

Review

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of the enigmatical verses so widely known, the broken phrases being skilfully and effectively varied; No. 8, "Ye banks and braes," an attractive melody, in E minor, has a running accompaniment of semiquavers throughout, which, if played with freedom, will help rather than obstruct the due expression of the words. No. 11, "How can my heart be glad?" beginning, like No. 4, in the minor and ending in the relative major, may be described as a song for voice and piano, for really the accompanist has as much to do as the vocalist: it is an excellent composition, and will be certain to prove effective in performance. No. 13, "My love is like a red, red rose," is an unpretending melody, simply but gracefully accompanied; and No. 14, "My heart's in the Highlands," is a really good song, and perhaps more than any other Scottish in character. It must not be imagined that in mentioning these numbers we have done more than merely select a few which are our especial favourites. All will please those who can appreciate genuine music; and we are firm in the faith that such persons are rapidly increasing.

*Eva Tual.* Irish Song. Poetry by Alfred Perceval Graves. Music by Charles Salaman.

MR. SALAMAN here shows that he can be as successful in treating musically the thoroughly Irish verses of Mr. Graves as he has been in setting the Odes of Horace. Vocalists will be glad to find a song so truly national in feeling written by an artist who is above having recourse to the conventional traps for catching indiscriminate applause so common in the usual "Irish Songs" of the day. The melody is extremely simple, but the intervals give it a thoroughly Hibernian flavour—especially the characteristic jump from the sixth to the key-note at the conclusion—and the harmony is most appropriate throughout. We predict for "Eva Tual" an extensive popularity.

*Album Leaves; for the Pianoforte.* Composed by J. Baptiste Calkin.

THESE four Sketches for the Pianoforte are highly favourable specimens of the composer's refined and musician-like style. No. 1, although from the author's original works for the organ, bears no trace of being a transcription, and indeed will be found one of the most attractive of the set. No. 2 is perhaps somewhat more conventional, being merely a melodious "Song without words," accompanied by staccato quavers for the right hand, and a flowing crotchet bass for the left. It is, however, well written and effective. The theme of No. 3 is tuneful, but some stretches for both hands, which to us appear scarcely in consonance with so simple a piece, commence on the second page, and perhaps may deter many amateurs from proceeding further. No. 4, "In Memoriam," has a pathetic subject, in perfect sympathy with the title of the Sketch, but a good player will be required to draw the theme away from the semiquaver accompaniment which is continued almost throughout. The changes of key are extremely felicitous, and in every respect the piece will well repay the amount of practice it demands.

JOSEPH WILLIAMS.

*An Englishman's Christmas Song.* By F. Marshall Ward.

CHRISTMAS songs are now in season, and our readers must not be surprised, therefore, if we select this composition for notice, notwithstanding the heap of music which is fast accumulating upon our shelves. There is a lack of originality in the melody; but the song is nicely harmonised, and so well adapted to the words as to ensure a round of applause from a good-humoured Christmas party.

WILLIAM REEVES.

*Life of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy.* From the German of W. A. Lampadius. Edited and translated by William Leonhard Gage.

It appears singular that although a number of books illustrating more or less the career of Mendelssohn have been from time to time translated from the German for English readers, the biography written by Lampadius only

a few years after the composer's death, and upon which so many of the less important works are based, should until now have been quite unknown in this country. The publication of Mendelssohn's letters, so ably translated by Lady Wallace, had the effect of creating an intense desire in England for every scrap of information respecting the life of one who throughout a correspondence intended exclusively for the perusal of his own family and his most intimate friends, manifested such wide sympathies, not only with the art of which he was so brilliant an ornament, but, as the translator of Lampadius's book affirms, with all that is "good, noble, and, in the strictest use of speech, Christlike." The fascination exercised by the composer over all with whom he came in contact may be partially pleaded in excuse for the numerous rhapsodical books which his German admirers, and even some amongst our own countrymen, seem never to tire of writing; but we cannot help thinking that could the subject of such adulation have had the least suspicion that the occurrences and thoughts of his everyday life would be minutely detailed in print after his decease, he would have sincerely prayed to be delivered from his friends. "I knew him so well and loved him so much," said one of his most earnest disciples to the writer of this notice, "that I cannot bear to hear of him what he would have recoiled from hearing of himself." May we not also suggest that, beautiful as are his works, the critics see in them much that never entered the composer's mind; for in his book Lampadius says, "and in the wave-like 'Melusina' overture does not the sea-nymph lift herself bodily, and offer herself in love to the brave knight?"—yet Mendelssohn, in a letter to his sister, Fanny Hensel, writes of this very overture, "as to the fabulous nonsense of the musical papers, about red coral and green sea monsters, and magic palaces and deep seas, this is stupid stuff, and fills me with amazement." Lampadius, although a musical amateur, was evidently thoroughly competent to appreciate the artistic genius of Mendelssohn; and being also an intimate friend, he could not but be impressed with the earnestness, purity, and nobility of his character. The many who read the biography of Mendelssohn now under notice can scarcely, therefore, expect that eulogy will be more tempered with judgment in this than in the works already known on the same theme in this country; but then it must be remembered, as we have already said, that Lampadius was one of the first to write upon the career of the composer, and he was naturally anxious, therefore, to set the pattern for those who might follow him. In speaking of his youthful days, in the first chapter of the book before us, we are told that even in his eighth year Mendelssohn played the pianoforte with remarkable facility, and that at the same early age "he disclosed that remarkable power of criticism, that lynx-eye, as Zelter termed it, which enabled him to detect six consecutive fifths in a piece of Sebastian Bach, which escaped the keen eye of Zelter himself." Goethe's friendship towards the young artist, and his often-expressed admiration of his exceptional gifts, are of course dwelt upon at much length; and we are glad to know that the author's earnestly-expressed desire "to be permitted to look into the correspondence of Goethe and Mendelssohn" has since been amply gratified by the publication of the book especially devoted to this phase of the composer's life, written by his son, Dr. Karl Mendelssohn Bartholdy, and translated into English by M. E. von Glehn. When in 1824 Moscheles replaced Ludwig Berger as Mendelssohn's instructor, it is affirmed that he could play anything that his master could, and that he "grasped the slightest hint with lightning-like rapidity." Moscheles himself says: "My E flat Major Concerto he played almost at first sight; and my 'Sonate mélancolique' he rendered very finely." Yet there can be no doubt that the ripe experience of his new tutor made his services of the highest value to the youthful prodigy, and we know how firm was the friendship of the two artists in after life. Our space will not admit of quotations to any great extent from this interesting biography—and indeed it may be said that most of the events therein related are now tolerably familiar to English readers—but we conscientiously recommend it to the notice of those who love to linger over the records of a life