THE Musical Times

ESTABLISHED IN 1844

Hymn Tunes and Chants by Frederick Augustus Packer

The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular, Vol. 16, No. 375 (May 1, 1874), p. 489

Published by: [Musical Times Publications Ltd.](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3352230>

Accessed: 10/01/2015 20:40

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Musical Times Publications Ltd. is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

scarcely need refer to a book to bring them instantly to mind, and we can consequently follow easily any complication in the music set to them, any delicate nicety or broad novelty in its expression; whereas, the latter are heard but rarely, heard then as it were accidentally, found perhaps with difficulty if found at all, and are often not to be comprehended at a single reading, for which reasons they demand the simplest musical treatment to do them justice before uninitiated hearers. If then the music to either should be longer or shorter than to the other, let us submit that the Anthem should be the conciser, the Cantic the more amplified, and in this view, the present work seems to have a misnomer. Happily, it must be at the option of the selector of the music for the day's performance to place the composition at what period of the Service may seem to him the apter; so, they who think with us may place it after the second Lesson if they feel it fitting.

A more important and a far more pleasant consideration than this of how the work should be defined, is the merit of the music itself, which is of the highest order. In the vast amount of new Church music now being issued, among which, indeed, there is very much to praise, the instances of highly exalted beauty are most rare, and this piece takes rank with the rarest. There are longer and more pretentious works by the same composer; but there can be none that more completely fulfil their aim, and thus are more entirely successful. His beautiful feeling for harmony, which prompts him with some of the richest combinations and most novel progressions, here evinces itself with admirable effect; and his nice sense of vocal distribution leads him to display his happily chosen chords ever to the best advantage. As an instance of this, look to the harmony on the word "shall," with the climax to it, in the setting of the *Gloria*, and it is impossible not to admire its power. The opening of the piece is most tenderly devout; beginning with an air of vagueness, which is in some degree induced by a long continued dominant pedal, the music seems to express a doubt in the claim to mercy here deprecated, and the charmingly melodious phrase that is passed from one to other of the solo voices seems to diffuse strengthening hopes and growing confidence. The unusually long interlude for the organ which precedes the entry of the full choir, at the words, "That Thy way may be known," belongs as much to the musical interest as to the unfolding of the sentiment. The treatment is remarkably grand of the words, "Let the people," which is where we have the first continuous forte; and the broad character of this passage is nobly sustained. The bass solo, "Then shall the earth" stands out in prominent relief; and the chorus intermixed with this, as much throws up the principal voice as helps to enforce the words. In this place, an admirable point is where the key changes from minor to major on the words "shall give us His blessing," which seems to point out the altered state of one who feels himself endued with the beauty of holiness. The music to the *Gloria* is most impressive, and the point in it to which allusion has already been made imports with singular vehemence that the threefold glory must be without end and for ever. Englishmen may boast, with well founded pride, of the rich stores of their elder Church music, but it is matter for still higher exultation that the torch, whose smouldering light was hidden for a large part of a century, finds new hands to bear it, displaying all its former brightness, refined by the purifying power of new knowledge and extended resources; foremost among living representatives of our glorious eld is the artist whose latest production we have now been noticing.

God is love. Sacred Song. Written and composed by Mrs. W. H. J. Carter. Arranged by W. Hollis, Esq.

THE words of this song, and also the title-page, tell us that it is "sacred," but it is a mistake to suppose that music united with religious verses is necessarily religious music. Mrs. Carter has written a pattern modern ballad, with the conventional "symphonies and accompaniments," and if her melody is not very original, it is at least tuneful and attractive. That it would more appropriately fit secular words can scarcely be doubted by any listener; and

we really think the composer—whose poetry must doubtless have been written after her music—would do wisely to reconsider the matter from our point of view.

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death. (Psalm xxiii. 4.) Song for Mezzo-Soprano or Tenor. By the Rev. W. H. Bliss, M.A., and Mus. Bac.

THE calm and devotional character of this song proves that its composer is well acquainted with the traditional style of sacred writing, although it does not show much inventive power. The melody well expresses the words, and the harmonies are smooth and appropriate throughout. We think it would have been better if the change in the character of the accompaniment had been reserved for the commencement of the "Animato" phrase, at the return to the original key, as it somewhat loses its effect from having been previously used in A minor. The repetition of the words "comfort me," at the conclusion of the song, has a good effect, and Mr. Bliss may be congratulated upon the manner in which he has studied the due expression of the verse.

Hymn Tunes and Chants. Composed by Frederick Augustus Packer.

WE are at a loss to divine why poems should be set and reset in the form of hymns. Many are the reasons why, when successful music has once been accepted for them, the attention of the congregation should not be irritated and the memory disturbed by the introduction of new tunes to the same words; and we regret therefore that musicians spend their talent to such a purpose. The present selection of six popular poems has a tune to each, all of which are of a kind that clings to the recollection, and so, though they are not of refined character, they will make their effect. The harmony is very free in style, but it is generally correct.

Here are also a dozen chants, and these, it must be owned, are less to the purpose than the hymn tunes. The chromatic harmony that abounds in them is inappropriate to chanting; the reciting note lies often inconveniently for voices, and the passing notes between the last chord of one strain and the first of another are practically troublesome, and they hinder the taking of breath, which the pointing indicates as necessary to the sense of the words, and the singer requires as necessary to the process of life.

The author of this little publication is organist of the Cathedral, and of the Town Hall in Hobart Town, and his evident fluency argues well for the musical experience he must have made, and for the opportunities the place affords.

Martha; or, the Fair at Richmond. A Comic Romantic Opera, in Four Acts. Composed by F. Von Flotow. Edited by Berthold Tours. Translated into English by Natalia Macfarren.

THAT it is possible for a man to make and sustain a reputation upon one work Herr Von Flotow has fully proved; for, although he produced a highly successful Opera, when quite a youth, called "Allessandra Stradella," it is by "Martha," his next composition, that he is now known; and, indeed, so popular has much of the music he has set to this pleasing little English story become, that the Opera forms a portion of the *répertoire* almost every season at both our lyrical establishments. Flotow was a hard worker, and well deserves the fame he has won. The score of "Martha," he says, he re-wrote four times before he allowed it to be played; and we believe that he has laboured zealously at other Operas, which have never yet had a hearing. The excellent translation in the edition now before us would, we think, make it a most acceptable work to produce on the stage of an English Opera-house, should such a place ever exist in this country; for, to say nothing of the scene of the tale being close at home, certainly the well-known "Last Rose of Summer" would sound better from a native vocalist, in the language of Moore's poetry, than from a foreigner in an Italian translation. The careful editing of the work reflects the utmost credit upon Mr. Berthold Tours; and we need scarcely say that the type, printing, and paper are excellent. So admirable a handbook will be a real boon to Opera-goers.