Review

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when the score was wanting, which we think may safely be presumed to be the Mass in C, considering that Beethoven's works of this class were limited to two. In 1835 he produced his first work of importance—an Anthem for the Tercentenary Commemoration of the Reformation. The performance took place in the Parish Church of Blackburn, and produced a striking effect; although, being written, as Dr. Spark says, whilst under the influence of Spohr, it has been almost eclipsed by his later works, all of which breathe a feeling of earnest devotion, more indeed in consonance with his real character. When appointed organist of St. Philip's, Regent Street, he became a pianoforte teacher, and also accepted the office of musical critic to the *Atlas* newspaper. His career after this has been sketched not only in THE MUSICAL TIMES, but in most of the journals which commented upon his services to musical art at the time of his decease; and we are sorry to say that Dr. Spark's book adds nothing to what we have been already told, save a few anecdotes, and some letters which, although highly valuable as records of a dear friend to those who possess the originals, contain but little to interest the general musical public. The list of the composer's works at the conclusion of the volume shows not only how earnestly he laboured in the creative portion of his profession, but how thoroughly he regarded it as a sacred duty; for not a composition, however light or small in construction, ever proceeded from his pen which could possibly be said to lower the art of which he formed so bright an ornament. The many admirers of Henry Smart will cordially welcome his friend's tribute to his memory; but Dr. Spark tells us in the Preface when he found the materials he could collect for the purpose of a biography "to be of the most meagre description," he desired to retire from the task. If, therefore, the book should not obtain that wide acceptance which its author could desire, those who "combated his misgivings," and not Dr. Spark himself, must be blamed.

Form or Design in Music. By Oliveria Prescott.
[Duncan Davison and Co.]

THE authoress of this little pamphlet has already made a name as a composer; and, no doubt, thinking with many others, that the subject upon which she writes is becoming more and more disregarded, gives us the result of her own examination of the standard works in a series of papers which were from time to time contributed to our contemporary the *Musical World*. That she has well thought out the matter may be seen by her definition of what may be termed a *heard form*, as distinct from that which may be seen or handled. "The one," she says, "may be compared to a road laid out on a map, the form of which becomes evident at a glance; the other to the same road when we travel on it, and trace it out by slow degrees, turning a corner here, going a hundred yards in a direct line, and another fifty in a curve, and so working its form into our minds minute by minute, and having it in our memories to refer to afterwards." The balance of keys, the periodical recurrence of ideas, and the due observance of rhythm, the three important elements of *form*, are well described; and on the varieties of design which may be built up with these materials our authoress makes some remarks which show that she has not studied in a school which would tend to cramp the ideas of young composers by confining them to the models even of their own day. "Some forms," she tells us, "have been developed by successive generations of composers, each adding a new feature, or cutting off one while increasing another, and at length certain forms have grown up which are recognised as classical—being those in which the classical, *i.e.*, the best, composers have cast their music, as the minuet and the rondo, the canon and the fugue, and the sonata with its many varieties of application, whether for solo instrument, for combinations of chamber instruments, or for full orchestra, as in overture and symphony." We cannot but think that were the fact of form in music—however much it may have gradually settled into certain recognised shapes—universally acknowledged to be progressive, there would be less antagonism between modern composers and their critics. The examples given in the book are most judiciously selected, the varieties of the sonata form being

shown to have been used by the best writers in overtures and other compositions. Mozart and Beethoven are very naturally constantly referred to, the former, indeed, being perhaps the truest adherent to the models of his time, and the latter—although considered "eccentric" by the pedants of the day—shadowing forth new forms which are now accepted as "classical." Although not very elaborate, students will find this little book extremely useful.

The Gleaners. Cantata for Female Voices. Words by Edward Oxenford. Music by Otto Peiniger.
[Stanley Lucas, Weber and Co.]

THE demand for concerted music of any kind is a healthy sign of the time, for too much solo-singing or solo-playing not only administers to the vanity of executants, but tends to keep them in ignorance of their defects. If a single performer, for instance, be out of time, or even out of tune, the listeners only are made painfully conscious of the error; but association with others at once brings the slightest failing into prominence, and there is little doubt that these failings will be, either tacitly or openly, very speedily made apparent to the too ambitious musical aspirant. Cantatas for female voices, therefore, may be strongly recommended for teaching in schools; for, apart from the reason already given, although comparatively small in construction, they lead gradually to a desire for choral works of a higher class; and even after school-days are over, will always be received with pleasure in the drawing-room. "The Gleaners" is a very fair sample of the conventional Pastoral Cantata; and, though not appealing so much to the musician as the amateur, is melodious and refined enough for the home-circle. The "Argument" is not very elaborate, for in it we are merely told that "it is the custom in southern countries to celebrate the day upon which gleanings commence by a formal procession to the fields. Songs, accompanied by music, are sung during the progress, at intervals throughout the day, and on the return home at nightfall." Now, as we have often heard in many parts of England gleaners going to and returning from their work singing songs by no means "accompanied with music," the author was quite right to lay the scene of his work in "southern countries," where we may hope some such pleasing little strains as the composer has given us enlivened their toilsome way. The great defect in the work is the constant repetition of verses to precisely the same music; this, especially in the choral pieces, becoming sometimes extremely wearisome. The opening chorus is simple and tuneful, and the duet (which, by the way, the composer tells us "may be sung as a chorus") contains some exceedingly effective points. The contralto song, "I hear them speak of riches rare," although somewhat eccentric in rhythm, expresses the words well; and a good effect is gained by a change of *tempo*, with a triplet, and afterwards an arpeggio, accompaniment. Some choral recitatives are interwoven with the solos and choruses; and the Finale, finishing with a reminiscence of the figure in the accompaniment of the opening chorus, forms an appropriate farewell to the day's work, although the repetition, already mentioned, materially weakens the effect of this, as well as many other pieces in the work. The naming of the principal singers—Gabiella (soprano) and Bianca (contralto)—seems to imply that the composer was desirous of creating some dramatic effect in the work, but we cannot say that this intention is realised. The music flows on pleasantly and smoothly; and, being thoroughly within the reach of the majority of amateurs, it may be cordially commended to their notice.

A Brief History of Mr. Henry Leslie's Choir from its Formation to its Dissolution. By F. A. Bridge.
[F. A. Bridge.]

AS the rise of artistic and refined part-singing in this country is unquestionably to be dated from the formation of Mr. Henry Leslie's Choir, there can be little doubt that when future histories of English musical progress come to be written, the little book now before us will be most valuable for reference. The germ of what afterwards became a recognised institution of the country originated, as Mr. Bridge tells us, in the autumn of 1855, when "about thirty-five voices, carefully selected by Mr. Joseph Heming, met, under Mr. Leslie's direction, in one of the