Handel's 'Messiah'

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passage. The two glees under notice have never before been published. This seems strange considering their Gossian attributes. But better late than never. The independence of the part-writing places them well in the category of the glee, and all the voices are well provided with tuneful phrases. 'O! little harbinger of day' is the more extended composition of the pair. The 'cheerfully, but not too quick' opening movement in quadruple rhythm gives place to a charming *andantino grazioso* in three-four time. This not only forms a delightful contrast, but the triplet treatment of the words 'go, tuneful sprite, and wave thy wing' is exceedingly happy in its appropriateness. The semiquavers which are made use of to 'charm Astrea's morning hour' give further variety to a composition which, with its companion, will doubtless be warmly welcomed by male-voice choirs and quartet parties.

A Book of British Song for Home and School. Edited by Cecil J. Sharp. [John Murray.]

Although this collection of school songs is designated 'British,' no fewer than sixty-six of the seventy-eight ditties contained herein are English; Scotland contributes eight, and Ireland a modest pair. In regard to the productions of the land o' cakes and the Emerald Isle, Mr. Sharp says that these ten songs are all that he could find 'really suitable for performance in class.' No one will object to the large sprinkling of folk-songs, though opinions may differ as to whether some of the words are suitable to be uttered by singers of tender years. For instance, 'The Beggars' chorus' (*circa* 1640) contains this verse:—

A bag for my oatmeal,
Another for my rye,
A little bottle by my side
To drink when I am dry,
And a-begging we will go, &c.

On this ground one has just the feeling that the book will go 'a-begging' in girls' schools and not a few homes. The time has long since passed by when the words of a song 'don't matter.' One of the main difficulties that beset earnest-minded teachers of school singing-classes is the selection of songs that contain words above reproach in every respect. The importance of this aspect of the subject cannot be over-estimated, especially when so much attention is given (or ought to be given) to the clear enunciation of the words as well as their poetic import. The editor of this volume has found it necessary to insert a rather extensive glossary of the obsolete words used in his pages. The 'notes on the songs' are a commendable feature of a not altogether satisfactory volume, and, moreover, one that leaves room for improvement in its music-typographical presentation.

Out of the Darkness. Love flew down from the North. Words by Kathleen Haydn Green. Music by Henry Gibson.

From the green heart of the waters. Words by Stephen Phillips. Music by S. Coleridge-Taylor.

[Novello and Company, Limited.]

The first two of the above three-part songs are laid out for first and second soprano and contralto. 'Out of the Darkness' might have been entitled 'Contrast,' the first verse dealing with night, and the second with the dawn of day. The scheme of the text is enforced by the music, the two verses being respectively in E minor and E major, and in melodic and other respects being designed to effectually accentuate the portrayal of darkness and light. The moral of the second part-song would seem to be that love comes from everywhere, but more particularly from the North and the South. Here again an effective contrast is presented, of which good use has been made by the composer. Love from the North comes in three parts, but love from the South in two, being only concerned with the first and second sopranos, but all the voices agree in the statement that 'love flies at will.' Towards the close there is some simple and very effective part-writing showing skilled musicianship.

Mr. Coleridge-Taylor's part-song will be remembered by those who attended the production at Her Majesty's Theatre of Mr. Phillips's 'Ulysses,' for it was one of the most charming numbers of the incidental music to the play. It is in three vocal parts, and was sung at the opening of the second act by the nymphs on Calypso's island. The accompaniment will require a little practice from ordinary pianoforte players, but will well repay any trouble it may entail.

O how amiable. Full Anthem, for four voices. Composed by Eaton Fanning.

[Novello and Company, Limited.]

Dr. Fanning always writes in sympathy with his choristers, and the grateful character of the vocal parts is the distinguishing feature of his anthem 'O how amiable.' The work will present no difficulties to ordinary choirs, and the entrances in imitation are ingeniously devised to secure the maximum of effect with the minimum of difficulty.

Correspondence.

HANDEL'S 'MESSIAH.'

DEAR SIR,—Will you kindly allow me to make a suggestion with regard to a new edition of the 'Messiah'?

When, in 1894, I had occasion to carefully consult most of the existing authorities (MS. and otherwise) on the 'Messiah,' I was much struck with the extraordinary differences existing in the various copies; so much so, that I contemplated publishing a critical full-score edition of the work, adding copious notes and explanations of the many variants to be found in each of the authorities consulted.

On consideration I felt that I might possibly tread upon the toes of the late Dr. Chrysander. Now, Sir, an ordinary toe is bad enough to stamp upon, but the effect of such on an enthusiastic toe is too dreadful to contemplate. Therefore I did not proceed, but waited for the Chrysander edition to be published. It is now out, and, I am grieved to say, terribly disappointing in the way it is done.

Therefore I should like to suggest that a full score of the great work be published, making the autograph and a few (I think about two only) of the Foundling parts the groundwork of the score, adding all the varieties and differences existing in the various MSS. and other works of information of unquestionable authority. I only know of twelve such authorities at present; probably you, Sir, or somebody else know of many more. Of course, a full account would be given of all works consulted. I am firmly convinced that such a thorough critical edition would be highly acceptable, because it is greatly wanted.

Yours faithfully,

King's Field, Cambridge.

A. H. MANN.

AN AYR INSTRUMENT.

SIR,—The Burgh records of Ayr state that in 1583, 'The maester of the Sang Schooll shall instruct the youth in singing and playing on the "pynattis" and other instruments, etc.' Can you inform me what sort of instrument this was?—Yours faithfully, H. G.

[We have submitted the inquiry of our correspondent to an expert in Edinburgh, through the friendly offices of Professor Niecks, and he is of opinion that the word is 'Spyntattis' (Spinets = spinet). The initial letter 'S' has very likely been taken for a flourish to the 'P,' hence the odd designation 'pynattis.'—ED. M.T.]

Mr. E. G. Mercer, organist of St. Michael's Church, Chester Square, has been appointed acting-organist of Carlisle Cathedral.