Review

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Reine d'Amour. Song for Soprano or Tenor. Words by Francis Turner Palgrave.

The Cottage by the Sea. Song for Baritone or Contralto. Words by Hastings Crossley.

The Lament of the Rose. Song for Mezzo-Soprano or Tenor. Words after the German of Mirza-Schaffy.

In the Night. Song for Baritone or Mezzo-Soprano. Words by Hastings Crossley. English version by H. C. Irwin, Esq.

Strew on her Roses. Song for Soprano or Tenor. Words by Matthew Arnold.

Composed by Hastings Crossley.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

ALTHOUGH the name of this composer is unfamiliar in the world of music, there can be no question that it will not long remain so. The freshness of style in the melodies and the appropriateness and excessive gracefulness of the accompaniments throughout these songs evidence the mind of a musician and a poet; and if Mr. Crossley can only meet success with that fortitude which is usually supposed only necessary to meet failure, we confidently predict for him a most prosperous career. Of course all the compositions are not of equal merit; but we most unhesitatingly say that all are good. "*Reine d'Amour*" is a highly attractive song, the purity and refinement of the voice part being materially aided in effect by the charming manner in which it is accompanied—one point worth noticing being where at the double bar the dominant is obstinately held on to form the third of the new key. Better than this song, however, and indeed the gem of the collection, is "*The Cottage by the Sea*." Commencing with a characteristic phrase in A minor for the pianoforte, the voice breaks in with a pathetic, wailing melody which eventually, closing upon the dominant, passes into the tonic major, with an arpeggio accompaniment, and afterwards into the relative major, in which key it concludes. The unexaggerated expression of the words throughout this composition strengthens us in the hope that the composer is not likely to be turned aside from his convictions by the dangerous "word-painting" theories of the day. "*The Lament of the Rose*" is a well-written and simple ballad in D flat major, which appears perhaps more suitable for a tenor than a mezzo-soprano, although the compass would make it available for either. "*In the Night*" and "*Strew on her Roses*" are worthy companions to the songs already noticed, the former—written, we presume, to German words by the composer—having many points of interest, the alternation between the minor and major keys being throughout in good sympathy with the poetry. Judging from these specimens of Mr. Crossley's power, we have every reason to believe that he may shortly give us some meritorious work of greater importance.

Reeves' Music Primers, No. 3. Exercises on General Elementary Music. By Kate Paige. In two parts. Part I. [W. Reeves.]

THE authoress of this little manual says in her preface, "We attach special importance to the questions which refer pupils for answers or examples to standard musical compositions, serving, as they must, to deepen their knowledge of the great classical compositions, and to encourage a more extensive study of these works." Acting upon this theory, the book contains merely the questions upon what may be termed the elements of music, and the pupils are left to answer them according to their own method, from works which they have previously studied. We quite agree with this system, provided all persons taught alike; but, in proof that this is not the case, we may mention that in the very first page of the work before us there are two questions which would cause a division of opinion with teachers—"What is a stave?" and "What is the clef sign for the mezzo-soprano?"—for many would say that "stave" should be "staff"; and whilst some would assert that the C clef on the first line is the sign for the "soprano," others would call it the "mezzo-soprano," and numerous books tell us that the "mezzo-soprano" clef can only be placed on the *second* line. Apart from this objection, however, we have much praise, not only for the general arrangement of the book, but for the lucid manner in which the questions are put. The chapters on Time and Accent

are exceedingly good; and there are some very useful exercises to accustom the student to transposition. We are especially pleased, too, with the method of writing incomplete bars, and asking the pupil to supply the missing parts with rests; and also of requiring notes to be changed into rests, dots into rests, and rests into notes. We are convinced that a great portion of the slovenly practice of young students is to be traced to the manner in which the elementary part of the study is often passed over, in order to arrive at "pieces." Before concluding our notice—as in a work intended for pupils it is of the highest importance that there should be nothing to confuse them—we should like to point out some inaccuracies. At page 27, in the 19th exercise, a bar of 9-16 is marked 12-16. At page 31, in the 1st exercise, there are five crotchets in the bar. Then, at page 33, what can be the meaning of the question, "What is a common chord or key chord?" Surely as, at page 32, the student has been asked to write "common chords on each note of the scale of C" (which, by the way, cannot, according to the theory of most teachers, be done at all), he would be somewhat puzzled to understand that a common chord may also be termed a "key chord." It is important, too, to correct some of the orthography in the works named at page 34: "*Sonnambula*" is spelt with one "n"; "*Rigoletto*" with two "g's"; and "*Babylon*" we presume should be "*The Fall of Babylon*," as we can only imagine that Spohr's oratorio is meant. A revision of these errors would make the book as perfect as it deserves to be.

Action Songs for Children. Words and Music by J. Clift Wade. [John Heywood.]

CERTAINLY children cannot complain that vocal music adapted to their capacities—both physically and mentally—is not easily procurable in the present day; for not only are their old favourite nursery rhymes set to appropriately simple notes, and illustrated by eminent artists, but verses written by poets who can think with the child's mind, and composed by equally sympathetic musicians, abound on all sides; so that nursery concerts may eventually become a recognised domestic institution. Young people, we all know, are fond of action; but whether they would agree to mix their action with their music becomes a question. For our part, we are inclined to believe that they like to sing when they sing, and play when they play; and that one will assuredly neutralise the other should they attempt to do both at the same time. The author of the *Songs* before us, however, thinks differently, and gives them a set of vocal pieces, the action to which, in some, is definitely pointed out. When the words are written in italics, we are told, "the part is to be illustrated by appropriate action"; but in the song called "*Stone Breaking*," it is expressly said that "the accented notes are to be marked by the children with sharp raps—by striking the palm of the left hand with the knuckles of the right fist—all through the song, except when other action is indicated by the words." Apart from any opinion of our own as to the welcome with which these compositions will be received by juvenile vocalists, we are bound to say that both words and music are admirably adapted for their intended purpose; and that the book is in every respect an excellent specimen of honest and earnest work.

Hesperus. Canzonet. Words from the Greek of Sappho, by Edwin Arnold, M.A., F.R.G.S.

The Avon to the Severn runs. Part-song for mixed voices. Composed by C. A. Macirone. [Stanley Lucas, Weber and Co.]

MISS MACIRONE has most happily caught the feeling of the simple Greek verse selected for musical setting, and has given us a song which should commend itself to any vocalist who can sympathise with both poet and composer. The pertinacious adherence to the key—with the exception of only a few bars—is in excellent keeping with the character of the words; and the accompaniment maintains a figure throughout which materially increases the interest of the voice part. A leading feature in the composition is the use of the harmony of the minor sixth of the scale, which, with other chromatic chords, prevents any undue feeling of monotony. The words of the Part-song, "*The Avon to the Severn runs*," have reference to the carrying