

Review

Source: *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, Vol. 30, No. 551 (Jan. 1, 1889), p. 46

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

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3360995>

Accessed: 26-01-2016 02:49 UTC

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Mendelssohn. By J. Cuthbert Hadden.
[W. H. Allen and Co.]

THE author of this little book gives certain of the known facts of the life and labours of Mendelssohn in a pleasant and appreciative style, but he advances nothing that has not already been told by the previous authors who have made the great musician the theme of their writings. It is an art to condense without becoming obscure, and to present all that is needed for those who desire to know enough upon a subject which the general reader is expected to be acquainted with. In the face of the recent publication of Mendelssohn's letters to Moscheles, the book is "born out of due time." Those letters, however, though they let in new light upon the composer's character, do not change the facts of his career as known to the public and the world of art. These things, forming as they do the subject of Mr. Hadden's book, mark its chief value, and as they are told in an agreeable form, will doubtless secure as hearty a welcome for it as for its predecessor in the series, George Frederick Handel.

Twelve Original Pieces for the Organ or Harmonium. Composed by Arthur Page, F.C.O. [Forsyth Brothers.]

ALL these pieces show that the composer has studied in a good school, and that he understands how to evidence the result of such study without the display of any undue pedantry. Were we called upon to name our favourites from the twelve Sketches here given, we should certainly select No. 2 ("Elegy"), No. 3 ("Barcarolle"), No. 6 ("Berceuse"), No. 9 ("Spring Song"), and No. 12 ("In Memoriam"), though all the rest have very considerable merit. We have said that Mr. Page evinces no "undue pedantry"; but although this is certainly true with respect to his music, we cannot acquit him of this fault on reading his eccentric time-signatures. Even admitting that all rhythms must be four, two, or three, surely there should be some sign to show whether each division of the bar moves in *twos* or *threes*. If it be said that this is sufficiently proved by the music itself, what occasion would there be for any time-signature at all?

Trois Morceaux de Salon. For Violin and Pianoforte (Op. 95). By Guido Papini. [E. Ascherberg and Co.]

UNDER this title Signor Papini has added three more compositions to the number already published for a like combination of instruments. The first, "Dolce far niente" (an Episode), does not belie its title, it being technically easy and practically in the first position, and may be considered as pleasure gained with very little trouble. The melody is pretty and flowing, and, if fingered as directed, will be found most effective.

The second, "Sérénade Italien," with its guitar-like accompaniment, tells a little story in itself, and will be found an excellent means for a display both of artistic feeling and execution.

The last of this collection of pieces, entitled "Lily of the Valley," in valse measure, is not the least attractive in any way, and will form an excellent contrast to the other two, if all three be played together in sequential order. The air, melodious in itself, is rendered more so by the excellent accompanying harmonies, and will make a very good solo for a not too ambitious violinist.

Six Two-part Songs. Composed by Ernest Clair Ford.
[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THERE is a most pleasant stream of agreeable melody in each one of these duets, with a spontaneity of treatment which is particularly refreshing. The parts are so set out as to keep up the interest announced in the first phrase of each song. There is no apparent straining after effect, yet all that is needed, according to the character of the several verses, is not missing when it is wanted. Such characteristic touches of colouring as the themes demand are artistically and even cleverly made. The nature of the treatment may be guessed by the titles of the songs, which are "A Summer Night," "Ever onward, time, thou speedest," "Twilight," "The sky is blushing deeply red," "The birds in council," and "The flowers I love the best." The words are good though not of equal excellence, but the music is of a commendable quality throughout.

Five Love Songs. By Arthur M. Layard.
[Charles Woolhouse.]

THE original words of these songs are by Heine, and are given, together with an English translation by an anonymous hand, which we must commend as being well fitted to the music, and elegant in itself. Mr. Layard writes very charmingly, and the only fault we can find with his songs is that they are too fragmentary. The themes and accompaniments are full of interest so far as they go, but that is not saying very much when the most extended of the five lyrics does not contain thirty bars. Diffuseness is a common fault with composers, but Mr. Layard has erred in an opposite direction.

Lord Ullin's Daughter. Trio for Soprano, Tenor, and Bass. The poetry by Thomas Campbell. Composed by John Armour-Haydn, LL.D. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

ALTHOUGH this is not a forcible setting of Campbell's well-known words, the music flows smoothly with the poetry, and those who are not distressed by such consecutive octaves and fifths as occur between treble and bass of the accompaniment—bar 6, page 5—may listen to it with pleasure. Perhaps, however, the composer may tell us that such effects are "Scottish."

FOREIGN NOTES.

AMONGST the papers of the late Princess Wittgenstein, the friend of Franz Liszt, a very interesting letter has just been discovered, and published in German papers, written by the great pianist-composer, whereof the following is a translation:—"The death of Overbeck"—the celebrated historical painter—"has made me think of my own. I desire, entreat, and emphatically insist upon, that my burial shall take place without ostentation; let it be as simple and as economical as possible. I protest against a funeral like that accorded to Rossini, and even against any gathering together of friends and acquaintances from afar, as in the case of Overbeck. No pomp, no music, no special mourning procession, no superfluous burning of candles, nor any orations whatsoever. My body should be interred, not in a sacred edifice, but in some churchyard; and *let them take heed that they do not thereafter remove my remains to any other resting place*. I do not desire to have my grave anywhere else but in the churchyard in common use at the place where I may die; nor any other religious ceremony beyond a silent mass (no vocal Requiem) read at the parish church. The stone over my grave might bear the inscription: 'Et habitabunt recti cum vultu suo' (Psalm 139)." This remarkable letter is dated November 27, 1869.

During the just completed first performance at the Berlin Opera of the entire "Nibelungen" Tetralogy, "Die Walküre" was given in its pristine form—*i.e.*, without any curtailment whatsoever, and created a profound impression. Alluding to this fact, the *Neue Berliner Musikzeitung* maintains that it is really the "cuts," more or less illogical as they needs must be, which are responsible for the reputed tedious movements in Wagner's music-dramas. "Produce Wagner's works as he wrote them and all fits together admirably, every bar will prove but the development of its preceding one, the attention of the listener becomes arrested without any special effort on his part, and all appearance of 'undue length' vanishes."

The *Allgemeine Musikzeitung*, referring to a new setting of Goethe's "Faust" by Herr Max Zeuger, recently produced at the Königsberg Stadt-Theater, enumerates the composers who have treated the subject for the purpose of stage representation—*i.e.*, irrespective of overtures, symphonies, cantatas, &c., as follows: Spohr, Voss, Bishop, Beaucourt, Blum, Bertin, Meyer, Kugler, De Pallaert, Gordigiani, Werstowsky, Zaitz, Gounod, Boïto, Zöllner, and Zeuger—sixteen in all. It must be added, however, that at least two of the above composers—*viz.*, Spohr and Bishop—have set their music to librettos which have scarcely anything in common with Goethe's "world-drama" except the name. We refer our readers to the very interesting articles on this subject, published in this journal some years since, from the pen of Mr. F. Corder.

The programme of the first Concert of the present season at the Leipzig Gewandhaus, included some hitherto