

Reviews of New Music and New Editions.

Passions-Oratorium nach Worten der heiligen Schrift für gemischten Chor, Soli, Orchester, und Orgel ad lib., von FELIX WOYRSCH, Op. 45. Klavierauszug (Verlag von Chr. Friedr. Vieweg's Buchhandlung).

Who is the composer? How could he venture after Bach to write a Passion Oratorio? What kind of a work has he produced? Brief answers to these three very natural questions will serve to call attention to an earnest composer and to an able work, even though they may not render full justice to either. A reviewer, however, has to cut his copy according to his compass.

Felix Woysch, born at Troppau, in Austrian Silesia, in 1860, spent his early years in Dresden and Hamburg; at present he is conductor of the Singakademie, also organist of the Friedenskirche at Altona. He has written music for the church, the stage, and the concert room. He studied in early days under H. Chevallier, but he is practically, as stated by Dr. Riemann, a self-taught musician. The sense in which the term is used is clear enough, although the composer with much truth thinks it scarcely applicable to a man who has made himself familiar with Palestrina, sat at the feet of the great Sebastian, and attentively studied the works of classical and modern masters. In answer to the second question it may be said that the story of the Passion of Christ inspired him to write, while it is evident that though an admirer of the genius of Bach, he wished to express his thoughts and feelings in the form and phraseology of the present day; in other words, to follow the new paths opened up by the master musicians since Bach.

Woysch's Passion Oratorio is divided into four sections: "The Last Supper," "Christ led to captivity," "Christ before Caiaphas and Pilate," and "The Crucifixion." Here and there are pauses in the music, and certain sections such as the devotional setting of the "Lord's Prayer," and the solo, "Be thou faithful unto death," have actually been published separately; yet the music of the four above-named parts is practically continuous. Throughout the work two powerful influences are felt, those of Bach and Wagner; and in this there is nothing unnatural. The only question to ask is, do we find assimilation or mere imitation of the styles of these great masters? That, indeed, is a question which always presents itself when any strong influence is felt. Here we have no hesitation in saying that the composer never consciously imitates; the influence indeed can only be felt, not proved. The Passion music is of a high order: most skillful as to technique, always dignified, and in its dramatic moments, as in the third and fourth parts, never stagey. The chorales, so prominent a feature of Bach's Passions, are here conspicuous by their absence; Bach wrote for the church, whereas Woysch has written an oratorio for performance in a concert room. And yet the "Chorale" element is not altogether set aside; in certain places we find well-known "Chorales" woven into the music; suggestive themes they might indeed be called, inasmuch as they are in keeping with the words, or, as in the final section, they are used in instrumental episodes as anticipations. From various indications in the vocal score, the orchestration deepens the impression of the music. The words are selected from the Bible, and in the English version, our Bible words have had to be altered in places to make them fit the music, and the fit at times is not good as regards accent. The task, however, was by no means an easy one. We may add that this "Passions-Oratorium" has been performed in many cities in Germany, also that its merits have been recognized by the public, and acknowledged by the press.

Three Salon Pieces for Violin and Pianoforte, by ANTON RUBINSTEIN: Op. 11, No. 1, *Allegro Appassionato*, No. 2, *Andante*, and No. 3, *Allegro*. Edited by E. Heim. (Edition Nos. 7562a, 7562b, and 7562c; net, 1s. each.) London: Augener & Co.

THE name of the composer has a magic sound; it recalls days

in which the works of the great masters were interpreted with extraordinary poetry and power. But Rubinstein was himself a creator of no mean order. In works of large compass, such as symphonies and operas, inspiration oft-times flagged; it was in his songs and also in his minor pieces that he appeared to best advantage. The first of the three under notice opens with a broad theme in the key of c minor—the minor mode, indeed, is used, almost without exception, for music of an impassioned type—and in due course a new and milder theme, though of yearning character, presents itself. After the return of the opening section, and a passage in which effective use is made of a thematic figure, the second subject is heard in the clear key of c major; but in the coda, minor tones and chromatic harmonies remind the listener of the "appassionato." No. 2, the *Andante*, opens with one of those quiet flowing melodies of which Rubinstein left so many engaging examples. The middle section, *piu mosso*, is in large measure evolved from a one-bar phrase, and the persistent dotted rhythm is of characteristic effect. On the return of the principal theme, it is assigned to the pianoforte with florid passages from the violin. No. 3, the *Allegro*, is a brilliant piece in which attractive melody and showy passage writing are happily combined. The writing for the violin in all three pieces is grateful; of the piano part there is no need to speak.

Daisy Chains. A collection of easy Pianoforte Pieces, varying in difficulty from Clementi's 1st Sonatina in c up to Mozart's easy Sonata in c major. Intended as a sequel to E. Kuhlstrom's Primula Series of Albums of very easy original Pieces. Edited, revised, and partly arranged by ERIC KÜHLSTROM. Series II., Nos. 22-40.

THE first series was recently noticed in these columns, and the speedy appearance of a second shows that they have been well received. Loeschhorn is again represented by a smart *Little Soldier* (No. 36), and a peaceful, pleasant *Good Night* (No. 39); Oesten by *The Young Savoyard*, brisk and gay at heart (No. 30), and a *Humoresque* which answers well to its title; Burgmüller by a bright, spirited *Final Galop* and *The Young Mountaineer*, who is evidently in a happy frame of mind; Reinecke by a *Shepherd's Dance* (No. 24), simple and delightfully quaint, and a *Rondino* (No. 26) depicting swallows on the wing; and the ever popular Kullak by a *Grand Parade* and *Children's Ball*. In addition there are two graceful *Rondinos* (Nos. 21 and 23) by Chwatal, a *Siciliano* (No. 27) by Diabelli, of quaint and appropriate pastoral character, a pleasing Mazurka (No. 28) by Enckhausen, *Turtle Doves* (No. 29) by A. Krug, with tuneful theme and pleasant "murmuring" effects, a Minuet (No. 31) by Hummel, stately yet simple, a most graceful *Gavotte* (No. 33) and spirited *March* (No. 35) by E. Pauer, a soft melodious *Reverie* (No. 34) by the Editor, and a tasteful, refined *Cavatina* (No. 37) by Aloys Schmitt.

Gavotte amoureuse pour Piano. Par AUGUST NÖLCK. Op. 31. London: Augener & Co.

THIS is a very taking piece. Here and there are some quaint touches—to say nothing of the form itself, which carries one's thoughts back to the eighteenth century—and yet both in the music and in the style of the writing one can feel that it belongs to the present. Again the *animato* trio combines both the old and the new. This *Gavotte amoureuse*, not difficult to play, will, if we mistake not, soon become popular.

Sérénade pour le Violoncelle avec accompagnement du Piano. Par W. H. SQUIRE. Op. 15. Transcribed for Pianoforte by the Author. London: Augener & Co.

THE *Sérénade* in its original form is well known, and when the solo part is played by the composer the result is a foregone conclusion. Of the music, then, nothing need be said. The transcription is exceedingly good, and quite within the reach of ordinary players.

Sonata in F for Violin and Pianoforte, by DIABELLI. Edited by W. Abert. (Edition No. 11,373; price, net, 1s.) London: Augener & Co.

THE name of the composer is in itself a guarantee that the