

Review

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Ten Pianoforte Pieces. By Henry Purcell. Selected and edited by Norman P. Cummings and William H. Cummings. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THIS selection is not very happily named, since, in Purcell's day, there were no pianofortes, and the most important of the pieces chosen were written for viols, with only a figured bass part for the harpsichord; but apart from this initial unveracity, the edition is to be heartily welcomed and should speedily find its way into the portfolios of all patriotic pianists. The smaller pieces in the volume comprise two preludes, two almandes, a minuet, a cello Siciliano, and "A new Irish tune," which last will be recognised by some as the celebrated "Lilleburlero." These possess much musical interest, and, well-played in the bold straightforward spirit in which they are written, would be decidedly effective. They will also be found to provide excellent practice for attaining independence of the hands. The chief interest of the collection, however, is in an arrangement of two sonatas originally written for viols, with figured bass for the harpsichord, the first of the two being the one in F, commonly known as "The Golden Sonata," which attained considerable popularity in the composer's lifetime. The remarkable dignity and masculine vigour and depth of sentiment of this work are well preserved in the pianoforte version, and although the music loses much by absence of the strings, the arrangement will serve the commendable purpose of increasing familiarity with the sonata in many homes. The second Sonata, in G minor, although of less important dimension than the preceding, is an extremely interesting example of our great composer's skill and contains a *Largo* of broad and expressive character. It should be added that all the music is carefully fingered, and in accordance with what is erroneously styled the German method, but which Mr. Cummings has shown was in current use in England long before the time of Purcell.

How to Accompany. By Annie Glen.
[Robert Cocks and Co.]

EVERY student of the grotesque in music is acquainted with the young innocent (he or she) who "only wants to play well enough to be able to accompany songs," and has yearned to place him (or her) before Schubert's "Erl-King" or Liszt's "Lorelei" on a platform from which no escape was possible. Alas! it is to be feared that few realise how many and varied are the gifts and acquirements that go to make up a good accompanist. These, however, are so well set forth in Mrs. Glen's book that ignorance on the subject is no longer excusable. It is, indeed, wonderful that a work on this important subject should not have been issued years and years ago. The fact that the work now under notice has already reached a second edition shows that the need of such a treatise was felt—which is more than can be said of most of the instruction books flung upon the market every year. It is greatly to the author's credit that, being the first to treat the subject, she should have dealt with it so successfully and so completely. We have, indeed, only one fault to find—that from the numerous and, for the most part, excellent musical examples given of the various styles of vocal music, all of an ephemeral kind should not have been excluded. In other respects the book is quite excellent, both as regards matter and manner, and should be added to the book-shelf of every vocalist and pianist, whether teacher or performer.

The Technics of Violin Playing. By Carl Courvoisier.
[D. R. Duncan.]

THIS little book of just over one hundred pages may be warmly recommended to all violin students. Not a few, also, of those who deem themselves fair masters of the instrument will find in these chapters many useful hints and much important information. Mr. Courvoisier not only writes with the decision born of experience and thorough acquaintance with his subject, but supports his precepts and rules with reasons and explanations which carry conviction, and his remarks throw much light upon the causes

of prevalent faults and the more subtle matter of good tone production. Some of the comments might well be taken to heart by all students, as, for instance, the following: "It makes, indeed, a great difference as to time and trouble spent over our studies, whether we think out at a rapid rate every detail of action, and give our hands and fingers literally a dictation from the brain at the very first real attempt to do the thing—or whether we try to accomplish it thoughtlessly, mechanically, with just a notion of the final result—namely, a certain musical effect upon the ear." This concentration of thought upon the employment of the best mechanical means to obtain mastery of the technic of the violin forms the fundamental idea of the book. Every muscular action called forth by the violinist is analysed, and the importance of thinking clearly and establishing good habits is emphatically stated and impressed on the student. The independence to be established between the hands is happily expressed in the remark, "*Your bow is your breath*, wherewith to articulate, to phrase, and to infuse with lyric expression the contents of the music, while the left hand hardly does more than to furnish the notes to be converted into tones." Mr. Courvoisier concludes his excellent treatise by a timely protest against the ambiguous employment of the dot and slur in violin music, a matter to which the attention of composers and publishers may alike be advantageously directed.

Ballade in D minor. For Violin and Pianoforte. By S. Coleridge-Taylor. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

MR. S. COLERIDGE-TAYLOR is one of the most promising students of composition at present at the Royal College of Music. In addition to this Ballade he has written a Nonet in F for strings and wind, a Fantasiestücke for two violins, viola, and violoncello, a Quintet for clarinet and strings, and a vocal piece for soprano solo and orchestra, entitled "Zara's Ear-rings." All these show distinctive individuality, which also characterises the Ballade now under review. Much interest pertains to this individuality of style, because the composer is partly of African descent and the remarkable use made of various rhythmic devices and the prominence of the barbaric element thus acquire peculiar significance. Violinists will find the Ballade an attractive piece by reason of its freshness and earnestness of expression. The pianoforte part, arranged by the composer from the orchestral score, is also interesting and enhances the effectiveness of the violin part. That a student-composer, yet unknown to fame, should be able to get such a high-class work printed reflects no small credit on English publishers generally, and is very encouraging to young writers.

Antique Wedding Music. By Arthur Nevin. Op. 5.
[H. Kleber and Bros., Pittsburgh.]

MR. NEVIN has written under the above title four melodious and pleasing pieces, consisting of a March, Bridal Song, Minuet, and Evening Song. They show graceful fancy and possess considerable individuality. The opening phrase of the Bridal Song is somewhat suggestive of a lullaby, but this cannot be said to be altogether inappropriate. The pieces are easy to read, and, tastefully played, would be effective.

Three Duets by Popular Composers. Arranged for two Violins, with accompaniment for the Pianoforte, by George Calkin. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

In a preface to these pieces Mr. Calkin says: "The custom which prevails in schools of allowing pupils to play in unison, to the practical exclusion of part-playing, has suggested the need of such pieces as are contained in this volume; and it is hoped that besides providing for the want that is felt, they will also tend to modify the custom." This laudable endeavour is well carried out. F. Kücken, Mendelssohn, and Rubinstein are the three composers from whom melodies have been taken and arranged in simple but effective manner for two violins with easy pianoforte accompaniment. The duets would form admirable pieces for "breaking-up" festivals.