

Review

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as music generally. He thought that folk-song melodies 'are seldom of much value,' and it is seldom that, 'sentiment apart, a melody of this class can be said to have an English character.'

The conclusion of the whole matter is that, waiving all criticism of musical value or suitability of words for a purpose, it is eminently desirable that traditional songs, and songs that are assumed to be traditional, should be collected as quickly as possible. When they are collected it will be soon enough to criticise their merit and consider to what use they can be put. Among the suggestions made in reference to the means of collecting the tunes in rural districts was the exceedingly naïve one that the 12,000 parochial clergy, aided by the schoolmasters, should take down the tunes. It is, we fear, a too flattering testimonial to the musical skill of the clergy generally to assume that they are able to write down the notation of what they hear. Why, a great many—but never mind! The really practical and dead certain plan would be to supply collectors with a good recording phonograph. Mr. Southgate claims that the Musical Association is a fit and proper body to undertake the task and there is a good deal to be said for this view.

Reviews.

Hector Berlioz et la société de son temps. Par Julien Tiersot.
[Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie.]

It is impossible properly to appreciate the life an art-work of a great man apart from his surroundings. Man is the creature of circumstances; they mould, if they do not make his character. Berlioz was of most impressionable nature, and the author of this interesting volume shows us how strong were the influences from without. So much has been written within the last few months about the composer that there is no need to tell the romantic story of his life, neither will space allow of comment such as the book deserves. M. Tiersot believes that Berlioz was thoroughly sincere—in his enthusiasms, his ironies, his loves, his hatreds; also that he has revealed himself fully in his scores, his books, and his letters. The writer frankly recognizes more than one 'semi-sincere' expression in the writings of the master; in the main, however, his statement appears to us correct.

Pasdeloup is generally regarded as the originator of popular concerts; as the man who paved the way for the successes of Colonne, Lamoureux, and now Chevillard. But M. Tiersot reminds us that the real initiator of such concerts was Berlioz. He sowed, but other men reaped. 'As a rule,' we read, 'Berlioz seems to have covered his expenses; perhaps he may occasionally have made a slight profit, but nothing more.' With regard to the 20,000 francs given by Paganini to the composer, some very plain facts are quoted to demolish Liszt's account of the matter; yet M. Tiersot says nothing about Sir Charles Hallé's statement that the money came ostensibly from Paganini, but that the gift was really Jules Janin's.

In the art-work of the composer our author distinguishes four periods. The first one of incubation—i.e., the early attempts at writing before he left home; the second (1827-1842), the period of 'romantic effervescences'—Harriet Smithson, Shakespeare, Beethoven; the third (1842-1854), one of transition; and the fourth, similar to the second, though with different influences—Estelle, his first and his latest love, Virgil and Gluck. The works produced during the second period are 'les plus vibrants.' The chapter on the contemporary composers of Berlioz is a very interesting one. Between Cherubini and our master friendship was impossible; 'they belonged to a different generation, to a different school, and the one in his own way was as bad-tempered as the other.' M. Tiersot fully endorses Wagner's opinion that Meyerbeer's conception of an opera was the *mise en scène* of Berlioz's orchestra. From among many distinguished contemporaries Wagner and Liszt of course stand out prominently. The relations

between them and Berlioz are described at some length. M. Tiersot agrees with many criticisms of the art-work of Berlioz by Wagner, but endeavours to show, and not unsuccessfully, that at times the latter was prejudiced. He recognizes the services which Liszt rendered to Berlioz in earlier days, but later on when the latter could not admire the great pianist's compositions the friendship practically ceased.

Bunte Blätter: Twelve Easy Pieces for Violin (in the first position) and Pianoforte. By Hans Sitt (Op. 84). In Four Books.

[Novello and Company, Limited.]

Hans Sitt may well be termed the friend of the young violinist, for no composer knows better how to write successfully for the initial stages of violin technique. Many essentials are required for perfect success in this direction—an intimate knowledge of the possible capabilities of the average young player, an easy flow of pleasing melody with appropriate and not too difficult accompaniment, and withal the occult skill, possessed but by the few, of imperceptibly, as it were, gradually guiding and leading a student to higher attainments. All these characteristics are remarkably demonstrated in Herr Sitt's latest opus, 'Bunte Blätter,' for violin with pianoforte accompaniment. These 'variegated leaves' consist of twelve short pieces (conveniently published in four books of three numbers each) specially written for performing within the first position.

The composer, wisely we think, adopts simple and suitably descriptive titles instead of the namby-pamby meaningless headings too often given to pieces for the young. Thus we find a Canzone, Minuet, and Gondoliera in the first book, followed by a Capriccio, Elegy, and Tarantelle in the second; a Romance, Gavotte, and Arietta in the third, and a Walzer, Berceuse, and Mazurka in the fourth. The pieces are slightly progressive in their degree of difficulty, but they are essentially simple and, we may add, instructive bagatelles, and as such cannot be too highly recommended to teachers. We quote the opening bars of the first and last numbers as specimens of Herr Sitt's melodic gifts:—



Who's Who? The Englishwoman's Year-Book. *Who's Who Year-Book.*

[Adam and Charles Black.]

It is hardly necessary to say that these three books of reference for the year 1904 are useful—they are invaluable. 'Who's Who?' has now been expanded to 1700 closely-printed pages containing biographies of living celebrities, including Colonials, Indians and Americans. The amount of information—some of it rather trivial—in this book is really amazing. The difficulties attending its production must be immense, and this may account for the inclusion of a biography of the late William Nicholl, the singer, who died so far back as April, 1902. We notice an important omission in the list of literary works produced by Sir Hubert Parry in not mentioning the 'Music of the XVIIth Century,' contributed by him to the 'Oxford History of Music.' The editor of 'Who's Who?'—like other editors—doubtless suffers much tribulation by the non-copperplate writing of some of his correspondents. To such cabalistic calligraphy may be traced (on p. 729) 'Rindberger' instead of Rheinberger. In the 'Englishwoman's Year-Book,' edited by Miss Emily Janes, the information given under the heading 'Music' is quite encyclopædic and yet concisely set forth, while the 112 pages of the 'Who's Who Year-Book' are full of varied information very concisely tabulated and set forth.

(Continued on page 181.)