

Review

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of the fact that they had appeared elsewhere. But the main attractiveness of the series will of course consist in the large number of tunes which are here printed for the first time. About thirty in a total of ninety belong to this category. As an acknowledgment for the favour with which his first collection was received in America, Mr. Barnby has set nearly twenty hymns from the "Lyra Sacra Americana." It would be impossible, within reasonable limits, to speak of the whole of the series as they deserve. A few examples must be selected, not so much because of their superiority to the rest as illustrative of the general merit of the book. The tunes are not numbered, neither are the names given of the authors of the hymns, so we can merely quote the first lines of those to which reference is made. In "Now the light of heaven is stealing" an excellent example is afforded of a six-line tune in the solid style, quavers being only introduced in the last line. "Lead us, O Father," is a worthy companion to Mr. Barnby's beautiful setting of "Lead, kindly light." "O walk with God," double 8.7.'s, is bright and dignified, and next to this come two of the gems of the collection, "The radiant sun declining," double 7.6.'s, and "Still, still with Thee," 11.10.'s. The former, in E flat, has some striking, yet perfectly defensible, changes of key in the fourth and fifth lines, while the latter bears some resemblance to "The Pilgrims of the night," as set by the composer in the "Hymnary," with which it will compare in beauty. It has been remarked of the typical modern hymn-tune that it partakes of the nature of the part-song. The distinction is perhaps not always fully observed, and the setting of "He that goeth forth with weeping," from which we quote the opening lines, would certainly be more effective if sung by a well-trained choir than by a large and hearty congregation:—



This is an extreme example, and indeed not more than three or four of the new tunes are open to the charge to which we have referred. Among those which have appeared in other collections, a high place is due to the second in the volume, "O world! behold upon the Tree," in which the composer has happily caught the spirit of the old German Choral as it appears in the sacred works of Bach. A perfect inspiration is the setting of the Stabat Mater, taken from the "Hymnary," and, therefore, doubtless familiar to most of our readers. Anything more beautiful than this simple six-line tune in F minor can scarcely be imagined within similar limits. On the other hand, it must be confessed that Mr. Barnby is somewhat too fond of using chromatic chords where plain progressions would do as well or better. A conspicuous instance of this occurs in "When God of old," where a fine bold tune commencing thus—



is injured by this effeminate close:—



In many cases, however, the end crowns the whole as in the ten-line hymn "O God the Lord," which has an exquisite refrain, worthy to close our list of quotations:—



It will be noted that the title of the volume states that it is intended "for use in church and home," and it will certainly be welcomed as a delightful addition to the repertory of Sunday music in the domestic circle, not less than by those who have authority in choirs and places where they sing.

1. *The Methodist Sunday-School Tune-Book*. [Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School Union.]
2. *The School Hymnal Tune-Book*. Edited by John Adcock. [E. Marlborough and Co.]
3. *Sacred Songs and Solos*. Compiled and sung by Ira D. Sankey. [Morgan and Scott.]
4. *Hymns of the Eastern Church*. [J. T. Hayes.]
5. *Hymns for the Church Catholic*. [Hodder and Stoughton.]
6. *The Church of England Hymn-Book*. Adapted to the Daily Services of the Church throughout the year. Compiled and edited by the Rev. Godfrey Thring. [W. Skeffington and Son.]
7. *Anthems for use in King's College Chapel, Cambridge*. [Cambridge: Macmillan and Bowes.]

WE have here a series of kindred publications, various in character, and unequal in merit.

1. This large collection of tunes (533) appears to us to be well chosen and adapted to its purpose. The Evangelical fervour of the hymns is matched by the music appropriated to them. Standard compositions, which have won their way to lasting popular favour by their intrinsic merits, are amply represented in the book, and the power of living writers to produce expressive and tasteful hymn-tunes is also very fully exemplified. It is of favourable omen for the real union of Christians of all denominations that no source has been neglected from which really good tunes can be drawn, and we cordially wish the collection a prosperous career.

2. This book purports to supply tunes for the many hymns in "The School Hymnal" and some other hymnals, for which none suitable are to be found in ordinary collections. The tunes, 207 in number, are chosen on the principle of including any that are appropriate, without limiting the area of selection; and this principle, which, as we have already remarked, prevails in the excellent "Methodist Sunday-School Tune-Book," has led, in the present instance, to the compilation of a volume which, as far as it goes, is comprehensive.

3. The preface to the "Christian Year" opens with these words: "Next to a sound rule of faith, there is nothing of so much consequence as a sober standard of feeling in matters of practical religion." This sentence we commend to the thoughtful consideration of all who take up this collection.

4. We are glad to give a cordial welcome to this interesting volume. The words of the hymns are the well-known translations by the late Dr. Neale of the "Hymns of the Eastern Church." The tunes have been partly adapted from ancient Greek ecclesiastical melodies by the learned editor, the Rev. S. G. Hatherly, Mus. B., and partly selected by him from modern Anglican composers. Such a collection must necessarily have somewhat of an eclectic character, but Mr. Hatherly has done his best to present what is unfamiliar, and what to some ears no doubt will sound strange and even uncouth, in an acceptable dress, likely to attract and retain some measure at least of general approval.

5. There is nothing specially remarkable about this collection, which contains 510 hymns. Most of the hymns usually to be found in modern compilations are included in it, but where hymns less well known are introduced, the choice does not appear to us to be generally happy. We notice also that the heads under which the hymns are ranged seem sometimes to cause what is called a cross division. In one or two instances we doubt whether the author's name is correctly given. But on the whole the collection is neither better nor worse than a score of others.

6. Mr. Thring claims to have produced a critical edition of hymns distinguished by sound doctrine and literary excellence, and we are bound to say that in both respects his book, which is large and well arranged, containing nearly 700 hymns, is worthy of the aims he has set before him. He has taken great pains to ascertain the authorship and the original text of every hymn he has thought worthy of being included, and we ought not perhaps to complain of the frequency of the recurrence of the word "altered," although it seems to savour of concession to modern usage such as we should scarcely have expected to find in a book compiled on Mr. Thring's principles. Mr. Thring has had the advantage, we observe, of the co-operation of Prebendary Hutton, and of that keen and indefatigable seeker after truth, Major Crawford. The collection should have a future before it full of praise and profit.

7. A comprehensive collection, clearly and cleverly arranged, giving full information with respect to the setting of more than 1,000 anthems, with economy of paper and print.

O may I join the Choir Invisible. Poem by George Eliot. Composed for Chorus, Solo-Quartet, and Orchestra. By Edward Hecht.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THIS charmingly sympathetic setting of George Eliot's beautiful poem adds one more to the many excellent works of Mr. Hecht which have already come before us. The opening chorus, in E flat major—commencing with a graceful and appropriate subject for the alto, and imitated in turn by the other voices—leads to a second chorus, well-contrasted in character, and evidencing the power of the composer to attract by the melodiousness of his phrases, as well as to interest by the skill of his counterpoint. The solo-quartet which follows, unaccompanied, is not only good as abstract music, but expresses with remarkable fidelity the words of the text; and the final chorus—opening with the symphony which begins the work, but now in the tonic minor—is admirably written throughout, an effective point being the repetition of the initial theme of the first chorus in the original key, thus giving a completeness to the composition which shows that the plan has been well designed before committing the notes to paper. The orchestral effects will no doubt materially enhance the beauty of Mr. Hecht's work; but even with the pianoforte accompaniment we cordially commend it to the attention not only of choral Societies but of all high-class vocalists.

Ballade (dédiée à Mlle. Teresa Russel) pour Piano. Par Oliver King, Pianiste de S.A.R. la Princesse Louise, Marquise de Lorne. [Schott Frères.]

THIS is an elaborate composition of very considerable difficulty, Mr. King having, in the act of composing it, given the rein to his fancy for crowding as many notes as possible into his score. On several occasions we have pointed out to the young composer that his advantage does not necessarily lie in the multiplication of details, but as he continues the process we must assume the existence of a good reason if we fail to discern its nature. The work before us opens, Moderato, in A flat, with a leading subject treated in polyphonic style. This is followed by an episode of a bravura character, in good contrast with a second theme, more simple than the first and having more distinctiveness. Both subjects are repeated in due form and the whole closes with an energetic and showy Coda. Some of the passages are very effective, and the piece in its entirety reveals earnestness combined with ability, but, not through such works will Mr. King achieve the end of his ambition. He must learn to make his art speak in plainer language.

Original Organ Music for Church and Concert use. By Edwin Allwright. [F. Pitman.]

WE have only the first number of this work before us. It contains two surprisingly short and easy pieces, intended, we presume, for the Church. It cannot be said that they are not melodious, but the melody is of a commonplace order, and characterless. We note that this number of the "Original Organ Music" is catalogued as Op. 3, Nos. 1 and 2 in the composer's works. We shall be curious to see the Concert pieces when they are ready.

The Morning, Communion, and Evening Service. Set to music in the key of G major. By W. Claxton, B.A., Mus. Bac., Oxon. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE style of this work shows a distinct leaning towards the modern school of service writing, in the way of obbligate, organ part, unison passages for the voices, frequent changes of signature, &c. It is not, however, an ambitious work, and it cannot be said to be strikingly original, but it is a useful and in many respects a commendable addition to this class of composition.

FOREIGN NOTES.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Boston Herald* has interviewed Gounod in Paris, and reports the following: Gounod, after stating that it will be difficult for him to accept the numerous invitations which he has received from the United States, said: "I shall write no more for the theatre. The work which you see on my piano, and which occupies me now, is one of the most important works which I have ever composed. It is intended for the next Birmingham Festival, and is an Oratorio combined with a Requiem. The subject is 'Death and Life.' The *motifs* from the first part, which will be the Requiem, will be repeated in the second, but altered so as to express the joy of the souls of the saved in a new Jerusalem of the saints. It is a subject on which I have long meditated. I work seriously at it, and it interests me more and more every day. According to my idea music finds its noblest and most exalted forms in religious ideas and sentiments. You will find a religious vein running through all my Operas and larger works. Think of the cathedral scene in *Faust* and of *Polyeucte*, which is an entirely religious Opera. For this reason I have given up writing for the theatre."

The first—after the death of the great master—of the contemplated annual performances of "Parsifal" took place at Bayreuth, on the 8th ult., and, in spite of the expected falling-off of general interest now that Wagner's own personality does not attract the curious (many of whom did not mind travelling hundreds of miles to have a look at the great master), was very well attended. The caste was very much the same as last year, Herr Scaria and Frau Materna deserving special mention for the excellent performances of their most difficult parts. Herr Kapellmeister Levi acted, as before, as Conductor.

The celebrated Passion-Plays of Ober-Ammergau have found an imitation in a similar undertaking which has been instituted by a private society formed amongst the peasants of the village of Brixlegg. The plays, which are of the same character as those of Ammergau, are given every Sunday during the months of June, July, and August, and are said to be very well acted. The representations promise to be a great success, the more so as Brixlegg is conveniently situated in the vicinity of Innsbruck.

Mendelssohn's "Hear my prayer" was performed for the first time with orchestra at Leipzig, on the 8th ult., by the celebrated choir of St. Thomas's Church and a select number of the Gewandhaus Orchestra. Dr. W. Rust, Organist and Choirmaster of this renowned institution of Church music, writes to us that the instrumentation (up to this time entirely unknown in Germany) proved highly effective, and was considered by all musicians present worthy of the best inspirations of the composer.

Franz Liszt has been presented by Messrs. Mason and Hamlin, of Boston, U.S., with a fine chamber organ, which is said to be worth 6,000 dollars. Liszt has transferred the present, as he always does on such occasions, to the Music School at Weimar.