Review

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small rehearsal rooms of the Hanover Square Rooms, for the purpose of practising unaccompanied music of the Glee and Madrigal school"; but the first public Concert of the Choir took place on May 22, 1856, at the Hanover Square Rooms, the programme consisting of two or three instrumental pieces, and the remainder of part-music for mixed voices. When we consider that up to the present year uninterrupted performances of this excellent band of vocalists have been given, it may be readily imagined that the disbanding of the Choir was a matter of deep regret to the majority of music-lovers, and that many persons naturally inquired why its dissolution became necessary in consequence of the retirement of Mr. Leslie from the office of Conductor? This question Mr. Bridge attempts to answer thus: "The connection between Mr. Leslie and his Choir is *personal*, and formed by links welded firmly together by years of hard work in the endeavour to raise part-music in this country to the highest excellence. If, therefore, the Choir is ever to be reformed, it must be by him whose name and presence is indispensable to its success." It is natural, indeed, that an earnest member of the Choir, and one sufficiently versed in the minute points of its history to write this tribute to its memory, should have formed so decisive an opinion; but there are others who think differently, and who cannot be made to believe that the secession of a Conductor—however zealously and effectually he may have worked in the cause—should remove from the metropolis an institution which has so thoroughly grown into the sympathies of the musical public.

A Complete Course of Wrist and Finger Gymnastics, for the use of Performers on the Pianoforte. By A. Leffler Arnim. [11, York Place, Portman Square.]

WE presume that this work is published for the author, who is a "Professor of Ling's Curative Movements," and that it is to be procured at the address which we have quoted. Although, as our readers must know, we are decidedly opposed to mechanical appliances for the fingers of pianoforte students, the same objection does not apply to what Mr. Arnim calls "Wrist and Finger Gymnastics," the only question indeed being whether these gymnastics should be practised at or away from the instrument. Technical exercises, of course, will bring the fingers under due subjection if judiciously worked at; but the author of this book thinks differently, and tells us that "in the collective use of the muscles—where really there ought to be, if not just individual, yet localised power centred in them—lies the kernel of the difficulty. For although most of the tendons of the hand are continuations of the muscles of the arm, and undoubtedly derive their strength from them, yet the hand must learn to act from the wrist and quite independently of the arm in its evolutions upon the piano. The fingers again must gain the maximum of individual power independently of the hand. Yet in each spot length must be located, else unconsciously it is borrowed from another part and causes impediments in playing." Some very excellent directions are given, with illustrations, for the gradual conquering of all these difficulties, and we really believe that much benefit may be derived from following implicitly the rules laid down; but it must be remembered that we have had, and still have, some tolerably able pianists who have practised only at the pianoforte keyboard; and there can be no question that this method is infinitely more interesting to the student. "Wrist and Finger Gymnastics" must be gone through, under some system, no doubt; but any person seeing a young lady, for example, placing herself exactly in the positions described in some of the early illustrations in this book would assuredly be astonished on being told that she was in training for a pianist.

Dew Pearls. Caprice for Pianoforte. By Boyton Smith. [Alfred Hays.]

THE manner in which musical pearls have rained upon us since Mr. Osborne's piece called "La pluie de perles" flooded all our drawing-rooms must have astonished all who do not realise the fact that, although there are few originators, there are many imitators. We may say, indeed, that the success of this work stimulated its composer to

imitate himself, for in a piece called "La nouvelle pluie de perles" he reproduced, and with good effect too, at least the character of the passages which had given such excellent employment to the agile fingers of so many amateur pianists of the day. We are content to let these refined little sketches take their place amongst the music of the past; but the tone of the music of the present is decidedly in advance of this school of writing, and it becomes a question, therefore, whether the hand of welcome can conscientiously be extended to those composers who are content to appeal rather to the unformed taste than to endeavour to assist in forming it. We may at once say that the pearls scattered over the eleven pages of the piece before us are quite as good as the pearls of many others who deal in these articles—indeed, for a piece in the "showery" style it deserves to take high rank—but inasmuch as it fosters a love of mere finger-music, we can award it but qualified praise; and, accepting it as a representative work, the observations we have made upon it will effectually save us from reviewing a huge mass of similar compositions now lying upon our table.

24 *Pianostudier, för det musikaliska föredraget, med upplysande anmärkningar och fingersättning*, komponerade af Gustaf Stolpe. [Stockholm: Julius Bagge. London: Novello, Ewer and Co.]

It is well for teachers to draw a very decided line between "Exercises" and "Studies." Both are extremely good in their way; but the effort to unite them is a mistake, and we generally find where this is attempted that we have a very uninteresting Study and a very useless Exercise. The "Pianostudier" before us are decided "Exercises," written especially for the fingers, and without any regard for their effect upon listeners. Although unequal in merit, the design of each is excellent; and we heartily recommend them for earnest practice. So good are they indeed that we sincerely wish they could be published with an English translation of the prefatory remarks, for we feel convinced that, when once known, they will be extensively used.

Thirty-one Short, Easy, and Melodious Studies for the Pianoforte. By Jules Rochard. [Ashdown and Parry.]

THESE short and melodious Studies—said to be specially written to follow the instruction book—will be found extremely useful to young players. A simple four-bar subject is first given, which is afterwards varied for the right, and then the left hand. A sequence of triads, ending with the dominant seventh, is then divided for the two hands, and these examples are followed by triplets, detached chords, scale passages, thirds and sixths, &c., occasional little melodies occurring, which are all attractive and carefully written. Why, however, the first exercise—which is merely a succession of chords within the key—should be headed "Modulation" would surprise us were it not accompanied with the explanation that "modulation is a progression of harmony." Assuredly this is not the received meaning of the word; and we cannot but believe that whenever an author departs from the conventional signification of a term, he should, at least, state that he has done so.

The Masonic Muse. Amusement with Music. A Collection of Unique Masonic Recitations and Highly Original Songs. Written and Composed for the use of the Craft, by Bro. F. Julian Crozer.

[Spencer and Co.]

BROTHER CROZER must remember that in sending these songs for review in a musical journal he will not have the protection of the "Craft." Artistically speaking, however, the compositions are so perfectly harmless that they call not for criticism; and so Masons can get any "amusement" out of the words we should be sorry to interfere with their pleasure by any observations of our own. That they are "unique" recitations and "highly original" songs may be at once conceded; but whether they are worth publishing in a volume must be decided by those for whose use they are written.