Review

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Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in F. By E. Bambridge.
[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THIS is a tolerably free and modern setting of the evening canticles, so far as regards the independence of the accompaniment and the nature of the harmonic progressions. At the same time, the Service is not too elaborate for ordinary use, and its generally expressive character will favour its chances of popularity. It is a pity that Mr. Bambridge has marred an otherwise excellent composition by some technical errors too grave to be ignored by musicians. The consecutive fifths between bass and treble, at the words "Holy is His name," are inexcusable, and the rising third in the chord of the 6-4-3 on page 6, bar 4, has a very harsh effect. With a little care such a barbarism as "in th' imagination of their hearts" might also have been avoided. It is worth while to point out these blemishes, as the composer has undoubtedly talent which we trust he will turn to advantage.

Christmas Carols, Hymns, &c. [F. Pitman.]

THE anonymous compiler of this collection of 106 sacred and secular ditties, suitable for yuletide, has drawn his materials from every conceivable source, and the requirements of church, chapel, and the fireside have been studied in about equal proportions. The old favourites are mingled with a considerable number of new compositions in various styles, and the editing of the former has generally been carried out in a modest and judicious spirit. A remarkable exception, however, occurs in Mendelssohn's "Hark, the herald angels sing," in which the harmonies are grievously distorted, and progressions inserted of which the veriest tyro would feel ashamed.

Carols for the Church Seasons. By Henry Hudson.
[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE revival of carol-singing is a noteworthy feature in the routine of church work of the present time. Christmas, of course, is the most popular season for the practice of this semi-devotional vocal exercise, though other festival periods are now giving occasion for the composition and performance of carols. Mr. Hudson's series consists of eight examples, namely, three for Christmas and one each for Easter, Ascensiontide, Whitsuntide, Flower Services, and Harvest. Structurally most of them are a compromise between a hymn-tune and a brief full anthem, and they are scarcely simple or tuneful enough for congregational singing. They may be commended, however, for musicianly feeling and a pleasant freshness of manner.

There were Shepherds. Anthem for Christmas. By T. Mee Pattison. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

ALTHOUGH this Anthem is very brief and unpretentious, it consists of five distinct movements, namely, two choruses, two passages for tenors and basses in unison, and a quartet. Excepting one or two questionable progressions, Mr. Pattison's composition is smoothly and melodiously written, and may be recommended to parish church choirs.

The Holy Communion Office in F. By Harry A. Marriner. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE composer of this Communion Service has evidently no sympathy with modern harmonies. He writes in a studiously plain and simple manner, and there is nothing in his music to prove that he is acquainted with the Church composers of the nineteenth century. He appears to have taken Kent and King as his models, and only manifests a sense of independence in the final cadence of the Gloria in excelsis, where he boldly violates the law against consecutive fifths and octaves.

Annice. Song. Words by Walter Raymond. Composed by E. A. Sydenham. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

MR. SYDENHAM is always melodious, both in his vocal and instrumental pieces, but there is a delicacy of touch in the treatment of the song before us which should ensure it a warm welcome from artists as well as amateurs. The figure in the accompaniment, which ceases and re-appears in sympathy with the varied feeling of the words, is extremely graceful; and vocalists in search of novelty will, we are certain, thank us for drawing attention to so attractive and refined a composition.

Allegro ma non troppo. Six Miniatures. For the Organ. By Oscar Wagner. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

SIMPLICITY is one characteristic of Herr Wagner's pieces, and another is a certain dryness and monotony of style, or rather, a want of melodic interest which, in default of scientific treatment, is necessary for effect. One or two of the "Miniatures" (which are pieces of moderate length, not fragmentary trifles) are tolerably pleasing; but we should be glad to know the composer's authority for concluding a Postlude in E minor, with a *fff* cadence in the dominant key.

Te Deum Laudamus in D. By T. Tallis Trimnell.
[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE title page description of this as a Festival setting of the "Te Deum" might easily mislead organists and choir-masters. In parish choirs, where only chants are used on ordinary occasions, the term might apply, but not in those places where a full choral service is the rule and not the exception. The voices move either in unison or in simple four-part harmony, and the accompaniment rarely takes an independent course. In its way Mr. Trimnell's setting is one of the best we have met with for some time. It is at once melodious, dignified, and musicianlike, and may therefore be heartily recommended.

FOREIGN NOTES.

At the Hamburg Town Theatre, the first institution in Germany for producing novelties, two new stage works by Anton Rubinstein were recently performed, under the composer's own conductorship—viz., "*Sulamith*," a biblical stage-play, in five scenes, the libretto founded on the "*Song of Solomon*," by Julius Rodenberg, and "*Unter Räubern*" (Amongst Thieves), a comic opera in one act, written by Ernst Wichert. Of the two, "*Sulamith*" achieved the greater amount of success. The writer of this libretto has done his best to endow the simple biblical story with some dramatic feeling, but has protracted it to such an extent that he fails altogether to sustain the interest throughout. Rubinstein, though deriving little help from the words, has written some of his best music for this work, which abounds in most beautiful melodies, particularly in the first part. In the latter portion he seems to have laboured under the strain put upon him by the uninteresting words, and in consequence the music is here much weaker. Taken, however, as a whole, this new work of the prolific composer is a most remarkable one, and will certainly make its way and be heard on all the principal stages of Germany. As our readers are aware, our countryman, Mr. A. C. Mackenzie, is now engaged on an Oratorio for the Norwich Festival of next year, founded on the same subject, the words written by Mr. Joseph Bennett. Long before it was announced that Rubinstein was to compose an opera on this theme, Mr. Bennett had selected it for Mackenzie's Oratorio, and we have no doubt that its purely lyrical character fits it far more for a work intended for performance in the concert room than for production on the stage. Nothing favourable can be said about the other work of Rubinstein's performed on the same night. The libretto, founded on a well-known novel, is entirely unsuited for dramatic purposes, and the music appears to have been written in such haste that the composer had not time to sift good from bad, interesting from uninteresting. The performance of both works was all that could be desired, and, as far as the orchestra is concerned, remarkably fine. Composer and artists were repeatedly called. The next novelty to be produced at this theatre is Mackenzie's "*Colomba*."

Gounod's "*Redemption*" was given on the 4th ult. at Vienna, in the great Hall of the Musical Society. The principal soloists and the entire chorus and orchestra of the Imperial Opera House took part in the performance, which was under the conductorship of Kapellmeister J. N. Fuchs. All the artists did their best to ensure a perfect interpretation of this master work, and the result was one of the most admirable renderings that has ever taken place in this centre of musical art. Herren Winkelmann and Rokitsansky gave the parts of the *Two Narrators* with great expression, as did also Herr Sommer, who sang the