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Benedicite, a Chant Service by H. E. Havergal

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At St. Mary, Aldermanbury, an effective choral service was held on the evening of Ascension-Day, when the music was rendered by the members of the Aldermanbury Musical Society, numbering 200 voices, assisted by the ordinary choir of the church. A short address was delivered by the Rev. C. C. Collins, M.A. Mr. Edward Craig, the musical director and conductor to the Society, presided at the organ.

WE understand that the Plymouth Vocal Association has in rehearsal for the coming season Handel's "Solomon" and "Messiah," Mendelssohn's "St. Paul" and Macfarren's "St. John the Baptist" (second time of performance). This will be the eighth season of this Society, which is under the conductorship of Mr. F. N. Löhr.

REVIEWS.

NOVELLO, EWER AND CO.

Magnificat and Nunc dimittis, set to music in the key of B flat, for four voices. By Berthold Tours.

THIS is a very clever and effective setting of the two canticles, and exemplifies to the best advantage the character of modern church music. The ancient narrow view of the progression of 5ths and 8ths have been happily expanded of late, and the ear has been taught to approve what the eye of old condemned. There is no doubt that our ancestors would have disapproved of a progression that occurs in the organ part at the bottom of page 10, where a chord of G minor is followed by one of B flat major, with the parts in exactly the same relative positions. Whether their decision would be endorsed or not by the more recently acquired liberality of the sense of hearing, we confess to having a prejudice against the sound as well as the appearance of such progressions. It can hardly be expected that musicians should abstain from writing for the church, music which meets with the approval of the majority. A man must be more than human who has an eye for principle and duty alone, and until we return to the simple rushlight and the primitive mystery of the Gothic temple, we must expect blazing harmony and a gaseous flavour in our church service. The call to write for the church is assumed to be universal, while the mantle of the prophet falls on but a few. We do not say that Mr. Tours is not one of the minority, but recognizing his musicianly power and the resources he evidently has under control, we regret that he does not entirely devote himself to the secular branch of his art. Let us hope that he has not gone beyond his noviciate, so that his return to the world can be effected without scruple or remorse.

Cantate Domino and Deus misericordatur, set to music in the key of F major. By Arthur H. D. Prendergast.

THIS is a melodious and well-written work. The use of the triad on the flat 7th of the scale gives a quaint character to the phrases where it occurs. We would, however, counsel the author to compare the effect of the dissonant 5th on the 3rd of the scale when it has been previously prepared, with its effect taken without preparation in the first bar of the *Cantate Domino*. Preceded by a tonic, and followed by a supertonic triad, that on the mediant is particularly harsh. Mr. Prendergast is evidently a thoughtful writer, and he will therefore consider this point well before he makes his final decision. We can confidently recommend the Service.

A Morning Cathedral Service, consisting of Te Deum, Jubilate, and Kyrie eleison. By Sir George Elvey.

WE cannot but regret that the modern unbridled use of chromatic harmonies should have enthralled composers who devote their talents to the Church. From excess, however, springs reaction, and hence we see to-day a school of pre-Raphaelite painters, the Gothic revival in architecture, and the Gregorian chant resuscitated. To take up the traditions of the school from the point where the high road was deserted, is a task we can only expect to be undertaken by earnest, able, and humble minded men. Whether Sir George Elvey has written the work

before us actuated by philosophy or inclination, we welcome it as a proof that there are still musicians living amongst us who appreciate the principles upon which church music should be founded, and who, while rejecting the extremes of severity and sentimentality, attach themselves to a style which is at once noble, solemn, and lasting.

The Offertory Sentences. Set to music composed by James Fitzgerald, Organist of St. George's Parish Church, Kidderminster.

No doubt Mr. Fitzgerald has been induced to undertake this task by the exigencies of his immediate surroundings. Some of the sentences seem to us to be hardly adaptable to musical rhythm. In the sentence "It is a great thing" the accent may be on the word "is" or "great" but not on the word "it." The 5ths between extreme parts in the accompaniment to the words "for this" at the bottom of page 3, though out of place here, are harmless, but we much dislike the doubled 7th in the last bar of the second line of the previous page.

Benedicite, a Chant Service. By H. E. Havergal, Vicar of Cople.

THE difficulty of treating the continually recurring words of this canticle may account for its neglect by composers, and the scarcity of competition would alone warrant our author's production. It will be found useful wherever the *Benedicite* is chanted.

Six Settings of the Kyrie eleison. Composed by Dr. C. G. Verrinder.

THOUGH lacking simplicity, these settings will be acceptable in places where the Kyrie is the only part of the service which is sung, or on occasions when the musical service for the morning contains no Kyrie.

Grand Chant. Te Deum. Compiled from authentic sources by F. H. Hodges.

ALTHOUGH this piece has a somewhat portentous title, it is difficult to see in what consists the grandeur to distinguish it from ordinary works of the class. It is certainly not extensive enough to warrant Miss Hodges in giving it an epithet which has been applied to certain of the works of the great masters. The composition in itself would be harmless but for a few cases where the third of a triad is doubled, and for a progression in

B♭ A♭
the key of A♭ from F♯ to D♯ the first being the first in-
D♯ B♯
G♯ F

version of a dominant minor 9th, the second a second inversion of a super-tonic minor 9th. The effect of the minor 9th and 7th in the first chord descending to the 3rd and minor 9th of the second chord is very disagreeable. The *Te Deum* is, however, singable enough.

I was glad. Psalm cxxii. Anthem written for the Consecration of Trinity Chapel, New York, April 17, 1855.

O pray for the peace of Jerusalem (from the Anthem "I was glad").

Gloria in Excelsis.

Shout the glad tidings. A Christmas Hymn.

I heard a voice from heaven. Funeral March.

By Edward Hodges, Mus. Doc., Cantab.

OF these compositions by the late Dr. Hodges, the chant and the *Gloria in Excelsis* have been published (with other works not here enumerated) since his death by his daughter, Faustina H. Hodges, who has thus had an opportunity of at once paying a tribute of affection to her father's memory, and of respect to a musician whom she naturally holds in reverence. It is doubtful whether in principle it is advisable to give to the sacred text a dramatic and personal character, at all events in works whose performance is confined to buildings consecrated entirely to religion. Whether this is so or not, Dr. Hodges has shown his carefulness for the meaning of the text by keeping the words "I was glad" for a solo voice, while the choir previously sing "Let us go unto the house of the Lord."