CHAPTER I.

THE NATURE AND OBJECT OF THIS WORK.

The Object for which this Work is intended.—Communion among Teachers. The Music-master.—The Teacher, the Artist, and the People.—The Qualifications of a Teacher.—Extent of the Field of Instruction, and Necessity of a Division of Labour.—The Profession, a Sphere of common Interest and Fellowship.—Sceptics.

At a time like the present, when all the relations of Europe are disturbed, when all minds are excited, and all interests—whether of a political, religious, social, or industrial nature—are left unsatisfied and anxiously waiting to be appeased: at such a time, the lover and disciple of art cannot refrain from asking questions, like those which are now so common—"What is *our* present position? What have *we* got, and what do *we* wish to obtain? What is needful for us, and whither are we going, or towards what are we drawn by the force of necessity?" In our art, too, as all will be ready to acknowledge, much has been achieved and great things gained. Not only has its number of votaries infinitely increased, but it has also assumed, in two directions, a character too important to be overlooked, and sufficiently complex to require a thorough examination.

One of these directions is that towards the past. The creations of our forefathers are now no longer known only to the learned, nor lie dormant in rare and inaccessible libraries; they have again come to life, like those grains of wheat which, after four thousand years' concealment in the hands of Egyptian mummies, were sown in our soil and brought forth fruit. The works of Bach, Eckard, Schütz, the Gabrielis, Palestrina, and Lattre, have again become accessible to every lover of music, and have been frequently performed and analysed. The past is no longer a hidden treasure, but has become the property of our times, and every one may avail himself of it, according to his capacity and inclination.

The other direction is that which leads towards the future. Since the days of those artists whom we call our "classics"—even since the time of Beethoven, the last of them—men of talent have constantly opened new roads to the player on "the world's instrument," the piano; they have created, or intended to create, new forms of vocal and orchestral composition; "the opera of the future" has been proclaimed, and there are even some to whom the time of promise seems to have arrived. On the other hand, there are not wanting those who cling to the forms and

traditions of the "classical times," who keep aloof from that which they deny to be a "progress," looking upon it rather as an aberration, or even as a sign of the decay and impending ruin of their art.

And literature has taken a lively interest in these matters. Questions regarding the signification and value of musical art and its propagation, the importance of former creations, and that which the future is likely to bring us, have been started with earnestness and warmly discussed. The question about the future, in particular, could not fail to agitate the minds of men, at a time when the existing state of things cannot possibly satisfy, when every one yearns for a better future, and, as far as in him lies, labours for its realization.

These are questions of interest and importance to every one who takes a conscious part in the life of nations; they belong, in fact, to the vital questions of our times. But no one is so deeply concerned in them as the *teacher;* he whose calling it is to spread the culture of art, to make accessible and comprehensible its existing productions, to impart to his pupils the necessary knowledge and skill for their proper performance, and at the same time prepare them for every demand of the future. As the expounder and warder of the treasures of the past, as well as the present, and as the labourer for the future, he cannot evade those questions. He, above all others, must feel it his duty to attempt a solution, not theoretical only, but also practical, a solution which shall lead both to a clear perception and an active exertion.

As a teacher, and for teachers, I take up these questions, hoping to make them fertile, not only for the abstract understanding, but also for the practical preservation and culture of art.

We are accustomed to look upon a book as the exclusive production and property of its writer. In one point of view, this is certainly true. The work was conceived and matured in the mind of the author, it was born through the power of that mind; his was the labour and anxious care, his the first reward—the consciousness of a duty fulfilled—and his the responsibility. From another point of view, however, it is equally undeniable that not only the labours of preceding individuals, but also the often undefinable influence of contemporary art and artists, the current of the times, and the character and position of the nation to whom we belong, may claim a share in the authorship of every work which springs from the life and genius of the nation, and the spirit of the times. This claim applies to all productions of art, though apparently of a purely personal and individual character; even works of science can scarcely repudiate such a co-authorship. We are all borne forward on the waves of time and by the current of life around us; though some of us may be floating beneath the surface, while others raise their heads above the heaving surge, and even cause small eddies in the rolling tide. It is our reward and consolation, nay, it constitutes the very essence of man's nobility, that he is not carried along senselessly like a piece of wood, but that he perceives how the current runs and whither he is carried; that he does not lose sight of his destiny, but floats on, bravely fighting his way, or, if it must be, bravely and cheerfully sinking, rather than submitting to be carried in a direction which he knows to be wrong. Mankind is the tide of which each individual forms a wave, a pulse of life, on which depends the existence and salvation of the whole.

Keeping this in view, I desire, above all, that my book may not be considered as my exclusive work and property. Much as I have thought, studied, tried, and experienced, during my long professional career, I never have had the presumption to set myself up as the teacher of my brother teachers, to whose preceding or contemporary labours, I, on the contrary, must always own myself a debtor, as I gratefully acknowledge their stimulating influence on my thoughts and actions, even where it has been less defined and obvious. I write this book with a different feeling, and for a different object. What all of us, others as well as myself, have perceived and discovered in the course of time and under the impulse of artistic life, that I intend to collect, as the quiet lake collects the streams and rivulets of the surrounding heights. I would wish my book to be considered as the common production and common property of all who are concerned in its contents. And, indeed, what is it, and what can it do, unless my brother teachers take it up as their own, become its willing instruments, and practically complete and perfect its design? This book is to collect the results of real life, reflect the lights that have arisen in the friendly or hostile contacts between life and art; it is intended to establish fundamental principles, to throw out hints that may guide us whilst so much is dark in art, and also in the human breast. All this can only become a living and fertile reality, by its being carried into our schools of art and educational establishments. It is as necessary in art as in every other concern of life, that those who invent, and those who examine, improve and apply, should go hand in hand with brotherly love; that every one should unite his own interests with those of others, and find his gain and reward in the gain of all. Each of us is merely a link of the electric chain through which flashes the spark that is to kindle a light among the people. No one forming a link of this chain is to isolate himself from the rest, no one is to neglect his portion of the work; every one must be ready to receive, that he may be able to give, and freely to dispense whatever he may have gathered or matured.

But who, among all that are engaged in mental labours, feels the want of brotherly communion so much as the teacher? No teacher depends on, or labours by himself alone, because no one has the power, or the time and opportunity, to complete the education of those entrusted to his care, altogether by himself and without the co-operation of others. But he who is engaged with him in the same work must necessarily operate against him, unless the efforts of both are guided by the same spirit, directed to the same point, and, as far as possible, supported by similar means. Misunderstanding, suspicion, anxiety about personal interests, differences of opinion, as well as position, may, indeed, offer an obstinate resistance, and tend for a time to pervert the mind of single individuals; but, ultimately, the want of hearty co-operation must make itself felt, and real brotherly communion among the members of the same profession will appear an indispensable condition to a perfectly successful *and cheerful* labour in the field of tuition. This necessity once felt and acknowledged, mutual understanding and goodwill may be expected to follow, and the harmonious exertion of all will conduce to the prosperity and happiness of each individual. Nor could he be called a teacher of the right stamp, who would obstruct the common work, or look coldly on its success; for, what is the object for which a true teacher labours, and what the reward he expects? He

wishes to awaken in his pupils an interest in his instruction, and qualify them for the object of it, that they may become rich and prosperous in the life of art, and that art may continue to live through their love and power. Is there in truth any other reward that could compensate a faithful teacher? The artist, with loving ardour and in blissful solitude, completes his work by himself; his own conception and creation are his world, and constitute his highest—often his only, though over-abundant reward. But what is the case of the teacher, who is anxious to share with his pupil the fruits of his studies and labours, to communicate to him that knowledge and experience which may have cost him a life of toil and care? Does he know that his labours will not be vain? That he will be satisfied with his own work when it leaves his hands? Who is sure that he—another Epimetheus—may not be constrained to deny and turn away from the object of his fostering care, when it appears before him in the shape of a lovely Elpore? Is he certain that his love and labours will be recollected when the work is done; even by him in whom he planted and nourished it with the most ardent devotion? In most cases he will be dismissed without honour or reward, unless he has ennobled and rewarded himself beforehand by that feeling of brotherly communion, which is the only certain basis of success and happiness in his profession.

And lastly, who among all classes of teachers stand more in need of mutual understanding, goodwill, and co-operation, than music-masters, dispersed as they are amongst the people, without the bond of common instruction or established institution, and utterly unprovided with public libraries and other means of information, such as have been collected so abundantly for every other teacher? Who and what are these music-masters? Look at the chequered multitude that crowd into the field! By the side of the teacher regularly prepared and trained for his profession, you behold executive and creative artists, who either have already expended their best powers, or are preserving them for a more favourable occasion; little considering that the calling of a teacher is totally different from theirs, and requires powers of a diametrically opposite character; the young composer who with a heart-felt sigh tears himself from his first dreams of success, from his half-finished symphony, or his never-ending studies, that he may help and counsel others, while his own work is still undone, and he himself in doubt or darkness. There is the noble champion returned from the hot campaign of triumphs that were doomed to end in disappointment; there is the *virtuoso*, who yesterday was revelling in the applause of the multitude, and to-day looks aghast at the enigma of empty benches—all feeling at heart a secret longing for a more secure and quiet occupation, and the hope of bringing up others who may carry on the work which they must leave behind. Then, there are those crowds of singers, orchestra players and others, professionally and honestly engaged in the service of art, but whose skill and fitness for their work have proved inadequate for their support; lastly, all those whom fancy, ambition, or absolute want have drawn from other fields of occupation into the arena of the music-teacher. And yet, all these, however different their individual motives or desires, are walking in the same path; the spreading of artistic culture is both their common aim and means of sustenance. They all must feel most deeply interested in every thing that promises to promote that common object of their labours and desires; and though some may for a time be unconscious of the fact, or lose

sight of it, no one can openly deny it without relinquishing that object and undermining the very foundation on which he builds.

Each of us has an undeniable claim to the exercise of that personal freedom which allows him to choose and follow his own calling. And yet it is not for our own sake that we are called to a work. The object of our labours, as well as the means we employ, are not to be subservient to our individual desires or caprice. We all are bound to acknowledge, and do acknowledge in our innermost conscience, the higher duties we owe to the genius of the people among whom we live, and the art we serve. He in whom this consciousness has been suppressed, who, from indolence or for the sake of personal and transient advantages, denies the higher obligations of his calling, and thus its real nature: that man will find his hands too feeble for the work, and all the gold he thinks to have amassed will at the end—as in the legends of the people—turn into withered leaves, or weigh upon his wearied back, a load of stones and useless rubbish. If all of us had lost that conscience, or if no one were willing to obey its call, then might we know for certain that art had passed through one of its epochs, and that the honour of its resurrection would be reserved for future and better times.

The times in which we live are but too much calculated to raise such a momentous question in our minds. But we, who feel our calling to be independent of the smiles or frowns of fleeting days, will not allow this question to paralyze our hearts and hands, though it should make us sober and circumspect. Whatever answers may be found, a voice within us bids us persevere with faithful love unto the end. It tells us that if our service and voluntary labours are to cease, we need not fear that utter ruin or the degradation of mankind will be the consequence. It will be only a sign that other ways and means are about to be adopted for the purpose of purifying man from selfishness and pharisaical hypocrisy, of imparting to him a clearer knowledge and that universal brotherly love which has been promised to the world, but which those very persons who bear the name of Christ most frequently upon their lips seem least inclined to practise or allow. When we shall be sure that this is coming to pass, that the nations are called to a higher phase of existence, then will we musicians joyfully allow the clear, prophetic word and the active deed to rouse us from our moonlight dreams; then may the harps be buried beneath the dust of mouldering halls, until they shall be wakened from their slumber to sound the jubilant song of victory in higher spheres. But, if such future should not be in Heaven's decree, then let those harps be mute for ever; yea, let them be broken and shattered to pieces, rather than that we should see them degraded and disgraced, like Samson's consecrated powers, to gratify the licentiousness or thoughtlessness of our oppressors and destroyers.

It is for these reasons that I should wish my book not to be considered as exclusively my own. Its subject rises high above the narrow circle of personality, as the motives of its composition reach far beyond the aim of individual intentions It is not mine alone, either as regards its object or contents; but it is the common property of all who are concerned in its subject matter, of all who work with us, or wish to share the fruits of our labour.

What, indeed, is the isolated music-master with his individual power and narrow sphere of action, when compared with the united knowledge and skill of all the teachers collectively and the vast field of their operations? Must not every one feel at the first thought how little he alone is able to contribute, and how greatly he requires the support and co-operation of others to make up for his own deficiency? Is it not at once apparent how much a mutual understanding and a combined action, as far as they can be brought about by literary or any other means, must increase the power and effective operation of every individual member? Every step towards this object must be a source of gain to all and to the common cause; any sacrifice for its attainment is only apparently such, for it carries with it its own reward, and this reward reveals itself immediately.

But is it possible to speak of the teacher without remembering the artist whose works he has to make understood? or the people that gave existence both to the artist and the teacher? These three individualities are quite inseparable. The artist has received his mental tendencies, his education and position, from the people among whom he was born and brought up, while the instruction of the teacher has aided him in the development of his talents, and made him properly fit for his calling. What then the fire of his creative genius brings into being—the ripened fruit of his labour—he offers to the people to whom he owes so much; it swells the treasury of life and culture, while, in the teacher's vineyard, busy hands are training plants, or sowing seeds for future times. The artist and the teacher can do nothing without each other. Without the artist, instruction can have no object; without instruction, the artist would neither acquire the power nor find an opportunity for the exercise of his calling; both artist and teacher together constitute the combined organ of that spirit which moves the people to whom they belong, and by whom, for whom, and through whom, every thing is and must be done, although short-sightedness or self-conceit and arrogance may be inclined to doubt or hide the fact.

But then, and lastly, is that nation to which we belong the sole proprietor and guardian of art? does that art, which with well-meaning partiality we cherish as our own, comprehend the task and powers of the whole human race, or even of this one period of time? How many different powers, inclinations, wants and feelings are united in one single man! and how different is each successive day from all others; how different are its pleasures, wants and duties! How different again the gifts and callings of various individuals, and even in the self-same calling what a diversity of powers and inclinations. But how does this diversity increase when whole nations pass before our mental eye like single individuals, and when centuries of time are comprehended in one fleeting thought! And yet this boundless ocean with its waves and countless drops, this endless host of animated forms, each called into being for a purpose and destiny of its own; they are all one, they make up the life of mankind that heaves its waves through times and nations, and in which nothing exists or can be comprehended by itself. This poor self—rich only in the contemplation of the richness of the whole,—this particular nation, this century, this art, and this particular period of culture; what is each, taken by itself? and how can its value, wants, and powers be estimated, except when taken in connexion with the

whole? In this connexion nothing is little or useless, for every thing has its purpose; nothing that passes away is lost, for it has fulfilled its destiny, and continues to live in the spirit of the whole, from which it emanated, and to which it has returned. It may again appear, though in a different form, like the immortal soul which the Hindoo believes to pass from one body to another.

What has been here expressed in general terms, is practically exemplified at every single moment of artistic life. You hear a little ballad: how many things have been required to co-operate in its production! There is first the language: how many centuries and generations have passed away, what storms of passion, what tides of emotion, what mental labour, what diversity of social and physical influences have contributed to make it what it is. Then the poet had to be born, had to perfect himself, had to wait for the hour of inspiration and the proper state of mind to produce this poem—and no other but this. Music had to be advanced so far, and the composer had to acquire such knowledge and skill as to enable him to clothe the poet's thoughts and ideas with the ethereal body of sounds; singer and accompanist had to be trained; and lastly, the hearer himself had to be prepared for the reception and due appreciation of this work. Thus the whole development of language and art, the education, culture, mental condition and feeling, not only of the poet and composer, but also of the performers and hearers, enter into the creation and effective reproduction of that little song.

In this manner our inquiries into the wants and duties of a music-master, as a single individual, expand and take a higher flight as we proceed. From the contemplation of an individual case we are led to that of the whole class, thence to the higher union of artists and teachers, afterwards to the claims of the people, until our view at last takes in the different times and nations, and all the manifold directions in which the human mind has been, and is, and may be, active in the field of art. It is only from this last and highest point of contemplation that the whole—the confluence and connexion of all particulars—fully reveals itself; and it is only in this whole that each individual may clearly perceive the extent and limits of his calling, his wants and hopes. Once in his life, at least, the music-master also should have climbed up to this highest point of eminence to gain a perfect view of his field of action, to perceive fully and distinctly the nature of his calling, its duties, means and last reward, and thus to get a certain basis for his life and labours. How can I hope to teach successfully, unless I know the powers and means that are required both in the teacher and the learner to make success secure? How can I point out to my pupils the true end and object, if I myself see neither of them clearly? How dare I venture—if selfishness, that most deceitful of all inducements, be not my only motive—to teach an art of which I have not fully ascertained what it will yield—not in appearance only, but in reality—to him who takes it up, how it will work, what it will do for him, and he for art? And, lastly, how is it possible that I should exercise my calling with ardent zeal and persevering love, if, aided by a knowlege of the past and present, I cannot look some distance into, or form a faint idea of, the future; that future to which the efforts of a teacher are chiefly directed, as it is to bring to maturity what he has planted in the youthful mind, and to reap what he has sown.

Many and most important, indeed, are the things a music-teacher is called upon to consider, and great the demands he has to satisfy. He must comprehend art in its nature and past developments;—he must have clearly perceived its present importance, and its relation to his own times and the nation to which he belongs;—he requires the power of looking into the future when those he teaches shall act for themselves;—he must have studied human nature, must know how to treat mankind properly, and how to make them fond of his art; how to find what they desire and what is good for them, what they are able to accomplish, and where they are likely to fail;—with the knowledge of art he must combine skill of execution; with that of man, experience, tact, readiness of means, and that sympathy and love without which all labour is barren and cheerless;—his scientific knowledge must be assisted by pedagogical skill, and that kind of instinctive discernment which enables him to find the right way and method where rules and precepts can no longer guide him:—lastly, his position must be a sufficiently independent one; he must neither be overwhelmed with work, nor be in want of pupils; he must not be altogether absorbed in his profession, neither must he be drawn away too much from his calling;—to sum up all, a music-master, in order to be able to fulfil all the duties of his calling, must be not only an artist, but also a teacher, an experienced trainer, a thinker, a man of action, and a man of the world.

Who is there that can boast of all these qualifications?—No one.—There is not a single individual who will pretend that he knows and possesses every thing comprehended in the above fugitive enumeration.

Should not this be a powerful inducement for all of us to draw near and assist each other, and thus mutually supply the wants and short-comings of which no one can pretend to be free?

But there is one thing more which involves the necessity that all should unite in the performance of our common task. Every music-teacher may consider himself, if he pleases, as perfect and superior to all others in his particular branch of the profession; but it is quite certain he cannot be such in every department. Composition in all its branches, vocal art, performance upon every instrument—not to mention the purely scientific doctrines of philosophy, history, &c. &c.—are all included in the universal culture of art, and necessary for its existence; among all of them, also, are divided the inclinations, talents, and requirements of our pupils. Nay, if I may be permitted to allude, in anticipation, to one of the most important objects of musical education—the development of those different powers which we are accustomed to comprehend under the term of "musical talent"—it will be found that, although those powers are more or less required by every musician, there are some branches of musical culture more favourable to the development of one or other of them than others. Thus, e. g. the sense of tone (what we call "ear") is more exercised in singing and in playing on stringed instruments than in the practice of the pianoforte, on which the tonal relations are indicated by the external arrangement; while, in the former cases, they have to be determined or discovered by him who sings or plays. Rhythmical feeling, on the contrary, is more easily developed on the pianoforte than in singing or on wind instruments, where time and accentuation do not depend upon the sense of rhythm alone, but also upon the perfection of

the organs of voice and respiration. Here, then, we may already perceive what an advantage it is, even to the individual music-master, to be acquainted with more than one branch of musical culture. The advancement of art as a whole, however, requires a knowledge of all its branches, and this, as we said before, no single individual will pretend to possess.

Every one, therefore, must acknowledge the necessity of a division of the common task between different classes of teachers. It is difficult—and generally attended with injurious consequences—to conceal this necessity either from ourselves or from others; and this may, perhaps, be seen nowhere so plainly as in the department of vocal instruction. A singer requires both a well-cultivated voice and an extensive knowledge of art; but how rarely do we meet with a teacher capable of fully supplying both desiderata. Most professional singing-masters look upon the training of the voice as the all-important, if not the only object of instruction, while their competitors and rivals—composers, conductors, pianoforte-players, &c.—conscious of their superior scientific knowledge, direct their efforts chiefly towards the intellectual side of art, but have neither the means, nor the time, or patience, properly to cultivate the vocal organ of their pupils. The consequence is, that, while we have very few singers whose schooling has been in every respect perfect, we meet with many possessed of considerable knowledge of art, but with an imperfectly cultivated organ, and many others whose vocalizing is faultless, but who are deficient in knowledge and artistic comprehension. This is one of the many obstacles to the true advancement of art, and has especially prevented our more profound German music from being as highly and universally appreciated as it deserves.

Thus every thing declares to us musicians "division of labour" as a prime necessity,—combination and co-operation as a second. In proportion as a field of operation widens and expands, the necessity of that division becomes more imperative; this we experience in trade, in commerce, in natural history, in chemistry, and in every thing else. On the other hand, the more steadfastly we keep in view, in every branch of undertaking or speculation, the nature and object of the whole, and the more diligently we seek for and apply that which is common to different branches, the more rapid and sure will be the growth of the whole, and with it the advancement in every single branch, and the success of each individual member.

This communion of means and purpose, this fraternizing between those who walk in the same path, is emphatically the question and problem of our time. Still, however, it is no new idea. We trace it already in the mysteries of the ancients, in the hetæriæ of the Greeks, in the planting of the Christian church, in the town-leagues and the freemasonry of the middle ages, in the most glorious moments of the great French revolution, as well as in the great work of Germany's liberation; in short, wherever a nation has risen to take a step in advance. It was the prevalent idea of that last memorable year, so full of errors, and yet so full of hope for the nations*; it is always the spring and object of hope in music no less than in science and in her sister arts. Great is the power of this idea, and great the happiness and confidence which it creates. It reaches beyond the fears and doubts that weigh upon the timid mind; it outlives the schemes and trickeries of the factions,

* The author alludes to the year 1848.—Tr.

who, under the semblance of union, commence with division and seek for points of dissent, instead of strengthening the bonds of harmony and love.

Nor let it affect us, if wiseacres sneeringly point to the proverbial strife and jealousy among musicians. There is, indeed, but too much of it! In former times, in Italy, it has even led to the use of the dagger and poison; in our days, it causes slander and backbiting; it makes us decry every thing that is new and great, so long as it has not been generally acknowledged, and slavishly adore it when it can be no longer denied or treated with contemptuous silence. Nay, this internal discord arises from the very nature of our art. Music is so intimately connected with our own individuality, it belongs so entirely to the mysterious world of our own personal feelings and inclinations, as to force every one of us to commence with and stand by himself; and it is by no means an easy work—but whose reward, artistic and human perfection, cannot be otherwise obtained—to conquer and go beyond ourselves, to expand our views and open our heart to the riches of the outer world! But if it be true that the peace and happiness of all, as well as the perfection of art, cannot be attained, except by self-denial on our own part, by freeing ourselves from the trammels of conceit and jealousy, and extending our hand willingly and joyfully to every member of the brotherhood: then it is also our duty not to despair, nor to shrink from the task. I myself bore for the period of seven years (until other duties imperatively called me away) the burthen of a Musical Gazette whose columns I opened, not for the sake of advocating my own views, but in order to afford every musician an opportunity of expressing his opinion, even if his views were opposed to my own. It was my wish to encourage my brothers and colleagues in the profession to speak for themselves, to stand up in their own right, and no longer silently to submit to those who had no business in the matter, and yet usurped all the talk. What I then only partly succeeded in effecting, has since been further carried out, and received due acknowledgment.

Schumann, Wagner, Berlioz, Liszt, and Hauptmann have proved that literary occupation and art may be united in one and the same person, and that it was only idleness or diffidence which tried to screen itself behind the notion of their incompatability. We must have patience in every thing affecting a community. The progress of the masses resembles the flowing tide; every wave that dashes forward against the shore seems to be rolling back as far as it advanced. So, when a new idea has exerted its impelling force upon a mass of people, doubt, the spirit of contradiction, and the fancied endangerment of private interests, endeavour to reverse the movement. But fortunately mankind are not fixed to an immoveable point of suspension, like the lifeless pendulum that sways to and fro until its motions cease. Progress—and not inertia—is an irresistible power, for it is linked with the eternal destiny of man. But that this progress should take place slowly, in the form of action and reaction, is necessary for the sake of freedom, and in order that the weak and timid may join the movement from their own free will.

And now arises the question: what can and ought to be done in the first place to promote such a communion among teachers?

The first thing necessary, is, that we should come to an understanding about the object we have in view, and the means by which it is to be attained. We shall then