Review

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words 'At the eternal Eastertide' being an inspiration. Dr. Lloyd's clear style is well illustrated by his contribution to the work, and will, with those of other writers, no doubt appeal to many who prefer a more direct method. There are other examples equally worthy of mention, and the whole book is full of interest. It was a happy idea to include the Chorale from Mendelssohn's 'Lobgesang,' for it exactly illustrates what is wanted in varied accompaniment. The book could not have been considered complete without examples from John Sebastian Bach, who, Mr. Bennett truly says in the preface, 'revealed his genius not least in his treatment of hymn-tunes.' It should be added that Mr. Bennett has contributed many admirable specimens of his own. The work is certain of wide recognition for its scope and variety.

Precept and Practice for Singing-Class Students. By J. A. Moonie.

[Novello & Co., Ltd.]

Mr. Moonie is an Edinburgh professor of great experience. He has for many years prepared students in Training Colleges for their musical duties. He finds that many existing manuals and instruction-books on sight-singing are cumbersome and redundant, and unnecessarily slow in coming to the point. There is a good deal of truth in this statement, and certainly no one will accuse Mr. Moonie of roundabout methods. He adopts the movable doh system, and some of the exercises are in Tonic Sol-fa notation. The work is comprehensive in scope without being over-long. The instruction is sugared with some humour of the variety generally called 'pawky.'

BOOKS RECEIVED.

Clara Schumann. By Berthold Litzmann. Two volumes. Pp. xxxvi. + 456, and vii. + 458. Price 24s. (London: Macmillan.)

Lyric Diction. By Dora Duty Jones. Pp. xvi. + 342. Price 5s. (London: Harper & Brothers.)

Music on the Shakespearean Stage. By G. H. Cowling. Pp. vi. + 116. Price 4s. (Cambridge: at the University Press.)

Voice training for choirs and schools. By Cyril Bradley Rootham. Pp. xlv. + 110. Price 1s. 6d. (Cambridge: at the University Press.)

The Church Music Society's Choir Book. Second Edition. Pp. 71. Price 1s. (London: Henry Frowde.)

Correspondence.

'WAGNER AND SUPER-WAGNER.'

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE MUSICAL TIMES.'

SIR,—*Quo tendimus?* Whither are our critics leading us? We know, of course, that they must be right—it is their business to be—but a poor musician like myself must be excused for feeling bewildered with his teachers of to-day. A few months ago I held up to derision in your columns the lucubrations of a man who wrote nothing but a series of incongruous notes, and I was gravely rebuked by Mr. Clutsam, who called this 'the logical development of harmony.' The other day I heard a piece by a composer, the whole of whose works I know well, and whose mental decadence I have long deplored. This latest product of his wrecked intelligence distressed me beyond measure, but was held up to admiration by the critics of the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Telegraph*, these gentlemen in the same breath praising Beethoven's Violin concerto and a primitive Symphony by Haydn, which were the other items on the programme. Now if Scriabine's 'Prometheus' is music, then it is idle to pretend that the other works are also music, for you cannot name a point in which the two styles are not absolutely contradictory. I do not say that the Cubists or Futurists are wrong—an artist's views on art are, of course, valueless—but if a man says he admires Buccioni or Severini, and also Raphael and Michael Angelo, I say . . . well, I would rather not say what I say.

And now on the top of this exasperation comes Mr. Ernest Newman, who is supposed to know all about art matters, occupying more than eight of your valuable pages with one of the strangest, un-Wellsian (if I may coin a word) forecasts of music in the future that ever was heard of. I call it un-Wellsian, because it seems so contrary to natural evolution or logical development (*pace* Mr. Clutsam) in art. I gather that he looks for 'a form of quasi-dramatic music in which we shall be rid of all, or most, of the mere scaffolding of narration or action that serves at present simply to give intellectual support to the music of opera.' I like that word 'simply,' it tells me so much. It tells me that the esteemed critic really believes that music can exist as such without intellectual support—that it is a state—a mood—an epileptic seizure—a trance. But these deplorable accessories of opera—the libretto and the singers—is not their existence due to evolution? To discard them would be something analogous to the procedure of the writers of 'Gems from the Classics' who discard the pudding and keep the plums, only to discover that the result is bathos. So have well-meaning literary persons endeavoured to eliminate the verbosity from Scott and Dickens with equally dire result. To come closer to Mr. Newman's idea, one beholds a composer making a tart that shall be all jam and have none of that nasty pastry about it. Believe a practical person: it would only be more difficult of digestion. I am glad to believe the idea chimerical.

Mr. Newman is really trying to imagine a simple form of art superseding a highly complex form. I well remember, just thirty-one years ago, when musical London was staggering under the assault of Wagner, hearing at a public dinner the future of music forecasted by several eminent men, the late Joseph Bennett and the present head of Novello's among them. The opinion most favoured was that in another twenty-five years a reaction would take place to a simple, solid style. The wish was doubtless father to the thought among these Handel-lovers; but I, as a modest young man should, imitated the behaviour of Brer Rabbit—'I lay low an' sed nuffin.' And the pen is now hardly dry in Mr. Newman's hand when out comes Strauss's new opera with more libretto and more accessories than ever. Speculations on the future are rather a futile business, as Mr. Chesterton has excellently shown in his 'Napoleon of Notting Hill'; but one thing one may prophesy with certainty about music: its evolution will always be in the direction of increased complexity. When the forecast I speak of was made it was thought that Brahms and Raff (!) had said the last word in abstract music. Then came along Dvorák, Tchaikovsky, and César Franck, and revealed new phases of our art: a still more recent new-comer, whom it is not for me to name (not being a critic), will presently make even Brahms a back number.

One must not reason from the particular to the general. Mr. Newman, I venture to think, is a little sweeping in his contempt for opera-books. Is he a librettist perchance, like so many of his kind? I fancy that there are libretti not devoid of merit from other pens than those of Richard Wagner and Hofmannsthal. Has Mr. Newman ever read 'Fervaa!' or 'L'étranger' by Vincent D'Indy, or that marvellous Greek trilogy 'Hippodamia' by Dr. Vrchlicky? I could even name at least three music-poems of the very highest merit from English pens, but this would be useless, as these are never likely to see the light. All these works are on different planes and have little kinship to those so trenchantly disposed of by Mr. Newman. Of course the poet and the musician always dream of a work which shall be all meat and no bones, just as the ordinary human being yearns for a Heaven where there shall be nothing but joy, forgetting that so long as we are human all our concepts are relative, so that we cannot have joy without sorrow, an umbrella without a stick, or an opera without padding. Yet Mr. Newman presents as his ideal a kind of symphonic-poem that shall be all interest. But why is the symphonic-poem—that excuse for all unskilful craftsmanship—to be our ideal? Not so long ago our critics scoffed at it, and the man who read psychology or theosophy into music was considered a crack-brained idiot. Now we are all for 'soul-states' and 'expression of personality' and 'inner-meanings' which have to be explained. When a man tells me seriously that 'there are thousands of pages in Bach that only yield up their full secret to us when we get some outside light upon the sequence