

Review

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REVIEWS—continued.

SONGS.

*If love's a sweet passion. When I have often heard.
Hark! Hark! the ech'ing air.*

Three Songs from 'The Fairy Queen.' Composed by Henry Purcell. Edited by J. S. Shedlock.

[Novello and Company, Limited.]

THOSE who were fortunate enough to be present at the private revival of Purcell's 'Fairy Queen'—held on July 6, 1900, and which we recorded in our August issue—were much struck with the charm of some of the songs in that opera. The enthusiastic antiquary, Mr. J. S. Shedlock, who was responsible for that interesting resuscitation, has therefore done well to issue a practical edition of three of those quaint old-time ditties. The first is a plaintive theme in G minor, the second, in A, is remarkable for the prevalence of skips in the melody, and the third, in B flat, with its delightful divisions, is by no means the least attractive of this set. We feel sure that soprano singers in search of something really good will find this trio of thoroughly English songs to their taste. The author of the words is unknown. Here is a specimen of his poetry:—

If Love's a sweet passion, why does it torment,
If a bitter, oh! tell me whence comes my content?
Since I suffer with pleasure, why should I complain,
Or grieve at my Fate when I know 'tis in vain?
Yet so pleasing the pain is, so soft is the dart,
That at once it both wounds me and tickles my heart.

PIANOFORTE MUSIC.

School Marches. Book II. Arranged for Pianoforte solo.

Intermezzo, from the Variations on an Original Theme for Orchestra. (Op. 36.) By Edward Elgar.

[Novello and Company, Limited.]

THE fifteen marches contained in this volume form a fitting sequel to those that appeared in Book I. Here we find a variety of subjects—e.g., Turkish, Gipsy, Birthday, and Wedding—marcily illustrated by composers of divers gifts, from Beethoven to Rouget de Lisle. Many girls, and, for that matter, boys will doubtless feel their marching powers stimulated by the rhythmic strains which these thirty pages furnish at a trifling cost.

The Intermezzo is one of the most pleasing variations of Dr. Elgar's popular work. The music must perforce lose in effect by being played on the pianoforte, but it may be taken for granted that, as the composer himself has prepared the present arrangement, he has made the most of his opportunity. The piece furnishes full scope for a delicate touch and poetical intuitiveness, especially if the idea of the muted whisperings of the orchestral strings enters into the soul of the performer on the household instrument.

Prelude, Capriccio, and Gavotte. By Mary Crawford.
Legende in E minor. By Paul Colberg.

[Forsyth Brothers.]

MISS CRAWFORD'S pieces may be recommended to amateurs in search of artistic music of moderate difficulty. The first, in A minor, forms an expressive introduction, the music exciting our expectancy, which is fantastically answered in the Capriccio; and the Gavotte is an admirable example of the stately old dance measure.

An element of mysticism is expected in 'Legendes,' and it will be duly found in Mr. Colberg's music. The piece also possesses pleasing sentiment, to which a pianist of average ability will find it easy to give effective expression.

VIOLIN AND VIOLA MUSIC.

Chanson de Nuit for Viola and Pianoforte. Edward Elgar. [Novello and Company, Limited.]

MR. ELGAR has arranged this beautiful piece for viola, for which it is well suited. Expressive players will find a delightful solo and a welcome addition to the limited *répertoire* of the viola.

Elegie and Scherzo for Violin and Pianoforte. H. Waldo Warner. [Novello and Company, Limited.]

Two charming solo pieces, well-written for the instrument, and of decided musical value. The beautiful, broad theme of the Flegie will here again prove very attractive to expressive players, and a good study in expression for those not specially gifted.

The Scherzo is a very bright and effective piece, the thrown *staccato* stroke being most brilliantly used. Mr. Warner is to be congratulated on his two solos, they are very much above the average, and in capable hands will be most effective concert pieces.

RECORDERS.

DR. J. C. BRIDGE, Organist of Chester Cathedral, discoursed upon Recorders at the meeting of the Musical Association, on the 12th ult., when his brother, Sir Frederick Bridge, occupied the chair.

In the course of his interesting observations Dr. Bridge said that Mr. Welch, at a meeting of the Association in 1898, had given such an exhaustive lecture on 'Recorders' that little more was to be said historically, but he (the lecturer) had an advantage in having brought with him a set of Recorders, or Flutes-a-Bec, belonging to the Chester Archaeological Society. They were found in an old box on the removal of the Society into fresh quarters in 1886. There is only one other set known to be in existence, and that is at Nuremberg, which consists of seven (originally eight) flutes. The Chester set consists of soprano in key of F (first space), alto in D, tenor in C, and bass in F, one octave below treble. The maker's name is Bressan, and the instruments were probably made at the end of the seventeenth or in the early part of the eighteenth century.

The word 'recorder' seems at one time to have been synonymous with 'flute,' and the instruction books of the seventeenth century made use of both names. By degrees, however, the word flute alone was retained, and finally recorders were called 'common flutes,' and died a natural death when the *flauto traverso* came into use about the middle of the eighteenth century. There can be no doubt that recorders were originally expensive instruments. Moreover, they were popular with royalty, for Henry VII. purchased them and rewarded players thereupon, and Henry VIII. died possessed of no less than seventy-six of these instruments! Pepys records with what delight he purchased a recorder, 'the sound of it being most pleasing' to him; and Evelyn says (1679), 'they are now much in request for accompanying the voice.'

The music for the recorder was undoubtedly of a simple nature, as semitones could only be obtained by cross fingering. The feature of the instrument is the thumb-hole at the back. It is frequently stated that the recorder derives its name from an aperture which existed between the embouchure and the first finger-hole. It was covered with bladder or skin, and gave a peculiar 'warbling' tone. The lecturer said there was no justification for this statement, no instruction book mentioned it, and no picture gave any clue to its construction, and the only specimen known, and said to belong to the sixteenth century, had been examined by Mr. Welch and proved to have been made about 1810—probably as an experiment.

The music performed comprised a 'Vaudeville' for recorders, played upon the pianoforte, a Gavotte by Henri le Jeune (1636), played upon three recorders, and a Quartet for the four recorders composed by the lecturer, who was assisted in the illustrations by the Rev. J. L. Bedford, of Chester, and Messrs. Ratcliffe and Finn. Dr. Bridge also referred to the 'Pibcorn,' an old wind instrument used by the Welsh. He played 'The Red House of Cardiff' with the Rev. J. L. Bedford, who performed on an instrument made in exact imitation of one described in the last century by the Hon. Daines Barrington. The tone certainly bore out Mr. Barrington's description as being 'like an indifferent hautboy.'

MISS MURIEL FOSTER, who has recently achieved great success in Gluck's 'Orpheus' at Frankfort, has gone to Canada for two months, where she will sing with Madame Albani's concert party.