Review

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The Canticles of the Church. Arranged to Gregorian Tones. By J. Stainer.

THE first and second series of these arrangements appeared some years ago in a smaller form, but the third has been lately written. The following direction appears on the first sheet of the first series:—"The choir to be divided into melodists and harmonists. When the melody is not on a separate line, it will be found in the upper line of the short score." This explains sufficiently the plan of the work, and the various effects aimed at by writing for the voices in harmony or unison, or giving the organ an independent part. It would have been well if Dr. Stainer had printed further directions, explaining the different values of the notes employed, and whether any definite time attaches to them, or if such matters are to be left to individual taste and judgment. It is impossible to avoid some doubtful accents in setting every verse of a hymn like the English version of the *Te Deum* to one melody, and the varied sentiments of the text must in such cases obtain their expression from the harmony. While exercising considerable tact and judgment to meet the former difficulty, Dr. Stainer has evidently revelled in his task of finding suitable harmonies which, without being crude, should vary in accordance with the sense. The second series is on the same plan, but in the third several tones are used in each canticle, which considerably lightens the duties of the arranger. In conclusion, we have only to remark that whether such transcriptions as these are considered as impious desecrations of a venerable monument or ingenious presentations of an old enemy in a friendly garb, admirers and opponents of the so-called Gregorian Tones will unite in praising the result of Dr. Stainer's labours.

Benedictus, Gloria Tibi, Gratias, and Sursum Corda. For Four Voices. *The same for Voices in Unison and Organ.* By Berthold Tours.

THESE four pieces form portions of the Morning, Communion, and Evening Service in F, the nine numbers of which are published separately. Mr. Tours has certainly managed very cleverly to obtain from the same compositions two totally different effects. Unlike the ordinary Unison Services that come under our notice, which are as a rule Services in parts with the voices singing the highest, he has preserved the organ accompaniment of his four-part service, and made a new melody for the voices by combining into one part the most fitting passages in each. In so thoughtful and musicianly a composition it is difficult to select any passage for particular commendation, and indeed there is nothing from beginning to end which interferes with the pleasant impression conveyed.

Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis, in the key of A♭. By A. H. Mann.

THE improvements that have been from time to time effected in the organ, have naturally altered the character of music written for the instrument; and whereas originally in Church use it served merely to accompany the choir, now-a-days composers of church music are more and more endeavouring to treat it as a necessary independent feature in their compositions. Mr. Mann has done this with good effect, and by avoiding passages of a florid nature, has preserved the solemn feeling not only suited to the instrument, but to all church music and the acoustical qualities of the buildings where it is likely to be performed. We are also pleased to observe the attention that has evidently been directed to the form of the composition; as a rule, the announcement of a service in a particular key means that the opening bars and, with good fortune, the last few chords satisfy our hopes of its truth. Here we have, perhaps, too much of the key of A♭, but at least amply sufficient to confirm the fact we read in the title-page. It is, moreover, satisfactory to be able to point out passages which may be called "leading themes," that by their recurrence induce intelligibility and a satisfactory shapeliness. The broad unison phrase with which the Magnificat opens, re-appears (after a free episode) at the sixth verse and again in the Gloria, while the point of imitation to the words, "He hath put down the mighty from their seats," is afterwards heard in the second verse

of the Gloria. Throughout the whole Service the voices are particularly well treated, good effect being obtained by writing for sopranos and tenors in octaves, as in p. 5, score 2, bars 3 to 6. The Nunc Dimittis and ninth verse of the Magnificat are examples of the author's happy manner of securing a charming vocal effect; in each case the melody being given to a tenor solo voice while the chorus sings an accompaniment (*pp*). These are but selections from the numerous points of interest presented by the work, and while we bear testimony to the talent and originality the author displays, we have no doubt that even better fruit than this will spring from their alliance with a wider experience and a more developed scholarship.

Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis (on a Rouennais Theme). By George Herbert Gregory, Mus. Bac.

THESE Canticles are arranged according to the same plan that Dr. Stainer has employed in his setting of them to the Gregorian Tones, which the Rouennais Theme closely resembles in character. We still think it necessary that some explanatory rules should be appended for the guidance of choirmasters.

Te Deum Laudamus, with *Two Kyrie Eleisons*, and *Two Doxologies*, with Accompaniment for Organ or Pianoforte. By C. Riechelmann.

THE *Te Deum* is in the key of F, and may be described as an unskilful series of modulations, terminating with a full close in the key of C. Such progressions as these—

show that the author is on the very threshold of musical composition.

Sanctus and Gloria in Excelsis Deo. Composed by R. R. Ross.

THESE movements are written "in completion of the Communion Service in G." The author is evidently much impressed with the manner of the early Church writers, whose influence is manifest in the pages before us. Music is still progressive, and the time has not come when, as in architecture, the designer must choose among the schools of various epochs the one he prefers to follow. We suppose that in the future there will be a school of pre-Beethoven composers, as there are now pre-Raphaelite painters. Desirable as such an event may seem to ultra-Conservatives, it has not yet arrived, and, at present, imitations, however clever, are not in season.

Offertory Sentences. By Alfred R. Gaul, Mus. Bac.

THE first series of these sentences was noticed by us nearly a year ago, and Mr. Gaul has now added another set of ten, which may be procured separately, or in one volume, containing the two series. We think Mr. Gaul's second attempt is even more successful than his first. He does more than write correct harmony and pretty melody, for each number is a thoughtful and well-considered piece of music, suiting the words admirably, and containing vocal effects that cannot fail to charm in performance.

The Lord knoweth the days of the Godly. Anthem. Composed by the Rev. William Statham, B.A.

THIS Anthem was composed for the annual Festival, 1875, of the Frodsham Deaneries' Choral Association, of which the author is choirmaster. We have been already impressed with Mr. Statham's compositions that have come under our notice, and can only say that, if he teaches as well as he writes, he must be doing good work in his corner of the county of Cheshire. It is most satisfactory to meet with compositions that confirm the laws and traditions we regard as binding and view with reverence; for amid the lawlessness that is spreading in the musical world, one's convictions receive rude shocks at times from those powerful minds who regard themselves as the sources of knowledge, and speak disparagingly of