Review

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Cantab.; H. G. Bonavia Hunt, S.C.F. (Warden); W. H. Sangster, Mus.B., Oxon.; and J. Gordon Saunders, S.C.F., Mus. B., Oxon.

WE are informed that Mr. H. G. Trembath, Mus. Bac., Oxon, Truro, has been awarded the 5-guinea prize offered by the College of Organists for the best Evening Service (*Cantate and Deus*), with *obbligato* organ.

THE Vicar and several members of the congregation at Christ Church, Hampstead, have presented their organist, Miss Cooper (daughter of Mr. J. T. Cooper), with a handsome and valuable diamond ring, in recognition of their appreciation of her musical ability and assiduity in the fulfilment of her church duties. This is the second present Miss Cooper has received from the congregation.

A VERY excellent musical performance was given by the pupils of the London Society for Teaching the Blind to Read, at the Institution, Upper Avenue Road, Regent's Park, on the 17th ult., the Rev. T. J. Rowsell, M.A., in the chair. An interesting feature in the programme was a selection from Mr. G. A. Macfarren's Oratorio "St. John the Baptist," which was so well rendered as to call forth unqualified praise from the composer himself, who also expressed his satisfaction at the zeal and energy displayed by the Society's Conductor, Mr. Edwin Barnes.

THE West London and Kilburn Musical Society gave a concert on Monday evening, the 6th ult., before a large audience. The programme included the first and second parts of the "Creation," the solos being allotted to Miss Georgina Maudsley, Mr. Greenhill, and Mr. Kilbey. Miss Maudsley received the warmest applause for her rendering of "With verdure clad," and "On mighty pens;" Mr. Greenhill was encored in the air, "In native worth," and Mr. Kilbey was also highly successful. The choir sang steadily, and was well supported by the band. Mr. W. Beavan was, as usual, the conductor. A miscellaneous selection followed, in which Miss Warwick (who received an encore for both her songs), Mr. Greenhill, Mr. Norton, Miss Taylor, and others contributed several vocal pieces. Messrs. John and William Beavan accompanied.

REVIEWS.

NOVELLO, EWER AND CO.

Israel, in Adversity and in Deliverance. A Sacred Cantata, in Two Parts. Composed by C. G. Verrinder, Mus. Doc.

THAT the great works in art are not—we might almost say professedly—mere imitations of those which have preceded them may be stated as a generally admitted truth; and yet constantly are we called upon to criticise Symphonies, Cantatas, Oratorios and other compositions of the highest school of writing, every thought in which is clearly traceable to the models bequeathed to us by those who have thrown the individuality of their genius into their work, and thus dared to lead, instead of being content to follow. True it is that, were the creations of skilled and accredited artists, who are satisfied to work by line and rule, completely ignored, and only those of original thinkers accepted, our repertory of works would become somewhat limited, but would the progress of real art be impeded? Certainly excellence, rather than novelty, would then be the attraction offered at our public performances; but we cannot be made to see that this would be a disadvantage: recent revivals of musical masterpieces have sufficiently proved to us that, whilst we have spent our time in endeavouring to discover isolated beauties in many modern compositions, perfect gems have for years been allowed to remain uncared for; and it is an indisputable fact that numerous works by the greatest composers are still known but to the few who—although the art itself, in its highest sense, is comparatively young—are, strangely enough, termed musical "antiquarians." We wish it to be distinctly understood that we have not been led to make these remarks solely from a perusal of Dr. Verrinder's Cantata: it is unquestionably the composition of a trained and well-

qualified musician, and the writing throughout proves that it is also the production of one well versed in what may be termed "the history of his art;" but it is the type of a class; and if such types are worth multiplying, then do we say that Dr. Verrinder has as much right to be heard as many others who have worked as truthfully and as zealously according to the patterns which they have a right to respect. The Overture, beginning with a stately *Andante*, in D minor, and followed by an *Allegro*, in the tonic major, would do well as a "Study after the manner of Handel;" but, as an abstract composition, it has little value. The opening Chorus is the best in the work, the wailing effect of the commencing phrases, in B minor, being well-contrasted with the long holding notes with which it concludes. We like also the Tenor Solo, which, although it does not strike the ear as original, is tuneful and sympathetic with the words. The Semi-chorus, "Wash you, make you clean," contains many good points, but is wearisome from its length, and the monotonous triplet accompaniment. The short contralto solo, which follows a Tenor recitative, reminds us of Mendelssohn, without our being able to assert that the notes are the same that occur in any composition of his with which we are acquainted. All we can say is that Dr. Verrinder had this composer in his mind when he wrote it. Some really good effects occur in the Chorus of Prophets and People, the subject of which has been previously heard as a solo for the Soprano, and the Semi-chorus which concludes the first Part is skilfully harmonised, and well-written for the voices. An Instrumental Prelude commences the second Part, the character of which is in good keeping with the subject which it illustrates, although it seems to want the orchestra for the full realisation of the composer's intention. Two soprano solos now occur, in the same key, but sufficiently varied in character, the second—in 9-8 rhythm, and with a harp accompaniment—well-expressing the words, and perhaps being one of the most tuneful songs in the Cantata. We like the Chorus for two Choirs, "Sing unto the Lord," better than the inevitable Fugue which follows, although of course the first is merely introductory. The subject of the Fugue is one that will "work" rather than one that will "please;" and the workmanship is, in consequence, the principal feature in the composition. As an exercise, however, it deserves much praise, for it shows throughout that the composer has studied in a good school, and knows how to make the best use of his materials. There is much boldness in many of the fugal points, and the voice parts are written most effectively. The final movement again introduces the double choir, reminding us—we presume intentionally—of the theme of the Prelude to the second Part. This forms a fitting termination to the Cantata, which, as we have already said, shows much scholastic learning and an intimate acquaintance with the best works of the best masters.

Break forth into joy. Composed by T. Ridley Prentice.

HERE is a composition of great spirit with sufficient variety. It opens with a Solo for tenor or soprano, which well befits the jubilant nature of the subject. Then comes a Quartett, "The Lord hath comforted," in which the voice parts flow harmoniously and rhythmically; its effect is most agreeable. Lastly, there is a Chorus, "The Lord hath made bare," wherein the exultant character is resumed that marked the opening of the piece, which is capably sustained. We cannot reconcile with rule, and we do not wish that rule should be widened to admit of piece-making on the subject, the curious progression from the chord of $\frac{3}{2}$, where the 9th rises a 3rd to the root of the next chord, that occurs on page 155, score 1, bars 2 and 3, and score 3, bars 2 and 3, and elsewhere. Another indiscretion is the anticipation of D sharp over C bass in approaching a half-close on B, page 157, score 2, bar 2, and page 159, score 1, bar 3. All freshness is taken from the modulation into E minor by the foretaste of its leading-note, and we suggest—it is always easier to suggest than to originate—the substitution of E in the prior harmony, and the reservation of D sharp till the chord of B in both places. The

general effect of a piece depends not on single notes, however, and there is stuff in this composition that will command a welcome wherever the anthem is heard.

Te Deum laudamus. Set to Music in the key of D by W. G. Willmore.

THIS is one more to the countless number of musical compositions for the Church, that betoken more feeling than ideas, and more of both than of knowledge. It shows that the writer has heard the elder ecclesiastical music, and is in the habit of hearing and perhaps playing the secular as well as sacred works of latest musicians; but it shows also that he cannot discriminate styles, and he consequently produces an incongruous confusion of ancient and modern, diatonic and chromatic. He tires us with repeated starts and closes in the key of D; now, this is a common practice of the old worthies, but it is not tiresome with them, because the simplicity of their plan leads us to look for nothing other than a perfect cadence at the end of every sentence, and the paramount prevalence of one tonic; whereas, in the piece under notice, their conciseness of phrasing is by no means universal, and the occasional modulations into remote, if not extraneous keys, prompts one to look for greater relief in the structure of the whole. The sensitive character of the leading note was not discovered until within little more than a century, and composers were wont to make this note descend to the 5th of the tonic chord. Modern ears are differently educated, and we long for the upward progression of the most delicate, but most imperious note in the scale; we bear the old practice, because it is in keeping with other peculiarities of the ancient style; but we are shocked by its misapplication in modern writing, where it contradicts peculiarities of modern practice. We forbear to name the technical irregularities that disfigure this *Te Deum*, but they are numerous enough to assure us that the composer has no vocation for that class of music, which should be the highest test of artistry. The accessories to worship are not trifling: and the power to pick out upon the keyboard more or less faithful recollections is not a sufficient qualification to entitle a musical writer to tread on such most sacred ground.

The 24th Psalm, "The earth is the Lord's." Composed by Louis Spohr. Adapted to the English version from the original German MSS. by W. T. Freemantle, and revised by Dr. S. S. Wesley.

IT is as though one of the great and gone came back into life, when we receive a new work from a master's hand fifteen years after himself has passed out of the world of action, and we welcome this entirely unknown work by Spohr with all the reverence due to the hero of his many successes, and rejoice to find that even death did not exhaust the riches of his genius. To what extent Dr. Wesley's revision makes him responsible for the purity of the publication, there is no means of guessing; but his avowed partiality for the author must have rendered the task congenial to him, and we read his name as a guarantee that the music has not been tampered with in changing its original for its English garb. Mr. Freemantle, the organist of St. Andrew's, Sharrow, Sheffield, has done his task so dexterously that he has preserved every word of the Bible version of the Psalm, with the exception of verse 6, which of course must have been omitted by the composer. This will make the publication far more acceptable than it could else have been for ecclesiastical and even for private use; since, with a natural inclination to the familiar, everybody would rather sing or hear the words he knows, than have their sense represented by any others. It is an unlucky consequence of this literary fidelity, however, that the words "gates" and "doors" are each set to two crotchets, which require detachment in performance, and which must have been written by Spohr to dissyllables. It is remarkable, how well, otherwise, the words and the notes agree. The universal popularity of the Messiah Chorus to the last four verses of the present text, "Lift up your heads," unhappily must interfere with the effect of their treatment by the later musician; but this inevitable obstacle is in some sort counterbalanced by the fact, that the portion of Spohr's work set to these words

is by far the most spirited part of the whole, and as unlike to Handel as any music can be. The piece consists of but one movement, an admirable plan for sustaining its interest. Its opening is for chorus; it has then a strain for a solo alto, another for a soprano, one next for four voices, and finally the triumphal passage to which we have alluded for the full choir. It would be vain to speak of this as one of the best of its author's works, but it abounds in the progressions which, when Spohr himself was new among us, were the delight of all hearers, and which have by no means lost their charm with the loss of their novelty. The passage of quavers towards the end, given first to the trebles and inverted afterwards for the tenors, is full of vigour. It is a significant proof of the editor's care, that, in two places, he leaves a progression of 5ths between the outside parts, which one with less respect for his subject, and less discrimination between what is objectionable in rule and effect, might have attempted to alter, but could not have improved. The very long list of subscribers shows the wide interest the work has excited, and people must have formed strange expectations whose interest will not be fully satisfied by the music.

March for the Organ, by J. E. Richardson.

THE organist of Salisbury Cathedral may be credited with having written a March which, if not strikingly original, offers many points of undoubted interest. It is reserved to few, and those only of the highest genius, to produce a work of this nature which shall exhibit originality of conception and general attractiveness in combination. If, therefore, Mr. Richardson may be considered to have failed in one of these two particulars, it will be some consolation to him to feel that he has done so in company with many eminent composers. On the other hand, it is but fair to say that he has added to the repertory of organ music a composition which will be found easy and effective, fairly conceived, and thoughtfully carried out.

Sonata in G, for Pianoforte. Composed by M. E. Doorly.

ASPIRING writers who insist upon trying their "prentice hand" upon a classical form of composition must expect to be judged by a somewhat high standard of art. Graceful and unpretending little pianoforte pieces, testing only the power of writing melodious phrases and brilliant passages, may be allowed to pass with but slight comment, but a Sonata demands the faculty of construction as well as the facility of invention; and the fact that but few modern composers have been successful in the production of such works is a proof of the difficulties to be surmounted. Mr. Doorly's opening subject—consisting mainly of key-note and dominant *arpeggios*, repeated in the left hand, with a scale accompaniment—has not sufficient solidity to fix the attention of the listener; and although we have afterwards some very good writing, especially in the second theme, the nature of the principal motive prevents the possibility of avoiding monotony in the passages. There is some novelty in the accompaniment to the subject of the "Largo," but the movement as it advances wants interest, and the descending chromatic passage of thirds is feeble. The *arpeggios* for the right hand, which accompany the subject of the "Scherzo," are effective; and we like the imitations after the double bar; but the "Trio" is weak, and the two bars of silence seem to indicate that the composer scarcely knows what to do. The "Rondo" is merely a string of rambling passages, skill however being shown in the harmonies, which prove throughout that they are written by a musician. The concluding portion of the movement—after the double bar—is little else than a succession of scales, with octaves in contrary motion for the left hand. Mr. Doorly should study the Sonatas of the great masters before essaying a work of this proportion; but in pieces of smaller magnitude we see no reason why he should not be successful.

Hunting Song. (Hie away! Hie away!) Four-part Song. Words by Sir W. Scott. Music by G. Newcombe.

THE composer of this Part-song is resolved that his accompanist, as well as his choir, shall have something to do, for he not only gives us twenty bars of symphony before the voices commence, but the instrument has also