Review

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Second Gavotte for the Pianoforte. By Walter Macfarren.

THE fine, bold diatonic harmonies in this piece are so thoroughly characteristic of the "Gavotte" age, to which we are now so lovingly looking back, that we unhesitatingly recommend it to all admirers of that school of writing. The subject, too, is so extremely melodious as to ensure its welcome even with those who cannot appreciate the musicianlike manner in which it is treated. For the benefit, however, of those who wish to study as well as to play this composition, we would especially point out the beautiful sequence of four-twos and sixes, commencing at the end of the 8th bar, page 3, and also, in the *coda*, the descending scale in the bass, harmonised with alternate triads and sixes, a point of much interest, and a fitting termination to one of the composer's best contributions to our rapidly increasing healthy stock of pianoforte music.

In the Gloaming. Reverie for the Pianoforte. By Frederick F. Rogers.

If it be found necessary to give titles to pianoforte pieces, we think the more indefinite they are the better. Assuming that our modern compositions are destined to a prolonged existence, it is undoubtedly true that to future generations such a description as "Rondo in E flat" or "Capriccio in D minor" would convey no idea of the piece intended, and this is the reason why, in speaking of the well known B flat Sonata of Dussek, for instance, we invariably call it the Sonata "dedicated to Mrs. Chinnery." Composers, then, would do well to consider how in naming their works they can give them a sufficiently distinctive title, without challenging criticism upon its applicability, by labelling them as "descriptive music," which, after all (although perhaps the most general in the present day), is about the most difficult class of composition a young writer can attempt. Now the piece before us is a "Reverie," and "In the gloaming" will do as well for an inoffensive title as anything else, because it merely expresses the hour of peacefulness and repose, and these are precisely the characteristics of the majority of those "Songs without Words" of which Mendelssohn set us the pattern. Mr. Rogers has written an extremely melodious theme, in D flat major, the accompaniment to which has some little character of its own. The second subject, in the subdominant, serves sufficiently well as a contrast; and the original melody on its re-appearance ends the piece, with a short *coda* and a plagal cadence.

Three Autumn Songs, for a Contralto or Bass voice.

1. *A Lament for the Summer.*
2. *A Rainy day.*
3. *A Song for November.*

Composed by W. Howell Allchin.

MR. ALLCHIN must be a bold man to publish "Three Autumn Songs," although he announces on the title-page that they may be had separately. Even Madame Patey, to whom they are dedicated, would scarcely have the temerity to sing all three in succession; and smaller vocalists, therefore, can hardly be expected to make so hazardous an experiment, even upon the most indulgent listeners. Although we have occasional—and, perhaps, pardonable—reminiscences of Mendelssohn, the composer has set the words he has chosen with much judgment; and—chiefly by giving a variety of character to his accompaniments—has succeeded in being less monotonous than might have been expected. No. 1 will, we fear, be dragged through at a crawling pace by amateur singers, for it is written in 6-4 rhythm, and marked "Lento." The melody has much eloquence; and, if singers can be persuaded to feel two beats in the bar, it may be made effective. No. 2, with an obstinate syncopated accompaniment throughout, is the best of the three songs; but a good vocalist and a sympathetic pianist are absolutely necessary, to realise the intention of the composer. There is a simplicity in the treatment of No. 3, which may, perhaps, make it a more general favourite than its companions. The change into the tonic major shows that Mr. Allchin has well considered the meaning of the verses to which he has given a musical colouring; the hopeful

character of the final words, especially, being set with much poetical feeling.

Six Trios for Female Voices. The words translated by H. W. Dulcken, Ph. D. Composed by Franz Abt.

- No. 1. *Ave Maria.*
- „ 2. *The Wanderer's greeting.*
- „ 3. *Where deepest shadows hover.*
- „ 4. *Parting beam of daylight.*
- „ 5. *Once again the day hath flown.*
- „ 6. *Thou Heaven blue and bright.*

THIS series of melodious Trios will be a real boon to amateur vocalists who wish to cultivate part-singing, for they present no difficulties which careful practice will not overcome. No. 1 has a calm theme in true sympathy with the words, the snatches of *arpeggio* accompaniment stealing in with good effect, and a solo for a fourth voice adding much brightness to the composition. No. 2 is a well harmonised melody, flowing throughout without any break, and exceedingly simple, both in the voice-parts and accompaniment. No. 3, although equally unpretending, contains somewhat more variety, the triplet accompaniment contrasting well with the *arpeggio* quavers, which continue until the change from major to minor. No. 4 has an attractive subject, but we do not quite like the enharmonic changes which occur so frequently as somewhat to disturb the quiescence demanded by the poetry. No. 5 is in our opinion unquestionably the gem of the series. Commencing with a melodious theme, in E major, we get some highly effective imitative phrases; and a solo, for alto or mezzo-soprano voice, answered by the trio, with which it is united at the close of the verse, is a point of the utmost interest. This beautiful composition deserves, and will no doubt receive, a large amount of attention both from masters and pupils. No. 6 makes a worthy close to the series. It has an exceedingly pleasing subject, which is appropriately harmonised, and so quietly accompanied as to help timid singers, a characteristic which cannot be too highly commended in simple part-music. We may mention, in conclusion, that any of these Trios may be had separately.

Two-Part Songs. With Pianoforte accompaniment for the use of schools:—

- No. 1. *Monarch Winter.* Poetry by W. S. Passmore.
- „ 2. *The Skylark.* Poetry by Richard Yates Sturges.

Composed by Stephen S. Stratton.

THIS is just the sort of simple part-music that we should like to see introduced into schools, for it is both melodious and well written. No. 1 has a bold subject, the harmonies to which flow naturally enough to enrich, without disturbing, the melody. Of the two, however, we much prefer No. 2, although it is perhaps somewhat more difficult to sing. The theme colours the words with excellent effect, and point is gained by the occasional breaking of the voice-parts, instead of allowing them to flow on smoothly, as in the first song. We believe, however, that in most elementary schools it will be found necessary to transpose No. 2, if not No. 1, to a lower key, for the constant strain upon the upper G and F sharp is rather to be avoided than encouraged in young singers.

The Scalometer and Chord Indicator. Invented by Dr. L. M. Bonn.

OUR opinion (founded upon many years of experience) is that the rudimentary part of music cannot be effectually taught by contrivances, showing "at a glance," by sliding a piece of pasteboard up and down, or twirling round a circle, the number of sharps and flats required in each key, the position of the tones and semitones in the scale, and the *relative* minor (as it is still absurdly called) to every major key. However a student may pore over a diagram like this (peering through little holes to discover whether a note should be sharp, flat, or natural), it is on music-paper that he must eventually read music, and it is the *staff*, therefore, which should first be submitted to the eye. Our conviction upon this point, however, shall not prevent us from bestowing praise upon Dr. Bonn's very ingenious invention. On one side—termed the "Scalometer"—the