

....Messrs. Donnelly, Ganette & Loyd, of Chicago, send us a musical work of a kind which we do not remember to have seen—*How to Understand Music: a Concise Course in Musical Intelligence and Taste*, by W. S. B. Matthews. This book does not aim to teach counterpoint, nor to discuss the theory, or perhaps we should more truly say the theories, of the divine art. Its aim is simply to show a hearer of ordinary intelligence and sensibility how to listen to music with enjoyment and profit. No more common mistake prevails than that a hearer furnished with natural taste, sense, and sensibility is in a good condition to hear good music, unless it be the further mistake—which is almost sure to follow in the wake of the first—viz., that good music may be defined to be that music which gives pleasure to such a hearer. The fact is that the hearer requires an education to hear, as truly as the performer requires an education for his part. We say requires it as truly; not that he needs so much, so thorough, nor so costly an education. It is a much simpler affair to acquire; but it needs to be acquired. Nature does not develop of itself into an ability to understand symphonies and sonatas and be pleased by them. This book of Mr. Matthews proposes its contribution to meet this need, and we submit that the occasion for the work is well caught and well conceived. We are not sure that the author has stuck to his theme as strictly as he might throughout the chapters. We do not see that the biographies at the close contribute very much to his purpose. Probably no one would care to possess the book for its biographies. We, therefore, should hope that the second edition would enlarge the criticism and the suggestive part of the book, and cut down the biographical, and in general hold it in strict bounds and contributive to the main design of the book.