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Sonata in D Major, for the Pianoforte by Julian Edwards

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Sonata in D major, for the Pianoforte. Composed by Julian Edwards.

As the name of this composer is new to us, we know not whether he has tried his "prentice hand" upon smaller works before venturing upon one which requires not only exceptional powers, but a maturity of judgment which can only be gained by an earnest study of the compositions of the great masters, and a self-criticism to which, we fear, but few writers subject themselves. An "Allegro," "Andante," and "Rondo" knitted together so as to form one continuous work may assuredly be termed a "Sonata;" but those who have to review a composition with so classical a title, can only do so according to a higher standard of art than would be demanded in noticing an ordinary piece; and Mr. Edwards must not be surprised, therefore, if we do not award warm praise to the ambitious production now submitted to us. If we except the progression of the subdominant and dominant chords, which move upwards in fifths, six bars from the conclusion of the Sonata, we have no grammatical errors to complain of; indeed the whole work shows that its composer has been a careful student. But neither by the interest of the themes nor by their development are we gradually led onwards through the seventeen pages to which the composition is extended. The principal theme of the first movement is sufficiently marked, and the second subject, in the dominant, is melodious, although somewhat common-place. The passages, however, are feeble, and there is but little vigour in the treatment of the motives. The second movement is better, and the finale decidedly the best, a good point occurring in the latter, where a subject, in A minor, with a triplet accompaniment, leads through an *agitato* passage to the return of the principal theme. One feature in the Sonata is the linking together of the three movements without a break; and we may also mention that an attempt is made to give an effect of continuity of idea throughout the composition by concluding with the opening subject of the first movement. All these points show the result of earnest thought; and if our strictures be taken in good part, Mr. Edwards may some day thank us for reminding him that, although he has undoubted talent, the requirements of a Sonata are at present beyond his grasp.

Harvest Thanksgiving March, for the Pianoforte. Composed by J. Baptiste Calkin.

HERE is a really good and moderately difficult March, written for the pianoforte, and consequently infinitely more satisfactory than the "arrangements" from orchestral Marches which we are constantly called upon to notice. The theme is not only bold and spirited, but, as it should be, more coloured with the feeling of the corn-field than the battle-field. The placid second subject is extremely tuneful; and the coda, ending with an unexpected plagal cadence, concludes the piece with excellent effect.

Six Songs. Composed by Ferdinand Hiller. The English translation by the Rev. J. Troutbeck, M.A.

1. Eyes of Spring.—*Frühlingsaugen.*
2. Departure from the loved one.—*Abschied von der Geliebten.*
3. Inconstancy.—*Flattersinn.*
4. The Pilgrimage of the Virgin.—*Maria, die wollt wandern Geln.*
5. Two voices.—*Zwiesengesang.*
6. A parting Prayer.—*Behüt' dich Gott.*

THE name of the composer of these songs is a sufficient guarantee for their musical excellence; but the majority of them are so exceedingly simple in construction and so winning in melody as to recommend themselves most strongly to vocal amateurs who desire something higher than the conventional drawing-room ballad. No. 1, in F major, with a charming and unexpected modulation into A minor, is an absolute gem, the melody being throughout in most perfect sympathy with the words, which—as in all the songs under notice—appear as good in the English translation as in the original German. No. 2, in F minor, has a character in the accompaniment which gives much pathos to the theme; and the song cannot fail to become

a favourite with singers who can make an audience feel as well as hear their words. No. 3, although scarcely to our taste, has many excellent points; and No. 4 is somewhat eccentric, the poetry tempting the composer, perhaps, to more elaborate word-painting than may be appreciated by many listeners. No. 5 is in every respect a charming composition, although exception may be taken by some to the very point we like—the fall of the diminished third between the two words "lovely night,"—and to some changes of key, which to us appear as spontaneous as they are beautiful. No. 6 has a remarkable progression in the melody of the short preliminary symphony, from the leading note to the fifth of the key, to which we confess we have not yet reconciled our ears. The song, however, is one of the best of the set, and will well repay study. We can scarcely doubt that this group of vocal pieces will find a cordial welcome wherever they are heard; and shall be glad if our few remarks upon their merits assist in making them more extensively known.

Ten Vocal Duets. Composed by Franz Abt. The English translation by the Rev. J. Troutbeck, M.A.

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| 1. O come ye flow'rets. | 6. Sabbath on the sea. |
| 2. All seek for rest. | 7. A Spring greeting. |
| 3. Lovely violet. | 8. The bird's question. |
| 4. In the distance. | 9. Longing for home. |
| 5. In the forest. | 10. On the blue sea. |

IT can scarcely, perhaps, be expected that these ten vocal duets should be of equal merit, even when composed by so accomplished and successful a musician as Franz Abt, but those who really want some effective and easy music for two equal voices will find a mine of wealth in this collection. No. 1, a simple and graceful melody, with a flowing semiquaver accompaniment, is unquestionably one of the best of the series, and we confidently recommend it as a most attractive duet for amateur performance. No. 2, written in 6-4 rhythm, would, perhaps, be more generally acceptable in 6-8, but it is a charming vocal composition, melodious, and in moderate compass for both voices throughout. Nos. 3 and 4 are somewhat more conventional in character, but the latter, especially, will please a mixed audience. No. 5 may be cited as a highly characteristic duet, the feeling of the poetry being well reflected in the music, and the voice-parts flowing amicably together. Passing over Nos. 6 and 7, with a word of commendation, we are arrested by an exceedingly quaint number, "The Bird's Question" (No. 8 in the list), which certainly must find its way to popularity. The theme is extremely pleasing; it is excellently harmonized, and some good effects are gained by the answering of the voice-parts. Of Nos. 9 and 10, we prefer the latter, which has a placid subject, with a waving accompaniment, well expressive of the words. Again, we must compliment the translator for the excellent manner in which he has performed his task; for the poetry is not only flowing and easily versified, but truly musical.

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Notation: Brief Directions concerning the Choice, Adjustment, and Formation by hand of the Characters constituting the Musical Alphabet. By John Hullah.

THIS useful little book may be confidently recommended to those who either copy or compose music; for, as the author truly says, "The copying of a page of music, to the tyro in 'phonography,' is notoriously a tedious and even painful operation; and even for many who have become more practised in the art it is neither an easy nor a pleasant one." Apart from the plain directions for writing clearly and expeditiously all the signs used in music, the student may glean a great deal of valuable information concerning the proper grouping of the notes in the various rhythms; for on this important subject it is notorious that much ignorance prevails. We quite agree with Mr. Hullah, for instance, that a measure of 6-8 time is incorrectly, though often, expressed by a dotted minim, this notation being obviously indicative of triple not duple rhythm; and there can be no doubt that when thought on this matter becomes more logical such false writing must disappear. We can quite endorse our author's observation that the *appoggia-*