

Review

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Mozart's artist life have been but slightly noticed"; and if a fault can be found with the work, it will assuredly be that it is rather dry in details, the various events being recorded somewhat in the form of a catalogue. Merely for the sake of reference, however, this is no objection; and the dates being printed in large figures, any prominent incident in the life of the composer can be readily turned to. In speaking of Mozart's works, Dr. Pole's writings have been largely drawn upon—his observations on the Overture to "Die Zauberflöte," from the programme of a New Philharmonic Society's concert, and a portion of his articles on the "Requiem," which originally appeared in THE MUSICAL TIMES, being quoted—but we have occasionally some able criticisms by Mr. Whittingham himself, which prove that he must be ranked as something above a mere compiler of materials ready to his hand.

Diana. Hunting Sketch. For the Pianoforte. Composed by Max Schröter. [Howard and Co.]

ALTHOUGH character pieces are to a certain extent cut to pattern—a few lazy triplets in 6-8 time suggesting a Barcarole, and a trifling melody, with a monotonous twirling accompaniment, a "Spinning-song," for example—there are good, bad, and indifferent works of this class; and we are bound to say that the little Hunting Sketch before us, although simple in the extreme, is both well written and sufficiently tuneful to please the young players for whom it is evidently intended. Of course we have the hunting-horn; but the principal subject is melodious: and the second theme, in the subdominant, is an excellent contrast. We commend this unpretentious little piece to the attention of the many on the look out for "something pretty."

Four Mazurkas, for the Pianoforte. By Stephen Heller. [Forsyth Brothers.]

ALTHOUGH all these pieces are, as might be expected, musically interesting, they are unequal in merit. No. 1, with its characteristic descending chromatic progressions, reminds us too much of one of Chopin's best Mazurkas. No. 2 wants interest, even in the leading subject; but No. 3 is excellent throughout. The theme given out at the commencement with the left hand is extremely striking, and the character of this is well preserved. No. 4 again reminds us of Chopin; but it is a musicianlike piece, an effective point being the change from minor to major for the concluding bars. The Mazurkas are edited and fingered by Mr. Charles Hallé.

Tarantelle, for the Pianoforte. Composed by C. H. H. Sippel. [C. Sippel, Cambridge.]

MR. SIPPEL will, we fear, find the key of his Tarantelle, B flat minor, somewhat impede the sale of the piece; but, apart from this amateur objection, there will be nothing to prevent its cordial welcome in the drawing-room, for the passages, although demanding a nimble finger, lie well under the hand, and will amply repay practice. The temporary change to the tonic major, and the crossing of the hands in the accompaniment on the return of the subject, have a good effect. But it is extremely difficult to write anything strikingly original in the Tarantella form; and if the composer of the one before us fails in this respect, he at least fails in good company.

Daybreak; Noontide; Sunset; Gloaming; Eventide; Nightfall. Composed for the Pianoforte by W. Millward. [Howard and Co.]

As a rule we care not for "picture pieces," because it seems too much like selling an illustration and giving a composition; but all the little coloured sketches on these musical trifles are so exceedingly well done that they will no doubt be at least acceptable to the little pianists for whom they are designed. "Daybreak," "Sunset," and "Eventide" are perhaps the most melodious of the set; but they are all well written, pleasing, and carefully fingered.

FOREIGN NOTES.

THE festivities to be held this summer throughout Belgium, in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the national independence, were inaugurated on the 16th ult. at Brussels, by a musical performance preceding the

opening of an Industrial Exhibition. The performance, a correspondent informs us, took place in the open air, in front of the Exhibition Building, and in the presence of a numerous and brilliant audience, including the members of the Belgian Royal Family, the ministers of the Crown, and the foreign ambassadors. The work chosen for the occasion was a cantata for chorus and orchestra, written to words of patriotic import, by the Belgian composer, Pierre Benoit, and executed by some 1,400 vocalists and instrumentalists, under the direction of the composer. The patriotic character of the cantata was enhanced by the fact of its having been composed to Flemish words, it being the aim of Pierre Benoit to re-establish that language, as far as musical art is concerned, in its former national position. For, as the popular composer justly maintains, although the French tongue has been pretty generally adopted in the country, the majority of the Belgian people still thinks and expresses its thoughts in Flemish. The reception of the work was, it need scarcely be added, of the most enthusiastic kind.

The following have been the works performed during the past few weeks at the Paris Grand-Opéra: "La Favorita," "Aida," "Faust," "Freischütz," "Les Huguenots," and "La Muette de Portici." There has, thus, been no novelty added to the *répertoire*, but the production of Auber's last-named masterpiece, which took place on the 14th ult., was rendered special by the fact of its having been the 500th performance of the work at that national institution, a distinction which, as a correspondent of the *Gaulois* points out, has hitherto only been conferred upon "Les Huguenots" and "Guillaume Tell," both the productions of foreigners. No official recognition was, however, taken of the event in question. At the Opéra-Comique a new one-act operetta from the pen of M. Hémery, entitled "La Fée," was brought out on the 14th ult., with very moderate success. MM. Octave Feuillet and L. Gallet are the joint authors of the libretto. Among interesting Concerts, characteristic of the musical life of the French capital, may be mentioned a so-called Festival Concert, given on the 4th ult., at the Trocadéro, in honour of M. Pasdeloup, the zealous Conductor of the Concerts Populaires, in which many of the French musical celebrities took part. Nor should we omit to record the brilliant success of the four Organ Concerts given by M. Guilmant, already announced in these columns, in the course of which the eminent organist of La Trinité introduced Handel's grand Organ Concertos, with the assistance of M. Colonné's orchestra, the hall of the Trocadéro being crowded on each occasion.

A statue of Auber is to be erected in one of the public places at Caen, the native town of the composer. A statue of Rameau also will be unveiled this month at Dijon. It will bear the following inscriptions: "Jean-Philippe Rameau, né à Dijon (1683-1764).—Élevé par Souscription. 'Hyppolyte et Aricie.' 'Castor et Pollux.' 'Dardanus.' 'Traité d'Harmonie.'"

M. A. Dannhauser, the Inspector of Vocal Instruction at Parisian schools, has, we understand, been commissioned by the French Government to study the methods of singing as taught in elementary schools in Belgium, Holland, Germany, and Switzerland, and to report thereon to a commission elected for the purpose of raising the standard of school-singing in France.

Weber's "Oberon" has recently been newly mounted at the Hof-Theater at Dresden, an institution which still retains that reputation for the artistic excellence of its performances which the personal influence of the great composer himself has rendered traditional. "Oberon," as performed at Dresden, consists exclusively of the music written for the work by the composer (*i.e.*, without the introduction of portions from his other operas, to which recent performances in this country have accustomed us), with the exception of the originally spoken dialogue, which has been converted by Capellmeister Wüllner into recitative, skilfully based, it is said, upon leading motives occurring in the opera and other musical themes intended by the composer for his work, but hitherto not made use of. The first performance of the newly mounted work took place on May 30, and is said to have produced an excellent impression, thanks to the reverent zeal and care with which it has been placed upon the stage.