Review

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Mr. Imoff. At the pianoforte, Mr. Parker; Conductor, Mr. Edward Jenn.

MISS MARGARET BUCKNALL, A.R.A.M., a young pianist who has rapidly gained a high place in public estimation, was married to Mr. Alfred J. Eyre, of the Royal Academy of Music, on the 15th ult., at St. Peter's, Vauxhall. The wedding was choral, and was witnessed by a large number of friends of the bride and bridegroom.

VARIOUS stories being afloat with regard to the transfer of Sir Julius Benedict's services from Covent Garden to Her Majesty's, we may state explicitly that Sir Julius, of his own will, severed the connection with Mr. Gye, and afterwards accepted an offer spontaneously made, in very handsome terms, by Mr. Mapleson.

SIGNORINA MAZZUCATO, daughter of the famous teacher of singing, Alberto Mazzucato, who was well known as the instructor of many vocalists of celebrity (including Mr. Sims Reeves), has recently taken up her residence in London, and intends devoting herself to giving lessons in singing.

MR. W. A. B. LUNN, who died on the 4th ult., although known chiefly in the literary world, deserves a record in this journal as the inventor of the "Sequential System of Musical Notation," a brief notice of which has recently appeared in our columns.

MADAME ALBANI, we regret to say, will not be able to take part in any of the provincial musical festivals next autumn. An offer of an engagement at Hereford has been indirectly made to Madame Gerster, but without the wished-for result.

SIR JULIUS BENEDICT'S Annual Concert will take place this year in St. James's Hall, and present more decided attractions to amateurs than of late. The principal artists of Her Majesty's Theatre give their services on the occasion.

THE Right Reverend Bishop Piers Claughton, D.D., Archdeacon of London, has consented to become the President of the London Church Choir Association, in the room of the Rev. W. C. F. Webber.

GOUNOD'S Opera, "Polyeucte," was performed at Antwerp on Friday, the 18th ult., with immense success. M. Gounod conducted the performance.

WE understand that there is no prospect whatever of Signor Boito's "Mefistofele" being produced at Her Majesty's Theatre this season.

MR. JOHN FRANCIS BARNETT is engaged upon an orchestral work having, like his "Lay of the Last Minstrel," a "poetic basis."

REVIEWS.

The Arts in the Middle Ages, and at the Period of the Renaissance. Music: a Supplementary Chapter. By Paul Lacroix (Bibliophile Jacob), Curator of the Imperial Library of the Arsenal, Paris. [Bickers and Son.]

M. LACROIX'S works on the Middle Ages have obtained a certain amount of favour, due alike to the careful manner in which they are prepared and the popular style in which they are written. The "Supplementary Chapter" devoted to music, and published separately, contains what we may reasonably suppose any intelligent compiler would collect upon the subject, and which may serve the masses, who merely desire to gain some knowledge of what music was like in the Middle Ages. A student, however, will we think scarcely rest content with a reproduction of the records which are evidently copied from the old works on the history of music, because in the present day many of these records have been proved to be unreliable. Mr. Chappell, for example, in his book on the ancient systems of music emphatically says, "The two systems, Ambrosian and Gregorian, did not exist at the dates of their now-supposed founders. The meaning of 'Ambrosian music' is 'music according to the use of Milan;' and of 'Gregorian music,' 'according to the use of Rome'—Ambrose and Gregory having been the founders of the two churches," and modern research upon the subject certainly proves Mr. Chappell to be right. The statement that St. Ambrose suppressed "the three systems of grave, medium, and acute," and substituted for all the scales "gamuts of the four principal

tones which represented the ancient scales of Greek music—Dorian, Phrygian, Eolian, and Mixolydian" will scarcely perhaps be accepted by those who have dived a little more deeply into the question. There is a little obscurity, too, in the paragraph which informs us that Pope Gregory I. "inaugurated his musical reform by collecting the fragments of the melodies of the primitive Church in order to form a book of Anthems, and by modifying the four tonal scales of St. Ambrose." Certainly the addition of scales commencing a fourth below each of those already in use could hardly be called *modifying* the old ones. But this subject always has been, and we fear always will be, obscure; for as Greek names were given to scales without any real meaning, it is scarcely to be wondered at that authors should differ in their attempts to unravel the mystery; and many of the most learned historians of this period will tell you that it is exceedingly difficult, and indeed almost impossible, to decide in which of the ecclesiastical scales a Chant is written. The illustrations form a highly attractive feature in the little Treatise before us. The chromo-lithographic print representing King René and his Musical Court is really excellent; and from the twenty-one other illustrations we may select for special praise the "Personification of Music, with the auxiliaries, the Poets, and the Musicians," which is a fac-simile of a wood engraving of the "Margarita philosophica nova" (Strasbourg edition); and also the Celestial Concert, in which the angels are represented as playing the various instruments in use during the fifteenth century, from a painting by Fillippino Lippi, in the Minerva Church, Rome.

A Dictionary of Music and Musicians (A.D. 1450—1879). By eminent writers, English and Foreign. Edited by George Grove, D.C.L. Part VI. [Macmillan and Co.]

THIS work appears to improve as it progresses. In the present part we have some highly interesting articles, that on "Harmony" being perhaps the best that has yet appeared, not only because it presents a well-digested history of the subject from the days of Hucbald to the present time, but because the author has wisely refrained from colouring it so with his own opinions as to make it rather a vehicle for the promulgation of a theory than a review of the varied theories of others. This praise we cannot give for an article upon J. N. Hummel, which may certainly represent the estimate of this artist by "Young Germany," but we scarcely think will be endorsed by the admirers of the school of which Hummel was so eminent a representative. That he was a "classic" of the pianoforte we admit; but that he was a "dull classic" we deny. Several of his Sonatas are masterpieces; his pianoforte Fantasia in E flat and his well-known Duet in A flat are not only remarkable for beauty of melody and polish of style, but for artistic development and command over the resources of the instrument, many of his passages indeed being quite new at the time they were written. Considering the writer of this article only mentions his pianoforte Concertos in A minor and B minor, we may presume either that he does not know, or despises, the Concerto in A flat, which Madame Arabella Goddard performed at a recent concert of the Philharmonic Society. Then are we to give no place to his Septett, Op. 74, save as an "Academical Stockpiece," under which head are also here ranged the only two Concertos mentioned, and the Sonatas in F sharp minor, Op. 81, and D major, Op. 106? His Masses too, although, perhaps, scarcely rising to sublimity—a fault which may be truly charged against similar works of many standard composers—are full of beauty, and he has left us some really admirable ballet music. Considering that (as we have already said) the Concerto in A flat is omitted from the list of his works by his present biographer, and that his pianoforte Duet in the same key is also not named, we are by no means surprised at the writer's opinion of the few which are mentioned; nor at the closing sentence that, besides those particularly specified, there are "a number of Sonatas, Etudes, and miscellaneous display pieces for two or four hands, a couple of Trios, a Quintett, &c.;" but we certainly are amazed at the following summary of his artistic gifts and perfect culture: "Endowed with curiously little inventive power, rarely warm, and quite incapable of humour or of passion, but fully equipped with every musical virtue

that can be acquired by steady plodding, he appears expressly cut out for the hero of respectable mediocrity." We quite agree with the writer of this paragraph when he ridicules the fact of Hummel having been regarded in his prime as "the equal of Beethoven;" but in art there are degrees of merit; and we cannot allow so disparaging an article upon a composer who has left us such charming works, and an executant who may be said almost to have founded a school of pianoforte-playing, to pass without an earnest and most emphatic protest.

The Sleeping Beauty. A Cantata for Female Voices. Poetry by Alfred Tennyson. Music by Henry Lahee. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

TEACHERS of choral singing in ladies' schools and classes will be grateful to Mr. Lahee for the happy thought that suggested this work. So small is their repertory of good music, apart from detached pieces, that any addition to it certainly commands a welcome, especially when, as in the present case, both story and illustration are well adapted for general use. We need not recommend the poem in which our Laureate has enshrined the beautiful old fairy tale of the enchanted court, the slumbering princess, and the happy prince whose kiss of love broke the sleep of a hundred years. Everybody knows it, and reads it again and again with unabated pleasure, for, though the idea may not shape itself definitely to us, we are all waiting for some form or other of the "fated fairy prince," with whose coming—

Will the hundred summers die,
And thought and time be born again;
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,
Bring truth that sways the souls of men.

Mr. Lahee was, therefore, fortunate in his choice of a subject. Let us now see how he has treated it. In the first place he has chiefly written concerted music, in two, three, or four parts, thus showing a due regard for the circumstances under which the work will, as a rule, be performed. There is only one air, but the incidental solos are neither few nor unimportant, while properly avoiding difficulties beyond the average amateur's means. And, in the next place, he has given special and graceful prominence to the accompaniment, awarding to it a distinct and independent share in the general musical expression, and writing for pianoforte and harmonium with excellent taste and just appreciation of the effects to be produced. The Cantata includes five numbers and a short instrumental prelude of twenty-four bars only. In the first number we have a description of the "Sleeping Palace," set as a chorus for three (sometimes four) parts, and relieved by short incidental solo passages. Owing to the great length of the poetic text, the style adopted often approximates to a *quasi* recitative, whole lines, for instance, being sung upon one chord. Yet the effect is not bald, for it is here that Mr. Lahee's accompaniment stands well to the fore, giving life, variety, and interest to the *ensemble*. The expression of the verses is, on the whole, well brought out, although Mr. Lahee's self-imposed limits keep him very much to the diatonic scale and the keys closely related to his tonic. Perhaps the most effective portion of the chorus begins with the entrance of the second subject in the relative minor. Here a dramatic spirit animates the music, and an entire change of style makes the subsequent return to the graceful and flowing first theme remarkably agreeable. No. 2, "The Sleeping Beauty," begins with a tranquil contralto air, most unpretending and even languid in character. It seems to reflect the somnolence of the heroine and her surroundings. This is followed by a Serenade for soprano solo and four-part chorus, which may be described as pretty, according to a somewhat familiar order of prettiness. Then we reach No. 3, "The Arrival," and, by means of a two-part chorus, follow the prince as he enters upon his grand adventure. Life and vigour pervade this movement, in happy contrast with the preceding, and we observe that in the accompaniment Mr. Lahee makes use of the polacca rhythm to obtain the effect sought. This chorus is undoubtedly one of the most attractive portions of the work, and will be a general favourite with young ladies, not alone for the fact that it brings a charming prince upon the scene. No. 4, "The Revival," is, however, the gem of the Cantata, so vividly has Mr. Lahee described, by simplest

means, the awaking of the court to sudden life. The music rushes on like a March wind, from which, however, we get a little change now and then by, so to speak, slipping round a corner, and watching the effect of revival upon such stately persons as the king and his chancellor. Altogether, the number is capital. In No. 5, "The Departure," the appropriate and inevitable finale to the whole story is shown. Mr. Lahee has contrived to make his love-music sufficiently earnest as well as pleasing, and the whole work ends as agreeably as it began. We congratulate the composer upon the true success which consists in exactly hitting the mark aimed at, neither going beyond it nor falling short.

Preciosa. An Opera. Composed by C. M. von Weber. The English words translated from the German Version of C. O. Sternau by the Rev. J. Tróutbeck.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

WHEN Wolff sent his drama of "Preciosa" to Weber in the hope that he would compose better music for it than had been supplied by Eberwein, there can be little doubt that he was tolerably confident of the result. We have no records of the original setting of the libretto; but it is impossible to imagine a more charming and sympathetic colouring than Weber has bequeathed to the world, although we know that he cared but little to write incidental music to dramas at the time he undertook the task. Weber could do nothing by halves; and when "Preciosa" was submitted to him, therefore, although his mind must have been haunted with reminiscences of his greater work, "Der Freischütz," which he had just completed, he plunged at once into all the descriptions of gipsy-life he could procure, and reproduced some of the most characteristic melodies he had heard amongst the Spanish soldiers, all of which it is needless to say he transformed into veritable gems by the force of his genius. And yet, strangely enough, with the exception of the Overture, the music of this work is but rarely heard save in detached portions in the concert-room, or woven into an Opera with which it has no connection for the display of some particular vocalist. In the octavo popular edition now before us the improbability of its being produced as an Opera appears to have been foreseen; for although the whole of the music is included, the condensed libretto by C. O. Sternau has been translated into English, in view of the performance of the composition as a Cantata in the concert-room becoming usual. Should it be desired, however, to present the Opera on the stage, the original libretto must be substituted for that here given. The translation is exceedingly good throughout, and we sincerely hope that this new edition will do much towards spreading a knowledge of a work so thoroughly representative of the individuality of its composer.

The Transient and The Eternal. An Ode. Composed by Andreas Romberg. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

ANDREAS ROMBERG is but little known in this country save by his Cantata, "The Lay of the Bell;" and even this is scarcely heard as much as its merits would justify. It has often been said that it is a misfortune for a clever man to write one work which attains excessive popularity, because it prevents his others from obtaining a fair share of recognition. This is certainly the case with Romberg, who was one of the most prolific of composers, the catalogue of his works including six Symphonies, eight Overtures, Quintetts, and other compositions too numerous to mention. The Ode now published, called in English "The Transient and The Eternal," although certainly inferior to "The Lay of the Bell," contains many beauties which should recommend it to the attention of Choral Societies. It is excessively simple in construction; but some of the choruses, especially, are good examples of pure and melodious writing; and its publication in the well-known octavo edition will no doubt rescue it from the neglect with which it has been treated for so many years.

Novello's Octavo Anthems.

No. 193. *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away.*

„ 194. *The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich.*

Composed by A. C. Mackenzie.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

It is no easy matter to set music to any one among the solemn opening sentences of the Burial Service such as