

Review

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"Kindergarten" games have long ago been introduced into England; but, as stated in the Preface to the book before us, they have been hitherto wanting in the musical element which makes them so attractive in the country which originated them. Froebel's book on the subject, published in Germany, contains descriptions of these games, pictures showing them in full play, and a number of little songs to be sung by the children during the progress of each game. The verses of these songs are in the work under notice translated into English; but as the music in the original does not fit the new version, tunes have been composed by Lady Baker expressly for them, all of which are excellently suited for their intended purpose. The verses are models of purity of thought, and the words are just such as a child would use in prattling to its play-mates upon the subjects selected. Amongst the number we may instance "Grass mowing," "Baskets of flowers," and "The Dove Cot," for especial commendation.

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*Showers of Sunshine*, for the Pianoforte. By C. H. R. Marriott.

SINCE the publication of "La Pluie de Perles" we have had showers of many kinds, but amongst the number we do not remember one of Sunshine; and indeed, although in this varied climate we have fitful gleams of the sun's rays, and occasional bursts of intense heat from this luminary, we can scarcely call to mind being caught in a "Shower of Sunshine." All this, however, has nothing to do with the worth of the piece, which, although wonderfully resembling the composition already mentioned as having given rise to the "showery" school of writing, is evidently the work of an experienced hand, and may be recommended as good practice. The composer will, we doubt not, thank us for calling attention to the fact of the flat being entirely omitted in the return to the key of F, on the 5th page.

*The Village Green*. A Rustic Dance, for the Pianoforte. By Francesco Berger.

MR. BERGER has written a telling subject for the leading theme of this little sketch, and has introduced a series of brilliant passages so easy as to enable a player to produce much effect by a small amount of labour. There is sufficient variety in the piece to keep the attention alive; and, to show the intention of the composer he tells us, in a footnote, that it "must be performed with unflagging energy, and must be worked up *Prestissimo* toward the end."

*The Wanderer's Return*. Ballad. Words by Mrs. M. A. Baines.

*Name me not*. Song. Words by Robert Wyatt Wadman.

*Sweet eyes*. Ballad. Words by James Douglas Harrington.

*Night and Morn*. Canzonet.

Composed by Charlotte C. Gilbert.

BEING written by a vocalist (Mrs. Alfred Gilbert) this group of songs is likely at least to be a welcome addition to the store of graceful compositions which form the usual contents of an amateur's portfolio; but an examination of their merits has proved to us that their composer has succeeded in doing something more than merely throw off a few common-place effusions which will serve for distribution amongst her pupils. Without assigning them any very high rank in the world of art, we may say that they are all melodious and accompanied with the skill of a musician. "The Wanderer's Return" is extremely simple, but the melody is attractive, and the little that is attempted in the accompaniment is unexceptionable. "Name me not" is somewhat too monotonous in character to bear four verses, but the *legato* bass against the semi-quaver accompaniment flows well with the voice. "Sweet eyes" is a good specimen of the pure ballad style, the pianoforte part merely aiding the voice, without presuming to set up on its own account: so unpretending is it, indeed, that we care not for the somewhat laboured bit of symphony which occurs between the verses. "Night and Morn," to some verses by the composer, has much variety

in character, and is written in the more ambitious form of a "Canzonet." There are many commendable points in this composition, but we prefer Mrs. Gilbert in her ballads.

ASHDOWN AND PARRY.

*A Selection of Compositions for the Organ*. By Edouard Batiste. Edited by William Spark, Mus. D.

IN the school of organ playing of which Lefebure-Wely was the chief, if not the first exponent, Edouard Batiste undoubtedly holds the second place. In like manner as a composer for the organ does the organist of St. Eustache—although probably distancing all other competitors—take rank after the late organist of St. Sulpice. To those, therefore, who know and enjoy the organ music of Lefebure-Wely will the compositions of Edouard Batiste be welcome. The English equivalent for the combinations of stops originally intended for French organs have been carefully and judiciously supplied by Dr. Spark, of Leeds; there is, consequently, little or nothing wanting to render this edition of value to the English amateur.

*Church Music*. A collection of Hymn Tunes, Chants, &c. Composed by Stephen S. Stratton. Novello and Co.

*Ten Original Tunes*. Composed by Arthur Cottman. Novello and Co.

*Six Hymn Tunes*. Composed by Signor E. Pieraccini. A. Dimoline, Bristol.

*Hymn for Holy Week*. Composed by William W. Ringrose, Mus. Bac., Oxon. Novello and Co.

THE activity of hymn tune writers at the present time is, to say the least, remarkable. If the intrinsic value of these compositions in any appreciable degree corresponded with their number—which is legion—there might be some grounds for hope that England would take the first place in the production of this class of music. Unfortunately few of these tunes—which are brought out in a fugitive form and usually at the composer's own cost—ever seem by any chance to strike editors of Hymnals as being eligible for insertion in their collections. Consequently they are soon laid aside and forgotten. How far this is just to these musicians and their works we might now proceed to ascertain, using the above-mentioned list of works, selected at haphazard, as specimens.

Mr. Stratton contributes twenty-one tunes, in all of which we find evidence of considerable musical feeling. And, accepting them as a fair criterion of the composer's powers, we should say that had he received the solid and complete technical education which appears to be so easily obtained abroad and so difficult to get in England, he might in all probability have become a successful composer of larger works than hymn tunes. As it is, we find in the midst of much that is promising, certain weaknesses—indications of imperfect education—that would go far to injure the finest inspirations.

Mr. Cottman has narrowly missed complete success in his tunes. There is more musical talent and fewer indications of weakness observable in them than in those noticed above. Upon the whole they are most favourable specimens.

Signor Pieraccini's tunes are distinguished by all the melodious flow generally regarded as a characteristic of his countrymen. The harmonies, however, are both sweet and impure, and greater severity of harmonisation would much tend to modify the suspicion of secularity that hangs about them.

The one solitary tune by Mr. Ringrose is neither better nor worse than those just noticed—full of indications of nice feeling, yet just wanting in those qualities which constitute a thoroughly successful hymn tune. It may be said that in the number written and published by the recognised writers of this class of work there are very few which turn out standard tunes. This is no doubt true, and points to the fact that the difficulty of writing a good hymn tune is greater than is generally supposed. But, on the other hand, seeing so many tunes are written which in