Review

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construction of every major scale is clearly shown, by moving round to the fixed place of *Do* any note which is chosen as the starting point, the naturals, sharps, or flats being indicated respectively by a white, red, or blue square. A minor third below *Do* major, the relative minor is given, both ascending and descending, according to the orthodox manner. But in examining this system closely, we find two embarrassing difficulties. In the first place, when a note is moved over *Do*, upon which a major scale is not constructed—as, for instance, D sharp—no sharps or flats are placed on the staff: this may mean that a scale is not usually written upon a sound so noted; but there is no explanation of this; and what learner is supposed to make it out for himself, especially when he finds that the scale of C appears precisely the same to the eye? In the second place, B and C are placed on the same square, the first coloured red and the second blue, forming, for example, the fourth sound in the scale of G flat major. According to Dr. Bonn's own explanation, this must mean that B sharp and C flat are identical: it is true that a musician knows better; but we presume that the "Scalometer" is to be used for the purpose of tuition, and not as a toy for those who already understand the matter. On the other side—called the "Chord Indicator"—the chords of the key-note, subdominant and dominant in the major key, are shown, corresponding with the note chosen for the *Do* on the opposite side; and the method of making the key-note and subdominant chords minor is also given. The received method of naming the notes according to their value—as semibreve, minim, &c.—is supplemented by the German plan of taking the semibreve as the whole, the minim as half, the crotchet as a quarter, &c., a system which we should like to see adopted in all instruction-books. Dr. Bonn's invention will especially appeal to the disciples of the Tonic Sol-fa method; for the syllables of the scale always appear in the same places, whatever may be the key-note; and thus the fixed sounds produced may be studied rather as a curiosity than a necessity. Much thought must have been bestowed upon the method of carrying out this invention; and we trust that its author will see that we appreciate his labours by devoting so much space to a discussion of its merits. We believe that if any contrivance of this kind can be of service in early tuition, the "Scalometer" will be found most valuable; and should Dr. Bonn see with us the defects we have pointed out, he can easily remedy them by a few words of explanation.

ASHDOWN AND PARRY.

Popular Classics for the Pianoforte. Selected and Edited by Walter Macfarren. Third Series.

THAT the idea of producing a carefully edited selection of those pianoforte works which have been allowed almost to fall into oblivion has proved a thoroughly successful one is amply shown by the issue of a third series of the "Popular Classics," every number in which we may at once say is a veritable gem. The Series contains (like those which have preceded it) twelve numbers; and Mr. Macfarren has, wisely we think, abstained from including any compositions of a very modern date, preferring to show how much sterling music of a former time we have neglected, rather than to point out the many works by composers of our own day which should command our attention. In the collection we have a Gavotte and Musette in D minor, and a Passepied, in B minor, by Bach; an "Allegro con Brio" (from the Sonata Op. 13) and a "Rondo Brillant" in B flat, by Hummel; a Sonata and a "Toccata" by Paradies; two Romances by Steibelt; the "Presto" in A flat, from Haydn's Sonata, No. 6; Woelff's Sonata (Op. 53); Dussek's Saxon Air, with variations; and Handel's Gigue in F sharp minor. As persons previously unacquainted with these pieces may find it difficult to make a selection from this list, it will be better for those with a classical taste—or for those who wish to acquire one—to possess themselves of the entire series; but timid travellers in the regions of art hitherto unknown to them may be too cautious to hazard such an experiment,

and to such, therefore, we unhesitatingly say that they cannot be wrong whichever number they may choose.

F. PITMAN.

New Practical Singing-class Handbook. The Instructions written and the Music principally composed or arranged by George Wells.

THE gradual spread of the "Moveable Do" theory for the purposes of vocal class teaching is leading to strange results. Given the starting point—that we are no longer to pay attention to fixed sounds—Instruction books without number appear, the sole novelty in which is that the lessons (written in the present notation) are to be sung to the intervals of the scale, presuming only that the pupil can manage to find them out. Mr. Wells says that "the strongly-felt want of this book has given rise to its existence;" let us see how he has supplied this want. Commencing by showing the names of the notes, and explaining the beats in simple duple time, he gives us some "Rounds for two voices," written in different keys without any signature. Music in two parts afterwards appears, noted on the same principle, and then the student is told (without having had the sharp or flat even mentioned) that he is to commit a list of "key signatures" to memory. Upwards of twenty harmonised lessons (some in four parts) are then given, with the proper signatures to the keys; and at the end of all these the formation of scales, by means of sharps only, is explained, and immediately tunes are given in keys with flats. Now it appears to us that although an intelligent pupil might be able to sing all these lessons without the help of the explanations, he certainly would never be able to do so in consequence of them, for passing over the fact of tunes being written in keys with sharps and flats before anything has been said about the formation of scales—the effect of a sharp is not even shown until the 17th page, and the effect of a flat is never mentioned at all. However, as it is stated in the Introduction to the book that it "does not pretend to teach the pupils without oral instruction," we will pass to the music, which consists partly of compositions by the author, and partly of selected pieces harmonised by him. Mr. Wells says that in studying these lessons "the taste of the pupil is cultivated while he is learning to sing." Let the reader judge whether the following harmonies (selected at random) will cultivate the taste: "Fruitful Fields," between the first and second bar, two fourths rising; "Farewell to the Village," between the fourteenth and fifteenth bar, a fourth rising to a fifth; "Cheerful Strains," eleventh bar commencing on the second quaver, three perfect fifths in succession; "Up the Hills," leading to the last bar before the *Da Capo*, perfect fifths between soprano and bass; "My Highland Home," third bar, an incomprehensible harmony upon F $\sharp$; and, worst of all, the first phrase in "Cherry Ripe," harmonised with a bass in perfect fifths with the melody, every time it occurs. Like many authors whose works have been submitted to us for notice, Mr. Wells may defend the illogical arrangement of the instructions in his book; but the defects in his harmonies are inaccuracies which speak for themselves, and we should not be doing our duty as reviewers were we to neglect pointing them out.

J. B. CRAMER AND Co.

Le Joueur de Flûte (Opéra de Hervé), pour Piano.

Une Heure de Royauté (Opéra de Armand Roux), pour Piano.

Une Fête aux Champs; Danse Rustique, pour Piano.
Par J. Rummel.

MR. RUMMEL's two Operatic Fantasias are the very best we have ever seen from his pen, which as our readers know is a somewhat prolific one. No. 1 commences with a stirring theme, followed by an "Allegro Vivo," an "Allegretto" and a melodious Waltz, all of which are excellently arranged. But No. 2 will unquestionably become the favourite, for not only are the airs tuneful, but

the passages which link them together are so vivacious and carefully written for the instrument that we heartily recommend the piece to teachers who desire something that shall combine pleasure with instruction. The Bolero, in A minor, is particularly effective, and the change into the tonic major makes a joyous *Finale*. In the "Fête aux Champs" the composer has given us an attractive rustic melody, in C minor, for the principal subject, and his second theme, in B flat major, is in good keeping with the character of the piece. Feebleness, however, is apparent before the return to the original motive, especially where the hands are crossed. The piece nevertheless is a good one of its kind, and does much credit to its composer's inventive faculty.

AUGENER AND CO.

Original Pieces for the Organ, by Francis Edward Gladstone.

An obvious familiarity with the capabilities of the organ and a fluent command of musical resources enable the fertile author of these pieces to contribute to the large stock of modern music for his instrument such matter as is pleasing in itself, if not conspicuously unlike the productions of other writers. The present series comprises a graceful *Andantino* in C, which flows on melodiously; a *Postlude* in E flat, of which the good effect is in some sort jeopardised by the constant prevalence of one figure or rhythmical arrangement of the notes; then a movement called *Preludio Religioso*, which is a *Larghetto* in D, and which, as a matter of taste more than of principle, we prefer to its companions; next, a movement described as *In Modo di Minuetto* in which, further, the antiquated direction "A Tempo Ordinario" leads us to look for an imitation of the style of past generations, and the agreeable music in A minor disappoints not our expectations; and, lastly, an *Allegro Moderato*, which has the additional direction "E Pomposo," is in the somewhat unusual measure of $\frac{3}{4}$, is extended to greater length than the others, and presents more variety than any of them. There is an independent pedal part in each of the numbers, they are all of moderate difficulty, the stopping is judiciously marked, and the collection deserves to be considered by those who need music for unostentatious effect and useful practice.

SCHOTT AND CO.

The Music of the Future. A letter to M. Frédéric Villot by Richard Wagner. Translated from the original German by Edward Dannreuther.

HERR DANNREUTHER, to whose zeal it is in a great measure due that the music, at all events the instrumental music, of Herr Wagner has of late obtained a fair hearing in this country, has now, in the above translation, afforded the general public a glimpse at the same composer's strivings in another department of his art, in which there is more room for polemical controversy—that of theory. The selection, on the part of the translator, is a judicious one, and we congratulate him upon his having successfully surmounted the obstacles which a subject, dealing to a great extent with abstract conceptions, necessarily presents. The object of the letter, from which Herr Dannreuther has already given some extracts in a lecture delivered at the Royal Institution in January last, is to explain the artistic aims of Herr Wagner's theories, showing, at the same time, how far they have been applied to his Music Dramas, composed up to the period from which the letter is dated (1860). It may thus be considered a *résumé* of theories and ideas advanced by the author in his more elaborate pamphlets, and particularly in his "Kunstwerk der Zukunft" (Work of Art of the Future), published more than twenty years ago, and which created so much angry controversy among German musicians at the time of its appearance. The above "letter" will be welcomed by all who have taken an interest in this new phase of German musical efforts. Those among us who, as yet, look upon Wagner as the innovator who would sacrifice all melody for the sake of

declamatory correctness, will be startled by passages such as this: "Let us settle, first of all, that the only form of music is melody, that without melody music is not conceivable, and that music and melody are entirely inseparable." And, again, persons who have been accustomed to entirely identify the movement set on foot by Wagner, with the efforts of the Lisztian School, will read with surprise that "it is not a *programme* . . . but only the dramatic action on the stage, which can fully express the significance of symphonic music." Whether or not we agree with theories, little more than hinted at in this pamphlet, there is a good deal of original thought contained in it, which will, in his turn, set the reader thinking and, we doubt not, make him desire for more.

PATERSON AND SONS, EDINBURGH.

Robert Schumann's "Soul of my Soul, my inmost Heart," "Sunday on the Rhine," and "Fare thee well." Transcribed for Harmonium, or American Organ, and Pianoforte, by Otto Schweizer.

THE growing love for Schumann's vocal music in England is a healthy sign of the time; and although not especially fond of "transcriptions" ourselves, we welcome the appearance of these beautiful songs in their present shape, because we know the more they are heard, the more must they win their way to a place in our affections. In combination with the pianoforte, the harmonium or American organ, they will be found extremely effective; and, if well played, a very good idea may thus be formed of these compositions, upon the many merits of which it is now unnecessary to enlarge. In the second and third upon our list the words of the songs are printed at the commencement; and we may also mention that very full directions for the management both of the harmonium and American organ in the performance of each piece are given at the bottom of the page.

ORIGINAL CORRESPONDENCE.

UNISON SINGING.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MUSICAL TIMES.

SIR,—As a constant reader of your valuable Circular, I have looked anxiously, but in vain, for some comment upon that portion of Mr. Barnby's Paper on Church Music, wherein he advocates the singing of hymns, &c., in unison, and not in parts. There may be some who, like myself, would regret the exclusion from our parish churches of part-singing not contrary to laws of harmony; and in default of a more able exponent, I venture to lay before you some views on the subject. Supposing a hymn to be sung in parts, Mr. Barnby points to three disturbing elements that will probably be present. Firstly, some of the congregation will be singing the melody an octave below others. Secondly, they will produce inharmonious combinations and progressions when heard together with the lower parts in the choir. Thirdly, there will be aspiring amateurs inventing parts of their own. Now, taking the last first, it is very doubtful whether the aspiring amateur will be induced to relinquish his contrapuntal impromptu, even by the abolition of part-singing in the choir. This individual must, I fear, in any case be endured, simply because he can't be cured; and I question whether his harmony (?) will not be more excruciating than ever, when combined with the "free" accompaniments some organists will add to unisonous singing. I do not understand that there is necessarily any objection to the "doubling" of a melody in octaves, in vocal, any more than in instrumental music; on the contrary, in many operatic concerted pieces, and other works of some of the best modern composers, examples are to be met with of melodies sung by voices in octaves, together with other vocal parts. Many hymn tunes and chants, when sung in parts by the choir, with the air doubled in octaves by the congregation, produce no inharmonious effect; disagreeable sensations being only experienced when a lower part moves in fourths with the air, or stands at the interval of a seventh from it (as in the