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What Is Art? by James Stanley Little

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d'illusion est nécessaire au bonheur, a line quoted by the authoress on the title page, perhaps in unconscious self-justification. Altogether, the volume is a bright, clever, readable sketch of German life and society, and a welcome addition to the musical literature of the day. And we heartily echo Sir George Grove's wish, expressed in a Preface to the book, that Miss Fay will some day give us an equally charming and faithful account of music and life in the States of America.

What is Art? By James Stanley Little.
[W. Swan Sonnenschein and Co.]

SEYMOUR HADEN'S assertion that "Art is not a learned profession"—one of the quotations on the title-page of this volume—seems to have been the text on which the author has discoursed in that free and caustic style which makes his work rather a defiance of, than an appeal to, public taste. We may, perhaps, be inclined to say that his remarks would have had greater weight had they been more temperately worded; for although he tells us in the Preface that his book is "from beginning to end an outcry against oppression and prejudice," some readers may even believe that in many pages the author displays the very "oppression and prejudice" that he complains of. There is nothing new in the charge against literary men that, as a rule, they have but a slender knowledge of music; but if, in writing of art, they include this subject, knowledge is absolutely necessary in order to give due effect to their observations. When, for instance, in declaring that inherent cunning of hand or voice has nothing to do with genius, the author of this work, amongst other questions, asks, "Otherwise, why is not the sweetest warbler of ballads a Mendelssohn?" or when he says "The musician has his chromatic scales and his tones and semitones," although we know perfectly well what he means, the manner in which he expresses himself is just such as to make us feel that he only ranks music amongst the fine arts because in the present day he must do so; but that as a powerful agent in the intellectual advancement of the masses, in his heart, he places it far beneath painting, sculpture, or poetry. Apart from these considerations, however, we have nothing but praise for the book. It is true that there may be nothing in it that every true artist has not felt throughout his years of toil, with what we may term the "outer world" for his critics; but the thoughts are so eloquently expressed as to ensure the attention and appreciation of all who believe in the high mission of art. We select, for example, the following, where, after explaining the difference between the scientist and the artist, the author says: "No picture can be capable of satisfying in a sustained manner the subtle refinements of the higher intellect which is not content to leave much unsaid, merely indicating this by hints and suggestions. Pictures whose aim is solely to act as keys to the conclusions of the botanist, meteorologist, or geologist, are useful doubtless as such, but should never be ranked as high art, or, in fact, as art at all, in the sense in which the word has been used, and will continue to be used in these pages. Art is an interpreter, not a transcriber: a suggester, not a realiser. Art does not, or should not, attempt to rival nature, to equal nature even; its aim should be to stamp the mind of one who has looked at nature sympathetically upon canvas. A thinker goes alone to a landscape, and looks at it with eyes which bring to him all manner of yearnings and aspirations. If he be a poet, he puts these thoughts into words; if a painter, upon canvas; and so he enhances the natural beauty of a landscape for ever, which to the unimaginative would only suggest so much prettiness. He thus helps weaker mortals to see and to feel the grand thought-inspiring capabilities inherent in nature, and he registers his own thoughts for others to revel in, and, may be, to enlarge upon." We must do our author the justice to say that he tells us: "I am now and hereafter in this work concerned directly with art as painting"; but as he insists upon constantly indicating the real mission of a composer, we are bound to take notice of his remarks; and more especially, then, as a proof of the place he would assign to the heaven-born tone-poet, we quote the following:—"It is true the musician can command a certain force denied to the painter, in that he can call to his aid the organs of sound.

But this gain is, to my mind, by no means a compensation for the more potent disabilities I have enumerated." These "disabilities," we may say, are stated to be the impossibility of representing tangible form and colour, and the incapacity of doing more than simulate sounds, "such as the rushing of the brook, the warble of the birds, or the crashes of natural forces." But to continue our extract: "Sound is, after all," he says, "a far lower and less subtle sense than sight. Language is a poor vehicle for the expression of thought; and music, although a much higher medium, is also lacking in the elements which would make it possible for it to claim pre-eminence." Here we have music classified from a painter's point of view. Now Thibaut, whose Essay on "Purity in Musical Art" has become well-known in this country through an English translation, says: "I could never grow old in spirit if a kind destiny were to preserve to me all my life-long an unimpaired enjoyment of fine music." Were there real truth in the disparaging observations upon music in the work under notice, men of high intellect, like Thibaut, would rather pray for an "unimpaired enjoyment" of an art which can represent, rather than suggest, to the mind. Mr. Little should be told that "simulating" sound is the very lowest department of music.

The Organ Works of John Sebastian Bach. Edited by J. F. Bridge and James Higgs. Book V.
[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE present instalment of this very valuable edition of Bach's imperishable organ works contains the last three of the sonatas or trios for two manuals and pedal. Though usually included in the organ works, Spitta tells us that, according to the original MSS., they were intended for the pedal clavier with two manuals. "In his organ music proper Bach turned to account much of his chamber music. But he took care not to transfer the forms without alteration and in their entirety. In contrast to Handel, he never ceased to regard the organ as devoted to the service of the church." But we no longer possess claviers with two manuals and pedals, and the trios can only be played upon the organ. For technical practice their value cannot be over-estimated, while as abstract music we cordially agree with Spitta, who says that they are fully equal to the violin sonatas "in wealth of ideas, in interesting working out, in masterly treatment of the three-part writing, and in sharpness of contrast between each other." It need only be added that the careful fingering and pedalling of Messrs. Bridge and Higgs render this edition specially useful, while the student cannot fail to profit by the terse and clear synopsis of the works.

An Appendix to the Service in G. By Gerard F. Cobb.
[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THIS appendix to Mr. Cobb's excellent and thoughtfully-written service contains the "Benedictus qui venit," "O Salutaris," and the "Agnus Dei," which, though not in the Prayer Book, are now extensively used in the Eucharistic Service; also a setting of the "Nunc dimittis," for use in the same office. The musical merit of these is quite equal to that of the other portions of the service, the "Agnus Dei" being especially pleasing.

Original Compositions for the Organ. No. 48. *Sonata in D minor.* By Charles H. Lloyd.
[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

IT is not often, even in these days of activity in a branch of art once sadly neglected, that we meet with so meritorious a work for the organ as Mr. Harford Lloyd's Sonata. Of course, the known ability of the composer excited high expectations, and an examination of the music more than realised them. The first movement, in symphonic form, is distinguished by breadth and energy, and the brief *Andante sostenuto*, in B flat, with an episode in G flat, is very charming. In place of a fugue as a finale, Mr. Lloyd gives us a *quasi minuetto*, in D major, containing some clever writing, but generally quiet and dignified rather than brilliant. The composer has not piled up difficulties unnecessarily, and his work is therefore within the means of ordinarily competent players.