Review

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Prout, Stainer, and others, speak for themselves, and the Editor may be honestly congratulated not only upon his own labours, but upon his being able to secure the co-operation of so many excellent hands in the duty he has so conscientiously carried out.

Common Praise: a Practical Handbook of Nonconformist Church Music. By F. G. Edwards. [J. Curwen and Sons.]

THIS excellent little book is compiled upon a principle instituted by Mr. Lennox Browne when he projected his work called "Voice Use and Stimulants." A schedule of about forty questions was addressed to the organists and choirmasters of respective churches in the following denominations: Baptist, Congregational, Presbyterian, Unitarian, United Methodist Free Church, and Wesleyan Methodist, in England and Wales; and the Church of Scotland, Free Church, and United Presbyterian Church, in Scotland. The replies have been summarised and largely quoted from, so that, in addition to the practical experience of the author, the reader has the advantage of knowing in a general way the thoughts and opinions of others deeply interested in the subject.

The author modestly makes no pretension to literary excellence in his work, but his very earnestness imparts a style to his labours, which brings with it a sympathetic agreement with him in his endeavours to show how that the higher forms may with advantage be aimed at in religious worship. For these reasons, the reader, be he churchman or dissenter, having the like objects in view, may derive not only profit, but pleasure from the perusal of the pages.

These pages treat of the attitude of the minister as regards music, of the organist, the choirmaster, choir organisation and management, the choir practice, congregational hymn singing, chanting, anthems, solos, services, and responses, organ recitals, concerts, special musical services, orchestral accompaniments, choral festivals, the organ and its position, organ accompaniments, and voluntaries. Besides the statistics obtained in reply to the circular, and having reference to the above subjects, the author's own views with regard to the music in "Common Praise" are instructive. He advocates the formation of voluntary choirs composed of persons of both sexes. In Nonconformist churches the opposition to the employment of women's voices in the choir does not exist, and Mr. Edwards thinks that "the objections to boys in choirs far outweigh the advantages." Where the services are arranged on a different plan to that adopted in cathedrals and large churches of the Anglican Communion, the employment of women in the choir may be advantageous; but where daily service is the rule the objection would be reversed, and women would be found to give more trouble than they are worth. Among dissenting congregations daily services are rare, and the voluntary choir is a possibility, the demands upon the time of the members are not great, and the interest in the music where it exists is keener among the congregation than in the Established Church. The observations on the "Choir practice" and "Congregational singing" are excellent, and are, for the most part, of general application. Chanting, which is a more modern practice with Nonconformists, is described and commented upon in considerable detail, and some of the remarks are shrewd and just. The use of Anthems by the congregation and choir, which is adopted by many of the churches, necessarily limits the choice to the most simple, and often to the least valuable as music. "The average Congregational Anthem-book is a very hotch-potch collection, and includes all sorts and conditions of composers and their works." Some curiosities of performance are cited, "enough to make any musical person's hair stand on end." Our author's opinion concerning the question as to whether the congregation should or should not sing in this part of the service, is expressed in the words, "Let the choir alone sing the Anthem," and while it is being sung let the congregation "make melody in their hearts." The temptation to make further extracts from this admirable work must be resisted. All who desire to find help and encouragement in the endeavour to promote the influence of common praise will gladly join in offering a tribute of thanks to the author for his wide-minded and commonsense views on the subject, as expressed in his

book. Whatever be the tenets of the religious body to which they may belong, they will find in it much matter for thought, and many precepts which will strengthen and comfort them in the endeavour to advance the love for music in its employment as an aid to worship.

Original Compositions for the Organ. Nos. 56, 57, 58, and 59. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

In these four numbers of an exceedingly useful publication, will be found a series of pieces by Mr. H. M. Higgs, whose name is a guarantee for excellence. The founder of the modern English school of organ music was unquestionably Henry Smart, and Mr. Higgs writes very much in the elegant, refined, and scholarly style of the deceased composer. The qualities we have named are not equally prominent in every one of the present pieces. Thus, for example, in the first of the set, an *Allegro ma non troppo* and a Communion are admirable, but an Offertorium is too chromatic to be pleasing. More important than these is a Prelude and Fugue in A in the next number. The Prelude is possibly open to the charge of monotony, but the Fugue is a masterly effort worked out with equal skill and brilliancy. Dropping the scientific, the composer gives us in No. 58 three pieces in a lighter style, of which the gem is undoubtedly a remarkably piquant Pastorale, quite fresh and dainty in manner, and yet not by any means flippant. A flowing and graceful Melodie also deserves mention. The last of the series is an Offertoire in D minor in the form of a Rondo. This is a very vigorous piece, but it is not so difficult as it sounds. The first and second subjects are perhaps not sufficiently contrasted, but the necessary variety is provided in an episode in the tonic major in which the left hand has a choral-like theme for the vox humana while the right accompanies in triplets with excellent effect. Mr. Higgs's pieces are well worthy the attention of organists.

A Dictionary of Music and Musicians (A.D. 1450-1887). Edited by Sir George Grove, D.C.L., LL.D. Part XXII. [Macmillan and Co.]

THE four volumes into which this Dictionary is divided are completed with the present Part; and, looking back upon his labours, we cannot but think that the energetic editor must be thoroughly satisfied with the result. The many eminent writers who have contributed to the work are entitled to the highest commendation for the manner in which they have fulfilled their task; and if some few of the articles strike us as being too strongly coloured with the personal convictions of their authors, it must be remembered how difficult it is for those active in the art upon which they are writing to avoid classifying a fellow-worker according to their own view of the value of his exertions in the progress of the cause. As a rule, however, the most important papers are free from this objection; and a very large fund of valuable information respecting the careers of the greatest artists of the world, as well as upon music and musical instruments, has been collected, which will, doubtless, render the book almost indispensable both for professors and amateurs of the art. The illustrations and woodcuts are uniformly good, and all the musical extracts clearly and correctly printed. An Appendix and full Index to the whole work are in preparation, and will be shortly issued. On the appearance of this Appendix we shall be able to judge whether the names of several artists, whom we consider worthy of a place in a work of this magnitude, are omitted by design or accident.

Praise the Lord of Heaven (Psalm 150). By C. Villiers Stanford. [Forsyth Brothers.]

THIS work was composed for the opening of the present Manchester Exhibition, and is inscribed to the memory of the late Edward Hecht. It has served its initial purpose, but there is no reason why it should not be heard on other occasions of a festive nature, either in church or concert-room, for it is quite worthy of Dr. Stanford's reputation. A solid yet vigorous introduction in G leads to a fully developed and very spirited chorus, with which phrases for soprano solo are blended. At the words "Praise Him in the sound of the trumpet" a transition is made to the key of B, in which we have another solo and chorus, still more