Review

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subject; and there is some good writing in other parts of the piece, especially after the first double bar, and before the return of the leading theme.

The Trumpeter of Säckingen. Six characteristic pieces for the Pianoforte. Composed by H. Hofmann. (Op. 52.) [Neumeyer and Co.]

HERR HOFMANN is found at his best in descriptive pieces of this class, especially when, as here, he takes the trouble to provide an arrangement for four hands. The composer has a happy power of expressing his subject with more or less fidelity, and even where the connection between music and theme is somewhat obscure, he never fails to interest. We can recommend "The Trumpeter of Säckingen" with scarcely any reserve. Amateurs will find the pieces well within the means of an average executant, though presenting difficulty enough to call for study, and the reward, when full mastery has been obtained, is certain to prove sufficient. Of the six movements two, entitled "Gnomes" and "In Rome," belong to the fantastic school. In the first-named, however, there is an Andante marked by extreme elegance and tenderness. Writing this, Hofmann, we cannot but think, must have unconsciously had in mind the theme of the Andantino of Dussek's Sonata in G (Op. 39). The piece called "Confession" is an utterance of intense feeling, distinguished by all the *abandon* of modern love-music, while that descriptive of "Separation" ranks as a charming example of the composer in his most expressive mood. The series ends with a bold, triumphant March, "Happy Solution."

Zwei Rhapsodien für das Pianoforte, von Johannes Brahms (Op. 79). [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

HERR BRAHMS writes nothing that fails to call for and deserve the consideration of thoughtful musicians. Even his Rhapsodies show more of studied method and "artful art" than becomes the accepted signification of their name. In the case before us this fact is well exemplified. The Rhapsody in B minor has its first and second subjects and its episode, while the principal theme is developed with as much elaboration as though the movement were the allegro of a Sonata. A Rhapsody, in the strict sense of the term, we can hardly call it, since design and order prevail throughout. But "what's in a name?" The composition is interesting, masterly, and effective to a degree that will insure it large favour among cultured amateurs of the "household instrument." The second piece, a *Molto Passionato* in G minor, seems to us less satisfactory, and is moreover somewhat ungrateful to the performer. But, as we said before, Brahms is always worth study. Even where he fails to touch the heart, he interests the mind.

Lieder und Gesänge, von Georgine Schubert. Heft 2. [Stanley Lucas and Co.]

THIS is a setting for two voices of a little German poem, beginning "Ich mocht' em Lied dir singen." The music is quiet, unpretending, but graceful, and refined withal. In families where the German tongue presents no obstacle, the duet will be welcome.

Gavotte, by Sir Julius Benedict.

[London: Neumeyer and Co.]

If we are not mistaken, this piece was played at the composer's benefit concert last season, and received with considerable favour, the justice of which we are not at all disposed to challenge. Without ranking the Gavotte above many others easy to name, we can give it the credit due to a tuneful and well-wrought specimen of the old dance form. It is by no means difficult, and may be commended to amateurs of very moderate executive skill.

Werke für Orgel: Siebente Sonata in A moll, von Gustav Merkel. (Op. 140.)

[Leipzig: J. Rieter-Biedermann.]

THIS is a work of some pretensions, and will sustain the very considerable reputation which its author already enjoys amongst us. The opening Allegro is written with great fluency and boldness, and the slow movement, in studied and excellent contrast, will assuredly become a favourite

both with performers and hearers. It is melodious and pleasing in a high degree. The finale—an Introduction and Fugue—worthily ends a capital addition to the store of genuine organ music.

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright. Quartet. The words adapted from George Herbert. Music composed by John Bulmer, B.D. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

ALTHOUGH this Quartet is merely an appropriately harmonised melody in A flat major, the piece, if well sung, would undoubtedly prove effective. The varied accompaniment to each verse prevents the monotony which might be felt from the frequent repetition of the music; but certainly the plagal cadence, with the minor chord of the subdominant, although pathetically expressing the words "must die" at the conclusion of three verses, does not equally express the very opposite to these words at the conclusion of the fourth verse. Assuredly, if music is to be an appropriate colouring to poetry, the feeling of the one must sympathise, not partially but wholly, with the text; and it is because composers do not always think of this that we draw attention to it in Mr. Bulmer's otherwise well considered Quartet.

Elsie (The Flower Girl's Song). Written and composed by Gabriel Davis. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

EXPERIENCE has proved to us that, usually, when composers become their own poets, their words seem rather written to the music than the music to the words. The song before us is no exception to this rule; the melody—an elegant waltz tune, with unexceptional harmony throughout—trips away most effectively to the verses with which it is united; but take away the notes, and we question whether the authoress would care to put her name to the poem. Musically, however, we have much praise for the song. The principal theme is pleasing; and the subjects in the subdominant and its relative minor are extremely melodious. The *coda*, however, with its *cadenza*, is somewhat conventional, and scarcely in accordance with the character of the song.

Fantasia in F for the Organ.

Three Preludes for the Organ. By F. E. Gladstone, Mus. Doc. [Weekes and Co.]

THE first of these is a short and not very difficult composition by the organist of Norwich Cathedral. It opens with an *Allegro* for full organ, consisting of massive chords and rapid modulations, somewhat in the style of Hesse. This leads into a *Larghetto* in 6-8 time which, like the other movements, is mainly founded on the notes which corresponds to the initials of the composer's name. A short and effective *Fugue* brings the work to a successful close. The three Preludes all contain very smooth and pleasing writing, and being extremely simple, are sure to find many friends.

English Organ Music. No. III. Vol. II.

[W. Reeves.]

THE current number contains three pieces of very unequal merit. No. 1, a "Reverie," by Arthur Page, F.C.O., is written in what is known as the French style, and altogether may be designated as "pretty." We are sorry that Mr. Brooke's "St. James' Festive March" (which comes next) should occupy so much space in this number of "English Organ Music," as the style is by no means original, and the harmonies frequently selected in an un-musicianlike manner. The last number, "Allegretto pastorale," is by Mr. C. H. Nottingham. This is music of totally different style. As to whether it carries out the idea conveyed by the title we will express no opinion; but that the composition is commendable and of a thoughtful character, is an undeniable fact.

FOREIGN NOTES.

No novelty has been added to the *répertoire* of the Paris National Opéra during the past month, the performances consisting of "La Juive," "La Favorita," "Faust," "Aïda," "Freischütz," and "Guillaume Tell." In the last-named opera M. Lassalle made his *entrée* for the present season, amidst every sign of unabated enthusiasm on the part of