VIOLIN MUSIC.

Tema con Variazioni. By A. C. Mackenzie.

Bourrée; Slow Minuet; Gigue. From Suite in F. By C. Hubert H. Parry.

Novello & Co., Ltd.

Violinists will be glad to have Sir Alexander Mackenzie's Tema con Variazioni from his set of pieces for violin and piano; Op. 37 (the whole Suite which includes the ever popular 'Benedictus,' first played by the late Lady Hakl by as far back as 1880 at one of the never-to-be-forgotten Monday Popular Concerts), published separately. The piece is an excellent example of variation-form, as each of the eight variations to the pleasing theme, with its unusual 7 + 8 bar rhythm, is in thorough contrast, and the music always gracefully under a skilled player's fingers. Messrs. Novello & Co. have also issued separate editions of the 'Bourrée,' 'Slow Minuet,' and 'Gigue' from the Suite in F ('Lady Radnor's Suite') by Sir Hubert Parry, lately reviewed in these columns.


Novello & Co., Ltd.

This piece will appeal strongly to players with a liking for musical composition; however, the composer does indulge in extravagances, and his striking harmonic effects are not dragged in, but have their proper part in the scheme, even the string of ninths on p. 53 grows naturally out of what has gone before. The main theme of the work is an expressive melody, which makes its second appearance accompanied by an effective counter-theme. The piece presents few difficulties, and although laid out for a three-manual organ, can be played on two manuals with little loss of effect. The composer, by the way, seems to have overlooked the limitations of the human hand in line 3 of p. 54, where, if his instructions as to the employment of two manuals are carried out, the player must be prepared for a stretch of a twelfth. We suggest that in bars 1 and 3 the left hand should be transferred to the Swell for the passages in the bass clef.

Ballade in E. By J. Stuart Archer. Original Compositions for the Organ (New Series), No. 44.

Novello & Co., Ltd.

Mr. Archer has hit upon a happy theme for his Ballade and, with a pronounced flavour of the folksong. Although dealing with small rhythms, he has cleverly avoided scrappiness or squareness. This rhymical interest is well maintained in the middle section in 2/4 time. An effective feature of the rereferenz is the decorative use of a fragment of the second subject. The Ballade is altogether a work distinctly out of the ordinary run of quiet recital pieces. It is not difficult, requiring chiefly neatness and taste for its proper performance.


Novello & Co., Ltd.

The latest volume of this well-known collection of recital music contains six works. As they have already been noticed separately in these columns, a bare mention of them will suffice: Pavane in A (Bernard Johnson), Finale Jubilante (John E. West), Scherzo in F minor (H. Sandiford Turner), and Rêverie in D flat, by the same composer (reviewed above), Scherzo Fugue (E. H. Lemare), and Epilogue (Harvey Grace).

The volume is handsomely bound, and would be a suitable book for presentation.

The thirteenth annual Conference of the Catholic Truth Society of Ireland was held at Dublin from October 12 to 15. The inaugural lecture was given by Mr. Cecil Chesterton, editor of the New Witness. At the concert given at the Mansion House, Dublin, on October 12, Mr. Charles Mott (baritone) and Señor José de Marais (tenor) were the chief attractions. In addition, Miss Jean Nolan, Miss Maude Clancy, Mrs. Fay Sargent, Mr. Arthur Darley, and Mr. W. A. McNally assisted, the conductor being Mr. Vincent O'Brien.

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Correspondence.

'PIETÀ, SIGNORE':
ROSSINI OR STRADELLA?

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE MUSICAL TIMES.'

SIR,—In the programme of the Promenade Concert (Queen's Hall) for Friday, October 8, I noticed 'Pietà, Signore' by Stradella. Now, it is written in the new 'Grove' (vol. iv., p. 707, s.r., Stradella): 'Stradella as a composer is known to modern audiences by the Aria di Chiesa, "Pietà, Signor!' attributed to him. It is enough to say that no musician, even though but slightly acquainted with the works that are indisputably by Stradella, will attribute it to him. The composer of that beautiful composition is almost certainly Rossini. (The old 'Grove' gave a choice, saying, 'is generally believed to be Pétis, Niedermeyer, or Rossini.') Further, in the same volume, at p. 163, col. b, under 'Rossini': 'The famous aria, "Pietà, Signor,' which credauna amateure [italics mine] still regard as Stradella's, is, according to Signor Alfredo Piatti, written as a joke by Rossini.'

I have before me three different editions of the Aria, which in each case is attributed to Stradella, and in one case bears the title 'Se i miei soprad.' I would suggest that the slightly-sneering reference to amateurs be amended by attributing the credulity to those who should guide them, namely: publishers, editors, and programme-makers.—Yours faithfully,

T. FRANCIS HOWELL.

A WELSH HYMN AND ITS ORIGIN.

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE MUSICAL TIMES.'

SIR,—A year or more ago, whilst going through the works of William Shield, I was interested to find in his opera 'Garian' (1758) the original of the beautiful tune to 'By the Waters of Babylon' (Psalm 137), classed amongst the Welsh Airs in 'Songs of Four Nations.' This psalm had long puzzled others besides myself, as it seems to lack Welsh or traditional characteristics. Reference to the published collections of Welsh music showed that the air, under the title 'Yr Helyg Gân' ('The Willow Hymn') was, however, as far as I know, first published in Edward Jones's 'Bardic Museum' (1802, or fourteen years after the opera of 'Garian'). The full title of Jones's compilation is too lengthy to quote, but it is described as consisting of 'Peculiar Pieces of Bardic music, forming the second volume of the Musical, Poetical, and Historical Relicks of the Welsh Bards and Druids, c., with great Pains now rescued from oblivion and never before published.' Jones has not only copied Shield's air but throughout the first, second, and third bars, his bass accompaniment also, though this has been prudently varied farther on. Obviously, the song 'Ah me! by the osiers so dank,' or 'The Branch of the Willow,' made popular by the enchanting Mrs. Billington, must have put it into the head of the compiler of the 'Bardic Museum' to adapt the song to a psalm descriptive of the exiles hanging their harps on the willows. He has, however, done his task very awkwardly, as the first verse will show. (The fine paraphrase in 'Songs of Four Nations' is by Dr. Arthur Somervell.) On the other hand, Shield's words suit the tune admirably, and the 'Ah me!' at the beginning is worthy of Purcell. Should it be argued by some that Shield—like most composers of ballad-opera—used material not his own, I should like to point out that Shield, so far as I can ascertain, was scrupulous in distinguishing between original and borrowed stuff. His opera-music is properly often described first time as 'selected and composed by William Shield.' Where he uses traditional airs he gives their titles, if familiar; as in the case of 'Glideroy' and ' Peggy Band.' In the case of music borrowed from others, e.g., Handel and Paisiello down to very minor musicians—he carefully appends their names; and, similarly, his own airs have the name of