Review

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matical correctness, they already besiege the publisher. They have neither time nor perseverance to go through the necessary preliminary, earnest studies. They are all geniuses (much abused title!), and geniuses do not need, they think, to study."

The early history of music is exceedingly well treated, and much interesting information is given respecting the gradual rise of the "Oratorio." When the Mystery and Miracle plays passed from the hands of the priests and monks into those of the people, we are told, for instance, that "instead of sacred hymns, impudent street-songs resounded before the altar of the Church; and the most important person in the Miracle plays was the devil. He was very popular with our forefathers. They dressed him up in the most fantastic, extravagant, and alarming manner. In France not less than four devils had sometimes to appear in one play. He did not yet represent the bad principle; but his parts were those of a clown, or a poor abused imbecile. He always got the worst of it." Yet when we see that many of our modern art-forms emerged from these ridiculous popular ceremonies, we learn to look with toleration upon the peculiar humour of our ancestors. Before speaking of Bach and Handel, Professor Ritter gives some very excellent remarks upon the musical culture of Protestant Germany since the Reformation; and although his observations upon the more modern composers are somewhat sketchy, it must be remembered that he professes to write rather more of principles than of persons, and aims at deducing from the works and the workers, as he says in his Introduction, "their individual importance as influencing and directing the growth of life and art." It is always interesting to see what a foreigner thinks of our own countrymen, and more particularly so when, as in the present instance, he appears by no means a biassed judge. Speaking of the English operas of Bishop, Balfe, Wallace, Barnett and Rooke, he says, "Though these composers possessed much natural facility of melodic inventiveness, a good deal of experience and knowledge of scenic and orchestral resources, their productions lack, in general, originality of form, style, and dramatic fire and expression. The operas of these composers are cleverly-put-together conglomerations of English ballads, Italianized arias, and French romances. They are consequently wanting in unity of style and colouring." This is severe perhaps; but we fear that even the composers themselves would have admitted the truth of it, for a positive *style* appears to have been scarcely even aimed at. We may say, however, that as a compensation for this harsh criticism, he freely admits that Sterndale Bennett, Macfarren, Sullivan, and H. Smart would "with the necessary opportunity," be highly successful on the operatic stage. This "opportunity" is, we now hope, drawing nearer and nearer.

STANLEY LUCAS, WEBER AND CO.

Four Sonatinas, for the Pianoforte. Composed by Gustav Wolff.

WE are not sure whether the gradual increase of works moulded in the classical form is to be looked upon by those who wish well to the progress of true art as an unmixed benefit. Poets who have but little to say have often, by casting their feeble effusions into fourteen lines, passed for very tolerable sonnet writers; and in the present day indifferent composers, by producing sonatas, gavottes, sarabandes and suites, in imitation of those which the great masters have left us, constantly receive a larger share of praise than they are entitled to, not because they have done a thing well, but because they have done it at all. Thus much of preface is necessary before noticing Herr Wolff's Sonatinas, because we are inclined to doubt, carefully as they are written, and solid as is the workmanship, whether, published as independent pieces, they would have commanded much attention. The subject of the first movement of No. 1 is good; but it lacks interest as it progresses, and towards the end the passages are common-place. The "Andante," in the tonic minor, with a progression into the major, is melodious; but the last

movement is trifling, although the leading theme promises well. No. 2 we like much better. The opening subject, in D major, is flowing and well harmonised, and the change into the minor is extremely effective. The "Allegro" too, though unpretentious, is a musicianlike movement, and will commend itself to young players. No. 3 has not a very attractive first movement, but the "Tarantella," in G minor, has much character; and the "Allegretto Grazioso," which is also an unmistakable dance, is vivacious, if not very tuneful. No. 4 has the best first movement, and although we care not much for the Andante, "Tempo di Marcia," the Rondo contains some excellent writing, and makes a good Finale to what we consider, on the whole, the best of the four Sonatinas. There are two or three inaccuracies which might easily be corrected, as, for instance, the omission of the sharp before the F in the "Tarantella" movement, No. 3, in the right-hand part of bar 8.

My Angel Lassie. Song. Words by Gordon Campbell.
I know my love loves me. Song. Words by Frederick Enoch.

Music by Rosetta O'Leary Vinning.

THE composer of these songs still writes for musicians, and will, no doubt, reap the reward of her conscientiousness in time. "Royalty" ballads have not yet quite had their day, but vocalists are beginning to discover that the system is no longer a secret with the general public, and when, in their own defence, they find themselves compelled to rely solely upon the merits of the works they sing, artists will have a chance. The words of "My Angel Lassie" have received a thoroughly sympathetic setting. The wailing theme, in E minor, with which it opens, is wisely left with the simplest harmony, and the triplets accompanying the phrase in the tonic major give much force to the passage. We may also say that the concluding phrase, where the unexpected change into C precedes the close in E major, is so well managed as to leave no effect of incongruity of keys upon the mind of the auditor. The second song, commencing, like many of the German vocal compositions, with a rapid triplet accompaniment, is extremely well harmonised, if we except the suspended seventh (C♯) on D, in the 8th bar, to which we have not yet got reconciled. The phrase in G minor is extremely beautiful, commencing on the last bar of page 3, and the constant changes of key throughout, although bold in the extreme, are always in keeping with the varied sentiment of the poetry. We shall be glad if we can help in drawing attention to this song, which, with its companion just noticed, will materially add to the reputation of the composer.

J. AND A. CHURCHILL.

The Human Voice; its Anatomy, Physiology, and Ailments. By C. B. Garrett, M.D.

DR. GARRETT has already worthily won his reputation by a large number of works on medical science, and having made affections of the throat and chest objects of special study, he now gives the result of his researches in a treatise which should be of the highest importance to vocal teachers. We regret that our limited space will not allow us to make any copious extracts from the book; but the author's demonstration of the fact, that "vocal vibrations would be feeble and only audible at a short distance were they not reinforced by the vibrations excited in the cartilages of the larynx, trachea, bronchial tubes and pharynx, the walls of the chest, the nasal cartilages, the teeth, and the bones of the cranium," is put in so homely a manner that we cannot resist quoting his words. He says "Open your mouth wide, put a watch in it, but so as not to touch any of the teeth—the watch-tick is not heard; now let the watch come in contact with the teeth, the tick becomes instantly audible to you, the sonorous vibrations being propagated and conveyed to the auditory nerve by the teeth and the bones of the cranium. In the same way the tuning-fork when struck and held in the air, excites a feeble and scarcely audible sound; when it touches a table or is placed between the teeth, the sound is heard over the