Review

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Reviews.

Memories: An autobiography. By Walter Macfarren.
[The Walter Scott Publishing Co., Ltd.]

Mr. Walter Macfarren is so well known for his geniality, humour, and kind-heartedness that it is not surprising to find these sunny attributes shining throughout the pages of his book. Nearly four full-scores of years are covered in this autobiographic survey, and the note which runs through it all is one that gives pleasure to the reader. This life-story enables us to follow the author in the ups-and-downs of his long career—his choristership at Westminster Abbey, as a chilblained assistant at a music-shop, and his successful pupilage and professorship at the Royal Academy of Music, the latter appointment covering the long period of 'well nigh fifty-eight years.'

Anecdotes are plentifully sprinkled about the 300 pages of these 'Memories.' In regard to Mr. Gruneisen, a former musical critic of the *Athenæum* and *Morning Post*, Mr. Macfarren tells us that he 'wrote such an illegible hand that it is said (I do not vouch for the truth of this), when he departed this life, the composers of the various journals for which he wrote gave a dinner to celebrate the event!' Half-a-century ago some of the students of the Royal Academy of Music not only received their music lessons at the Institution, but were lodged and boarded within its walls. The changed order of things is recorded by our author in these words:

Let me here recount the circumstance which led to the abolition of indoor students in Tenterden Street. The British Government, fifty years ago, used to proclaim Fast-day on very slight provocation,—too much or too little rain, as the case might be—and the Archbishop of Canterbury composed a prayer suitable to the occasion. On these Fast-days the boys who were housed and fed at the Academy were treated to salt fish. In the early part of this year [1853], there having been an unusual number of Fast-days, and the salt fish particularly bad and malodorous, the boys struck, and led by four of the strongest of their number, they tied the hall-porter in his chair and stormed the larder, laying siege to fragments of bacon, cold pudding, eggs, &c. Then, with cans of porter, brought from 'round the corner,' to wash these luxuries down, they made high feast. Swift retribution, however, fell upon the four leaders, who were ignominiously expelled, and Academy boarders at Tenterden Street abolished for ever.

Thus does Mr. Macfarren chat pleasantly on. His book is enriched with various portraits, facsimiles from an album, &c., among the latter being the signature of W. H. Weiss placed under the first bar of his popular song, the words of which are there written 'Under a *roasted* chestnut tree'! The long lists of compositions and names of pupils—many of the latter distinguished in English music—which form appendixes to this autobiography testify to the author's industry during his honourable career. Two dates in the book need correction—(p. 55) Mendelssohn died on November 4 (not 7), 1847; and (p. 296) the Biographical Sketch of Mr. Macfarren appeared in 'THE MUSICAL TIMES' in 1898 (not 1896), the month being January.

Organ Music. By Various Composers.

[Novello & Company, Limited.]

Organists who give organ recitals—and their name is legion—have no cause to complain of the variety of pieces that are available for their performances. Old and new, original compositions and arrangements, are procurable in abundance, with the result that programmes need not become stereotyped, as they often are, or that players need to circumvent their repertoires. In the 'Old English Organ Music' series Mr. John E. West has added seven new numbers: these include a Voluntary in A and one in C by William Russell, a former distinguished organist of the Foundling Chapel; a Voluntary in C minor by Dr. Greene; a Voluntary in C, a remarkable and particularly fine work by Samuel Wesley, and a Prelude and Fugue in A, by the same

composer; an Introduction and Fugue in F by Dr. Crotch, founded on a single chant by Dr. Philip Hayes; and an Air varied by Thomas Adams. All these interesting specimens of true organ music have been skilfully and effectively edited for modern organs by Mr. West, who knows what to do and what not to do.

Those who favour arrangements may have their attention drawn to a series of transcriptions carefully made by Dr. G. J. Bennett, organist of Lincoln Cathedral. The first number consists of the Introduction and Melodrama from Sir Alexander Mackenzie's 'Dream of Jubal,' and the same composer's Prelude from 'Colomba' is also laid under contribution. Mozart is represented by three minuets from his great trio of symphonies; Beethoven by the minuet from the E flat pianoforte sonata (Op. 31, No. 3); and Wagner by the Prelude to 'Lohengrin'; while three numbers are devoted to Tchaikovsky—the *Andantino* from the F minor symphony, the slow movement from the B flat minor pianoforte concerto, and the Coronation March. Effective laying-out and suitable registration are features to be commended, and Dr. Bennett has evidently taken great pains in making his transcriptions artistic and playable.

To return to original organ music, but modern instead of ancient creations, we have before us a set of three musicianly pieces by Mr. John E. West—entitled 'Aspiration,' 'Contemplation,' and 'Lamentation.' These strains not only reflect their several designations, but they furnish just the right kind of material for in-going and offertory voluntaries. A 'Meditation' in E flat, also by Mr. West, is a thoughtful and well-contrasted piece. Of three compositions by Dr. C. H. Lloyd the two *Scherzos*—in C minor and E major—fully justify their designation in *Allegro* and *Allegretto* genialities; a Postlude (in E flat), also by Dr. Lloyd and dedicated to Mr. Basil Johnson, of Rugby, is an effective contribution to modern organ music. Dainty and melodious to a degree is an *Adantino* in D flat by Dr. H. Davan Wetton, a little piece which is almost sure to come into favour by reason of its attractiveness.

A book of 'seven pieces for the organ' by M. Théodore Dubois, the distinguished French organist and composer, contains a mixture of both loud and soft voluntaries suitable for church use, or recitals. In addition to their melodic interest these pieces have the advantage of being easy of execution; indeed one of them, entitled 'Prière,' is for manuals only.

A History of Irish Music. By Wm. H. Grattan Flood.

[Browne & Nolan, Ltd., Belfast and Cork.]

Many people may be surprised to learn that there exist ample material and justification for a history of Irish music. There is no doubt that in the Middle Ages, and earlier, music as an art and a science was successfully cultivated in Ireland and that its devotees exercised considerable influence over the British Isles and parts of Europe. This may be conceded without endorsing all that Mr. Flood (who never forgets that he is an Irishman as well as a historian) patriotically claims on behalf of his country. We are told (p. 37) that, 'taken in general, from a technical point of view the ancient Irish can claim the credit of inventing musical form—in fact, the germ which developed into the sonata form,' that before the 9th century 'they [the Irish] had an intimate acquaintance with the diatonic scale long before it was perfected (?) by Guido of Arezzo,' that they were 'the first to employ harmony and counterpoint,' that 'they had a world-famed school of harpers,' and finally that 'they generously diffused musical knowledge all over Europe' (pp. 19, 20). Then it is stated (p. 48) that 'in the new organum of the 12th century we find in use dissonance (?) of the major and minor 3rd with the major 6th,' that Irish immigrants introduced Celtic minstrelsy and taught the Welsh people the music of ancient Erin, and that Irish missionaries introduced Irish music and inaugurated plain-chant at a number of English cathedrals. In an interesting and useful chapter on Shakespeare and Irish music the acquaintance of the great poet with many Irish songs is industriously traced, and another chapter deals with the visits of Handel and Dr. Arne to Ireland. The cultivation of the art languished in the later and

gloomier periods of Irish history. The harpers began to die out, and the developments of music taking place in other countries had little or no influence in Ireland. The 19th century brought forward John Field the pianist; then came Balfe and Wallace and others to show that Irish musical genius was by no means extinct. To-day we have Sir Charles Villiers Stanford in the front rank of living musicians, and there are many other Irishmen who have achieved fame in the art.

Although Mr. Flood's history is somewhat discursive in its literary style, and inclined to be over enthusiastic, it is a useful compilation of facts and dates.

Sonate (No. 3 in B dur), Op. 12, für Orgel. Componirt von Percy C. Buck.

[Breitkopf & Härtel.]

Dr. Buck has planned his third organ sonata thus: *Fantasia*, *Marcia Funèbre*, and *Toccata*. The first of these movements opens with a broad and well-defined theme, one that recalls in its stately tread the last movement of Mendelssohn's sonata in the same key. To this succeeds an agitated section in the tonic minor (B flat) of restless tonality: indeed, it would serve admirably for a sight-reading test. A repetition of the opening portion concludes the *Fantasia*. By-the-way, in bar three from the end of this movement, should not the uppermost note (C) be a dotted minim, instead of a dotted crotchet? The *Funeral March* is constructed on three Hebrew melodies—'Matnath Yad,' 'Attah Adonai,' and 'El Nora'—thematic material of an unusual but distinctly melodious nature, which the composer has deftly and impressively treated. In the last movement the contrasting elements of dignified phrases and toccataish semiquaver energy are well displayed. The work, which in its interpretation will make some demands on technical skill, is one that reflects credit upon its composer.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

An Elizabethan Virginal Book. By E. W. Naylor, Mus. D. Pp. xv. and 220; 6s. net. (Dent.)—*Schubert.* By Edmondstone Duncan. With illustrations and portraits. Pp. ix. and 281; 3s. 6d. net. (Dent.)—*Joseph Joachim.* By J. A. Fuller Maitland. Pp. ix. and 63; 2s. 6d. net. (John Lane.)—*Richard Wagner to Mathilde Wesendonck.* Translated, Prefaced, &c., by William Ashton Ellis. Pp. xii. and 386; 16s. net. (H. Grevel & Co.)—*The Study of Music as a means of Education.* By Edgar Mills. Pp. vii. and 73; 1s. net. (Oxford: B. H. Blackwell.)—*Brahms.* By Herbert Antcliffe. Pp. 56; 1s. net. (Bell.)

THE HIGHER ASPECTS OF MUSICAL FORM.

At the meeting of the Musical Association held on May 9 (Dr. Charles Maclean in the chair), Mr. F. Gilbert Webb read a paper on 'The Higher Aspects of Musical Form.'

The lecturer said that it was with the diffidence born of knowledge that he ventured to take up the thorny subject of form in music, but his justification was a desire to contribute in some degree to a clearer apprehension than seemed at present to exist concerning the principles which gave form and design force and influence. Music has ever reflected the spirit of its time, and at the present period nothing was sacred to the analyst and searcher after truth, and the result was that our conceptions of material substances and our beliefs had been shaken to their foundations. Small wonder, therefore, that in the midst of this physical and mental *Götterdämmerung*, composers should question the truth of laws and rules hitherto accepted unhesitatingly.

Formalism might be described as form run to seed, and was as inevitable as the decay of a beautiful flower; but, while lamenting that degeneration, it should not be forgotten that the flower would have had little beauty but for the presence of symmetrical form. The germ of form was the desire for

symmetry. It was observable in the rude pattern markings of the savage. Such markings might be described as form in an inert state. Active life came to it with the spirit of expression, and the moment design became the medium or thought, it acquired artistic vitality, and its subsequent ramifications were the natural product of environment; but formalism was the killing of that spirit, the retrogression to the inert state.

That in which the masterpiece differed from what might be termed estimable music was that, whereas every note of the former had been dictated, perhaps unconsciously, by an overwhelming desire to express a dominating idea, a considerable portion of the latter has been filled in by obedience to precedent and to theoretical laws.

There were two aspects of form which to-day were somewhat overlooked, *i.e.*, the different action of form in mental conception and in assimilating the ideas of others. The composer worked from a central idea, a germ thought which he expanded; the listener had to be conducted to that germ-thought by a series of introductions. The composer stood within the edifice he had erected, but the listener was outside, and unless the builder had been clear in his designing his object would be hard to understand. In no art was the consideration of the laws by which understanding was accomplished so imperative as in music, yet modern music showed that few composers studied to make their music easily comprehended.

It should be recognised that design in music was as many-sided as form in the inanimate world, and that nature always suited her form to her requirements. Far more compositions had failed by being written in obedience to rules inapplicable to the subject-matter than by formlessness, but the composer's difficulties and responsibilities were greatly increased by his emancipation from fixed laws. He was faced by eternal principles of balance, symmetry, appropriateness, and other attributes which made for rationality and sanity, without which he could never achieve true greatness. He might select any subject for musical illustration, but unless the appropriate treatment made for the production of a work that conformed to the laws by which the mind of the listener received and assimilated impressions, he would only produce a monstrosity.

Mr. Webb's thoughtful and well-expressed paper was followed by a discussion in which Sir Frederick Bridge, Dr. Yorke Trotter, Mr. T. L. Southgate, and the chairman took part.

PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY.

The concert on May 11 opened with the Welsh Rhapsody by Mr. Edward German, its first performance in London. The success which the work gained when produced at the Cardiff Musical Festival last year was fully endorsed by the Philharmonic audience at the Queen's Hall, who cheered the composer again and again. Mr. German has selected five Welsh melodies for his thematic material. These really tuneful strains he has welded together and treated in a most masterly and interesting manner, with the result that there is not a dull moment from beginning to end. And is not this saying much when a modern composition is under consideration? The orchestration is as clear as the day: everything 'comes off,' and the manner in which the composer has climaxed his fantasia with 'Men of Harlech' is overwhelming in its effectiveness. We venture to predict frequent performances of this delightful work: it will brighten many a programme.

The enjoyment of the concert was further enhanced by the charming playing of M. Raoul Pugno, a pianist who has a lovely touch and who is an artist to the tips of his fingers—would that this could be said of all pianists! In César Franck's beautiful Symphonic Variations for pianoforte and orchestra and the 'Africa' fantasia by Saint-Saëns, M. Pugno further distinguished himself in those rare qualities which so eminently characterize his interpretations. Miss Lydia Nerval was the vocalist, and the concert concluded with Tchaikovsky's Pathetic symphony, a work that was first introduced into England, under Sir Alexander Mackenzie's conductorship, by the Philharmonic Society in 1894. Dr. Cowen ably conducted a concert that formed a most pleasant music-making.