Review

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to many elementary classes; and the fact of the twenty-two songs contained in the collection being all of a popular character will make them additionally attractive to beginners.

LAMBORN COCK.

The Maid of Orleans. Sonata for the Pianoforte. By Sir William Sterndale Bennett.

If a real artist were judged by the quantity rather than the quality of his productions, the position of Sir Sterndale Bennett in this country might be a puzzle to many who have followed with interest his career since he stood forth before the public as a composer of the highest classical works, even when a boy in the Royal Academy of Music. No composer has won his fame more truthfully or with less self-assertion; for, with a firm reliance upon his power to elevate the art, he has never sought the praise of the hour at the expense of his reputation; and even the many honours he has earned have been bestowed upon him, and not courted by him. It is true that of late years he has been somewhat too reticent for his admirers; but restless activity is too often accepted as a proof of genius; and the reception of his most recent work sufficiently convinces us that his intervals of silence have increased rather than diminished his fame. Even those who do not like what is usually called "programme music" would, we think, be more than half converted by the charming composition before us. Pianists who can sing with their fingers will be delighted to linger over the beauties of the first movement, entitled "In the Fields," a delicious Pastoral in A flat. The flow of the triplets is never once interrupted, although the rhythm changes occasionally from double to triple. The second subject, whilst felicitously preserving the pastoral character of the movement, offers an excellent contrast with the opening theme, reminiscences of which are afterwards introduced, with some graceful modifications, a few bars of *coda* bringing this melodious *Andante* to a close. The second movement, "In the Field," is an *Allegro* of martial character, in A flat minor, opening with a staccato bass, accompanying the trumpet call, and, after modulating through B minor, leading to a tranquil theme, accompanied with a syncopated bass. The writing in the second part of this movement is of an exceedingly high character, but in the elaborate working of the subjects the original design is never lost sight of. The *Adagio*, which follows, "In Prison," is a Prayer, so lovely in its pathos as to render the translation of Schiller's verse, with which it is headed, almost superfluous. The second subject, in the dominant, after a return to the opening theme, appears again with good effect as an inner part, in the original key of the movement; and the tender treatment of these two subjects is so fascinating to the listeners that we can scarcely wonder at the desire for the repetition of the movement which has always been manifested at the public performance of the Sonata. The words, "Brief is the sorrow, endless is the joy," which precede the final movement, are sympathetically illustrated in the passionate music, which appropriately commences in A flat minor and concludes in the tonic major. What may be regarded as the second subject, beginning in A flat minor, has an enharmonic change into E major so perfectly resistless in its eloquence as almost to reconcile us to the truth of Mendelssohn's remark that words are more ambiguous than notes. A remarkable characteristic of this movement is the constant alternation between major and minor, the entire conception indeed of the *Finale* showing how deeply the composer has studied the feeling of Schiller's poem upon which the Sonata is based. Without presenting any extraordinary executive difficulties, this beautiful work demands the highest intellectual powers from the executant. True appreciation of the poetry throughout each movement, and a command of tone with the utmost refinement of touch, are absolutely necessary to its due interpretation. To those who possess these essential qualifications the composition will sufficiently speak for itself; but all who have devoted themselves to the ephemeral works of the day

must fit themselves for a higher world of art before the beauties of such music can be fully revealed to them.

CHAPPELL AND CO.

Bourrée. For the Pianoforte. Composed by Cotsford Dick.

THE name of this composer is new to us, but we select this *Bourrée* from a mass of compositions of a similar character, because we discover in it a merit which should not be passed unrecognised, especially if its author be an amateur. The spirit of the old dance has been so thoroughly caught, and the harmonies are so quaint and in accordance with the writings of the Bach period, that we cannot but imagine Mr. Dick to be an enthusiastic admirer of the time when the best writers threw their genius into this class of music. It is difficult of course to compose an original *Bourrée*, and we are consequently not surprised at finding reminiscences of Bach in the one before us; but the composition is in every respect extremely creditable, and we recommend it with all sincerity.

Evening Thoughts. Impromptu for the Pianoforte.

Song of the Mill Wheel. Melody for the Pianoforte.

By Mrs. Joseph Robinson.

BOTH these pieces are gracefully treated, and evidence much musical feeling in their composer. "Evening Thoughts," headed with a quotation from "Paradise Lost," has a melodious subject, and is well harmonised, the second theme, in the subdominant, being perhaps scarcely a sufficient contrast, but flowing melodiously enough to please an amateur audience. The mildness of the piece throughout may be perhaps forgiven, considering its title; but the question is whether the composition suggested the name or the name suggested the composition. Songs descriptive of mill wheels, even "without words," have been somewhat overdone; but Mrs. Robinson has written a good piece of its kind, and one which should, we think, find favour with pianists in search of novelty. A rapid succession of triplets accompanies a pleasing melody, a good effect being gained by the occasional introduction of four even notes against the three. The manner in which the passages are written for both hands seems to prove that the composer is a good pianist.

JOSEPH WILLIAMS.

One Hundred Easy and Progressive Violin Duets. Selected by H. Sydney Davis.

THIS work is issued in four parts, each containing twenty-five duets. The subjects are extremely attractive; and, being selected chiefly from the compositions of the standard writers, the performance of them cannot fail to aid in the cultivation of a taste for good music. They are all easily arranged, and carefully punctuated; and may be confidently recommended to young violinists as infinitely better for practice than the commonplace airs so often plodded through by beginners on the instrument.

The Changeling. Song. Written by Robert B. Holt. Composed by Bennett Gilbert.

THERE is much dramatic feeling in this song, but the constant recurrence of the subject in A minor, unharmonised, becomes somewhat tiresome. The fresh theme in the tonic major is a relief; and a good effect is gained by holding on the key-note for the change into F major, the "Agitato," with the triplet accompaniment, contrasting well with the more subdued portions of the song. Character without monotony (or at least such monotony as becomes distressing to the listener) is rarely found save in the works of the highest writers; but the composition of songs of this class is so fascinating that we can scarcely wonder at their rapid increase. Some of the best *lieder* of Schubert and Schumann may be cited as excellent examples for study. Mr. Gilbert's song is dedicated to Madlle. Titens; but it is not stated whether she has ever sung it in public.