Review

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MR. BURNHAM HORNER read a paper on the "Life and work of Dr. Arne" at the Sette of Odd Volumes, on the 5th ult. Dr. A. C. Mackenzie and Dr. C. Harford Lloyd were present, and the former spoke in terms of high praise concerning the contents of the paper; it is to be included amongst the privately printed *opuscula* of the Society.

At the Royal Academy of Music, on the 13th ult., the Charles Mortimer Prize for a composition for violin and pianoforte was awarded to Frank Idle. The examiners, Messrs. M. Birket Foster and Edward German, highly commended Marie Mildred Ames. There were fourteen entries.

MR. HENRY CROSS, of St. Andrew's, Wells Street, and Westminster Abbey choirs, was installed into the Chair of the Orpheus Chapter Rose Croix at the Masonic Hall, Golden Square, on the 17th ult., by Bro. Edwin Moss.

REVIEWS.

Essays and Addresses. By the Right Hon. Arthur J. Balfour, M.P. [Edinburgh: David Douglas.]

COMMENT on those chapters of Mr. Balfour's interesting volume which deal with purely literary, political, and speculative questions would be obviously out of place in these columns. But one of the essays—the longest of the whole collection—is devoted to the life and works of Handel, and it is to this that we would call the attention of such of our readers as have not fallen a prey to the modern heresy of sneering down the great Saxon master. Mr. Balfour in his preface describes the essay as critical and æsthetic, and the contents justify his description. Mr. Balfour is a great admirer of Handel, but his attitude is by no means that of the indiscriminate eulogist. He asserts, for example, that he contributed but little to the evolution of modern music as we know it, that he left behind him some humble imitators, but left no school. "His works," says Mr. Balfour, "form, as it were, a monument, solitary and colossal, raised at the end of some blind avenue from which the true path of advance has already branched; a monument which, stately and splendid though it be, is not the vestibule through which art has passed to the discovery and exploration of new regions of beauty." In illustration of this assertion, the writer points out that as regards form he rather exhausted the possibilities of those already in use than added to their number, while in most of his operas he carefully observed the rules which had grown out of the domination of the great singers, and made no effort to emancipate himself from the tyranny of circumstance. For this, he continues, it would be unfair to blame the composer. "The greatest works which the world has seen have not been dedicated to an unknown posterity, but have been produced to satisfy the daily needs of their age, and have, therefore, conformed to the tastes and usually to the fashion and the prejudices of the period which gave them birth." We find it somewhat difficult to reconcile this, first with the passage quoted above, and secondly with the attitude of such composers as Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, and Berlioz, to mention no others, the greatest works of each and all of whom were never properly appreciated—indeed, in the case of some of them, never performed at all—in the lifetime of their composers. With regard to Handel's Oratorios, Mr. Balfour speaks in terms of what he himself calls an "affectionate devotion" for the great composer, adding, curiously enough, that it is not possible, perhaps even desirable for the majority of his readers to share his devotion. In dealing with the burning question of Handel's plagiarisms, he formulates a test which is at once plausible and audacious: "If the borrowed fragment shows like the marble capital of a Corinthian column, built into the brick-work of a mediæval wall, the theft is a mistake, and mistakes are crimes—indeed, the only crimes recognised in the jurisprudence of art. But if it not only fits harmoniously into the new structure, but shows there for the first time its latent capabilities of beauty or grandeur, then, whatever judgment we may pass on the morality of the plagiarist, the plagiarism, as I conceive, stands justified at the bar of criticism." Mr. Balfour, in fine, declares that

Urio and Erba were immortalised by Handel's loans. "The truth is that Handel has not cheated them out of their due meed of fame, he has cheated them into it." In his estimate of the nature and extent of our debt to Handel, Mr. Balfour is at his best. "No man," he declares, "has equalled him, scarcely any man has tried to equal him, in the free application of chorus to every dramatic purpose, and to the delineation of every human emotion which language is capable of describing." He dwells with enthusiasm on his copious, fluent, and delightful gift of melody, and lays due stress on the "astonishing fact" that in the age of Voltaire and Hume, Pope and Swift, Handel produced the most profoundly religious music which the world has yet known. Here we must take leave of an essay which, for felicity of expression, acuteness of insight, and breadth of sympathy, constitutes a real addition to the critical literature of music.

Albums for Violin and Pianoforte. No. 30, Six Pieces, Ernst; No. 31, Five Pieces, David; No. 32, Four Pieces, Vieuxtemps; No. 33, Six Valses, Schubert.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE great violinist whose pieces fill the first Album was something more than a virtuoso—he was a musician of refined feeling. Some of Ernst's music is very light and showy; but there are other pieces of his which reveal higher qualities. This Album contains the famous "Élégie"; the brilliant "Carnaval" Variations, rendered more brilliant by the violin being tuned up a semitone; the "Otello" Fantasia; and other pieces, including "La Romanesca," a celebrated dance tune of the sixteenth century; this last piece is quaint and simple. Album No. 31 is devoted to Ferdinand David, the pupil of Spohr, the friend of Mendelssohn, and the teacher of Joachim. In the three "Caprices" the player will find pleasant tune, but plenty of solid work; the "Petit Tambour" is a brilliant, showy piece. Everything in this Album shows that David was a thorough master of his instrument. But everyone knows too how eagerly Mendelssohn, who knew something about the violin himself, sought—and what is more, took—his advice with regard to the technique in the solo part of his Violin Concerto. The third Album, No. 32, contains four pieces by Vieuxtemps, another name famous in the annals of the literature of the violin. But his music is so well known that it will suffice to say that the pieces are "Yankee Doodle," "Air Varié," "Réverie," and "Tarentelle." Album No. 33 contains some of the most fascinating of Schubert's Valses. The arrangements by Siegfried Jacoby are simple and effective.

Sonate No. 1, in D, für Pianoforte. Componirt von W. H. Speer (Op. 2).

Sonate für Violoncell und Pianoforte. Von J. Weingärtner.

Chromatische Etüden für Pianoforte. Von Graham P. Moore. Heft. 1, Nos. 1-3; Heft. 2, Nos. 4-6.

[Breitkopf und Härtel.]

THE writing of Sonatas is becoming somewhat rare. We live in an age of freedom, and few composers are willing to go forth to battle clad in the close-fitting armour of the past. Mr. Speer does not seem at his ease in the Sonata form, and yet his courage must be duly recognised. The opening movement of his Sonata—in which, by the way, the influence of Weber makes itself felt both in the matter and the manner—has outward vigour, but lacks inward strength. The *Intermezzo* is pleasing, but the writing is not well suited for the pianoforte. The *Finale* has good points, but lacks homogeneity. M. J. Weingärtner's Sonata for violoncello and pianoforte, again, is a work that suffers from the form in which it is cast. It contains melodious thematic material; but the movements are scarcely filled with such "stuff" as sonatas ought to be made of. The Romance is very light in character; at the same time, it is the most successful of the three movements. Mr. Graham Moore's clever Chromatic Studies are excellent practice; they are both difficult to read and to play. In some of the numbers—as, for instance, No. 6—sharps and double sharps are quite dazzling. Some of the musical thoughts are good; but the composer's chief aim in writing them was a technical one.