Review

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March will no doubt be an especial favourite, the bright and joyous subject with which it opens being well contrasted with subordinate themes, which are always melodious and in excellent sympathy with the character of the composition. The March in G is more bold and martial, the second subject in the subdominant giving just the repose necessary before the re-introduction of the original theme. Both these compositions will doubtless speedily become as popular as they deserve to be; and those in search of novelty will, we are certain, thank us for drawing attention to their publication for our household instrument.

Church Music in the Metropolis. By Charles Box.
[W. Reeves.]

It is not altogether easy to grasp the purpose of the author in giving this volume to the world. He says that he desires "to correct the many absurd misstatements respecting the real condition of music in our churches now"; but he does not tell us what are the misstatements to which he refers. We believe it is generally admitted that a vast improvement has taken place in the musical rendering of the Church of England services in the Metropolis and elsewhere within the last few years. Apparently Mr. Box does not wish to disprove this, but after carefully reading his book we cannot say that it tells us anything but what was perfectly well known before to all interested in the subject. The opening chapters on Church music generally are loosely put together, and contain very little information with a great deal of verbiage. The most interesting section is that on the City churches, all of which Mr. Box has visited, and the services of which he describes and criticises. In some cases we do not think his remarks are calculated to afford lively satisfaction to those interested in the maintenance of these fabrics. Excluding the padding, however, there is little but what is conveyed more clearly in Mackeson's Guide.

Sechs Liebeslieder von Heine. (English translation by Charles Hervey.) Componirt von Arthur Hervey.

Der Erste Kuss. Song. Poetry by Von Redwitz. Music by Arthur Hervey.

Parted. Song, with Violin accompaniment. Words by Mrs. Hume Webster. Music by Arthur Hervey.

Chanson d'Etoiles. Song. Poetry by Armand Silvestre. Music by Arthur Hervey.

[Stanley Lucas, Weber and Co.]

THE composer of the above works is one of the most thoughtful and refined of those among our native musicians who devote themselves to songs. A glance serves to show that his method is largely influenced by contemporary German writers, but he adheres to the greater simplicity of the typical English song in a measure sufficient for a happy blending of excellencies, such as cannot fail to meet with wide approval. The six love-songs from Heine show Mr. Hervey at his best, with the exception, perhaps, of No. 1, "Die Trostlosen," the music of which is more ambitious in aim than successful in expression. For this "Winter Abend" makes ample amend, as do "Liebeserkentniss" and "Warum"—examples of artistic taste and musicianly skill complete within the narrow limits imposed by the nature of the work. We do not hesitate to recommend the "Sechs Liebeslieder" as songs eminently satisfying where something out of and above the common order is desired. Mr. Charles Hervey has fairly succeeded in the delicate task of rendering Heine into poetical English, though here and there the accent of verse and music are not in just accord. "Der Erste Kuss" is quite German in spirit and method, and a very good specimen to boot, the accompaniment not being over-loaded with detail, while sufficiently characteristic and suggestive. In "Parted" the composer has adopted a model more approximately English, and has written in graceful fashion for the violin as well as the voice. Obviously he tries hard to avoid common-place, sometimes going dangerously near the limit beyond which the searcher after novelty may not safely pass. For the most part, however, Mr. Hervey avoids solecism and eccentricity. The "Chanson d'Etoiles" strikes us as less effective than its companions, but here also we must recognise the author as one who writes with thought and a more than ordinary purpose.

Pictures of Youth. Twelve Progressive and Melodious Pieces for the Pianoforte. By Heinrich Lichner.
[Edwin Ashdown.]

ONE of the most healthy signs of the times is the abolition of the conventional "Instruction Book" for juvenile students of the pianoforte and the substitution of well-written Primers, in which the elementary principles of music are explained, and pianists are gradually led to easy pieces, in place of those arrangements of common-place airs which in former days children were kept at even for years. There can be no possible reason why simple and original music should not be written for young players, so that they may be made to feel that composers take a real interest in their progress; and since the pattern of these trifles has been set by Schumann and other German writers, there can be little doubt that the supply will always keep pace with the demand. The twelve little Sketches before us are excellent examples of such pieces, and we cordially commend them to the notice of teachers. They are all good, but we feel pretty certain that the following will be the especial favourites:—No. 1, "A Morning Prayer" (we give the English titles); No. 3, "March"; No. 4, "In the Playground," a joyous piece, admirably suggestive of holiday moments; No. 7, "Minuet," which contains an effective change of key; No. 10, "Joy and happiness," a flowing and graceful melody, simply harmonised; and No. 12, "Nocturne," a really attractive specimen of a style of writing which has obtained much favour in the present day, although it would be difficult to say what is really meant by the title. In the whole of the compositions under notice care is taken that the hand of the performer shall be neither unduly extended nor cramped. Effect is gained by simple means, and if well played the pieces cannot fail to give pleasure to all listeners.

Prize Day. A Cantata for Ladies' voices. Written by Jessie Moir. Composed by Charles Marshall.
[Robert Cocks & Co.]

"IN accordance with an annual custom," we are told in a prefatory note to this composition, "the Kaiser's Prize is to be competed for. Ida and Dorothea, chosen as the most advanced from a number of students, are so equally successful that each obtains a prize, and is duly crowned with flowers, according to an old Greek tradition which has become identified with this ceremony." It may readily be imagined that the music to colour so simple a subject would be appropriately unpretentious; yet we cannot but think that Mr. Marshall has scarcely shown sufficient artistic workmanship either in the voice parts or accompaniments, to raise his Cantata beyond the ordinary level. The instrumental introduction is extremely feeble; and the opening chorus, although containing one or two figures in the pianoforte part, is accompanied chiefly with the conventional arpeggios. The Chorus, "Joyful news," and Duet, "Come, sister, come," are about the best numbers in the Cantata; but the contralto solo, "Farewell to summer," were it not for the eccentric symphony at the commencement, is also deserving of praise. The voice parts are generally well written and easy to sing; and, were the composition to be got up in a drawing-room, we have little doubt that the critics who judge it would scarcely endorse our opinion upon its merits; for where a good effect can be gained with but little expenditure of trouble the end is generally considered to justify the means.

Primrose Lane. Song. Words by Mary L. Campbell.
The Ev'ning Rest. Song. Words by Edith Ramage.
What care I for the weather. Song. Words by M. A. Baines.

Composed by James J. Monk.
[J. B. Cramer and Co.]

WE have selected three from a group of seven songs by this prolific composer, because they very fairly represent both the style and merit of his contribution to the store of modern vocal music. We presume that the wave of musical education now rapidly spreading over England has still left a sufficient number of young ladies untouched to purchase such harmless effusions as "Primrose Lane" and "The Ev'ning Rest," and we can, therefore, cast no blame upon publishers for issuing them. The last song on