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Franklin Taylor's Pianoforte Tutor by Franklin Taylor

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carefully looked over the whole of the twenty books, and most conscientiously award the highest praise to the editor for the manner in which he has discharged a duty which, from his admiration of the Studies and his personal friendship with their composer, has evidently been a labour of love. The intrinsic musical beauty of all these pieces, as well as their usefulness in forming a refined and intellectual style of performance, should earn for them a world-wide acceptance; and we cannot but believe that, valuable as they have ever been, they will be doubly so in the form now issued to the public.

Franklin Taylor's Pianoforte Tutor. [Enoch and Sons.]

NOTWITHSTANDING the multitude of instruction-books for the pianoforte published in this country within the last few years, Mr. Franklin Taylor may confidently rely upon the wide acceptance of his new Tutor, not only because he has worthily earned his right to be heard as a teacher of the instrument upon which he is so accomplished a performer, but because it is extremely unlikely that he would be desirous of multiplying the number of existing treatises unless he had either something new to say upon the subject or had systematised his code of instructions in a novel form. That the latter of these reasons has influenced him in producing the work we are informed in the preface. "Acting upon the principle," he says, "that all instruction, to be thorough, must be strictly progressive, it has been thought well to depart from the customary method of dividing the whole Tutor into two portions—theoretical and practical—an arrangement which compels the pupil to seek out, in the first part of the work, all the explanations and descriptions which apply to the particular lesson he may be learning, and, instead of this, to combine both theoretical description and practical illustration in such a manner that the pupil may proceed systematically through the whole book, finding nothing in the practical exercises which has not previously been explained, and nothing in the explanatory text which does not receive immediate practical application." This is an excellent theory, and excellently is it carried out; every rule being so ably illustrated by example as materially to smooth the path of the little traveller through the pages of the work. The notes are taught just as gradually as they should be; the position at the instrument is clearly defined; the construction of the scales is carefully explained, and all the musical lessons are interesting and well suited for their purpose. We certainly regret that Mr. Taylor has not boldly combated the principle of following the major scale by its "relative," instead of its "tonic" minor. Professor Macfarren, in his recently published book on Counterpoint, truly says, speaking of the inaccurate signature of the minor form of a key, "This system for ages held back the progress of music by obscuring, if not totally hiding, the natural principles on which music is based, and which constitute the science that furnishes the materials with which the artist works." With this we perfectly agree; and as an instance of the false ideas engendered by the conventional method of teaching, we may mention that, in our own presence, a young pupil who played the chord of G major and was requested to make it minor, without the slightest hesitation, struck the chord of E minor, that (as she afterwards said) being her only notion of the connection between major and minor. A good feature in this book, however, is the appearance of the "harmonic" as well as the "melodic" minor scale. There is no doubt that students should be urged to practise both, for we can scarcely wonder that a pupil should puzzle over a minor scale with the minor sixth and major seventh in a piece, when in her "Instruction-book" no such progression of intervals can be found. In conclusion, we may say that the finger exercises at the end of the book are exceedingly good; and we are certain that if the author's directions are implicitly followed, the basis of a sound musical education will be laid by the aid of this Tutor.

Inventions. Six Two-part Pieces for the Pianoforte. By Ferdinand Hiller. [Forsyth Brothers.]

THE "Inventions" of Bach have effected so much good in training young pupils for that close part-playing so essential to acquire before attempting to perform classical works of any elaboration, that we can scarcely wonder at

Herr Hiller's desire to multiply exercises founded upon so excellent a model. Pure two-part writing is as good practice for the executive as for the creative artist, and teachers owe a deep debt of gratitude to the composer of these modern "Inventions" for presenting them with a set of pieces so carefully adapted for the purpose of tuition. No. 1, in E minor, has a flowing subject well suited for imitation; No. 2, in G major, is a good study for bold and marked playing; No. 3, in G flat major, has a flowing theme in 6-8 time; No. 4, in B minor, with some contrasted touches for the two hands, demands a true and careful finger throughout; No. 5, in A minor, abounds in rapid semiquaver passages; and No. 6, in E major, will be found highly useful for cultivating a sympathetic touch between the hands, the legato quavers running almost through the piece in two parts. We sincerely hope that this group of thoughtful studies by so eminent a writer will receive the attention they unquestionably merit.

Billet Doux. Rendezvous en Bois. Silhouettes pour le Piano.

Nosegay. The Doll's Royal Wedding March. In the Meadow. Three pieces for the Piano.

Composed by L. Samson. [Neumeyer and Co.]

TRIFLES of this sort, written for the young ladies who in drawing-rooms are asked to "play something," may, as a rule, be dismissed with scant courtesy. But Mr. Samson's pieces are an exception, because something better and higher than a melody over which arpeggios and scales have been sprinkled as from a pepper-box. Each little movement, while simple and quite unpretending, strives at perfection in its way, and, if we cannot admire every bar, a good many pages call forth honest praise. The "Rendezvous en Bois" is a case in point. No doubt it would please just as well by any other name, since the connection of music with such an idea as that here expressed must needs be arbitrary, but the work displays none the less grace of style, in combination with a mode of utterance which, while not laboured, avoids commonplace. "In the Meadow" belongs to the same category, and is written, here and there, with decided freedom. Let us add that all the pieces are adapted for use, not only by adults who have risen above the cheap glory of arpeggios and scales, but by children whose taste careful educators would keep pure till the time comes for their initiation into the higher mysteries of the art.

The Waterfall on the Exe. Song. Words by the Rev. F. Tilney Bassett. Music by the Rev. J. Munro Tate. [Enoch and Sons.]

As a rule we find that amateur vocal composers may be divided into two classes, the first consisting of those who, feeling themselves gifted by nature for writing melodies, do not think it necessary to study the theoretical portion of the art at all; and the second, of those who dive so deeply into the mazes of harmony that, like most rich men, they are proud of displaying their wealth of knowledge on every opportunity. We do not affirm that there are none who steer the middle course, but the instances are rare; and when we say that the composer of the song before us must be placed in the second of these classes, we are paying him no ill compliment, for his harmonies show that he has mastered many of the difficulties which all students encounter. But he has yet to learn how to be simple. His method of harmonising every note and distressing the voice throughout with a restless accompaniment is one of the worst faults of inexperience. Imagine the words "As foillings deft and mazes thwarting weaves the hunted deer," sung with a quaver to each syllable, a quaver bass, and semiquaver *arpeggios* in the right hand.

My Love far away. Ballad. The poetry by Maria X. Hayes. Music by M. W. Balfe. [Duff and Stewart.]

ONLY the weary traveller who, after a long journey over the desert, comes suddenly upon a spring of pure water, can imagine how refreshing is a ballad like the one before us to the wanderer through dreary wastes of music-paper. There is character even in the opening symphony, which ending upon the dominant, prolonged for a whole bar, leads with charming effect to the tuneful and simple theme to which the words are wedded. Apart, too, from the excessive