Review

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the Lord, O my soul," by T. P. Royle, for treble solo and chorus, is a cheerful, unpretentious little anthem, without any special characteristics to which it is desirable to call attention. Rather more ambitious in structure is "Before the heavens were spread abroad," by Horatio W. Parker. It opens solemnly with a chorus *Grave*, leading to a quicker and more extended movement, "The morning stars sang together." Some striking key transitions in the accompaniment are followed by a brief tenor solo, which is repeated, with variations, in chorus, the anthem coming to a pompous and even brilliant climax. The last for the present is "Thy mercy, O Lord," by George Garrett. This is described as a Festival anthem for tenor solo and chorus. It opens in grandiose fashion, and the first choral movement is considerably extended, though elaborate contrapuntal writing is avoided. Another somewhat lengthy section for tenor solo and chorus, chiefly in alternation, is followed, after a full close, by a dignified double chorus, hymn-like in character, bringing the composition to a thoroughly church-like conclusion.

Novello's Part-Song Book. Second series. Nos. 685—697. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

WE commence our notice of the latest numbers of this popular publication with mention of an attractive and rather quaint and florid, but quite easy four-part song, "When Flora decks," words by J. Cunningham and music by Noel Johnson. No. 686, "I think on thee in the night," by Elizabeth Fédarb, is pleasing, but more quiet, placid, and sentimental. No. 687, "The evening wind," by F. G. Harper, is a setting of verses by "Christabel"; the music is strophic and very tender, with sensuous harmonic progressions rather suggestive of Spohr. A brief setting of Herrick's lines, "To daisies not to shut so soon," by J. D. Davis, No. 686, has nothing in common with antiquarian music, for it is distinctly modern in style. The final cadence is fresh and effective. No. 689, "Beauty, arise," by Kellow J. Pye, is an Ode to Hymen, the words being by Thomas Dekker, 1599. The music is unpretentious and reposeful; indeed, if adapted to sacred words, it would make a pleasing little anthem. Shakespeare's familiar lines, "It was a lover," receive another musical illustration in No. 690, by Charles Wood. The setting is singularly dainty and piquant, and if sung with crispness and refinement should be much appreciated by lovers of unaccompanied part-music. Florid music for voices is rather out of fashion at present, but "Sweet Thrush," by J. Danby, No. 691, might well be taken in hand by choirs, or, preferably, a quartet of single voices. It is very pretty, but it needs highly finished singing. The last six on our list for the present are Spohr's Op. 120, with excellent English words translated from the German by the Rev. J. Troutbeck. Although these delightful little pieces are scarcely known as yet in this country, the name of their composer is a guarantee of their excellence, and we may add that, if practicable, they should be sung without accompaniment.

Masters of French Music. By Arthur Hervey. [Osgood, McIlvaine and Co.]

MR. HERVEY'S book may be warmly recommended not only to all admirers of French music, but to every lover of the art. The author is in thorough sympathy with his subject, while, at the same time, his long experience as an English critic prevents him, while recognising the merits and beauties of French music, from being blind to its weaknesses and defects. The composers whose lives and works are most fully treated of are Ambroise Thomas, Charles Gounod, Saint-Saëns, Jules Massenet, Ernest Reyer, and Alfred Bruneau; brief but comprehensive comments being also made upon Victorin Joncières, Théodore Dubois, Charles Marie Widor, Benjamin Godard, Emile Paladilhe, Gervais Bernard Salvayre, César Franck, Vincent d'Indy, Gabriel Fauré, Emmanuel Chabrier, and others. The value and interest of the criticisms are much increased by the quotation of contemporary French critical opinions, and amusing anecdotes which convey, better perhaps than could otherwise be done, the peculiarities of temperament of the various composers. Deductions from present tendencies can scarcely be made without reference to the past, and thus many a seasonable word is said

concerning past composers whose works have exercised an important influence on the music of modern France. Prominent amongst those thus referred to is Meyerbeer, concerning whom it is justly said: "It has been too much the fashion in recent years to decry the works of Meyerbeer, and to lay stress upon their shortcomings whilst giving but a grudging half-hearted acknowledgment of the many undeniable beauties that pervade them. Against so unjust a verdict I desire emphatically to protest, for however much Meyerbeer may have sacrificed for the sake of effect, there can be no doubt that he contributed in a large measure towards raising the operatic standard, then at a very low level. If we find the rich crop of wheat not devoid of chaff, we must at any rate admit that the former is of excellent quality. To be the author of 'Les Huguenots,' the fourth act of 'Le Prophète,' and the music to 'Struensee,' not to speak of many another dramatic masterpiece, is in itself a sufficient title to rank amongst the greatest musicians of the age." One of the most interesting portions of the book is that devoted to Saint-Saëns, who, in his works, is aptly described as "Janus-like, keeping one side of his head turned towards Bach, Handel, and Beethoven, whilst he finds means with the other to gaze at Liszt, Wagner, and Gounod." Most readers of this instructive volume will probably quickly turn to the chapter headed "Alfred Bruneau," and they can scarcely do so without profit to themselves. Preceding his remarks by saying, "It has always appeared to me to be idle to attempt to impose one's ideas upon the relative merits of a composition on those whose disposition is antagonistic to its due appreciation," the author argues in favour of Bruneau's procedures with a calmness and completeness that will gladden the hearts of this composer's admirers. The book also contains portraits and *fac-simile* specimens of the scores of the leading French composers commented upon, and a most useful list of their principal works, together with the dates of their production.

Three Songs. By Johann Sebastian Bach. Edited, with a pianoforte accompaniment, by C. A. Barry. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

INTEREST in these songs is at once awakened by the following note by the Editor which appears on the first page: "Anna Magdalena Bach, the second wife of Johann Sebastian Bach, possessed two 'music-books,' into which it was her wont to copy out such pieces, both vocal and instrumental, as took her fancy, and to which her husband occasionally contributed. The three songs, now for the first time made available for general use, are to be found in their original shape in Vol. 39 of the Leipzig Bachgesellschaft's edition of Bach's works." Mr. Barry's editing necessitated the provision of suitable accompaniments—for Bach had only written the vocal melody in the now obsolete soprano clef, together with a slightly figured bass—and the suggestions of *tempo* and marks of expression that seemed in accordance with the master's intentions. These important particulars have been admirably supplied, and the collection should be acquired by every lover of Bach, not merely because of its antiquarian interest, but for its musical value. The character of the three songs may be gathered from their titles—viz., "Gedenke doch, mein Geist, zurücke" (Consider well, my soul), "Bist du bei mir" (Stay thou with me), and "Erbauliche gedanken eines Tabaksrauchers" (Edifying thoughts of a smoker), the English translations of which have been admirably supplied by C. F. Herman. The first two are suitable to a soprano voice, and the last may be recommended to the attention of baritone vocalists.

Tabulatura Nova. By Samuel Scheidt. Für Orgel und Clavier. Herausgegeben von Max Seiffert. [Breitkopf and Härtel.]

NOR the least of the many advantages which the art or music derives from large publishing firms is the republication of works which change of taste and various developments have caused to be neglected. In the majority of instances republication not only means rescue from undeserved oblivion, but the preservation of valuable indications of the prevalent modes of thought and practices of our forefathers.