

Review

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what is meant thereby; and that, after all, is the main point. That Dr. Riemann has here made a first move in filling a real void in the otherwise abundant material available for the study of the pianoforte, will be readily conceded. He very truly says in his Preface (we give our own translation): "It is strange that all compilers of technical studies, following Plaidy's method of reducing their material to representative elementary types, should have omitted to furnish similar typical exercises for the training of each hand in the contrapuntal style. For whatever in Aloys Schmitt's 'Exercices Préparatifs,' and older similar works, may be said to partake of this element—such as the stationary position of one or more fingers, while the rest are executing rapid passages—is merely introduced either with a view to the reposeful bearing of the hand, or in order to render the fingers independent of each other; certainly not for the purpose of developing the appreciation of polyphonic devices in the pupil." Nor do we at all disagree with the author's recommendation that the training of the pupil in the direction indicated should be commenced at an early stage of his tuition. The exercises here given are simple enough at the outset, but well thought out and progressive, and fairly typical from beginning to end.

Dr. Riemann has not been particularly fortunate in his translator, especially in the purely technical passages of the letterpress, which frequently require a reference to the German text, accompanying the present edition, in order to render them intelligible. On the other hand, the "studies" generally speak for themselves, and conscientious masters will, we have no doubt, be grateful to the author for having lightened their duties in providing them with an additional and very useful adjunct to their tuition.

*The Story of Music.* By W. J. Henderson.

[Longmans, Green & Co.]

WITHOUT making any pretence to originality, Mr. Henderson must be admitted to have achieved very satisfactorily the aim set before him in his preface—that of giving a succinct account of the progressive steps in the development of modern music as an art. He avoids unnecessary biographical details, and prefers to treat the history of the art rather than that of artists, borrowing freely from authorities but acknowledging his loans. The book is prefaced by a brief chronological table, which is well drawn up except for some notable omissions. Mr. Henderson holds that Wagner is the only master-genius that has risen since Beethoven's day, hence it is not to be wondered at that he does not so much as even mention the names of Brahms or Dvorák. But this admiration of Wagner is, happily, compatible in his case with much sound and excellent criticism of the defects of Wagner's operas, to say nothing of Mr. Henderson's sensible remarks deprecating violent partisanship. In evidence of Mr. Henderson's temperateness we may quote the following passage: "Wagner wrote with a view only to the expression of his ideas, and he rarely troubled himself about the ability of singers to cope with the difficulties of his score. The consequence has been that vocalists engaged in the interpretation of his works have been continually obliged to so sin against the laws of good voice production that only persons of unusual robustness, such as Materna, Winkelman, Scaria, or Lehmann have been able to remain before the public for any length of time as representatives of his characters. And very few of these people have achieved great distinction except in the German mind, as vocalists pure and simple." Mr. Henderson is not afraid to declare his opinion that there are some very bad quarters of an hour in Wagner's operas, or to brand as a mistake the inordinate use of the *Leitmotif*, which Wagner and his imitators have indulged in. These lectures are in effect the work of an intelligent and independent thinker, whose views, whether we agree with them or not, are always worth listening to. The notes are often very much to the point—e.g., that on page 147: "I have spoken elsewhere of the possibilities that were in Mozart's genius had he lived longer. His widow died in 1842. 'Der Freischütz' was produced in 1821. Suppose Mozart had been living then, and his genius had come under the influence of the romantic movement, what might he not have done? He would have been sixty-five years old. Verdi's 'Aida' was produced when the composer was fifty-nine,

and his 'Otello' when he was seventy-four." With regard to Mr. Henderson's persistent spelling of Handel as Händel, we would point out to him that Handel habitually wrote his name without the modification. One might as well spell the name of the Chancellor of the Exchequer as Göschén. Strict historical accuracy in these matters amounts to a practical solecism. The printer has been unkind to Mr. Henderson in his quotation from Horace, on page 186, which is sadly mangled. But with all the shortcomings inevitable in so small a book on so large a subject, these lectures are well written and decidedly worth republishing.

*Anton Rubinstein. A Biographical Sketch.* By Alexander McArthur. [Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black.]

IF the many admirers of the various great musicians from time to time had done for their idols what has been done in the present case, the world would have been richer for the number of authenticated facts concerning the lives and labours of those who have shown humanity in its more exalted aspects. The author modestly offers his work "as a series of facts in the life of Anton Rubinstein, collected in St. Petersburg from intimate friends of the great composer-pianist, from Russian journals, books, and papers, and from such information as came to light during various conversations held with himself."

The student of musical biography who has already made himself acquainted with the works of the great Russian master will find little that is new to him in the pages, but it is something to have all the known facts of the life of a great artist in a convenient form, told in a pleasant and suitable way. There is nothing that can be called "word painting" in the book, and there is hardly any attempt at fine writing. There is no effusiveness whatever in such descriptions of Rubinstein's music as may be found in the pages. Indeed, it is almost possible to perceive that the author, who admires music, and has a special partiality for one of its greatest prophets, is not a trained musician. He is inclined to that form of biographical bias which, for lack of a better term, we call "hero-worship," is enthusiastic in his admiration but still speaks the words of common sense and cool temper, even in such controversial subjects as that of sacred opera, the evolution of which Rubinstein has attempted in more than one stage work founded upon Biblical themes. With regard to this it may be said that it is quite possible that the form of the older oratorio having been alleged to be almost exhausted, new ones may spring up, the result of earnest attempts and careful culture. But it is equally possible that the day of a reform in operatic subjects may be near at hand, and that the stage as a moral teacher may yet derive its themes from the inspired writings. If so, Rubinstein will not be the first of the advocates for such a reform, even though his voice is not the most resonant in its utterances on the subject. In this light the pages in the book on "Geistliche Oper" will be read with peculiar interest. There are two portraits, a copy of one taken in 1841, and another quite recently, with a photograph of a new medallion, and a view of the house of the musician at Peterhoff. The chief fault of the book is the want of an index; but as a whole book it is a sympathetic tribute to the genius of the composer, and will doubtless be much sought after by his many admirers as a *souvenir* of him personally, and of his artistic jubilee.

*Music and Action, or the Elective Affinity between Rhythm and Pitch.* By J. Donovan.

[Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.]

THE author of this "psychological essay on a new principle of explanation for the genesis and development of music" endeavours to explain the mystery of the origins and growths of the much-loved art. With this object in view he divides his theme into eight chapters, namely—1. General indications of the character of the feeling which discovered the elective affinity between rhythm and pitch. 2. The same feeling as affecting, and as affected by, dramatic art. 3. Some instructive points in early history of drama, and in modern descriptions of musical effect. 4. Significance of the mentally absorbing element in music. 5. Recognition of this element by Æsthetic writers. 6. Psychological analysis. 7. Significance of woman's lack of the creative impulse for music. 8. Harmony and the