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the rhapsodical style of the Abbé, if somewhat embarrassing at times, is peculiarly suited to the subject and to the wayward genius of whom he treats. This brilliant effusion of a poetic mind should be read in conjunction with the connected story of the composer's career at present under our notice; they supplement one another. Herr Karasowski is a countryman of Chopin, and as such especially fitted to be the interpreter of the ardent patriotic sentiments which form such a prominent element in the character of his compositions; he is also an intimate friend of the Chopin family, a circumstance which has enabled him to obtain a number of details, of anecdotes and incidents in connection particularly with the youth of Friedrich, which admit new light upon his early development, and which will be welcomed by all who take an interest in the matter. The most interesting portion of the work is, however, a number of letters of the composer now published for the first time, which enable the biographer at various stages of his work to let his hero speak for himself—the true secret, in fact, of all successful biography. These letters, originally written in the Polish language (the mother-tongue, in the strictest sense of the word, of our composer, whose father, a Frenchman by birth, had settled near Warsaw and married a Polish lady), are given in admirable translation, and are dated from various parts of Poland and Germany, and subsequently from Paris, where, after a sojourn of many years, the great musician fell the victim of a painful and protracted malady. Unfortunately, as we learn in the course of the above narrative, the whole of the letters written by Chopin to his family while resident in the French capital, and thus comprising the most interesting and important period of his life, were destroyed by the vandalism of the Russian soldiery incidental to one of those chronic disturbances to which their author's divided and unhappy country is periodically subjected. Enough, however, of his correspondence dating from that epoch, and directed chiefly to his bosom-friend Titus Woyciechowski, has been preserved to make the existing disproportion in the personal communications, supplied respectively in the first and second part of the work, less apparent. With Herr Karasowski as our guide, we are introduced to the talented members of the Chopin family at Zelazwa Wola, the village near Warsaw where the composer spent the early days of his youth, and to the excellent musician Elsner, who watched over and directed the development of the precocious talent of his pupil step by step, who was so proud of his subsequent success, and who in after life so impatiently and fruitlessly awaited that crowning effort on the part of his favourite, viz. the composition of a Polish national opera. We follow the young virtuoso upon his visits to Berlin and Vienna, always modest, always shrinking from the public gaze, yet always eliciting admiration, and exercising that indefinable fascination upon his auditors by which a powerful individuality manifests itself. Finally, we see the now matured musician take up his abode in Paris; we find him surrounded by a circle of fellow-artists, yielding in brilliancy and fame to that of no other epoch in the art-history of the great metropolis, himself the flattered and spoilt child of the *salons*, from whose scented atmosphere he would often turn to his rooms at the *Chaussée d'Antin*, with the grief of his betrayed country in his heart, with the stings of disappointed love still rankling in his bosom, to pour out his woe at the pianoforte in unheard-of improvisations. We hear something also of the composer's alternate attachment to two Polish ladies, who proved in turn faithless; and a good deal about his subsequent relations to Madame Dudevant, the great French novelist known by the name of George Sand. The author treats in a separate chapter of the importance of Chopin as a creative artist, by which means he manages to convey a great many instructive suggestions to the mind of the student, which form not the least valuable portion of the biography.

We have, we think, said enough to recommend this interesting and important addition to biographical literature to such among our readers whose knowledge of German will enable them to peruse its pages: those unacquainted with that language must be content to wait; we fancy

it will not be long before the work will follow its predecessor (Franz Liszt's) with an English translation.

Herr Karasowski's "Life of Friedrich Chopin" contains probably as much as we shall ever learn of the career of a musician whose genius had chosen but few forms of expression, into which few, however, he has infused endless variety and a singular depth of poetry entirely his own.

Venite, Te Deum, Deus Misereatur, the Preces and Responses, set to music for use during Advent and Lent, Ten Offertory Sentences, "Sing to the Lord," Hymn for four voices; "Onward, Christian soldiers," Processional Hymn. Composed by Ernest C. Winchester, A.C.O., Ch. F. London: F. Pitman.

THE above compositions and arrangements are all designed for average parish choirs. The three canticles which come first on our list are very good arrangements of Gregorian tones, judiciously harmonised with a free organ part; these will be found useful at churches where Gregorian music is sung, but where the organists have not sufficient experience, or perhaps skill, to be able to harmonise for themselves. The *Preces and Responses* will not, we think, be likely to supersede Tallis. The *Offertory Sentences* are pleasing and well written; the only fault we have to find with them is that in one or two cases Mr. Winchester has not been sufficiently careful in the accenting of his words; thus in No. 7 we twice find the word "behold" with the first syllable at the beginning of a bar; and in No. 8 we have "do good unto all men," "and specially to them," the syllables printed in italics coming on the accented part of the bar. "Sing to the Lord," a tune which gained the College of Organists' Prize in 1874, is very good; the harmonies are in the style of Bach, with moving inner parts, and therefore not particularly easy for congregational singing. The *Processional Hymn* we like less; and the composer has made a bad slip in his harmony, giving consecutive octaves between melody and bass at the end of the passage for sopranos alone.

Spare us, good Lord. Sacred Song. Written and composed by J. Adams. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

IT is difficult to advance anything in disparagement of a song which shows good intention, and offends not by any violation of musical grammar; but were a literary work submitted for notice which said but little, yet said that little in pure English, we question whether it would not be passed over in silence. In truth, music has not yet arrived at that point which would justify a reviewer in throwing aside a composition which, although well and carefully written, bears no evidence of the possession of origination power; for were he to do so, not only would the journal in which he wrote show a sorry list of new works, but he would himself be accused of "favouritism" by many who hold a highly respectable position in the art. Let us do our duty, therefore, and say that the "sacred song" before us is neither better nor worse than the number we are daily called upon to notice. The little bit of legato melody which, with the exception of the short opening phrase, makes up the entire composition, is vocal, and smoothly accompanied. It is a question, however, whether it will bear being repeated three times.

The Song of a Sprite. Words by Mrs. Radcliffe. Composed by Mrs. Mounsey Bartholomew. [Samuel Brewer.]

WE have often awarded much praise to the vocal compositions of Mrs. Bartholomew, but this is unquestionably one of the best we have yet seen from her pen. A light and characteristic symphony well prepares us for the nature of the verses chosen by the composer, the setting of which is materially aided by the highly dramatic accompaniment, which is skilfully varied with the changes of feeling in the poetry. We particularly admire the subdued and melodious phrase commencing with the words "And listen to celestial sounds;" and the modulation into E flat minor may be cited as a remarkably happy point. The song is dedicated to "La Marquise de Caux," whose voice would certainly be admirably suited to its due rendering.