

—Music Not a Science.—

It was the greatest mistake to consider music as a science—it could not possibly be treated that way. Too much stress could not be put on the value of the fullest possible development of the senses; the value, or, rather, the indispensability, of cultivating to the very utmost the power of mental hearing. It was impossible to overstate this, and hopeless for people to attempt to do anything in music without it. Most amazing was the widespread lack of the power to read and think music. It had happened that a student quite prepared to play elaborate works by Liszt was unable to identify the simplest chord when played upon the piano. As a rule, the impulse on receiving new music was to "try it over." This was exactly on the level of the poor little youngsters learning to read, and obliged to sound letter by letter, and word by word, in order to understand. Where would the literary man be whose only knowledge of Shakespeare's plays was what he had actually seen staged? As the scholar knew his Shakespeare, so the musician should know Beethoven's symphonies.

—Rules are Servants.—

Turning to the demand for rules, rules, rules, a great composer had said:—"The rules are all my most humble and obedient servants." The great master wrote, and the theorist followed, after deducing rules from what had been written. Turning to the more technical side of the subject, the lecturer proceeded to touch on modulation, showing how music had constantly grown, ever finding new and unexplored regions. The main principles remained unchanged, although new decorative developments might overlie them. He mentioned, in passing, the differing division of the octave from that of the 12 semitones to the greater number of other peoples—the Hindoo having 22, which amounted to quarter tones. The effect of Eastern singing was on the Western ear that of slurring from note to note, but really the singer was putting in these quarter tones. In modulation the student was apt to develop a fumbling inability to reach his aim. By numerous examples Dr. Davies demonstrated how to seize upon the essential and work in the most direct method. Over and over he urged the need of visualization, or, might he call it "auralization"—a mental realization of music, and a clear comprehension, and a clear cut appreciation of what was essential.

—Harmony.—

Turning to harmony, the lecturer gave a crisp, lucid, picturesque presentation of his subject, illustrating his remarks by excursions far back into the history of music. He urged the necessity for clearness and simplicity, of appreciation of structure, and the need to think musically rather than to be for ever seeking for hard and fast rules; and always developing every faculty to the utmost. It was fatal to begin to harmonise a melody without first having a thorough understanding of its tempo and rhythm. A full understanding, and the knowledge only to be obtained by constant experiment and study, were needed. There were music schools where you were taught to play the piano in three lessons at 2/6 a lesson. Practically you had there the three main chords—tonic, dominant, and sub-dominant.

Sitting down to the piano, the lecturer played a few chords. "That is what is called vamping," he said. (Laughter.) While he did not believe in the whole art of piano playing as taught in three lessons for 7/6 for the course, yet, in one way, it illustrated the root of the matter—practically it meant the use of the three main chords—tonic dominant, and sub-dominant. The lecture concluded with interesting reflections upon the possible origin of certain musical developments, and the characteristics of early music. He had been fortunate in the possession of a very valuable old book of Ecclesiastical Motets, given to him by the late Bishop O'Reilly. This had been a most fruitful field of study. He urged his hearers to lose no opportunity of studying different phases of music, past and present, and training themselves for appreciation and expression.

—Afternoon Proceedings.—

Thursday afternoon was the occasion of a piano recital by Mr. Brewster Jones. There is a special value to teachers and pupils in an opportunity to study various methods and schools of piano playing; and, what is more, of learning to realize how each musician brings something of his own to the interpretation of the works of the great masters. Mr. Brewster Jones had chosen his programme well, in order to contrast old music with new, and there was in it the additional interest of hearing an original composition played by the composer. In two numbers, the Scarlatti-Tausig "Sonata in G minor" and the "Prelude and Fugue in C sharp minor," by J. S. Bach, the pianist gave examples of the time when finger dexterity and a bewildering intricacy, of interweaving of themes,

rather than variety of tone, were aimed at. He rendered them in just the right way to bring out their character and beauty. "An Ayre," by Jeremiah Clarke, had a quaint appeal of its own. Next came "Two Bourries," by Henry Purcell, arranged by Mr. Brewster Jones. Their bright spontaneity and joyousness were delightfully expressed. The "Sonata in F minor," by H. Brewster Jones, had individuality of character and a decidedly modern colouring. There was the restlessness of the sea in the opening movement, "Allegro moderato." The "Scherzo" and "Allegro vivace" had the liquid flow of a fountain. There was a pleasing serenity in the Andante con moto, and the "Finale-Presto" was decidedly striking. In response to prolonged applause the composer gave yet another of his own writings, a delightful little gavotte, dainty and haunting. Possibly it was in the three Chopin numbers that Mr. Brewster Jones displayed most fully his powers of virtuosity. These were "Etude, op. 25, No. 10," "Nocturne, op. 27, No. 1," in which the rendering of the left-hand passages was wonderfully good, also the singing quality of the touch in certain passages. "Gaspard de Nuit, No. 1" (Ondine), by Maurice Ravel, concluded a particularly fine performance.

A MOZART CONCERT.

S.A. ORCHESTRA AND BACH SOCIETY.

On Thursday evening, at the Elder Hall, a striking and inspiring Mozart concert was given by the South Australian Orchestra, in conjunction with the Adelaide Bach Society. Dr. Davies conducted, and it must have been a source of keen and merited gratification to have so fine a medium of expression of the greatest music at his command as the two organizations—both owing their origin mainly to his own initiative and enthusiasm. The production of works such as those presented involves years of previous training and months of intensive rehearsal, and it says much for those concerned, vocalists and instrumentalists, that their love for the divine art had led them to devote time and effort to achieve this result. Miss Sylvia Whittington was leader of the orchestra, and Mr. George Gardner organist. Mozart's "Symphony in E flat" called forth the full resources of the orchestra. Dr. Davies conducted with his usual quiet but complete command, and throughout the symphony was rendered with a fine appreciation and judgment. The arresting opening of the Adagio was given its full value. The Allegro varying from dignified composure to brightness, the lovely tranquility of the Andante, the Minuetto with its arresting rhythm all led fittingly up to the breathless exuberance of the conclusion. The presentation of Mozart's "Requiem Mass" was an event of note. The whole work is full of the deepest, most poignant religious feeling, and, as was only fitting, Dr. Davies requested the audience to refrain from talking and listen throughout with the reverence it deserved. This atmosphere was noticeable in the interpretation, adding tremendously to its impressiveness. The soloists were Miss Myrtle Ingham, A.M.U.A., Miss Lillian Wilkinson, Mr. Leslie Martin, and Mr. C. R. Watson, who gave each of them a sincere and artistic rendering of their parts. It is impossible to go through the work in detail, but specially impressive were the "Rex Tremendae," the close of the "Recordare," and the "Lachrymosa." The "Hostias" breathed the very spirit of prayer; the "Sanctus" and "Benedictus," the impressive instrumental introduction to the "Agnus Dei," and the close were all notably good.

A MUSIC TEACHERS' CONFERENCE.

The cause of musical education in this State will certainly be helped by the conference of music teachers proceeding this week at the Elder Conservatorium. The meetings have the advantage of bringing together for social intercourse music teachers both of the city and the country, and also of getting them into closer touch with the principal seat of musical learning in the State. They are hearing good music, satisfactorily performed, at a series of concerts and recitals, besides excellent addresses by experts on various aspects of their art. These must tend alike to the spread of knowledge and the elevation of standards and ideals, without which it is hopeless to expect any great advance in musical culture. There are some people who imagine that no education in music is necessary except for the executant, and none even for him beyond technique. It is foolishly supposed that a full power of appreciation of this extraordinarily profound and complex form of art is a kind of inborn faculty; that a sufficient sense of rhythm, melody, harmony, and structural form comes, as it were, by nature, and needs no study for its development and refinement. Few would make the mistake of believing that to the un-literate and untrained mind there is an instant and complete revelation of the higher beauties of poetry, or that the masterpieces of painting and sculpture have as full and deep a significance for the uninitiated as they disclose to the educated eye and mind. Of all forms of emotional expression, music, as Professor Harold Davies pointed out in his inaugural lecture on Monday evening, is essentially the most creative. The sources of its beauty are not in the objective world; the vision and the faculty divine of the composer are turned inward, where lies a wealth of the spirit communicable only by the magic symbolism of sound into which his genius translates it. The Abt Vogler of Browning wonders whether "save in this, such gift be allowed to man—that out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound, but a star." Music, as Professor Davies says, is the sheer product of human imagination. It is in its absolute form an entirely subjective thing, and we can only conjecture an ultimate psychological basis in a mysterious perception of the fundamental beauty and harmony of the universe, with which, in the depths of his being, man is conscious of a sympathetic relationship. What we do know is that in its own language music is able to say things that the most eloquent words can never utter. Incomparable as a means of soul-expression, it speaks of the wonder and mystery of existence as can no other of the arts; and doubtless it is on such grounds that Professor Davies does not hesitate to claim for music the highest place of all. But though "the sublimation of all human utterance," the language in which music interprets thoughts and feelings otherwise ineffable is not to be mastered in the absence of some effort.

Professor Davies rightly lays stress on the importance of the "cultivation of perception," by which the ear becomes an avenue to the soul. Absolute tone-deafness is a rare defect. Even the unmusical Dr. Johnson made the concession that music to him, was "the least disagreeable kind of noise." But even where it gives pleasure, an incomplete and unrefined perception of tone is accountable for the popular preference for the "light and frivolous" music, the "audible confectionery," as Professor Davies calls it, which is of the same order in music as in relation to their respective arts are the "endless floods of writing which are not literature, illustrations which are not pictures, cheap rhymings which are not poetry, and buildings which are not architecture." Clearly a musical people requires, besides the possession of capable interpretative artists, a cultivated taste in listening. In advocating the fuller inclusion of music in a common-scheme of education, Professor Davies tells us that what is wanted is the gift not merely of hearing—that may be purely physical—but also of "perceiving things, consciously, intelligently, together with our relation to them, and then, as a natural consequence, learning to feel these things."

This, as he observes, is "developing a heightened sensibility." The time will come, he believes, when systematic ear and rhythm training will be an integral part of the school curriculum. But the training will not be purely sensuous; it must be intellectual too, or the master-works of the greatest musical composers—the inspired symphonies, for instance, of Beethoven—will ever remain beyond the student's grasp. The neophyte in music will, of course, begin with the simplest and most easily understood compositions. But music they must always be. Taught to hear intelligently and appreciatively, and with instruction in the contents of a work, its melody, harmony, rhythm, cadence, and broad principles of form; taught also to appreciate tone and touch, at least so far as to enable the beautiful to be distinguished from the ugly at the outset, there is hope that the student will grow up loving good music and impatient of any other. A community helped by its music teachers and its Conservatorium to the attainment of a high and refined taste by this means will give music the important place in life that Dr. Davies properly demands for it.

FLORA AND FAUNA OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

Considerable progress has been made in the preparation of the handbooks dealing with the flora and fauna of South Australia. The work is being carried out under the auspices of the British Science Guild, and the publication of the series has been undertaken by the Government. Professor Howchin is engaged on the introductory volume for this important series. Professor Wood-Jones is dealing with the mammals. The native South Australian mammals are of great interest and much scientific importance, and those who live in country districts may help this work by supplying information about the prevalence of various forms found in their neighborhood. Already many species are rare, the indigenous mammals being replaced by introduced foxes, rabbits, &c. Mr. Edgar R. Waite is compiling the useful and important handbook of the South Australian fishes. Dr. R. H. Pullen is writing the volume on spiders, a much neglected, but important, group. The difficult subject of the beetles has fortunately been undertaken by Mr. A. M. Lea. A long-felt want has been an up-to-date flora of South Australia, which Mr. J. M. Black has undertaken to produce. The orchids are to receive separate treatment from Dr. Rogers. Professor Cleland, Professor and Mrs. O'Brien, Mr. Malloy, and Mr. Samuel are working at other subjects for this series of handbooks. The honorary work thus undertaken in the public interest will be much appreciated by nature lovers throughout the State, and welcomed by children whose pursuit of nature is at present hampered by the lack of suitable books.

MUSIC IN EDUCATION.

In commenting at the Music Teachers' Conference on Friday on the need for teaching music in schools, Dr. Harold Davies quoted the following paragraph on the subject from "The Educational Times":—"Sir Henry Hadow, in an address at the annual meeting of the Manchester High School for Girls, made a special plea for the inclusion of music as a properly recognised part of our educational system. He said some people did not understand what a musical education really was, and many thought that it consisted in teaching reluctant people to play the piano rather badly. He would gladly sweep away 90 per cent. of the piano lessons now given. What was wanted was an appreciation of music rather than executive ability. Music ought not to be regarded as something which foreigners made and England paid for. It had exactly the same kind of appeal as great literature, and everything that could be said in favor of the inclusion of Shakespeare in an educational system could be urged equally for great music. It was to be noted also that music was most prominent in those periods of history which were the most splendid and full of life and happiness. For our comfort Sir Henry expressed the view that things are improving as compared with his early days, when, he said, 'Every girl was disgraced who could not play the piano, and every boy who could not...'"