Review

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Three Short Pieces for the Pianoforte. No. 1, Sarabande; No. 2, Intermezzo; No. 3, Echo Song. Composed by G. J. Van Eyken. [Stanley Lucas, Weber and Co.]

THE first of these pieces has all the character of the Sarabande, and both melody and harmony merit commendation. But what is the meaning of the three sharps at the signature throughout the whole of the last page? Unless amateurs who "try over" the composition happen to know what key they are playing in, some curious effects may be anticipated. No. 2, although extremely simple, has some good imitative points; but No. 3 relies chiefly for its effect upon the justification of its title. The piece is well written, but it is a question whether the portions chosen to be echoed are worth repeating. We have seen better specimens of this composer's talent than these descriptive sketches.

The Linden Tree. Part-song. Words by Mrs. G. Linnaeus Banks. Composed by Cedric Bucknall, Mus. Bac., Oxon. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

No contrapuntal effects are attempted in this part-song; but the melody is smooth and flowing, and the harmonies extremely appropriate throughout. The middle verse, in the tonic minor, tells the pathetic portion of the little story with good effect, and contrasts well with the bright and joyous last verse, in the major. When everything attempted is so well done, the composer is justly entitled to unqualified praise; and although, from this specimen of Mr. Bucknall's powers, we may confidently rely upon his success in a piece of more importance, there can be no question that good work, even in so small a composition, should receive due recognition.

Prairie Pictures (Steppenbilder). Three Pianoforte Pieces on Original Russian Melodies. Composed and dedicated to his friend Gustav Janke, by H. Hofmann. [Neumeyer and Co.]

THE themes of these three pianoforte pieces will be found so full of character as perfectly to reflect their nationality; and the manner in which the airs are treated, although unlike the method employed by the fashionable musical caterers of the day, will charm pianists of refined and cultivated taste. No. 1, a Vivace, in A minor, strikes us at once as thoroughly Russian; and No. 2, a short Lento, in A major, is full of interest. No. 3, in D major, is so eccentric as to demand close attention in order fully to unravel its meaning. The melody, however, is extremely quaint; and the piece will, we think, improve upon close acquaintance. All these compositions are published also as duets, and in this form, we should think, would be more effective than as solos.

The Carollers. Words by T. Hood, from the *St. James's Magazine*. Music by James H. Godding. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

MR. GODDING tells us that this composition may be sung either as a solo or quartet, but we should decidedly recommend the union of the four voices, if possible. The melody is extremely attractive, the harmonies appropriately simple, and the voice parts written with the utmost purity throughout. We are glad to find that the song has already reached a third edition: when a fourth is printed, let the composer see that the third bass note in the ninth bar of the chorus is altered from a quaver to a crotchet.

Christmas Anthem; Let us now go even unto Bethlehem The words taken from S. Luke ii., 15, 16, 20.

Two Christmas Carols: When Christ was born ("In excelsis Gloria"); What Child is this? Composed by J. T. Field. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THESE musical Christmas offerings are very fair specimens of the composer's power of writing simply and effectively for the voices; but we cannot say that we find any especial character in them. The Anthem is the best of the three pieces, the movement in 4-2 being extremely smooth and appropriately written for the words. Of the two Carols we prefer the second, "What Child is this?" which has a flowing and melodious theme in 6-8, unassumingly but carefully harmonised.

FOREIGN NOTES.

RECENT performances at the Paris Grand-Opéra consisted mainly of standard works, such as "Guillaume Tell," "Les Huguenots," "Freischütz," "Aida," "Faust," and "L'Africaine." In "Les Huguenots" Mdlle. Krauss (whose contract with the national establishment has been prolonged to the year 1883) made her *rentrée* this season, amidst the most enthusiastic demonstrations of the audience. On the same occasion Mdlle. de Vere made her *début* in the rôle of *Marguerite de Valois*, the gifted young artist achieving a genuine success. M. Gounod's opera, "Le Tribut de Zamora," is at last in active preparation at the Grand-Opéra, several preliminary rehearsals of the work having already taken place. Rossini's "Le Comte Ory" was to have been revived on the 29th ult. No novelty of importance has been added to the *répertoire* of the remaining lyrical establishments of the French capital.

The Marquis d'Ivry, composer of the opera "Les Amants de Vérone," is just now completing a new operatic work entitled "L'Armurier du Roi," to which he has also written the libretto, the subject being taken from one of Balzac's stories.

The Paris Concerts Populaires resumed their weekly performances at the Cirque d'Hiver on the 17th ult. M. Pasdeloup, the zealous conductor of this excellent institution, intends during the present season to have special regard to the claims of the composers of the Russian school to a hearing. The programmes will, therefore, include symphonic works by Rubinstein, Dargomischski, Seroff, Tschaiakowsky, Rimski-Korsakoff, Glinka, and others. There can be no doubt that, considering the increasing interest which the compositions of the school in question have of late years aroused among amateurs, M. Pasdeloup has taken a step in the right direction. Of modern Italian composers the works of Verdi, Boito, and Ponchielli will be predominant; modern Germany being represented by Wagner, Raff, Brahms, Goldmark, and others. Thus it will be seen that these Concerts maintain the progressive tendency which distinguishes them from similar institutions of the French capital. Classical music will, of course, be prominent, as heretofore, while another feature of interest will be the production, during the present season, of representative works by French composers from Lully to the present time.

At the Royal Opera of Berlin Boieldieu's charming opera "Jean de Paris" was revived on the 8th ult., and was extremely well received by a crowded audience.

Richard Wagner has completely recovered from his recent serious indisposition during his stay at Naples. The poet-composer will return to Bayreuth this month.

The October number of Herr Wagner's organ, the *Bayreuther Blätter*, consists entirely of an interesting and important article from the pen of the reformer on the subject of "Religion and Art." The production of "Parsifal" is now definitively fixed for the year 1882.

Hans von Bülow has accepted the post of Musical Director at the Court of Meiningen, and will, it is said, inaugurate his activity in his new capacity by a series of Concerts to be given at the Court Theatre, in which Beethoven's compositions will be exclusively represented, comprising the master's nine symphonies, his overtures, the choral fantasia, the choruses from the "Ruins of Athens," the Violin Concerto, and the Pianoforte Concerto in G. In the final Concert a favourite idea of Bülow's is to be carried out—viz., the performance, twice over, of the Ninth Symphony, with a half-hour's interval between the first and second rendering. Whether or not a fresh choir and orchestral complement is to be provided for the repetition of the gigantic work, "after a half-hour's interval," our informant does not say.

The festive performances held at the Cologne Stadttheater, in connection with the celebration of the completion of the famous cathedral, included Wagner's "Lohengrin" and Meyerbeer's "Les Huguenots," the choice of the latter work, as illustrating the strife between Catholics and Protestants, being considered by many as peculiarly inappropriate for the occasion. A grand cantata composed by Ferdinand Hiller was performed during the opening ceremony.