Review

Source: *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, Vol. 25, No. 496 (Jun. 1, 1884), p. 358

Published by: [Musical Times Publications Ltd.](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3356545>

Accessed: 20-02-2016 21:30 UTC

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The Thistle. A Miscellany of Scottish Song. With Notes Critical and Historical. By Colin Brown. Instrumental Accompaniments and Harmonies by James Merry-lees, A.C.

[London and Glasgow: William Collins, Sons and Co., Limited.]

HAD this book no other claim upon our notice than the fact of its being an excellent collection of Scottish songs, appropriately harmonised and accompanied, it would certainly deserve an extensive sale. But it has also a powerful attraction in the "Introduction to Scottish Music," contributed by Mr. Colin Brown, Euing Lecturer on the Science, Theory, and History of Music at Anderson's College, Glasgow, who tells us in his Preface that "the principles and construction of Scottish music have been misunderstood, and its peculiar characteristics so strangely mistaken that much of the music has been misrepresented by erroneous notation, and also by an application of the laws of harmony out of keeping with the genius and structure of the melodies." Many practical proofs of the truth of this assertion are given in the course of the volume; and we are certain that all genuine lovers of these old tunes will peruse the book with the utmost interest. It is truly said that although the pentatonic form of the scale is used in Scottish melodies, it is almost as much so in the national music of other countries; and there are innumerable tunes of undoubted Scotch origin where the fourth and seventh are freely used. Mr. Brown, indeed, says that we find Scottish music constructed upon the seven modes, on the same principle as the ancient Greek modes and the Gregorian tones, three of these modes being major and four minor. Anxious enquirers into this matter must be referred to the book itself, where ample proofs will be found of the soundness of the Euing lecturer's investigations upon the subject.

Trois Petites Esquisses. No. 1, Promenade; No. 2, Polonia; No. 3, Petite Chaconne. Pour le Piano. Par G. Bachmann. [William Czerny.]

THESE three well-written and effective trifles may be commended to teachers who desire that the simple music which they supply to their pupils shall shadow forth the style and feeling of more elaborate compositions. No. 1 has a pleasing legato theme, appropriately harmonised; No. 2, although reminding us perhaps too much of Chopin, is sufficiently characteristic to justify its title; and No. 3 is not only flowing and melodious, but an excellent study for young players, who cannot be too early taught that the left hand should not be a mere attendant upon the right.

La Harpe Eolienne. Nocturne pour Piano. Par J. Leybach. [Joseph Williams.]

SUCH elegant trifles for the pianoforte as the composer of this piece has occasionally given us are worthy of favourable mention, although not calling for any detailed criticism. An original composition of any kind has always more claim to our attention than the so-called "Fantasia" upon well-known airs, in most of which some of the tenderly loved and unassuming friends of our early days are so mercilessly disfigured as to be scarcely recognisable. "La Harpe Eolienne," perhaps, may do as well as any other title for the sketch before us; but considering that it is merely built upon a graceful melody in 12-8 rhythm, and that—unless a chromatic scale is presumed to represent it—the "eolian" effect is nowhere observable, we should have preferred to accept the piece simply on its own merits as a "Nocturne." Like all Leybach's works, it is well written for the instrument, and not too difficult for moderately advanced players.

Les Cloches du Village. Pour Piano. Par G. Ferraris. [Forsyth Brothers.]

THIS characteristic and effective little piece, although bearing a somewhat conventional title, is deserving of warm commendation. The figure given out at the commencement is ingeniously preserved throughout the composition; and, though in the unusual key of F sharp major, it will not be found difficult either to read or to execute. Apart from its attractive musical qualities, we can conscientiously recommend the piece as an excellent study for touch in both hands.

Pitman's new Pianoforte Tutor. By Arthur H. Brown. [F. Pitman.]

As this Tutor has been recently published, it may unquestionably be termed "new"; but, on a close examination of the work, we fail to discover anything novel in its contents. The arrangement of the material, however, is extremely good, and the explanation of all that it is necessary for young pupils to become acquainted with is, with few exceptions, so clear as to be easily understood. Let us, however, at once say that we do not think a child should be told that "B sharp is played on C," but that B sharp is played on the white key more frequently called C. Again, we cannot see what the author means by saying "the spaces of the treble staff collectively form the word *Face*"; so also do the three lines both above and below it." Assuredly, notes upon three lines cannot spell a word of four letters; and it is obvious, therefore, that *Face* can only be spelt by taking in one of the staff lines. The lessons throughout the book are not only well selected, but carefully arranged; and the occasional introduction of chants and hymn tunes is a feature deserving commendation. There is also a brief dictionary of Italian terms used in music, with an attempt to give the correct pronunciation by means of English letters, a task in which the author has, we think, been fairly successful. Descriptive words in other languages have, however, latterly so crept into musical publications that many of these must also be included in Tutors which profess to keep pace with the time.

Collection of Celebrated Violin Duets. Selected, progressively arranged, and edited by J. T. Carrodus. [F. Pitman.]

STUDENTS of the violin will find this an excellent selection of works for practice. The eight books—containing pieces by F. Derckam, M. Gebauer, J. Pleyel, J. W. Kalliwoda, J. B. Viotti, and L. Spohr—are so carefully arranged in the order of difficulty as to lead the pupil slowly, but surely, onward; the talent and large practical experience of Mr. Carrodus affording a sufficient guarantee, not only of the merit of the duets chosen, but of the able manner in which they are edited.

Tc Deum and Jubilate in G. By T. Creswell Dean. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THIS setting of the "Morning Canticles" would be known in Cathedral choirs as a full service, no solo voices being required. At the same time its distinctive features are neither brevity nor simplicity. Though the display of contrapuntal skill is extremely modest, the accompaniment is for the most part independent of the voice parts. The composer indulges freely in transitions of key, and repeats words and sentences at pleasure in order to secure the desired musical effect. In general the style is vigorous rather than melodic, and modern without being unchurch-like.

FOREIGN NOTES.

THE announcement which we are able to make of the discovery, at Leipzig, of two hitherto unknown compositions by Beethoven—viz., two complete Cantatas, one commemorative of the death of the Emperor Joseph II., and the other celebrating the accession to the vacated throne of Leopold II. of Austria—will be hailed with satisfaction and delight by every amateur. We refer our readers to the more detailed notice of the event given in another column.

We are glad to notice in German papers that it is proposed to erect a statue of Carl Maria von Weber at his native town of Eutin, in Holstein, to be inaugurated in connection with the centenary of his birth on December 18, 1886. There is abundant reason why Englishmen should take an active interest in the homage thus proposed to be offered to the genius of a composer whose "Der Freischütz" has been the most popular opera of foreign origin ever presented on the English stage, and whose "Oberon" was written, by the dying hand of the master, for England. Subscriptions for the purpose indicated will be received by the Honorary President, Freiherr von Liliencron, Schleswig, Germany.