

## MUSICAL EDUCATION FOR THE PEOPLE.

The beneficial effects of music in allaying bad passions and eliciting the better attributes of the human mind, have been long acknowledged. If it be an exaggeration to say that it "hath charms to soothe the savage breast, to soften rocks, and bend the knotted oak," at least it is admitted to have a genial influence upon our nature. It remained for the present age to bring into practice the theory of instructing the masses in this delightful science. Formerly the study of it was confined to the rich, the educated, and those who cultivated it for their daily bread; but within a recent period an attempt was made by Joseph Mainzer, an enlightened German, to inspire the working-classes on the Continent, and the people generally, with a taste for singing. He was so successful at Paris, that he had numerous classes of labouring men, who, after a short period, were able to sing in harmony with great power and precision.

Within the past year, M. Mainzer came to England, and, by dint of perseverance, aided by genius and industry, he has succeeded in establishing classes for the instruction of labouring men in singing. There are now daily classes in London; and it augurs favourably of the good sense and intelligence of the people, to be able to say that they have joined these classes in great numbers, and in a short time have made very rapid progress in the first principles of harmony. About a month ago, there was a gathering of all the classes at the Music Hall, Stone-street, Bedford-square, and the efficiency exhibited by the pupils gave great satisfaction to a number of musical and literary celebrities, who were specially invited to be witnesses of M. Mainzer's success in developing and forwarding the musical capabilities of the multitude. The number of singers was nearly twelve hundred. They executed the national anthem with great precision and effect; and, indeed, upon few occasions has such a powerful and well-organised chorus been brought together. Although some of the pupils had not received more than two months' instruction, yet difficult pieces of music were admirably executed by them.

A system by which uncultivated men may sing beautifully in chorus, although three months before they did not know a single note, must naturally excite some attention, and we think that a brief explanation of the mode adopted by M. Mainzer must prove of interest to our readers. As soon as the elementary course is finished, a second or superior class is immediately formed, so as to conduct the pupils to the higher branches of the science. The first course consists of fifteen lessons, at the end of which the pupils can sing choruses in a very creditable manner. They manifest great energy and enthusiasm. Many of them will teach their companions so far as they themselves have proceeded, and then bring them to the classes. One person, a woman, comes thirty miles every week to receive a lesson. Many of the pupils attend two or three classes in the course of the week. One workman, in particular, attends a class every night. Six nights in the week does this industrious individual come to the various class rooms, distant four, five and six miles from each other. By way of proof of the estimation in which M. Mainzer is held by his pupils, we may mention that he frequently receives addresses of thanks, letters, and complimentary poetry from them, which, if not exhibiting much literary ability, yet manifest much honest gratification and gratitude.

The manual employed by M. Mainzer for the instruction of the pupils, is a book of his own, called *Singing for the Million*, the lessons of which are on an easy and progressive scale, by means of which the study is much simplified. Within a recent period, a small publication has been established, under the auspices of M. Mainzer, called the *National Circular*, the object of which is to record the progress of his system, and its effects upon his pupils.

From the very commencement of M. Mainzer's labours, there seems to have been a due appreciation of the value of his system. For instance, at the Mechanics' Institution, the following was the ratio of the increase of his pupils. On the first evening, the number was 120; on the second, 250; on the third, 350; on the fourth, 400; and we are happy to say that the number continues progressively to increase.

The intention of M. Mainzer is to give periodical festivals, where the classes will assemble in the same manner as upon the occasion alluded to in Stone-street. The progress of the working classes in musical education will there be fairly and fully developed. It is almost impossible to conceive how much good will be effected by giving to the artisan such ennobling pleasures, instead of the degrading ones to which, in too many instances, he now has recourse. The absence of musical taste, and an ignorance of the solid pleasure and improvement to be derived from the cultivation of the science, have long been a reproach to England, enlightened as she is. M. Mainzer, however, seems destined to remove this blot from our intellectual reputation.

M. Mainzer has already established a class at Brighton, and it is his intention to do the same in other provincial towns. At Brighton, he has been quite as successful as in the metropolis. His classes at Brighton increase in numbers, and the journals of that town attest the fact of the rapid progress of his pupils in the art of singing. Six hundred persons of all ranks, from humble mechanics to exalted fashionables, attended his very first lecture. It is not our intention at present to enter at length upon the doctrine which M. Mainzer professes; but we may remark, that his theory is shortly this. He contends that Nature has not only given to every human being a voice, but that each individual, if he cultivate that voice properly (and it may be done with ease), may become a good singer.

It is true that some people have a finer voice than others, but he maintains that all may improve their voice, and acquire what is called an ear for music, by practice. The faculty of voice is, as he contends, susceptible of a higher or lower degree of development, by men's of more or less practice. The truth of this theory has been demonstrated to a great extent by the progress which M. Mainzer's pupils have made. But to return to M. Mainzer's labours at Brighton.

He explained, at one of his lectures in that town, that all persons could make one tone, and this was *sol*, (G in the treble clef), and this he called the speaking note. He made his pupils sing this note five times in a bar. They then rose one tone to *la* (A treble clef); after exercising them, they proceeded to *si* (B the major third), and so to *do* (C, the fourth). They were then exercised in the scale downwards, and they effected all his lessons with great ease. M. Mainzer then illustrated the use of *time*, which he did in a peculiar mode. He does not use the old terms of breve, semibreve, crotchets, &c., but he calls them *whole notes*, *half notes*, *quarter notes*, &c.

We have thus given an outline of M. Mainzer's system, the chief point of which is the attempt to teach persons to sing scientifically from notes, with as much ease as they are taught to read. His system is addressed principally to the humbler classes, from the excessive cheapness of the terms, which do not exceed the sum of three-halfpence per lesson.

Into the difficult question of the capability of the human voice, we do not propose to enter; contenting ourselves with repeating the principle for which M. Mainzer contends, that the register or compass of every one's voice may, by care, attention, and perseverance, be so regulated or improved as to enable all to sing with a certain degree of proficiency. Singing is certainly a beautiful accomplishment; and if, as M. Mainzer says, there is no nation on the Continent where the people possess such fine musical voices as he meets with among the workmen in England, it is not too much to anticipate that he will not be deceived in his desire to found a popular school of music, which may lead to the extensive dissemination of a taste for music among the labouring population of this country.—*Chamber's Edinburgh Journal*.