

Review

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Mazurka, Intermezzo, Serenade, Caprice, and Romance, which titles indicate their respective characters. The most attractive, perhaps, are the Meditation, Scherzo, Legend, and Mazurka, but each possesses considerable individuality, and they are a series of short, brilliant, and moderately difficult pieces that will form a valuable addition to the repertory of any pianist.

*Song Flowers from "A Child's Garden of Verses."*  
By Robert Louis Stevenson. Set to music by Katherine M. Ramsay. With illustrations by Gordon Browne.  
[Gardner, Darton and Co.]

VERSES, music, and sketches are here happily united in making this dainty volume one of the most delightful gift-books of the season. Robert Louis Stevenson's bairnie poems, like good wine, need no bush. To set them to appropriate music, such as will reflect their charming *naïveté*, is no easy task; but we are bound to say that the fair composer has admirably succeeded in catching the spirit of Stevenson's graceful lines. Mr. Gordon Browne's illustrations are excellent and Mr. S. R. Crockett, a distinguished fellow-countryman of Stevenson's, contributes a characteristic foreword.

#### MUSIC IN BIRMINGHAM.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

THE local musical season is now in full swing, and practically began with Messrs. Harrison's first subscription concert of a series of four. The principal attraction was centred in the re-appearance of Madame Melba after an absence of four years. The Australian *prima donna* was in excellent voice and she could not have chosen a finer aria than "Ardon gl' incensi," the mad scene from "Lucia di Lammermoor," in order to display to the fullest her beautiful voice and marvellous vocalisation. The other artists were Madame Belle Cole, Mr. Ben Davies, Mr. Douglas Powell, Miss Llewela Davies (pianoforte), Mr. Gorski (violin), Mr. Frederic Griffith (flute), and Mr. Landon Ronald (accompanist).

Mr. J. W. Turner and his English Opera Company paid a flying visit to the Grand Theatre and produced, for the first time here, a new tragic opera in two acts, entitled "La Gitana," written by F. Leslie Morton, music by Stephen R. Philpot.

Orchestral concerts are prominently to the fore this season, their number being increased by a series of ten organised by Mr. George Halford, an earnest and accomplished musician. The first of the series was given on the 2nd ult., proving an artistic success in every way. His orchestra consists of eighty performers, with Mr. Schiever and Mr. Fred. Ward as principal first violins. For the initial concert the programme included the following: Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, Wagner's overture "Der Fliegende Holländer," the entrance of the gods into Valhalla, from "Rheingold"; Gounod's ballet music from "Polyeucte," and Tchaikowsky's "Marche Slave." Madame Brema was the vocalist. The second concert took place on the 16th ult., when Mr. Emile Sauret, the eminent violinist, played Saint-Saens's Concerto (No. 3) in B minor, with the orchestra, and Ernst's "Hungarian Airs." The pieces for the orchestra consisted of Marschner's overture "Hans Heiling," Rubinstein's "Valse Caprice," and Berlioz's overture "Benvenuto Cellini."

The Birmingham Festival Choral Society opened its series of subscription concerts with Mendelssohn's "St. Paul," which attracted a large audience to the Town Hall on the 13th ult. The Society could not have marked the fiftieth anniversary of Mendelssohn's death in a more befitting manner, for it was in this very hall that in 1837 Mendelssohn conducted his great work. The last performance by this Society was in 1891, its revival was, therefore, more than justified. I cannot recall a more impressive and all-round excellent rendering of Mendelssohn's *chef d'œuvre*. The singing of the chorus was quite remarkable in tone power, and it was evident that the high pitch was to their liking, the intonation being absolutely pure and correct. Mr. Perkins, the organist, had to transpose the organ part a semitone higher, which he did in a faultless manner. The principals, Madame

Emily Squire, Miss Marie Hooton, Mr. Edward Branscombe, and Mr. Ffrangcon-Davies gave an intelligent and sympathetic reading of their respective parts, and to Dr. C. Swinnerton Heap fell the honour of having conducted and prepared one of the finest performances of "St. Paul" that has been heard here since the festival of 1864.

The Birmingham Amateur Orchestral Society gave an interesting concert in the large Lecture Theatre of the Midland Institute, under Mr. George Halford's able conductorship. The feature of the concert centred in the first performance here of Mr. Albert W. Ketelbèy's Concertstück for pianoforte and orchestra, with the composer at the pianoforte, and Mr. Herbert Grice's masterly playing of Goltermann's Concerto in A minor (Op. 14) for violoncello, accompanied by the orchestra.

Mr. Stockley having last season given up his long established orchestral concerts is succeeded by Dr. Rowland Winn, who is carrying them on on somewhat the same lines as heretofore. The first of a series of four was given in the Town Hall, on the 17th ult., before a large audience. Mons. de Greef, the eminent Belgian pianist, and Madame Blanche Marchesi, vocalist, comprised the solo artists.

#### MUSIC IN BRISTOL.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

A SPLENDID performance of Mendelssohn's "Elijah" was given by the Bristol Choral Society on the 6th ult. The work was well rehearsed, under the guidance of Mr. Riseley, and the result was a performance which for expression, phrasing, pronunciation of the words, and dramatic treatment approached very near to perfection. The chief vocalists were Mr. Andrew Black (who gave an admirable exposition of the part of the *Prophet*), Miss Mabel Berrey, Miss Sarah Berry, and Mr. Braxton Smith. Miss F. Crome, Madame Probert-Goodwin, Miss C. Aldersley, Mrs. A. Baker, Mr. Fancourt, and Mr. W. Thomas assisted in the double quartet. The part of the *Youth* was taken by Master F. Gardner, formerly a chorister of Bristol Cathedral. A better representation of Mendelssohn's masterpiece has probably never been given in our city.

A pianoforte recital, on the 17th ult., by Mr. Eugene d'Albert, and several organ recitals in churches and public institutions, are the other chief musical events of the month.

#### MUSIC IN DUBLIN.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

MR. ROBERT DWYER's first annual concert, which took place at the Rotunda on October 27, was the opening event of the Dublin musical season. The works presented were Mendelssohn's "Lauda Sion" and "Loreley," with the "Magic Flute" Overture and a miscellaneous selection. The principal vocalists were Misses Prendergast and Corcoran, Messrs. Melfort Dalton and Lawrence Mooney.

On the 3rd ult. the Dublin Musical Society gave the third of its series of orchestral concerts at the Royal University, Earlsfort Terrace. The orchestral numbers included the overtures "Der Fliegende Holländer" (Wagner) and "Midsummer Night's Dream" (Mendelssohn), Grieg's "Peer Gynt" Suite, Wagner's "Walkürenritt," and Augusta Holmès's Poème Symphonique "Irlande." Songs were contributed by Miss Alice Lamb and Mr. Melfort Dalton, but undoubtedly the leading feature of the concert was Signor Esposito's masterly performance of Mendelssohn's Pianoforte Concerto in G minor, in which the gifted pianist revelled in the opportunities afforded him for the display of his fine technique and graceful phrasing. In this work too the band was at its best. Dr. Joseph Smith conducted with his usual ability, and the strings were led by Mr. Arthur Darley.

The winter series of chamber music recitals, under the auspices of the Royal Dublin Society, opened in the Society's new lecture theatre, Kildare Street, on Monday, the 8th ult. The executants engaged are Signor Papini, Mr. Arthur Darley, Mr. Grisard, Herr Bast, and Signor Esposito.

A violin recital was given in the concert hall of the Royal Irish Academy of Music, on the 15th ult., by Signor Gerolamo de Angelis, who has been recently appointed