

Review

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In the second Act an important Scene and Duet may be mentioned as the best dramatic piece; but the Finale contains some vigorous writing, the chorus being most effectively combined with the solo voices. The last Act is brief; but, as we have already said, the Finale stands forth prominently, being well written throughout, both for the voices and instruments. We cannot say that the words of the *libretto* are of a character to call up much inspiration in a composer:—

Yes! grape-juice to elate us;  
Pleasures await us

may be cited as an average specimen of the verses given to the chorus; and

Can ghosts arise, the quick to harrow?

is a line called up by the supernatural appearance of *Herne*, the huntsman. Such versification is scarcely likely to elevate the tone of English Opera, the musical portion of which is certain to rise or fall with the character of the *libretto*. The composer has evidenced the possession of so much dramatic feeling in the setting of this Opera that we much regret the mixture of styles—observable even in portions of the same piece. We could pass over an especial leaning towards any particular school; but the ultra Italian will not amalgamate with the modern German; and we cannot but think that had Mr. Old thought more of what he ought to do with the words, and less of what other people would have done with them, the result would have been infinitely more satisfactory. With all its defects, however, we cordially welcome this additional proof of the talent existing around us, since it will help to dispel the doubt as to material being ready at hand should any enterprising lessee devote himself to the performance of original English Operas.

*The Grammar of Music.* By Henry Hiles, Mus. Doc., Oxon. Book I. Consonances and Dissonances.  
[Forsyth Brothers.]

THIS elaborate work shows in some respects a decided advance on many of the musical treatises in ordinary use. The number of chords and progressions illustrated is very large, and in explaining them an attempt is evidently made to find a more secure theoretical basis than has often been the case. Dr. Hiles begins by stating that scales and chords are tuned by consonant intervals, and that the smoothness of consonance is due to the absence of beats. These are commonplaces of science, but it is new to find them in a grammar of music. Having thus got the practical facts on which harmony is founded, it would seem unnecessary for Dr. Hiles to go into the physical theory of beats; but since he has done so, it is unfortunate that his teaching should be opposed to that which is now everywhere accepted as true. Beats, he says, are "caused by the complexity of the ratios of the two sets of vibrations," and harmony "has no sort of connection with, or reliance upon, the phenomena of harmonics." The arguments Dr. Hiles brings forward in support of his position refute many current fallacies, but in no way apply to the theory of consonance demonstrated by Helmholtz. As this theory has often been very imperfectly treated, it may be well to refer to the Proceedings of the Musical Association, 1874-5, pp. 122-5, as containing a satisfactory explanation. Those who wish for practical proof of what is there advanced will find it in Dr. Preyer's pamphlet published last year. If musicians will be scientific, it is surely better for them to learn from the latest and most trustworthy authorities, than to fasten on notions which are nearly twenty years out of date.

Like most theorists, Dr. Hiles accepts the idea that every chord is derived from a root. But he does not use this word to mean the note whose harmonics would give the notes of the chord, nor to mean the lowest note of the chord when arranged in a series of thirds. He defines the root as the sound "upon which the chord rests most comfortably and consonantly." Of course this rule cannot apply to dissonant chords; and in the second section of the work, which treats of dissonances, the root is defined anew as the note from whose chromatic scale the chord is derived. This hardly agrees with the statement at the beginning, that chords are derived from consonant intervals, not from scales. Moreover, according to the first definition, a chord could have only one root; while,

according to the second, it might have several, for the same chord might be found in several different keys. In fact, Dr. Hiles derives  $A\flat-C-E\flat-F\sharp$  either from G, C, or  $E\flat$ . What is to be gained from this view does not appear; for it cannot be pretended that the ear feels the chord to be derived from any of these notes. Even as regards the scientific explanation of chords, the idea of a Root does not seem to be of any use.

A large number of chords and progressions which are usually considered to change the key, Dr. Hiles treats as chromatic. We do not object to this, for the limits of the key hardly admit of exact definition. Some of these chromatic chords look new and strange, owing to the peculiar way in which they are written; but when translated into the common notation they are familiar enough. That Dr. Hiles has views of his own respecting notation the following example from his book will show (p. 77):—



Here we have at least four combinations of notes ( $B\flat-D\sharp$ ,  $D\flat-F\sharp$ ,  $C-E\sharp$ , and  $F-A\sharp$ ) which are not recognised as belonging to music, and which are intolerable in any tuning but equal temperament. Dr. Hiles says plainly that this "notation of chromatic dissonant sounds does not show the actual pitch of the sounds; but, rather, their progressive tendencies towards notes of different names—as  $F\sharp$  to G;  $G\flat$  to F." Elsewhere he cautions the student against an incorrect notation of chromatic consonant sounds (p. 31); but the student will fail to understand why  $F\sharp$  and  $G\flat$  should cease to be signs of pitch when applied to dissonances.

The first book raises so many interesting questions that we must defer the consideration of the second, which treats of Counterpoint and Form, till some future time.

*The National Music of the World.* By the late Henry Fothergill Chorley. Edited by Henry G. Hewlett.  
[Sampson Low and Co.]

MR. HEWLETT (who has already compiled the Autobiography, Memoir, and Letters of the late Mr. Chorley) says in his preface to the work before us: "In offering these essays to the world I am giving effect to the wish of my deceased friend," so that it will be seen that, so far from any violence being done to his memory, there can be little question that, had he lived, these Essays would have been published precisely as they now appear. But the art-criticism of Mr. Chorley was written at a time when, in this country at least, he had few rivals; and although, therefore, we have now every respect for the boldness with which he advanced his opinions, there are not many who have the same respect for the opinions themselves. "If the public," says Mr. Hewlett, "has declared itself in favour of certain canons of art which he rejected, and one or two composers with whom he had imperfect sympathy, it has adhered in the main to the principles which he advocated, and endorsed the verdicts which he pronounced." We have a very perfect recollection of Mr. Chorley's writings; and without advancing our own opinions upon the matter, we can positively affirm that in very rare instances has the public "endorsed the verdicts which he pronounced." A generation has grown up since his time whose judgment is unfettered by old-world traditions; and not only, therefore, have modern competent judges exalted many of the composers he depreciated, but they have depreciated many of those he exalted. Of course the subject of the Essays in the volume before us would scarcely draw forth any decided opinions upon the relative genius of creative artists; but here and there we light upon an assertion which, even at this short distance from the day in which it was written, seems somewhat antiquated. For example, speaking of Rossini, he says: "I hold that, since Handel, there has been no musician deserving the epithet so completely as the composer of 'Il Barbiere,' 'La Donna del Lago,' the third act of 'Otello,' the tomb-scene of 'Semiramide,'

the greater portion of 'Moise,' and 'Guillaume Tell.'" Leaving out of the question the last-named Opera (in which the composer deserted the style by which he had won his fame), will the public ratify this sweeping criticism? Passing, however, from a review upon Mr. Chorley (which, by the way, Mr. Hewlett somewhat courts in his preface) to a review upon his book, we are disposed to welcome with pleasure these pleasant talks upon National Music. Throughout the Essays there is an earnestness which was one of the leading characteristics of the author, and one which, even when we differ from him, we cannot but admire. In "Music from the East" we have some very interesting information respecting the tunes which come to us from this quarter of the world; and amongst many others, the air "Malbrouk"—respecting the parentage of which there has been much controversy—is given, the Eastern version certainly being widely different from that coupled with French words, and which attained such popularity some years ago. "Music from the South" contains some well-merited tributes to the genius of the very many composers of this musical portion of the globe, M. Gounod—who was at the time the author wrote rapidly making his fame in this country—being especially praised. The Russian melodies are largely dilated upon in "Music from the North," and also the Polish music, than which perhaps nothing more thoroughly *National* can be found. Much is said in the last chapter, "Music from the West," about Welsh airs, and the national instrument, the harp, which, as the author truly observes, has been "too much undervalued in our day." Thanks to the patriotic exertions of some of our prominent Welsh artists, and also to the munificent gifts of really genuine instruments by enthusiastic residents of the Principality, we are beginning to hear much more of the "Welsh harp," and we shall be glad to find that their praiseworthy efforts have not only rescued the instrument from comparative oblivion, but have had the effect of placing it in a foremost position, at least at all Welsh musical festivals. The four Essays contained in the volume under notice are based upon lectures delivered by the author at the Royal Institution in 1862, and subsequently at Manchester and Birmingham; and although more exhaustive works have appeared on the subject since that time, we can promise those who possess themselves of Mr. Chorley's "National Music of the World" that they will derive both pleasure and profit from a perusal of its pages.

*The History of Music from the Christian Era to the Present Time.* By Dr. F. L. Ritter. [W. Reeves.]

THE publication of a second edition of this work affords a satisfactory proof that the book has supplied to some extent an acknowledged want. Of course a volume of 465 pages cannot pretend to compete in completeness with the larger works of Hawkins and Burney, and indeed this history is chiefly valuable from the fact that it continues the thread of musical story down to our own day. It is pleasantly readable, and apparently free from undue or overstrained partisanship, notwithstanding the fact that considerable space is devoted to what is commonly called the "Music of the Future." The author has added a considerable amount of matter to that contained in the first edition, and has made many revisions; the introduction is worthy of great praise both for matter and manner, albeit the author's notions of Hebrew temple-music seem to be somewhat flippant and questionable. The history of *Neumæ* is discussed at length, and the author arrives at conclusions respecting their origin which are quite opposed to the views elaborately and frequently stated by Fétis, as we think with more correctness and probability. A table of *Neumæ* with translations into modern notation is given, but should any one attempt to elucidate an old MS. by its aid he will find, as others have before, that he has ventured into an unknown sea whose depths up to the present time have not been fathomed. The author has touched upon the history of musical art and progress in England with a scant and sparing hand, and has failed to do justice to this important branch of his subject; but further judgment on this head must be deferred until after the publication of his promised treatise on "English Musical Culture." As it is probable that a third edition of the work under notice will be required, we advise the addition of copious re-

ferences to authorities, both as regards the text and the musical examples. In a book especially designed for the use of students, like this, it is indispensable that every facility should be afforded for verifying statements, and we should be glad to know, for instance, from whence Dr. Ritter obtains the Psalm said to be by Claude Goudimel: we neither recognise the key nor the harmony as Goudimel's.

Examples should always be given *literatim*, or they are comparatively valueless; for this reason we strongly object to the harmony put to "Adam de la Halle's Song" on page 69; also to the pianoforte accompaniments to the excerpts from Peri, Monteverde, and Lully. They should appear simply with the figured basses of the composers.

*Simple Studies for the Pianoforte: Introductory Exercises.* Composed by William H. Hunt. [J. F. Pettit.]

Six of the twelve pieces contained in this now complete work have been noticed in these columns as they were published; and the remainder, recently issued, fully merit the warm commendation bestowed upon the former ones. Indeed it is seldom that we have seen strictly educational little lessons so pleasing as well as instructive; and we earnestly recommend them to the attention of those teachers who desire that their pupils shall be trained upon music which gradually shadows forth the elaborate compositions of the great masters. The Scherzo is a good specimen of a simple, playful movement; the Bourrée in G major, and Tarantelle in G minor, have all the characteristics of these dances; the Minuet and Trio, although perhaps not quite equal in interest to those already mentioned, are well-considered trifles; the March in D is sufficiently martial to justify its title; and the Sonatina, containing three short movements, is melodious, and includes some imitative passages for the left hand. An excellent feature in this work is the plan of turning a line upwards to indicate a partial break in the sense, and downwards to show the end of the phrase; very clear and easy rules being also given for counting. We cannot, however, agree with the system (which we see so frequently adopted) of counting *and* only when the notes forming the partitions of the bar are divided. For example, in No. 8, the student is told to count "1, 2 & 3, 4 &" to a crotchet followed by two quavers, twice over, in a bar of Simple Quadruple Time. Now we contend that where the "2 &" is to be counted is the very place where the "&" is unnecessary, and that the 1, where it is *not* to be counted, is the very place where it *is* necessary. The second division of the bar will take care of itself; but having said "1," when is the young pupil to say "2"? The same objection applies to the counting of No. 9, in 6-8 time, where the player is directed to say to two bars noted thus:—

♩ ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♩ ♪ ♪ ♪ | "1 — 2 | 1 Triplet 2 —" | .

The word "triplet," as we believe, only being required where it is *not* to be said, according to the author. In a work generally so well considered we should be glad to see these objections removed; but should Mr. Hunt not concur in the truth of our remarks, we can only say that he will have many teachers to support him.

*The Year.* A Cantata. The words selected from various Poets. The music composed by William Jackson (Masham). [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

CONSIDERING that this work, originally produced at the Bradford Musical Festival of 1859, has long ago taken its place in public favour, it is unnecessary minutely to criticise its merits. As until the appearance of this edition, however, it was only procurable in folio size, it can scarcely have attained that extensive popularity which, now that it appears in the welcome octavo form, may be confidently relied upon. Unlike most of our modern Cantatas, the words are collected from numerous sources; yet all the little poems are not only admirably suited for the composer's design of musically depicting the varied seasons of the year, but they are chosen exclusively from the writings of those whose charming verses have already won their way to enduring fame. The fresh and tuneful character of the music, and the skilful but undemonstrative treatment of the voice parts throughout the choral portions of the Cantata, will warmly recommend the composition to