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Life and Letters of Sir Charles Hallé. Being an autobiography (1819-60), with correspondence and diaries. Edited by his son, C. E. Hallé, and his daughter, Marie Hallé. With two portraits. [Smith Elder.]

THIS volume will be heartily welcomed by the music-lovers of Great (and Greater) Britain. Hallé, the conductor, the pianist, has been a familiar figure enough to millions any time during the past twenty years. But concerning Hallé, the man, or the private incidents of his career, how few of his many admirers ever possessed more than the scantiest information? The methods of Charles Hallé were not all "up-to-date." He did not encourage the "new journalist" to paragraph or interview him, with an eye to good advertisement; he pandered to no rage for sensations; he affected no singularities of personal appearance or eccentricities of conduct and behaviour; and in consequence his life, outside the concert-room, attracted less attention than that of perhaps any other artist occupying so prominent a position or wielding so commanding an influence. The delightful volume now under notice lifts the curtain which Hallé's modesty had so long allowed to remain undrawn, and permits us to see, "in his habit as he lived," the man to whom the England of to-day owes so much of her improved musical taste. More, it gives us glimpses of many among those who have moulded the artistic tendencies of the past half-century—for instance, Chopin, Wagner, Berlioz, Heller, Thalberg, Liszt, Meyerbeer, Spohr, De Musset, Heine, Lamartine; and of a host of "lesser lights": Rinck (under whom Hallé studied as a boy), Vieuxtemps, Molique, John Ella, Chorley, Costa, Ingres, and others. The book is divided into three parts, the first being the autobiography, which covers the period between 1819 and 1866 and fills 140 pages. Following this we have a chapter of forty pages, most sympathetically and skilfully written by Mr. C. E. Hallé, dealing with Hallé's life from 1865 to 1895, and describing his personal peculiarities in the most amusing way. The rest (more than half) of the volume contains the letters (of which there are 115), extracts from diaries, and notes of travel and appendices. Of the last-named, a complete list of the works performed at Hallé's Manchester concerts is not the least interesting or useful portion of the book.

The Organist and Choirmaster's Diary for 1897. Compiled by Ralph Hindle Baker.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE completeness of this diary and the amount of admirable and useful information it contains should assure it a place on the organ desk of every church which possesses a choir. This year's additions comprise an interleaved church calendar, and still further improvements are intended to be inserted in next year's volume, concerning which the author in the preface invites suggestions. The efficiency of a choir is so greatly dependent upon details of management and method, that Mr. Baker's book may be warmly recommended to all those who are not already using it, for the comprehensiveness of its provision for attendance, salaries, and behaviour, and other items, together with pages devoted to the organist's voluntaries and other matters of interest to himself, are in themselves suggestive of a system which, if conscientiously carried out, could not fail to secure beneficial results. The quotations from acknowledged authors on church music are admirably chosen and may be read with profit by all.

Etude de Concert. Serenade. Valse Impromptu. For Pianoforte. By Oscar Beringer.

[Edwin Ashdown and Co.]

OF making of *Etudes* there is apparently no end, but happily the necessity for their containing some musical interest is recognised by most writers in this branch of the pianist's education. No one probably knows better than Mr. Beringer the requirements of the young pianist, and his study in F sharp is well calculated to cultivate the ability to sustain an expressive melody amidst chords distributed between the hands. The Serenade may be taken to be that of an accepted lover assured of his mistress's favour. It is bright and pleasing, and devoid of difficulties. The Waltz has also a graceful melody for its chief subject, and, tastefully played, would prove attractive.

Six Polonaises. Composed by Franz Schubert. Arranged for Violin and Pianoforte by Siegfried Jacoby.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

AT this period, when musicians are busy singing the praises of the gifted Viennese composer, the publication of these pieces is very opportune. The Polonaise attained its highest development at the hands of Chopin, who imparted to its somewhat stiff form a life and variety which caused it to become the medium of tone-pictures of the deepest expression. In Schubert's Polonaises we have the form in its original shape with the strong emphasis frequently falling on the second beat of the bar, and the close of the phrases on the third beat preceded by a strong accent on the second. The melodies are distinguished by that facile grace so characteristic of Schubert's music, and Mr. Jacoby has done his work in an admirable manner, the pianoforte part frequently possessing considerable interest. No. 5 possesses a remarkable resemblance to the opening subject of Weber's Grand Polonaise in E flat (Op. 21). No. 6 is the most brilliant of the series, and would make an acceptable piece in the concert-room. The others are well fitted for home use, presenting but small difficulty of execution.

Three Sketches for the Pianoforte. By Walter Macfarren.

[Edwin Ashdown.]

THESE are three charming little pieces, severally entitled "Daffodils," "Lilies," and "Violets." The first is an *Allegretto Scherzando*, gay in spirit and irresponsible in character. The second is an *Andante Serioso*, and would seem to imply that the stateliness of the lily is not incompatible with impassioned sentiment. The third has the simplicity and pleasing attributes associated with the sweet smelling and modest flower.

The Office for the Holy Communion. Set to music in the key of B flat. By W. Monk Gould.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THIS setting of the Communion Service is an excellent example of modern Church music, in which dignity and restrained emotional melodiousness is happily combined. The music comprises the Kyrie Eleison, Credo, Sanctus, Benedictus, Agnus Dei, and Gloria in Excelsis. These are set in four parts, with the exception of the Agnus Dei, which has solo passages for treble and tenor. The part-writing will present no difficulties to a fairly well-trained choir, although it possesses considerable musical interest. Mr. Gould has been specially successful in his setting of the Credo, the words being admirably accentuated and the music expressive. An effective Fourfold Amen is given for use after the Benediction.

Pianoforte Album. By Francesco Berger.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THIS volume comprises five pieces for the pianoforte, the first of which is a study in contrary motion well calculated to develop independence of the hands. No. 2 is a "Barcarolle" of more musical interest, which will afford excellent practice for playing thirds *legato*. The next piece, entitled "The Voice of the Rivulet," calls for independence of finger action and a delicacy of style, and is a graceful little piece. A spirited Polka comes next, and the volume is effectively concluded with a vigorous March.

AT the meeting of the Finance and Estate Committee of St. George's Hall, Liverpool, held on the 21st ult., the Report of the Examiners, Dr. E. J. Hopkins, Professor J. F. Bridge, and Professor Stanford, appointed to examine the six selected candidates for the position of organist, was submitted. The examiners recommended the candidate whose *nom-de-plume* was "Organum," and upon reference to the list it was found that the candidate recommended was Dr. Peace, of Glasgow. The committee eventually passed a resolution recommending the council to appoint Dr. Peace. There were forty-seven applications, and the salary attached to the position is £300 per annum.

M. LAMOUREUX has arranged with Mr. Robert Newman to give another series of six Concerts with his orchestra at the Queen's Hall, from March 22 to 27, three in the afternoon and three in the evening.