

Review

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German Folk-Songs. With pianoforte accompaniment by Johannes Brahms. English version by Albert B. Bach. [Berlin: Simrock.]

THESE songs are forty-nine in number, divided into seven books, the first six of which are for solo and the seventh for solo with small chorus. The melodies have been taken from various sources, some of them dating as far back as the sixteenth century, and have been selected, as one would naturally expect, with rare insight and sympathy, and with an evident desire to exhibit the wide range of expression that characterises the folk-songs of Germany. Though all have more or less distinction and merit, some stand out by reason of exceptional beauty or pathos—such, for instance, as No. 42, "In silent night," or No. 20, "Dearest heart," which are most exquisite songs. The student of folk-song will find here many interesting points of rhythm and form, which he may profitably compare with similar features in the folk-songs of Great Britain. No one who knows anything of the music of Brahms will need telling that the accompaniments to these songs are distinguished by great harmonic richness and dignity, but they will be glad to know that, in nearly every case, he has avoided that complexity which is often a far from satisfactory feature of his pianoforte writing. The difficult task of translation has been performed with a fair measure of success by Mr. Bach, who has also furnished a preface in which he draws attention to several features worthy of note. The collection is issued in two editions—one for high, the other for low voices.

Menuet (Vieux style), Polka de Concert, Valse Impromptu. For pianoforte solo. By Emile Sauer. [Weekes and Co.]

PIANISTS who can lay claim to the possession of a certain amount of "style" and whose appreciation of the decorative element in instrumental works has not been blunted by the modern fad that only music with a "meaning" has the right to exist, will find plenty in these pieces to charm and interest the ear, and to repay the trouble of learning them. The Menuet is the easiest of the three—the Polka the most difficult. This last is full of daring harmonies and modulations, and is planned on a large scale. The leading theme is tossed about in the most masterly way, and the whole piece needs to be, as it were, "shaken out" from the player's fingers as though it were a mere trifle. The Valse is distinguished by much grace and finish.

Living Pictures (Tableaux Vivants). Words of Songs and Stage Directions by May Gillington. The music composed by Arthur E. Godfrey. [Robert Cocks and Co.]

"THESE pictures," says the preface, "are designed to be carried out by children of from eight to twelve years of age, with such inexpensive accessories in the way of dresses, scenery, and 'properties' as can be easily procured, made, and arranged by themselves, with a little help." Illustrations are given of all the tableaux, which are accompanied by descriptive songs of melodious and simple character, intended to be sung by those not taking part in the pictures. The idea is a good one, is well carried out, and undoubtedly provides our little folks with a means of amusement calculated to cultivate artistic taste.

Pensées Intimes. Pour Violon et Piano. Par Emile Sauret. Six Nos. (Op. 39). [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE number of compositions for violin and pianoforte is ever on the increase. Performers on the pianoforte have never been scarce, while the number of students for the violin is growing larger every day: hence the supply of music must be equal to the demand. These six pieces have been written by one who is master of his instrument, and the violin part, merely from a technical point of view, is, therefore, sure to be thoroughly good and, moreover, effective. But M. Sauret has also bestowed care on the pianoforte part; the writing for this instrument shows both taste and skill. No. 1 is a smooth, flowing *Aria*. No. 2 is a graceful *Gondoliera*. The principal theme has both simplicity and charm, and the passage in which the opening phrase, or

rather a free version of it, is repeated several times by the violin and echoed by the pianoforte, is attractive. No. 3, consisting of a quiet *Mélodie*, with soft, light accompaniment, is altogether simpler than the first two numbers. No. 4 has for title "Capriccietto," and the music is becomingly light and fanciful; the middle *più tranquillo* section contrasts well with the spirited first part. No. 5, "Tristesse," is an *adagio* movement which, with its wandering violin part and chromatic progression, sounds somewhat after the manner of a rhapsody. The title of No. 6, *Valse Gracieuse*, sufficiently describes the character of the music.

A concise and simple plan for Fingering the Scales in double thirds and double sixths. By Walter Fitton. [Edwin Ashdown.]

MR. FITTON has made a laudable attempt to classify the fingering of the scales when played in double thirds and sixths, and those students, especially such as meditate going up for examination in technique, who find a difficulty in remembering the fingering of the respective scales in these positions will do well to master this system. It is contained on two cards, and may be said to be a model of conciseness. Perhaps a little more explanation might have been vouchsafed with advantage, but the author evidently has faith in the intelligence of musical students, and doubtless many will find valuable aid from his ingenious arrangement.

FOREIGN NOTES.

BAYREUTH.—Herr Siegfried Wagner has just completed the composition, in the form of a cantata, of one of Schiller's poems, which it is expected will be first performed in London in June next.

BERLIN.—Wagner's "Rienzi" has just been revived at the Royal Opera, after many years' neglect, Frau Cosima Wagner having personally superintended the various departments. Capellmeister Muck conducted.

BRUNSWICK.—The annual meeting of the Allgemeine Deutsche Musikverein will take place this year in this town, from June 12 to 16 inclusive. The occasion is generally one of *rendezvous* by musicians from all parts of the world, to whom important Concert performances are to be offered on every one of the five days, the principal choral work contemplated being Berlioz's Requiem. Amongst the artists whose active assistance is anticipated are Madame Lilli Lehmann, Professor Heermann, Eugen d'Albert, and Paderewski.

COLOGNE.—The annual Musical Festival of the Lower Rhine is to be held in this town next Whitsuntide. The programme, which has not yet been completely arranged, will include Haydn's "The Seasons," a Te Deum by Dr. Wüllner, Handel's Overture to "Agrippina," scenes from "Guntram," by Richard Strauss; and "Die Wallfahrt nach Kevlaar," for soli, chorus, and orchestra, by Humperdinck. Madame Sembrich will be amongst the vocalists. —Professor G. Holländer, so long a greatly esteemed member of the musical profession here, has taken up his residence at Berlin, as director of the well known Sternsche Conservatorium, which he has acquired by purchase.

COPENHAGEN.—An interesting celebration is being organised just now in this capital—viz., that of the ninetieth anniversary of the birth of Johan Peter Emil Hartmann, the composer of a number of more or less successful operas and other musical works and a most highly esteemed member of the profession. The veteran artist was born in Copenhagen on May 14, 1805, and since 1840 has been the director of the Conservatoire, and more recently private capellmeister to the King. His first symphony, dedicated to Louis Spohr, was produced at the Leipzig Gewandhaus in 1838.

DARMSTADT.—At a Concert recently given by the Grand-ducal Orchestra a young violoncellist, Mr. C. Fuchs, late pupil of the Royal Manchester College, met with a most enthusiastic reception in his interpretation of Schumann's Concerto in A minor and pieces by Saint-Saëns and Popper.

EISENACH.—The question of the disposal of Herr Oesterlein's Richard Wagner Museum has been finally