole work." The author expressly tells us that the object of these Lessons is to "place and fix the voice accurately," and to "develop *taste* while singing broad, elegant, and rhythmical melodies." Twenty-five of the Lessons are intended to be sung as *Solfeggi*, viz., pronouncing on every note its corresponding Italian name (do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si), and fifteen are to be *vocalised*, viz., sung upon the broad and open sound of the Italian vowel A (as pronounced in the word *Father*). Mr. Randegger expressly directs that these Lessons should be practised, *in conjunction* with the Vocal Exercises contained in his "Singing Primer," after the system of respiration and voice-production therein explained have been sufficiently mastered. Apart from the great advantage of practising these Lessons as studies for voice-training, their attraction is musically so great that all lovers of pure melody will be delighted with them as "songs without words"; and in the form now published, therefore, they cannot fail to command an extensive sale.

Studies of Great Composers. By C. Hubert H. Parry, Mus. Doc. [George Routledge and Sons.]

DR. PARRY is so accomplished a musician that we should have been glad to welcome from his pen a series of analytical "studies" of the great creative artists of the world; and, from the title of the work before us, this is precisely what we anticipated. After carefully reading his book, however, we fail to see that it is more than a collection of biographies of composers, the incidental opinions upon their works being what would be naturally called forth by any intellectual recorder of their career. Viewed in this light, we are bound to accord very high praise to the volume, not only for the evident care which has been bestowed upon the collecting of facts, but for the exceedingly clear and concise style of the author. Commencing with Palestrina (in the chapter devoted to whom we have a brief account of the state of music which incited him to the composition of his "Missa Papæ Marcelli"), we pass on to Handel; and here the author appropriately reminds us how long after the death of Palestrina the world had to wait for another composer of the highest rank. "In reality," he says, "the time that passed before works of anything like as great calibre as his were produced again was considerably over a whole century, but to count from the year of his death to the year when Handel and Bach were born is actually ninety-one years. This certainly seems a very long while, and it seems the more remarkable if it is compared with the ninety-one years immediately before the present day. In that time some of Haydn's best symphonies have been written, and his 'Creation,' and his 'Seasons,' all Beethoven's symphonies and masses, and his Opera 'Fidelio,' and Weber's 'Freischütz,' and Schubert's songs, Mendelssohn's oratorios, and Chopin's pianoforte music, and Schumann's many beautiful productions, and all Wagner's immense music-dramas; and if the time is expanded just to a century, it will take in all the greatest of Mozart's symphonies, and his 'Requiem' as well; so it seems to hold almost all that is most interesting in thoroughly modern music." Proving thus how young music really is, we may fairly be astonished at the rapidity of its development; and all who wish to become acquainted with the lives of those who have gradually achieved this result cannot do better than consult Dr. Parry's volume, which, containing biographies of Palestrina, Handel, J. S. Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Wagner, really includes all the representative men of the art up to our own time. The whole of the sketches of these great artists are highly finished, and true to the life. That of Schubert is especially interesting and should be read by all admirers of his music. "His rapidity of thought and of writing," Dr. Parry says, "must have been marvellous. As fast as he finished one thing he generally began another, and often wrote several songs in a single day, and those not songs of the cheap, ephemeral description familiar in modern times, but works of art, with real thought and point and good workmanship in them." We can scarcely believe, with our author, that, although this composer's "symphonies and the masses, and the operas, and the sonatas, and pianoforte pieces, have a place in history, they all must yield in importance to his songs; and it is as the first great representative songwriter that he must be chiefly remembered"; for certainly the one "Symphony and a half," which he mentions, have a "place in history," and also in the hearts of all music-lovers, even of those who thoroughly appreciate the beauty of his songs. Dr. Parry has much to say upon Schumann and Wagner, and his observations upon both these composers show an intimate knowledge of their works. As we have already indicated, however, it is mainly with the *lives* of the artists selected that our author concerns himself; and it is not until his concluding remarks that he quits facts and gives us individual opinions. In this chapter he tells us truly enough that the German "thoroughness, clearness of judgment, and true nobility of thought in music is still maintained by Johannes Brahms, a descendant in the direct line of Bach and Beethoven." With his estimate of this composer we are inclined in every particular to agree; but it is rather a left-handed compliment to an artist, at one time perfectly idolised, to say that "the list of composers, who came near to the greatest, would not be complete without mention of Spohr."