Review

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into song with the same eagerness, if not with the same genius, with which German musicians, and foremost among them Schubert, fell upon the poetry of Goethe, Schiller, Uhland, and later of Heine. There was in England a remarkable poetic outpouring. The lyrics of Burns remained more or less untouched by the musicians; there was the group of poets with Wordsworth at its head, of whom Matthew Arnold said that almost all his best work is packed into the decade between 1798 and 1808; there were Byron, Keats, and Shelley. S. S. Wesley wrote a number of songs, but was too indolent to try to impress himself upon the public as a song-writer. Church music and fishing occupied his more serious hours; the songs are merely the offshoots of his idle ones. Two of them you are to hear. A gentle evening song, 'Silently, silently,' has a beautiful melody; and in the pianoforte introduction there is a phrase which perhaps is a conscious reminiscence of 'Lead me, Lord' from one of Wesley's best-known anthems.

['Silently, silently' was then sung.]

The other song is a setting of Byron's paraphrase of the Psalm 'By the waters of Babylon,' and perhaps in the fact that Wesley gravitated to words by Shelley and Byron in more than one instance, we find his recognition of the fact that song-writing should spring from the poetic feeling of the time, and the somewhat laconic attempt to act upon it. This song is remarkable for Wesley's favourite use of striking and chromatic harmonies, which are appropriately used, and the genuineness of its feeling is beyond doubt.

There is one man who forms an interesting link with the older English tradition, and whose style shows genuine signs of developing in accordance with modern requirements into the form of song in which singer and accompanist are colleagues, rather than master and servant. Edward James Loder (1810-1865) had the genuine spirit of the song-writer, and if all his work is not on a very high level, we may put that down partly to the fact that fairly early in his career he made a considerable success, and then entered into an agreement with a publishing firm to supply a new song or other composition every week, which he did for some time. A good many have the taint of the shop upon them; such once favourite things as 'The Outlaw' and 'The Diver' are on their way towards 'The gambler's wife'; but so far as I know he never reached that goal, and Henry Russell therefore remains 'unsurpassed.' There are a great many of his songs which maintain the standard of pure melody of Hook and Shield, and are quite spontaneous, if not particularly lofty. An excellent case in point is 'There's a light in her sparkling eye.' You are to hear the best song he ever wrote, a song which is so extraordinarily artistic in its treatment of the pianoforte part, that one could not be surprised if it were proved to have been written by a much greater master. It is, curiously enough, a translation of one of the songs from the 'Müllerlieder,' but it is so good that I feel sure that it was written without a knowledge of Schubert's setting. It is called 'I heard a brooklet gushing, the 'Wohin' of the 'Müllerlieder.' The freedom of the pianoforte writing, the excellent point with which the idea of the brook is always kept before the hearer in the pianoforte part, the fluency of the melody, and the grace and finish of the whole are what make it so remarkable. For purposes of comparison you shall hear Schubert's 'Wohin' first, and Loder's 'Brooklet' afterwards. It is pleasant to end with a masterpiece.

[Both songs were then sung.]

Mr. Lewis, in moving a vote of thanks to Mr. Colles, made an interesting speech.

Reviews.

The Romance of the Fiddle. By E. van der Straeten.

[Rebman, Limited.]

Mr. van der Straeten, in his latest work, has done valuable service by collecting into one interesting volume information on his subject which before was almost hopelessly scattered among books, journals and diaries of the periods with which he deals.

The instruments themselves of the violin family, and their evolution from the crwth and viol, under the hands of Duiffoprugcar and Gasparo da Salo, are concisely dealt with;

the general development of instrumental music from vocal compositions, such as the early madrigals, which were described as 'Apt for Viols and Voices,' is followed; instruction books from the earliest known, that by Gasparo Zanetti, published at Milan in 1645, to the 'tutors' of the early 19th century are dealt with; and from them, as well as from the instrumental music of successive periods, the gradual growth of violin technique is traced; and, above all, a vivid picture is drawn of musical life in England from the time of Charles II. (before the Restoration there was no such thing as a public concert in London) to about the end of the Georgian era.

Mr. van der Straeten is thoroughly at home in his subject, and the old composers and violinists of whom he writes are evidently among his dearest friends. Yet we miss one name we had hoped to find; surely one of the greatest strides ever made in the progress of technique is that from Corelli's Sonatas, Op. V., to Bach's Sonatas for violin without accompaniment.

It has been impossible before to get as comprehensive a view as is now offered us of the very interesting late Jacobean period, when Thomas Britton, the small-coal man, gave concerts in a loft, at which the performers were the best musicians of the time and the audience included people of the highest rank; when a man who wanted music must go to a tavern and pay his sixpence to hear it, for no concert room had yet been built. The following generation, being better catered for in such matters, seems to have looked down on the methods of its predecessors, for Hawkins in his account of John Humphries, a worthy English composer of String concertos (whom, by the way, our Author does not mention), speaks contemptuously of those who 'were used to recreate themselves with music at ale-house clubs, and places of vulgar resort,' and adds a foot-note beginning, 'To such readers as are interested in the knowledge of *low manners* it may be some gratification to mention that there were concerts of this kind at the following places.'

Mr. van der Straeten intersperses his remarks with many direct quotations, one of which, from 'The Court of King James,' is so innocent that it must be given here. After a description of the imitation which a clever servant of Sir Thomas Monson could give of the sound of the tabor and pipe, there follows, 'to this musick, would Mrs. Turner, the young ladies, and some of the gig, dance ever after supper; and the old lady, who loved that musick as well as her daughters, would sit and laugh. She could scarce sit for laughing.'

The illustrations, which are excellent, include portraits of the younger Banister, Britton, Playford, Mace, Geminiani, Leopold Mozart, and many others, as well as facsimiles of interesting title-pages and specimens of early instrumental parts printed 'consort-way.' The get-up of the book deserves a word of praise: the volume would adorn any library.

Pavane, for the Organ. By Bernard Johnson.

Festal March, for the Organ. By A. Storr.

[Novello & Co., Ltd.]

If originality cannot be claimed for Mr. Johnson's 'Pavane,' it has yet some points of interest, and should prove popular with a concert-hall audience. It will also tax to some extent the ability of the player in giving a clear interpretation of the combined and contrasted themes.

The outstanding feature of the 'Festal March' seems to be unusual simplicity. The themes can hardly be considered either strong or interesting, while nothing by way of development is attempted. The piece, however, may be played on a small organ by anyone having a moderate command of the instrument, and for these reasons may be of use on occasion.

The Universal Music and Dramatic Directory. English edition of the 'Annuaire des Artistes.' Edited by H. Bonnaire.

[20, High Holborn, W.C.]

The above comprehensive title is no vain and idle boast. It might be called the musical directory of the world, with special reference to France and England. The volume supplies 5 lbs. 4 ozs. of detailed information which, one would think, it must be a life-work to keep up to date.