

Review

Source: *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, Vol. 26, No. 506 (Apr. 1, 1885), p. 226

Published by: [Musical Times Publications Ltd.](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3358178>

Accessed: 13-03-2016 06:30 UTC

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subject recurs, with some variation, in B minor, while the section in F sharp minor (which, by the way, is only a transposition of a part of the first subject) is not repeated. In construction the two movements might almost be called twins—an error of judgment, we cannot but think, on the part of the composer. Apart from the question of form, there is abundance of vigour and spirit in this finale, at the close of which Mr. Selby introduces in the bass one of the themes from the first *allegro*—an expedient frequently used by modern composers (as, for instance, by Brahms in his third symphony) to give unity to the entire work. But why does Mr. Selby finish with a *pianissimo*? As he has done the same in both the first and second movements, a vigorous close would have surely been more effective.

We have dealt at some length with this sonata, because it is a work which on its own merits deserves more than a few hasty lines. We have, therefore, criticised it freely but fairly, and have pointed out what we consider to be its defects in no unkindly spirit, but because it shows sufficient talent to warrant the hope that, with self-criticism, Mr. Selby may produce something even superior to his Opus 21. To sum up, the sonata is a composition not, indeed, of genius, but of sound musicianship and of even greater promise.

*Musical History; briefly narrated and technically discussed. With a Roll of the Names of Musicians, and the Times and Places of their Births and Deaths.* By G. A. Macfarren. [Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black.]

THIS work is a reprint, with amplifications, of an article by Sir George Macfarren in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," and although the history of the art is, as expressed upon the title-page, "briefly narrated," we can conscientiously affirm that it is so complete in every important particular as to form a thoroughly reliable reference for the student, and especially for one who seeks for intelligent opinions as well as bare facts. In tracing the progress of music in Europe during the last twenty-five centuries, it is a matter of extreme difficulty, where the space is so limited, to dwell sufficiently upon the career of those who may be said to have been the representative men of a certain period; but in all cases much judgment has been shown in the selection of artists whose claims deserve more lengthened recognition than others; and, as a specimen of searching criticism, we may mention the parallel between Handel and Bach, commenced at page 82. In the Introduction, alluding to the appended roll of the names of musicians, it is said, "If any names of interest are omitted, this is through oversight and not intention, and it must not be regarded as showing disesteem of such notabilities." Now, one of the most important names omitted is that of the author himself, the absence of which from the list of those living writers who have contributed works in the highest departments of the art, as well as in the "roll" alluded to, does indeed appear strange. Were the book a dissertation upon the genius of musical composers, we might make every allowance for the modesty of a critic who declines to classify himself; but this is a history, and in it, therefore, personal considerations should not be allowed to intrude.

*Fünfzig Kinderlieder.* Von G. Chr. Dieffenbach; für 2 Singstimmen mit leichter Klavier-Begleitung komponirt von Carl August Kern.

[Wiesbaden: C. G. Kunze's Nachfolger.]

THE Germans have always excelled in the production of *naïve* and simple poetry adapted to the understanding and appealing to the imagination of young children. In the present collection of fifty "Kinderlieder," Herr Dieffenbach has shown himself worthy of his numerous predecessors in his endeavour to kindle in the youthful mind a love of nature, and a healthy sympathy with all the creatures therein; a sufficient proof in itself of the author's own amiable and childlike disposition. The music to his verses, furnished by Herr Kern, though simple enough, is scarcely equal to the standard achieved by the poet. There is a strong family likeness in the majority of the composer's tunes which will be quickly discerned by young folks, and which, at any rate, does not add to their educational value from a musical point of view. Mozart, in his "Komm lieber Mai," and Weber, in his cradle-song "Schlaf

Herzens-Söhnchen," have supplied us with such ideal examples of this kind of song that, perhaps, we have become somewhat too exacting in this direction. The fact, however, of the present being the fourth edition of these "Children's Songs" ought to speak for itself, and should encourage the issue of an English translation thereof (from the hand of a lady, we should say), as a very amiable and sympathetic addition to a field of musical literature in which there has been, as yet, no over-production in this country.

*The Child's Garland.* A collection of Three-part Songs for Children's voices. Composed by Franz Abt. The English version by the Rev. Dr. Troutbeck and Miss G. E. Troutbeck. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

WITH all who, like ourselves, advocate the desirability of placing fresh and hopeful words before juvenile vocalists, the little volume before us will most assuredly find favour; for the verses, in their excellent English translation, are full of that charming simple poetry which children are never tired of repeating. The pleasing melodies and easy three-part harmony to which they have been wedded by the genial composer, Franz Abt, fully prove his deep sympathy with "nursery music"; and during the coming festive season few more appropriate presents can be selected than this well-chosen "Garland" of poetry and song.

*A Second Series of Church Songs.* By Rev. S. Baring Gould, M.A., and Rev. H. Fleetwood Sheppard, M.A. [Skeffington and Son.]

WE are told that although several songs in this collection are marked as solos, they may be sung according to the means at command—viz., in unison, chorus, or by any one set of voices, &c. The pieces are carefully selected, and the harmonies, mostly by the Rev. H. Fleetwood Sheppard, thoroughly satisfactory. In every respect the songs will be found well worthy of attention.

*Trio (Canone) for Soprano, Contralto, and Baritone, or Tenor.* Poetry by Thomas Moore. Music by Gordon Saunders. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

A TRIO in Canon form is always effective, and Mr. Saunders has here given us a melodious specimen of this class of composition, which should find favour with amateur vocalists. The baritone part being written an octave higher than it is sung, and some chromatic notes being enharmonically changed to make them easy for the singer, distract the eye in reading; but until we reform our anomalous method of expressing the pitch of voices, and of naming accidentals, we fear that the evil must be endured.

*War in the Household (Der Häusliche Krieg).* An Operetta: the German words by J. F. Castelli; the English translation by Marian Millar. The music composed by Henry Hiles. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE composer of this Operetta rightly felt that he had an excellent subject for the exercise of his talents, and has thrown an earnestness into his task which has produced admirable results. The dramatic power, indeed, evidenced in many of the scenes, is extremely striking, and gives a brightness to the effect of the story upon the listeners which, with more conventional and monotonous musical colouring, might become wearisome. All the choruses are full of life, and admirably illustrative of the text, that of the lady conspirators, in which they swear allegiance to the Countess, that of the dames and knights, cleverly carrying on the plot and counterplot, and the finale, in which, as usual, all are made happy, being good specimens of the composer's power of effectively grasping the varied situations of the little domestic drama, and especially of throwing a mock heroic air over some of the ultra-martial declarations both of the male and female characters. There are also some well written duets, amongst which "Tis vain to strive," for contralto and baritone, must be especially commended. The short desponding air, "I creep about," for contralto, may also be mentioned in terms of praise; the 5-8 time, however, in which it is written, sounding to us—like all music thus marked—in alternate bars of 3 and 2. We sincerely hope that we may shortly hear this Operetta in public.