Review

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The Musical Educator. A library of Musical Instruction by eminent Specialists. Edited by John Greig, Mus. Doc., Oxon. [Edinburgh: T. C. and E. C. Jack.]

THIS work, now in course of publication, will be completed in five volumes or seventeen parts. It is designed on the plan of the well-known "Popular Educator" of Messrs. Cassell and Co.—that is to say, several subjects are begun in the earlier volumes or parts and completed in succeeding ones. In the case of a publication issued weekly or monthly this method may have advantages, inasmuch as the learner is supplied each time with just enough for one lesson in each subject; but, when completed, such works are far less convenient than those in which each department has a volume to itself. This, however, is a matter of taste. With regard to the manner in which the plan in question has been carried out in the first two volumes—the only ones yet issued—hearty praise must be awarded to all concerned. The complete work will include courses of lessons in twenty subjects, and of these twelve are begun in the two volumes under notice. These deal respectively with voice culture, the pianoforte, violin, organ, harmonium, orchestral instruments, musical history, rudiments, harmony and counterpoint, form and analysis, choir training and conducting, and musical terms. The authors are Messrs. J. Sneddon, W. Townsend, W. Daly, J. S. Anderson, J. C. Grieve, F. Laubach, W. Daly, jun., J. Robertson, and H. Hartley. All these gentlemen write clearly, convey correct information, and arrange their materials in conformity with modern lines of thought. Photogravures of musical celebrities and numerous engravings in the text form attractive and helpful features of the volumes, which are well printed on excellent paper and strongly bound. Among the articles still to come we are promised one "On the Characteristics of National Music"—author's name not stated. If this be well carried out it should be extremely valuable.

Organ Arrangements. Nos. 37 and 38. Edited by George C. Martin. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

BOTH these numbers are important additions to this excellent series. The first is an arrangement for the modern organ, by Mr. W. Alcock, of Purcell's "Voluntary for double organ" in D minor, which was played and greatly admired on several occasions during the bi-centenary celebrations in November last, and notably at the memorable service in Westminster Abbey. It is true organ music, highly effective, without presenting any special difficulties, and should certainly be in the repertory of every patriotic organist. No. 38 makes greater demands on the executant. It is an arrangement, by Mr. Charles Macpherson, of the *Finale* from Tchaikowsky's sixth Symphony, one of the most deeply impressive pieces of orchestral writing of modern times. The endeavour to reproduce on the organ the orchestral effects peculiar to the modern Russian school of music is a difficult task, and one which from its nature can, at the best, be but partially successful. Mr. Macpherson has, however, much knowledge and experience, and his work bears the stamp of earnestness and sound musicianship. Its success in execution will be proportionate to the dramatic perception and abilities of the organist and the resources of his instrument.

Novello's School Songs. Books 57 and 58. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

BOOK 57 of this excellent series will doubtless meet with wide acceptance. It is unnecessary to say more than that it consists of the following songs: "Hear thou my weeping" ("Laschia ch' io pianga"), Handel; "My mother bids me bind my hair," Haydn; "To Chloe in sickness," W. S. Bennett; "Come, happy Spring" ("Caro mio ben"), Giordani; "Autumn Song," Mendelssohn; and "The Mermaid's Song," Haydn. Book 58 includes ten unison songs (Nos. 274 to 283), several of which are of a humorous character and are intended for younger singers than the examples forming Book 57. The composers are A. Scott Gatty, Thomas Murby, Arthur Richards, and Seymour Smith, all of whom have set the vivacious text in a melodious and simple manner. It should be added that each song can be had separately, and is furnished with the Tonic Sol-fa as well as the Staff notation.

FOREIGN NOTES.

ABSAM (TYROL).—A committee has formed itself here charged with the collection of the necessary funds for the erection over the grave of Jacob Stainer, the "father of German violin makers," of a worthy memorial in place of the existing dilapidated stone slab. Stainer, who was born at Absam in 1621, died here, demented and in poverty, in 1683, and for many years past visitors to the grave have found it almost impossible to discover its whereabouts.

BAYREUTH.—The importance as a musical centre which this little Bavarian town has acquired, since the existence here of the Festspielhaus, has been substantially recognised in the bequest by one of its leading citizens, Commerzien-Rath Roesse, of the sum of 150,000 marks, to be expended in the erection here of a large concert hall. Plans by several eminent architects have already been received by the Municipality, and the building will be proceeded with at once.—The villa inhabited by the poet-composer during the earlier part of his sojourn here, and where he wrote the greater part of the score of "Götterdämmerung," has been bought by a wealthy German amateur, and will, with its adjoining park, be thrown open to the public during the Festspiele.

BERLIN.—Under the title of "Hugo Wolf-Verein," a Society has been started here with the object of introducing to wider circles the songs by that composer, which, by their charm and originality, have already found many admirers here and elsewhere. Herr Wolf has just completed an opera, "Der Corregidor," which is to be brought out at the Royal Theatre.—At the sixth Symphony Concert of the Royal Orchestra last month, under Herr Weingartner's direction, Smetana's symphonic poem "Aus Böhmen's Hain und Flur," the first of a series of similar works published under the general title of "My Fatherland," obtained a first hearing. The truly poetic contents of the work, its clever polyphonic treatment of national themes and masterly handling of the orchestral resources, secured for it the warm appreciation of the audience. The same Concert included a new orchestral version of Weber's "Aufforderung zum Tanz," by Herr Weingartner, wherein the familiar themes have been paraphrased, subjected to certain contrapuntal devices and combinations, and the piece otherwise added to. The audience were delighted, and the performance had to be repeated. The composer, on the other hand, to whom the eminent conductor had thus extended the charity of his latter-day erudition, could he have been present, would scarcely have shared the delight.

BUDA-PESTH.—The Philharmonic Society here will give a series of eight festival Concerts, in connection with the forthcoming "Millennium" Exhibition, to be conducted by eminent musicians. Six out of the series will be devoted exclusively to composers of Hungarian nationality.—A young artist, Bruno Granichstaeden, has recently attracted the attention of music-lovers both here and in Vienna to a considerable degree as the composer of a symphonic poem, "The Song of the Sea," a pianoforte quintet, and other compositions, and as a pianist. He is only sixteen years of age, and a pupil at the Vienna Conservatorium.

COLOGNE.—An important novelty at the Gürzenich Concert of January 28 was the performance of the symphony-oratorio "Christus," by the veteran Belgian composer, M. Adolphe Samuel, first produced about twelve months since at Ghent, where M. Samuel is Director of the Conservatoire. The work is divided into five parts, the first and second being purely orchestral, while in the remaining three the chorus takes an important share. Manifestly conceived under the influence of "Parsifal," with the subject of which it presents many points of contact, M. Samuel's "Christus" possesses nevertheless considerable independent merit, as was acknowledged both by the highly appreciative attitude of a crowded audience and in the criticisms of the leading press organs. The performance, under Dr. Wüllner, was an excellent one, amongst those present being the Archbishop of Cologne, Cardinal Krementz, the composer himself (now in his seventy-third year), and M. Ysaye, who is preparing a performance of the work for one of his Brussels Concerts.

COPENHAGEN.—A new opera, entitled "Aucassin and Nicolette," by August Enna, the successful composer of