

EDUCATION OF TEACHERS.

PROF. OTTO SINGER, of Cincinnati, in an able essay on "Musical Education," read at the annual meeting of the Ohio Music Teachers' Association, among other excellent things, said the following:

"How would it do to talk about our own education? Is it not of the highest interest and importance to our scholars to know something about their teachers?"—After a well-sustained statement that those who had become famous as virtuosos, composers, etc., seldom make successful teachers because their own attainments make them unable to sympathize with the routine of detail teaching, the essay continued:

"Of the highest importance to the musical public of our country are all those masses of teachers and musicians who, perhaps, without name and favor, teach the population, instruct the masses. We might say, without any exaggeration, with them rests the hope of the art in the future of the country. All these teachers are generally a class of musicians who do their duty in a most faithful way. They do more to raise the taste in, and the standard of, music, in the general public, than the greatest and most famous virtuosos can do with personal performances."

This is a plain truth, well told, and coming as it does from such a high source, should carry with it a convincing force impossible to question. Prof. Singer is of the class to which he himself alludes, the "virtuoso" order, and speaks understandingly. As a teacher himself, he fully understands the relation of teacher and pupil, and realizes the need of both. The essay goes on telling the kind of teacher the "good musician" is:

"This class seems to us to be sometimes very faulty. Their first and principal fault is, that they have no methodical and systematic way of teaching. With their love and adoration for good music, they compel the scholar to study and play the works of our great masters long before they have the intellect and technique to overcome the difficulties which we meet in these compositions. Very often we have to take the good intention for the correct and good execution. To these musicians and teachers I feel inclined to say: without a good, solid technique, there is no possibility of an artistic performance. And again: technique alone never will do it; a cold and uninteresting show of merely mechanical accomplishments will attract only for a little while the attention of the audiences."

No one will or can dispute this: Let us see what Prof. Singer has to say of another class of teachers.

"One class pays in a too one-sided way only attention to develop the more or less gifted scholar to become a 'virtuoso.' All other important means of educating a pupil musically are neglected, and 'technique' is considered the only point worthy to gain. It is true, if the faculties of the scholar allow it, this is the shortest way to gain a success, especially in the eyes of people who stand far apart from music. There is very soon made a show of talent in the most striking and surprising way, but only to be followed soon afterwards by a feeling of disappointment. This one-sided way of musical education will never be satisfactory for a long time, either to the listeners or the executant himself. We have striking examples of these kind of musician in our country. They play with a

dash and brilliancy, with a never-failing technique, and in spite of all this, the musical public of the better kind never take a deep interest in the performances of these virtuosos. We have them not only on the piano, but also on the violin and with the voice. The other class of teachers consists of those who are called generally "good musicians."

In other words, superficial coaching, to enable one to "show off," is made to take the place of a more solid based system of instruction.—*The Folio*.

USES AND ABUSES OF THE PIANOFORTE.

BY LOUIS LOMBARD.

THE pianoforte may be justly stigmatized as a dry and inexpressive instrument if we listen only to the average player; however, as under the touch of a Chopin, a Liszt, a Rubenstein, it becomes a soul-breathing machine, capable of creating the noblest emotions within the breast of aesthetic auditors; it behooves us, therefore, not to speak disparagingly of this complex and wonderful product of human art, but rather to express our intense antipathy toward that vast army of *pianomaniacs* which infests the earth.

Notwithstanding its apparent coldness when compared with instruments played with a bow, the pianoforte, next to the great organ, is entitled to the highest place among musical instruments, owing to the possibility in its mechanism of simultaneously reproducing harmony, counterpoint, melody and a variety of timbres.

The guitar, the zither, the harmonica, *et id genus*, being too trivial to elicit any comment here, we will consider only the harp as a competitor against the pianoforte, on account of the nobility of its sounds, its accents of love, and other exalted sentiments that it inspires. Unfortunately, that identical sonorousness which transported us a moment ago, becomes as insipid as fatiguing, if we hear three or four successive harp solos.

On what instrument can you perform the principal works of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Chopin, or Liszt?—inspirations of geniuses who have mastered the technicalities of the pianoforte as well as the canons of musical composition. Even the orchestral scores of these giants can be interpreted upon a single pianoforte with sufficient fidelity to permit the listener a full comprehension of their harmonic, counterpointal and melodic structure. Liszt advanced so far as to faithfully portray orchestral tone colouring.

What more charming friend than the pianoforte? If you wish to sing, what can better accompany your voice? With its aid you can play to your friends the reminiscence of last evenings' opera that now flashes through your memory, whether it be a bit of melody or a grand *ensemble*. At all times and places it is ever ready to lend its strings to the *epanchements* of music lovers.

To comprehend the importance of the pianoforte in musical art we should look at its repertoire. Had not it been the sympathetic echoer of the secret sensations engendered within the soul of a Beethoven—what vacuum might not now exist in our musical literature?