

Review

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suggestive orchestral accompaniment does duty, naturally arrests attention. Some may not like it; others approve the plan as allowing prominence to the pictorial element, from contemplation of which, at certain moments, the audience are not disturbed. This feature, let us add, is familiar to students of the lyric stage, and even the extreme idea of a play entirely in pantomime, with continuous orchestral comment, were it now put forth, would be recognised as merely the resurrection of an old thought.

Professor Herkomer's music, like the product of his etching needle, is purely illustrative; that is to say, it is nowhere music for music's sake, but everywhere has its *raison d'être* in stage character or situation. This fact explains a frequent absence of "form," which, however, is wanting in no greater degree than usual to modern work of the class. But the composer falls easily into form when dealing with the lyrics. The opening chorus of peasants and children may be cited as an example, and several other numbers with it; the music in each case having a simple, melodious, and expressive character. Nevertheless, it appears to us that the composer is much more satisfied with himself and his work when using the orchestra only. This may be indicated by the fact that he prefers to do without vocal music when an old *Granny* is supposed to amuse the children with a story, and also when the household of *John the Smith* say, or rather think, a "grace." Besides being curious examples of favour shown to instruments as against the human voice, these numbers indicate, in an interesting manner, the orchestral bent of Professor Herkomer's mind. We shall not undertake a minute analysis of the work. Important though it be as a stage in development, its destined successor, "Found" (to be produced next year), will far transcend it in every way. At the same time, all who are attracted by the career of a very remarkable man should possess this beautiful book as evidence of rare versatility, of a singularly quick and ingenious nature, and of the rapidity and boldness with which the composer has progressed along a road other than that which he travels as a painter. In after years no artist of the present generation will present so interesting a study as Herkomer, and then whoever possesses the volume before us (only 676 copies are issued) will deem himself fortunate.

*English Folk-Songs.* Collected, arranged, and provided with Symphonies and Accompaniments for the Pianoforte, by Wm. Alex. Barrett.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

MESSRS. NOVELLO have evidently resolved that, however widely the acceptance of new music may prevail in this country, the old music shall not be allowed to die out. In furtherance of this design, songs by the truly representative composers of England are constantly issued by this enterprising firm, pleasantly reminding us that a national school of music really does exist, which, on its own merits, and not from a mere feeling of patriotism, deserves wider recognition than it has hitherto obtained; and now we have a volume of *English Folk-Songs*, collected, as the preface informs us, "from various sources during many years." This almost unworked mine will yield many treasures to those who diligently search for them, the pure and unpretentious melodies—all of which have been noted down from the singers themselves—having, apart from their tunefulness, the merit, in most cases, of faithfully reflecting the words to which they are wedded, especially those which are so frequently sung at harvest-homes, festivals on the occasion of sheep-shearing, at Christmas time, at ploughing matches, and rural entertainments of all kinds. It is worthy of notice that the songs do not belong to any particular county, but are popular in many places, each district where the same song is found embellishing it with local peculiarities of dialect. From so extensive a collection it would be useless to name any specimens entitled, in our opinion, to special praise; but we may say that additional interest is given to each song by an appended note telling something of its history. The accompaniments have all been written by the editor, with the exception of that to the "Birds in the Spring," which is the work of Mr. B. W. Horner. There can be no doubt that this carefully edited volume will be heartily welcomed by all who

love genuine Folk-Songs, and we are glad to learn by the preface that there are many more of the like character waiting for further recognition.

*The Solo Music in Mendelssohn's "Elijah."* Edited, with marks of expression and phrasing, by Alberto Randegger. Soprano, alto, tenor, bass.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THIS work will indeed form a most valuable guide to solo vocalists who desire to carry on the traditions of Mendelssohn's Oratorio; for perhaps no artist now before the public is more qualified to publish the result of his experience on this subject than Mr. Randegger, who, both as a Conductor and an intelligent listener, has had such frequent opportunities of observing the methods of rendering the solos adopted by the great vocalists who have been engaged in their interpretation. The editor in his preface modestly disclaims any originality in his work; but the idea itself may be said to be original, for, save by private lessons, it would be difficult indeed to give a reading of the solos in a composition so well-known that would thoroughly satisfy a critical audience without such hints as are contained in the volume before us. It is a graceful and appropriate act for a firm so identified with this world-renowned composition to issue a book of directions so reliable as to expression, phrasing, and breathing, in the due rendering of solos which tax the best energies of even the most experienced singers. Another of the advantages which reasonably may be claimed for this edition is that each vocalist sees only the solos which he or she has to sing, so that the entire work need not be held in the hand during performance. With regard to the metronome marks, the editor tells us that those which appear in the first edition are no longer observed, "and as we know," he says, "that the composer himself was no great believer in 'metronomes,' figures indicating the *Tempi* usually adopted are placed within brackets above the original ones." We sincerely hope that this edition will have an extensive sale, not only for its own sake, but because it is likely to be followed by others of a similar character.

#### FOREIGN NOTES.

THE Beethoven Haus, at Bonn, has just been enriched by the portrait of the Countess Thérèse von Brunswick, Beethoven's only love, who had presented it to the composer during their secret betrothal. The portrait, three-part life-size, is the work of Lampi, a Viennese painter of considerable reputation at the beginning of the present century, and bears the inscription, in the handwriting of the lady: "Dem seltenen Genie; Dem grossen Künstler; Dem guten Menschen; von T. B." The interesting relic had been for many years in the possession of Capellmeister Helmesberger, of Vienna, who has now presented it to the Bonn Institution.

MADAME INGEBORG VON BRONSART's opera "*Hiarne*" (to which we referred in our last month's Notes) was brought out at the Berlin Opera on the 14th ult., the performance deriving some special interest from the fact of the composer of the work being a lady of some social eminence. The result, a Berlin correspondent informs us, was on the whole satisfactory, quite apart from the probability of a *succès d'estime* being assured beforehand. The opera, though abounding with reminiscences, is the work of a capable musician, and contains some very interesting moments, particularly in the more tender situations of the drama. The libretto, from the experienced pen of Herr Bodenstedt, deserves praise for its purity of diction and general adaptability to musical treatment. The Emperor was present on the occasion, and the new opera is likely to remain on the *répertoire* for some time.

The present is a year of centenaries of eminent musicians. It includes, though little notice has been taken of it, that of Charles Czerny, whose memory survives in the present day through his excellent instructive works for the pianoforte, but who was also the author of numerous other compositions, including masses and sacred cantatas, to the number of over one thousand. Czerny was born at Vienna on February 21, 1791, and among his pupils were Franz Liszt and Thalberg.