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Four Dances from 'The Blue Bird' by Norman O'Neill
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voice. There are a few misprints, and we might mention the name of C. Spackman Barker, the inventor of the pneumatic lever, as being wrongly spelt. Also, in some of the musical extracts, notably that of the slow movement of Mendelssohn's 2nd Sonata, there are wrong notes. The addition of an index would have added greatly to the convenience of the reader.

Having had our grumble, we cordially agree with most of Mr. Statham's excellent work. We are, for instance, entirely at one with him in thinking the centre of the screen the best position for the cathedral organ. We also agree that a musical service of praise by proxy, as it may be called, is not by any means so inconsistent with sincere devotion as some unmusical people suppose.

We have read the book with much pleasure, and strongly recommend it to all who, in these days of the apotheosis of the orchestra, still believe the organ to be, in capable hands (and under capable feet!), a logically musical instrument.

Folk-songs from Hampshire. Collected by George B. Gardiner. With pianoforte accompaniment by Gustav von Holst.

[Novello & Co., Ltd.]

This is the third book of the 'Folk-songs of England' series, and some pathetic interest is attached to the work by the recent death of Dr. Gardiner, the collector, who probably only just lived to see the completed work published.

Dr. Gardiner, though a Scot, was an enthusiastic collector of English folk-song, and spent (since 1905) most of his time in Wiltshire, Hampshire, and the adjoining counties gathering up every scrap of folk-song he could come across.

The present work contains sixteen songs of his collecting, and although versions of several of them have been before published, they are all of interest and of some melodic value.

Dr. Gardiner, strangely enough, found traditionally current in the Southern counties of England a great number of songs generally considered as of Scottish or Northern birth. 'John Barleycorn' is one of these, in the present volume, and 'Lord Dunwaters' is a version of a ballad generally associated with James Ratcliffe, the Lord Derwentwater who lost his life, and his estates, in 1715, by following the fortunes of the Old Pretender.

'Sing Ivy' is a pretty version of the well-known nursery rhyme, and among others Dr. Gardiner has included variants of 'The Irish Car,' 'Bedlam City,' 'Young Edwin in the Lowlands Low,' 'Our ship she lies in harbour,' and 'The Squire and the Thresher.'

A once popular song is also present as noted down by Dr. Gardiner: this is the 'Willow Tree.' The words are much in the spirit of folk poetry, but really are by Thomas Dibdin, and with music by Braham; the song was sung in an opera called 'Thirty Thousand,' at Covent Garden, in 1805.

Four dances from 'The Blue Bird.' Composed by Norman O'Neill.

[Elkin & Co.]

An all too-familiar class of sacred compositions has been aptly dubbed 'Kapellmeister' music. Nowadays there is need for some similar term for the incidental music which average conductors of theatre bands think they have special ability and a prescriptive right to supply from their own brains. Such a term would sum up the very qualities whose absence forms the chief virtue of Mr. Norman O'Neill's music to Maeterlinck's play 'The Blue Bird.' A composer with an individual style and artistic judgment, he has written music which enters into the fanciful and mystic spirit of the drama and helps to create an illusion and an 'atmosphere' in the theatre. Some of the best passages are contained in the set of four dances which are now issued arranged for pianoforte solo. The most effective in this guise is the dance of Fire and Water; the dances of the Mist-maids, the Stars and the Hours have many attractive points of melody and harmony that bear the stamp of originality.

Vagrant Songs. Poetry by Eleanor Farjeon. Music by Harry Farjeon (Op. 26). For baritone voice.

[Novello & Co., Ltd.]

In this volume Mr. Harry Farjeon makes no concealment of his admiration for the Debussian type of harmonies. 'Under the dark' and 'White Woman,' are clever studies in a mild application of the imported idiom which, however, never for a moment appears to be the composer's natural method of expression. Moreover, any pretence that it is so is immediately belied in the three remaining songs, which are thoroughly English in style—except here and there in 'Wander Hunger'—and undeniably the best of the collection. 'Of troubles I know none' is amusing, and happily expressed as regards both music and words; it has even a 'catchy' tune. 'I went far and cold' embodies some peculiarities of notation and an accidental reminder of a familiar theme by Tchaikovsky. All five of the songs possess interest and a distinctive character.

The Unison Chant Choir-Book. By Arthur W. Pollitt, D.Mus., and Ernest Bryson.

[Henry Frowde, Oxford University Press.]

To those who feel that the highest form of worship is obtained by congregational singing, the work before us will no doubt make a strong appeal. The vocal part of the chants is of low pitch, and generally of small compass and diatonic progression, and consequently easily grasped by the congregation. The accompaniments, though generally well designed, are, we think, rather full of notes, and might give trouble to some organists. There are also a few progressions which could not be satisfactorily explained, though the authors in their preface expressly regard the organ accompaniments in the light of suggestions, rather than as a strict adherence to academic rule. We should prefer a separate setting to the Psalms for the 31st Day, and presume chants for the Canticles will be provided in a new edition. The book is evidently the result of conscientious thought and high ideal.

Children's Singing Games. Edited by Alice B. Gomme and Cecil J. Sharp. (Books 198 and 199 of Novello's School Songs.)

[Novello & Co., Ltd.]

The pretty ring games that children used to play (and do yet, be it said) at one time were the sole property of the children themselves and the antiquaries who found in them references to remote customs dating from even Pagan times.

Mrs. Gomme has edited an authoritative work on such games for the Folk-Lore Society, and later made a selection from the two volumes of the Folk-Lore Society for sundry books of artistic character, wherein the little games have all the dignity that decorative art can lend. These books are now included among those that in second-hand booksellers' catalogues are marked 'scarce.'

The Board of Education having accepted the idea of singing games, Morris dancing, and country dancing as among the desirable things that should form part of elementary schooling, it has but remained for Mrs. Gomme and Mr. Cecil J. Sharp to combine forces and to produce the two works under notice.

There are twelve games in the two books, and these are all marked as 'collected and arranged' by Mr. Sharp.

Most country children, and many town ones, too, will be familiar with these, although collectors of these games will observe differences according to the district in which the tunes are obtained, for both games and airs have considerable variations in different parts of England.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

Modern Musical Composition: A Manual for Students. By Frederick Corder. Pp. 98. (Curwen & Sons.) Price 5s. net.

Piano Questions. Answered by Josef Hofmann. Pp. xviii. + 183. (Hodder & Stoughton.)

Musical Diary and Artists' List. (Chappell & Co.) 1s.

This handy pocket-book provides much useful information. In one respect it is not quite up to date, inasmuch as it states that our office is at '1, Berners Street.'