Review

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and a well trained choir. To such the music will give no small pleasure to construe, for it will call forth and effectively display their abilities. Miss Needham's part-song, 'How dear to me the hour,' is designed for the usual four mixed voices, and makes far less demand on its executants than does Dr. Lloyd's composition. That it possesses merit above the average is attested by the fact that it gained the prize offered for the best arrangement of an ancient Irish air at the Feis Ceoil of last year. Well sung, this part-song would be very pleasing. 'When Spring comes laughing,' which, by the way, it seldom does in this 'right little, tight little island,' is a gay ditty that is calculated to lighten the hearts of its singers as well as the listeners. Seeing that it comes from so experienced a choir trainer as Dr. Eaton Fanning, it is scarcely necessary to add that the music is admirably designed to secure good vocal effects. Mr. Percy Pitt's part-song is akin in spirit to Dr. Fanning's, but it is much shorter and the music is more distinctive. Some of the harmonic transitions are very bold and striking; but in this case the 'end justifies the means,' and the end attained is very pleasing.

MUSICAL LITERATURE, &c.

Handel. By C. F. Abdy Williams. With illustrations and portraits. [J. M. Dent and Co.]

THE pathway of Handel biography has been so well trodden that any fresh wayfarer in that direction finds little or nothing of 'pastures new.' Mr. Abdy Williams frankly admits that he has endeavoured to give 'a popular narrative of the chief events of his (Handel's) life, without entering much into technicalities which, though interesting to the musician, are not perhaps so necessary for the general reader.' In this we think he has succeeded; the chequered life-story of the great composer is pleasantly told and the illustrations add to the interest of the book. One or two points in Mr. Williams's monograph may be referred to, as touching matters of accuracy. Vauxhall Gardens are not the present Spring Gardens (Trafalgar Square), as might be inferred (p. 48, note). The notice in the *Daily Courant* of July 19, 1717 (quoted on p. 65), refers to the *second* performance of the *Water Music*, not to the first, as is implied. John Byron should be John Byrom (p. 88), the author of the famous Bononcini-Handel squib. Chester was not the place of embarkation for Ireland in Handel's day (p. 156), but the boats started from Parkgate, once a place of considerable importance, twelve miles north-west of Chester, on the estuary of the Dee. The Dictionary of Musicians was issued in 1824, and therefore not quite so early as 1727 (p. 248); the article on Handel in Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians is written by Mr. Julian Marshall and not by the editor of that work, and Hoptinstall should be Heptinstall (both on p. 249); and on p. 251, R. H. Streatfield (a name often wrongly spelt) should be R. A. Streatfeild. As a small but practically new contribution to Handelianism we give in another column some particulars relating to the Act of Parliament for the naturalisation of the great composer.

First steps in the Harmonization of Melodies. By J. E. Vernham. (No. 53 of Novello's Music Primers and Educational Series.) [Novello and Company, Limited.]

THE conditions under which students in music may become equipped for their work are very different from what they were even fifty years ago. If we do not turn out such men of grit as formerly, the charge cannot be laid to the aids which are now available even to the most slender purses. In regard to this, the most recent of the Primer series, the author of the book states: 'The simple rules contained in the following pages are given to assist students to harmonise simple melodies in the early stages of the study of Harmony.' Mr. Vernham has chosen the Single Chant, being the simplest form of melody, as a suitable beginning. With this as a starting-point he proceeds on his first steps and systematically leads his student companion towards that goal which should enable him (the student) to harmonise a simple melody correctly and effectively.

VARIOUS PUBLICATIONS.

Arundel Masses.—I. *Mass for Three Voices* (unaccompanied). By William Byrd.

[R. & T. Washburne.]

WILLIAM BYRD died nearly two years before Charles the First ascended the throne, and he is, therefore, in the strictest sense, one of our Old Masters. He is known generally to musicians by his pieces in the Virginal Book, from among which 'The Carman's Whistle' stands out with special prominence; also by the 'Non nobis, Domine,' canon. Both Byrd and his master, Tallis, were of the Roman communion, hence the Masses by the former, of which the one under notice possesses interest for the musician as well as the antiquary; the music is solemn and dignified, and, although full of clever contrapuntal devices, is not laboured in effect. The whole of Byrd's three Masses were printed during the composer's lifetime; the one for five voices was recently reprinted by Messrs. Breitkopf and Härtel, and the one in four parts republished in 1890 by Messrs. Novello. The present work was long thought to be lost, but manuscript copies have been found, and the present edition has been prepared, and ably, by Mr. William Barclay Squire, from a set of parts acquired by the British Museum in 1888.

Georg Friedrich Handel's Klavierwerke. Book I. Edited by Conrad Kühner. [Breitkopf and Härtel.]

LOVERS of Handel will find an interesting series of pieces for the pianoforte in the first book of the collection edited by Herr Conrad Kühner. They present great variety, both in character and length; one, a graceful Minuet in G minor, only occupying a single page, while a Chaconne in G has sixty-two variations. Between these extremes are many bright examples of the old master of more ordinary dimensions. As studies for independence of the hands and fingers they may be specially recommended, particularly as they are admirably fingered, and the proper renderings of the turns and ornaments are printed at length at the bottom of the pages.

THE BACH FESTIVAL IN BERLIN.

(BY OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

Mayence, April 18.

JUST before the close of the musical season an unwanted artistic event has taken place in Berlin, which will doubtless bear good fruit in the future—viz., the *first German Bach Festival*. I may, perhaps, be permitted a brief glance at the preliminary history of this significant event. Fifty years ago a Bach Society was formed in Germany, having for its object to collect the enormous number of existing, but widely scattered works of the great Cantor of St. Thomas's School, and to unite them in a truly monumental edition. After having been zealously and laboriously engaged upon their task for half-a-century, the Society brought it to a conclusion, some two years since, with the issue of the forty-sixth folio volume of the complete edition of Bach's works. The Society having thus fulfilled its mission, Professor Kretzschmar, of Leipzig, in an interesting and exhaustive monograph concerning the history and activity of the old Society, then about to be dissolved, advocated the constitution of a new Bach Society, whose purpose it would be to realise and, as far as possible, popularise the treasures contained in these forty-six volumes of the master's works. This was to be effected by the organisation of biennial Bach festivals to be held alternately in different musical centres. The idea having been taken up with alacrity, the new Society very speedily sprang into existence, and the first of the festivals has now been held in Berlin. In thus assigning the place of honour to Berlin, the committee were actuated, in the first instance, by motives of gratitude. For was it not here, in the year 1829, the first complete performance of Bach's 'St. Matthew' Passion had taken place, under the direction of the youthful Mendelssohn, whereby the attention of the musical world had at last been drawn to the greatness and the importance of the master's genius? For his works