

Review

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perhaps, but full of spirit and humour, animated in rhythm, and occasionally marked by real grace and feeling, he is entitled to serious consideration. The ponderous tirades of the classicists failed entirely of their mark, and just as a savage review will often increase the circulation of a book, Jules Janin's onslaught in the *Débats* on the tone, musical and moral, of "Orphée aux Enfers" only stimulated the curiosity of the public to see a piece which, strange to say, was coldly received on the opening night. In the controversy which raged around Offenbach the wit was all on his side. As one of his champions remarked, not without point: "M. Berlioz may despise Offenbach's music as much as ever he likes; he won't make his own any the better appreciated. Until there is established at the Polytechnic School a special class of *Berliozometry*, where it will be demonstrated that the three angles of a harmony are equal to two melodies, the high-flying music of M. Berlioz has no chance of being respected." For all these reasons, as we have admitted at the outset, Offenbach deserved his biography, and it is greatly to be regretted that the work before us should have been executed in a spirit of indiscriminate partisanship rather than that of sober criticism. As a chronicle of facts, M. Martinet's pages are curious and interesting, though the jerky telegraphic style of the writer is excessively trying. But the critical value of the work is *nil*. It is one unmitigated panegyric. In winning *immediate* popularity, perhaps no other composer ever approached Offenbach. Such unflinching tact in hitting the taste or the fashion of the day, though a valuable commercial quality, is hardly the best guarantee for abiding and immortal fame such as M. Martinet claims for his hero. From the many anecdotes with which his pages bristle we may extract the following: "Les Deux Aveugles," with which Offenbach had scored his first success as a manager as well as a composer in 1855, had attracted the curiosity of the Emperor, who ordered a performance to be given at the Tuileries. "A stage was erected in the *salon de Diane*, and Offenbach conducted his orchestra before a brilliant audience blazing with diamonds. Their Majesties were in the front row, and near to them Count Bacciocchi, the Grand Chamberlain, armed with his wand. Pradeau and Berthelier [the representatives of the "two blinds"], at the thought of this imposing audience, felt a thousand confusing apprehensions awaken in their hearts. Would they not find in them judges at least as critical as those at the general rehearsal? What effect would this long burst of laughter have before the sovereigns? The famous duet was barely finished when, with a terrified gesture, Pradeau pointed out to his companion M. Bacciocchi, signalling to them and vehemently waving his arm. There could be no more doubt about it. Their sinister presages were realised. The Empress was evidently ordering the piece to be stopped; so, armed, the one with his trombone, the other with his guitar, Pradeau and Berthelier left the stage, to the profound amazement of those present. The Chamberlain, in dismay, rushed after them, found them in the "Salle des Maréchaux," and breathless with emotion, in language variegated with Italian, informed them that the gesture which had alarmed them so much was intended 'per bisser' " (*i.e.*, as a signal for an encore). M. Martinet gives an amusing picture in one of the later chapters of the Friday evening parties at Offenbach's house, at which all sorts of musical absurdities were enacted by Bizet, Gustave Doré, Délibes, and other friends. We read how, on one occasion, a "Farmyard Symphony" was performed, in which the last-named composer created a *furor* by his rendering of "The return of the little dog whose foot has been trodden on." Two features in Offenbach's character which especially command respect were his generosity and his indomitable capacity for work, which neither suffering nor the approach of death could abate. The volume is prefaced by a characteristic portrait of the composer in which his hawklike glance, the terror of many superstitious Italians, is well reproduced.

Eighteen Songs. With pianoforte accompaniment. Composed by Hermann Goetz (Op. 4, 12, and 19). The English version by the Rev. Dr. Troutbeck.
[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

ANYTHING from the pen of Hermann Goetz—the gifted one who died all too soon for his fame and his art—comes

with special welcomeness, and here we have a timely and handy selection from his best songs, such as cannot fail to meet with approval. It is hardly necessary to point out the qualities of Goetz as a song-writer. In the Lied, as in other forms of art, he belongs essentially to the German school; he appears to have modelled his form and character upon the form and character of Robert Franz, and to have cultivated with great success the blending on equal terms of voice and instrument, as well as the habit of sacrificing something of lyric beauty to an intellectual conception of the poetic text. A refined and musicianly taste, together with general culture, is essential to the proper reception of the songs before us, but there is in them that which, to some extent or other, all amateurs can appreciate and enjoy. Opus 4 comprises six songs, the verses being German translations from, or paraphrases of, Italian national lyrics. We need scarcely say that there is nothing distinctively Italian in the music, which represents the composer's characteristics in the strictest sense. The subject of each is love, and if, in some cases, the music lacks the strength of the words, it is always suggestive and thoughtful. A certain stiffness of phrasing appears now and then, and one is tempted to conclude from this and other indications that Goetz took upon himself to express the strongest of passions before having himself experienced it. There are occasions, however, when he comes nearly up to the mark, as, for example, in No. 4, "The Swallow." No. 6, in which a young girl tells how she longed for a musical lover, and at last gained a fiddler husband, proves that Goetz was by no means deficient in humour. Opus 12 also includes six songs, words by various German writers. These compositions are, as a rule, more largely developed than those in Op. 4, and many amateurs may reckon them as conspicuously more valuable. No. 1, "The Secret," suggests Schubert in manifest fashion, partaking largely of that composer's lyrical beauty and, on occasion, frank geniality. It will be a favourite everywhere. No. 2, "The Gentle Touch," abounds in pathos that deepens into solemnity, and is, musically, altogether beautiful. No. 3, "The Passage Bird," ranks with No. 1 in fulness of development, while each of the remaining examples presents features, technical or expressive, which lift it far above the common order. The final set of six songs (Op. 19), words by several German authors, presents again the beauties already indicated, in combination with proofs that the composer's genius underwent continuous and rapid development. Without going further into details, we heartily recommend this book to amateurs who have learned to appreciate German song. They will find in it abundance of matter upon which to dwell with delight.

Notes and Notions on Music. By N. Kilburn, Mus. Bac., Cantab. [James Burns.]

THE author, in his preface, tells us that his Notes are "the outcome of practical experience, rather than the ideas of a mere student." His first article, or note, informs us that "it is commonly believed that genius is always original," and he then gives parallel passages from different composers in musical notes to show that there is "a kind of common fund out of which composers help themselves whenever their own fount of inspiration fails." These things and others are stated in a lofty oracular form, as though they were new discoveries, and that, until our author condescended to enter upon the scene, the world knew nothing of them. Most musicians will be extremely grateful to our author for his kindness in placing before them such new facts as that Beethoven was deaf, that Macfarren is blind, that Mozart was a great and wonderful genius, that Mendelssohn had a great faculty for extemporising at the piano, and that Wagner uses the most advanced musical means. These are facts which it would seem have never been stated in print before. Who is there among us who, after reading the chapter on "Musical Culture," will not feel a glow of pride at being told that it "augurs well for the future of musical England that such compositions as 'The Messiah,' the 'Creation,' and 'Elijah' continue to hold so firm a place in the esteem and affection of the people"? These are "brave words at the bridge," but here are braver: "Yet it should be borne in mind that music does not end with the oratorio." There are many literary men, of considerable position in the world of

art, who devote their lives to the investigation of humble matters, but who bring to their aid all the resources of education. Men who take, perhaps, a humble ballad as a theme, and invest it with the glow of classic lore. These men find a stone and leave a diamond. Others there are who become fascinated with the charm of the diction of the casual reporter, *vulgo dicto* "penny-a-liner," and find their best modes of expression in rhodomontade and metonymy. Fire is "a devouring element," water falling from an overturned pail "rushes with an uncontrolled impetuous force," the noise of a sack of coals cast down a shoot "rends the air with deafening reverberations," and so forth. Our author offers "the outcome of practical experience" in a manner only equalled by the process adopted by those who desire to instruct the female ancestor of one of their parents in the art of extracting the albuminous and other contents of the ovum of the *gallus domesticus*, by the process of imbibition. When we are told in the grandiloquent descriptions of the three oratorios named above, that the Hallelujah Chorus, Niagara-like, defies description, that in Mendelssohn's "and he went by a whirlwind into heaven," "one is almost borne away by the impetuosity of this resistless Tone-tempest," or that "the fact that our popular taste has clung to works like these, testifies to a latent musical capacity which, laid bare by more diligent practice and study," we are humbled by a superior presence in literature, and we feel crushed and humiliated, and find how hollow everything else written on the subject of music has been. In mercy to that which exists, we implore the author to give no more "Notes and Notions" for the present, lest we be absolutely annihilated; for, insects as we are, our lives are sweet to us.

The Choral Society. By L. C. Venables.
[Curwen and Sons.]

In this neatly printed little book there are some twenty-three chapters setting forth the various details of the formation and conduct of choral societies, with directions and instructions for their business management and so forth. There are also instructions concerning the choice and classification of voices, the direction of rehearsals, the selection of music, arrangement of programmes, the management of concerts, the engagement of soloists, tuning, accompaniments, how to retain members, choral competitions, men's voice societies, hints to conductors, and a number of other matters of a valuable and useful character. The whole is probably derived from experience, and although the matters cannot in the nature of things sublimely be made applicable to all cases, those who are interested in the subject and are seeking some such work for their own guidance will doubtless be able to adapt the suggestions to fit their own requirements. In this respect the little book will be found most useful and handy, and may be safely recommended for perusal and preservation. There are many interesting references to work done at home and abroad, but they can only be regarded as of lesser importance compared with the practical part of the book. The writer has much to say about the Tonic Sol-fa notation, and its advocated advantages. This is of course to be expected, but his book will be more sought after for his commonsense remarks concerning the formation and maintenance of choral societies than for the expression of his own and other views on the subject of musical systems.

Come now, and let us reason. By Herbert W. Wareing.
(Octavo Anthems, No. 314.) [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

ALTHOUGH the composer of this anthem is a musical graduate, it contains very little display of counterpoint, melodic interest being apparently his principal aim. Thus it commences with a flowing chorus in 6-4 time, to which succeeds a very expressive soprano (or tenor) air and chorus, a third chorus somewhat like the first, but rather more vigorous, bringing the work to an effective conclusion.

Alternative Tunes to Familiar Hymns. By John A. Macmeikan, M.A. [Hart and Co.]

THIS is a series of some twenty-two tunes to words already associated with other melodies. They are well and thoughtfully written, and may be used as a change by those who admit the pleasure arising from variety.

Album of Short Classical Pieces, for Piano. Arranged and Fingered by William Smallwood. [Joseph Williams.]

ALL persons who desire that young pianists should become acquainted with classical pieces will, we are certain, welcome a collection of the minor works of the great composers in a cheap form; and we must say that in the Album before us are some well chosen little gems, carefully arranged and fingered. But we must object to presenting fragments of compositions without any acknowledgment that they are fragments. For example, one page, containing merely the theme of Dussek's well-known piece, is headed "La Consolation—Dussek." In another volume of similar character, noticed by us some short time since, the whole of the composition, minus the Introduction, was given. Now in either of these cases how can a juvenile student become acquainted with the piece as Dussek wrote it? It may be said that masters would probably explain the matter to their pupils; but many professors would not think of doing so; and it must also be remembered that amateurs purchase these Albums, and play their contents without any communication with a teacher. The objection we have named also applies with considerable force to the extract called "Andante in F—Beethoven," which (apart from its conveying no idea that it commences a lengthy piece) having no distinctive title—save to musicians, who are accustomed to hear it so-named—is likely to be confounded with any other Andante in F by the same composer. Some of the little pieces, however, are complete in themselves, and all are abstractedly excellent themes to linger over.

The Treasury. Compiled and edited by Joseph B. Mead.
[Published by the Trustees.]

IT is pleasant to note that the great reform in the music of the sanctuary which has taken place in the Church of England within the last generation or two is now finding its echo in the ranks of dissent. That our Nonconformist brethren were somewhat slow to move in this matter was by no means surprising, for many reasons; but they now seem fairly alive to the necessity of keeping with the times, and have apparently grasped the truth that music, to be reverential, need not be wholly inartistic. The present work, intended primarily for the use of the Baptist denomination, consists of over 600 tunes, and a few chants, anthems, &c. From the preface we gather that few of the tunes appear for the first time, but the collection is very comprehensive, and the editing shows a praiseworthy amount of musicianly care and taste. It is said that "a very few have been included more from their general popularity and the hold they have obtained than from their intrinsic musical value." This probably refers to such tunes as Helmsley, Miles Lane, &c., in which case it does not matter very much, as there are alternatives to these vulgar melodies. But is it possible that any devotional feeling can still be aroused by such trivial, flippant compositions as Jackson's Te Deum in F, "I will arise," and "Vital spark"? These survivals from the dark days of sacred music might surely be replaced by worthy pieces—if not by modern composers, at any rate by our grand old composers, such as Tallis, Farrant, Bird, or Gibbons.

Albums for Violin and Pianoforte. (No. 6.) *Hungarian Dances.* Transcribed by Siegfried Jacoby.
[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

IT is safe to prophesy that there will be a large demand for this welcome addition to the Novello Albums. The book contains eight examples of Hungarian dance melodies, each of which may be found in the selection arranged for four hands, by Brahms, and, subsequently, by Joachim for violin and pianoforte. If it be asked why, since Joachim has transcribed the themes for the same instruments, Mr. Jacoby has done a superfluous deed, the answer is that there are players and players. The great violinist's version presents difficulties which are prohibitive to the vast majority of amateurs; Mr. Jacoby, on the other hand, has taken the beautiful tunes, laid them out simply, with an equally unexacting accompaniment, and so placed them within the reach of very moderate performers. That they will be extensively used and much valued in amateur circles we do not for a moment doubt.