Review

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Lieder und Gesänge. Songs. Composed by Gerard F. Cobb. [Augener and Co.]

THESE six songs are a valuable contribution to our rapidly increasing store of artistic vocal music. They are written for a baritone or mezzo-soprano voice, either to German words translated into English by the composer, or to English words translated into German by C. Waldstein. They vary much in importance, but are nearly equal in merit, some of the shorter pieces, indeed, being charmingly sympathetic settings of the poetry. No. 1, "Bird upon the branch alighting," is quite a little pianoforte sketch, with vocal accompaniment; but, unlike many of the imitations of the German *lieder* which have come before us, the two parts are so indissolubly united as to render neither unduly prominent. No. 2, "Thou glance enchanting, wilt thou fathom," has a most melodious theme, to which some attractive figures in the accompaniment lend additional effect. No. 3, "Entreaty," although only sixteen bars long, is wedded to an appealing subject, accompanied throughout with appropriate placidity; No. 4, "O wind that blows out of the west," like the first song on our list, has an elaborated pianoforte part which seems to grow naturally from the feeling of the words, and may very probably, both with the vocalist and pianist, prove one of the most popular of the set; No. 5, "The Death Bed," is a setting of Hood's beautiful verses, commencing "We watch'd her breathing thro' the night," the simple pathos of which has been thoroughly caught by the composer; and No. 6, "The morn hath not the glory that it wore," a Meditation for voice and piano, most successfully concludes a group of vocal poems which, even in these over-productive days, cannot fail to command attention.

The Amateur and Professional Artist at the Pianoforte. By Forsey Brion. [Hutchings and Romer.]

WE cannot say that there is anything new in this little treatise; but the observations throughout are not only extremely sensible, but evidently spring from a long practical experience of the legitimate resources of the pianoforte and an intimate knowledge of the works written for that instrument by the great masters of the art. "Digital facility," the author truly says, "has in the present day run riot with pianists, while *Expression* and the laws of *Phrasing* and *Rhythm* are so little regarded that the lack of observation of these delicacies in music, together with an almost utter ignorance of Harmony, constitutes the wide gulf that separates the Amateur and Professional pianist." This is the text upon which Mr. Brion discourses, giving rules for the guidance of those pianists who are desirous of understanding, as well as of playing, the standard compositions, and explaining the true meaning of the marks by which a composer conveys his intentions to those who undertake to interpret his works. We do not, however, agree with the author's observations upon the relative effects of *staccato* signs; for we certainly hold the opinion that the round dots indicate a heavier touch than what he terms the "elongated mark"; but there are so many good points in the work that we will not dwell upon the few which we think open to discussion.

The Great Musicians. Edited by Francis Hueffer.

Joseph Haydn. By Pauline D. Townsend.

[Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington.]

THIS biography, by the accomplished translator of Jahn's "Mozart," may be conscientiously recommended as a reliable account of the career of a composer whose beneficial influence upon the progress of instrumental music should not be allowed to pass from our memory. The authoress frankly acknowledges her indebtedness to Herr C. F. Pohl's great work on Haydn, and also quotes her further authorities on all matters of fact contained in the volume, the list of the composer's works being mainly based upon that in Grove's "Dictionary of Music and Musicians." We may say, however, that although the "matters of fact" are, as they should be, vouched for by the best authorities, there is very much original writing in the volume which all musical readers will find both interesting and instructive. The character of the composer is exceedingly well sketched, and the main incidents of his life—especially his two journeys to London

—are most graphically told. In view of the monument to Haydn, about to be erected in Vienna, this book should be cordially welcomed in England; for it is earnestly hoped by the promoters of the undertaking that the many lovers of the master in this country will liberally contribute towards the expenses of this tribute to his memory.

2ième Sonate Romantique. Pour Pianoforte. Par Eugen Woycke. [C. Jefferys.]

"THE real and proper use of the word 'Romantic,' " says Mr. Ruskin, "is simply an improbable or unaccustomed degree of beauty, sublimity or virtue." We fear that this definition will scarcely apply to the piece before us; for certainly the "degree of beauty" to be discovered by a careful search through the four movements into which it is divided, is very much less than we are accustomed to, even in the works of the crude imitators of what it is the fashion to call the "advanced school" of writing. Indeed the composition is so completely disconnected that it sounds like the improvisation of one who aims at astonishing his hearers by a series of passages, between each of which they may mentally place a double bar. We do not say that there are no musical ideas scattered through the Sonata; but they are speedily stifled, as if the composer were fearful of degenerating into the "classical," and thus betraying his want of power to sustain the "romantic" character he aims at. The *Intermezzo*, marked "Andantino con anima," is, in our opinion, the best considered movement in the work; and the *Adagio* starts with a subject which raises expectation, doomed, however, to disappointment when the harsh chromatic progression at the "Poco animato" occurs. The first and last movements are, to us, incomprehensible as component portions of a piece which, by its name, suggests design, even when the severity of such design is presumed to be tempered by the addition of the term "Romantic."

Fourth Tarantella in E flat. For the Pianoforte. By Walter Macfarren. [Stanley Lucas, Weber and Co.]

THE multiplication of Dance Music in the present day will lead students to the consideration of how much we owe to this form of composition in our modern works. The marked rhythmical character of all music written for dancing purposes, it is well known, prompted many of our best writers to mould their ideas into this shape; and Weber, Chopin, and even Beethoven, have left us undying specimens of these pieces, not with fanciful titles designed to disguise this fact from ambitious pianists, but with the names of the dances which they represent boldly stated by the composer. Amongst the number of artists who have plentifully contributed to the store of such works for our household instrument, no one has been more successful than Mr. Walter Macfarren, whose fourth Tarantella, now before us, will certainly not only sustain but add to his reputation. The light and tripping principal subject is well contrasted with subordinate themes, the passages lie throughout well under the hand, and the varieties of touch will be found extremely useful for practice.

Handel's Choruses for the Organ. Arranged by Henry Smart. Nos. 22, 23, and 24. [Duncan Davison and Co.]

SMART's transcriptions gained so much acceptance with organists during the musician's lifetime, that it is surprising we should have had to wait so long for the present examples, which are not likely to prove less useful than the earlier numbers. They are arrangements of "How excellent," from "Saul," "Blest be the man," from "Joseph," and the Coronation Anthem, "My heart is inditing." In each instance the transcription is effective, sufficient fullness of harmony being given without too much doubling of the parts or needless piling up of difficulties.

I cannot but linger. Song by John Nicholson.
[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THOUGH but a sentimental ballad of the ordinary pattern, this may be commended as somewhat above the average of its class. The melody is pleasing and expressive, and the accompaniment something more than a series of commonplace arpeggios. The song is written for second tenor or baritone voice.