

Review

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Musical Tales, Phantasms, and Sketches. Translated from the German of Elise Polko, by Mary P. Maudslay. Second series. [Samuel Tinsley.]

THE sympathetic feeling for art and artists which pervades every sketch in this volume will surprise no one who has read the charming *Reminiscences* of Mendelssohn by the same authoress; but, apart from their attraction in a musical point of view, many of the tales have such strong human interest that they should meet with a cordial welcome even from those who read for the story alone. Presuming that the facts are authentic, we may say that "The Last Viol di Gamba Player" contains much that will enchain the attention of the musical student; for, although we all know the wandering life of Carl Friedrich Abel, and have heard that he died in London, we are but little acquainted with the pathetic episodes in his checkered career. That the instrument with which he had so long delighted every sensitive ear "was laid in his coffin" may be accepted as a proof of the respect paid to his memory; but it was a prophetic incident, for, as our authoress says, "Carl Friedrich Abel was the last performer on the viol di gamba." We may also mention as especially deserving of praise "The Song of the Bee," "Bach in London" (which reveals some curious incidents of this artist's life in the metropolis), "The Quiet Student," and "A Surprise," although many others might be named which have very considerable merit. The translation is extremely good—so good indeed that, save for a very few German expressions, we might fancy the tales were written by an Englishwoman. The work is elegantly got up, and may be warmly recommended to those who love to read about music and musicians.

Elizabeth's Song. From "The Saint's Tragedy." By the Rev. Charles Kingsley. Set to music by Joseph Barnby. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

MR. BARNBY has evidently aimed at expressing Kingsley's words in preference to writing a "selling" song, for a more unconventional composition we have rarely met with. Commencing with a short symphony in G minor $\frac{3}{4}$ time, the voice begins in the same key $\frac{3}{4}$ time, and changes to $\frac{2}{4}$ in the tonic major, on the words "Happy birds!" So musicianlike a colouring of these verses will no doubt be appreciated by those whose taste is not too much fettered by pedantic rules; and we trust that the good opinion of this artistic minority will amply repay the composer for daring to think solely in sympathy with the poet.

The Child-Angels. Song. Words by Frederick E. Weatherley.

The Maiden and the Sunbeam. Song. Written by Charles J. Rowe. Composed by Berthold Tours. [Evans and Co.]

THE simple nature of the words of these two vocal pieces is faithfully reflected in the music; and both compositions are sufficiently thoughtful and artistic to sustain, if not to add to, the fame of one of the most prolific of our song-writers. "The Child-Angels," in G minor and major, has a pathetic theme, well adapted for a contralto voice, the accompaniment having but little independent character, but giving much intensity to the vocal part throughout. The second song is a perfect little musical poem, the tones of the organ, to which the child listens in wonder, being well imitated by the dragging left-hand passages in the accompaniment. We could wish that modern composers would choose poetry for musical setting breathing more of the happiness lying around the world of childhood: certainly, a song beginning "There was rain in the city churchyard," is scarcely suitable for drawing-room singing; but when we get music as good as Mr. Tours has wedded to these sombre verses, we have less right perhaps to complain.

Husarenritt. Tonbild aus dem Krieger, für Pianoforte, von Fritz Spindler. Easy arrangement by Berthold Tours. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE admirers of this popular piece whose fingers are not yet thoroughly under their control will be glad to find that a simplified version of it is now within their reach, the arrangement of which has been undertaken by an artist so

competent for his task that the salient points of the composition are retained, whilst all the passages are placed easily under little hands. We cordially recommend this spirited Galop in its present shape to young players; and may mention that it is also published as a Duet.

Four Sketches for the Pianoforte. Composed by C. H. Sippel. [Metzler and Co.]

THESE sketches show some musical feeling; but the composer has evidently been fascinated by the fragmentary style of writing which so fatally stands in the way of solid advancement. No. 1—with the somewhat affected title "Funny"—is a feeble little piece, in D minor; and No. 2, called "What is it?" is little more than a study of chords of the sixth. No. 3, however—"Farewell," a flowing little piece in $\frac{12}{8}$ time—is melodious; but Mr. Sippel must be careful, even in so unpretending a composition, not to let his two parts drop together in such unpleasant octaves and fifths as occur between bars six and seven, page 6; one and two, page 7; and six and seven, page 7. No. 4, "Longing," is by far the best of the four sketches. In this we have a more defined melody; but even here there is a vagueness which seems to result from the habit of allowing the fingers to wander over the keyboard. If Mr. Sippel were to study earnestly, shun catching "titles," and write with an artistic aim, we think he might be successful.

Six Pensées Musicales pour Piano. Par Rosa Guerini, née Wilberforce. [Milan: Jean Canti.]

THE composer of these thoughtful little pieces is a stranger to us; but she writes so well that we may hope to hear more of her in the future. No. 1, "Etude," is a smooth and graceful sketch, which, apart from its attraction to the listener, will prove an excellent exercise for the student. No. 2, "Pensée Fugitive" (inscribed "A ma mère"), derives much of its effect from the figure in the bass. The alternation between the tonic minor and major gives much freshness to the theme, which is appropriately tender and refined in character. No. 3, "Pourquoi," although written with fluency, and sufficiently suggestive of its quaint title, is scarcely so much to our mind as No. 4, a song without words, in F sharp minor, every bar of which is full of meaning. No. 5, "Souvenir," is a more clever trifle; but No. 6—a scherzo, with a trio and coda—is instinct with musical life, and should become a favourite with pianists educated to the appreciation of form and coherence of design, to whom, indeed, we cordially commend the whole of these unpretentious trifles.

March of the Templars, from "The Crusaders." By Dr. Hiles.

Two Movements, from "The Crusaders." By Dr. Hiles. Arranged for the Organ by George Marsden, Mus. Bac.

[Forsyth Brothers.]

THIS March is fairly interesting, easy to play, and will go very well even on a small organ. The name of the composer will be a sufficient warrant for the proper manipulation of whatever may be the subject of the composition.

The first of the "Two Movements" is of the organ-andante species, and will make an effective introductory voluntary. The second is an arrangement of a chorus, and will be found suitable for a short concluding voluntary. Both are good, distinctly easy, and suitable either for small or large organs.

March for the Organ (in F major). Composed by Frederick Iliffe, Mus. Bac. Arranged by W. J. Westbrook, Mus. Bac. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THIS is undoubtedly an effective March, and there is much to admire in it, though one is frequently reminded of two well-known compositions of the same kind. To the March-loving public, however, it will be very acceptable, and a slight lack of freshness will help to commend it rather than otherwise. The subjects are of a classical mould and treated in a befitting manner. The arranger's work has been done so as to interest a good performer, and yet not to tax his powers of manipulation to any great extent.