

Review

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a minor key suggests a suspicion of the proverbial grapes of unattainment. The pathos of "Cyril's Song," from "The Silence of Dean Maitland," by Maxwell Gray, finds simple but true expression in Mr. Hill's music, the contrast which forms the feature of the poem being simply but effectively reflected by the second section of the song being in the relative tonic minor of the first portion. "If there were dreams to sell," written by T. H. Beddoes, is somewhat mystical, but dreams incline that way, and the music makes amends by its simplicity. The text of the last of this series is "The Covenanters' Scaffold Song," by James Hogg, and the music appropriately illustrates its sentiment.

*The Church Choir Chant Book.* Edited by Sir John Stainer and the Rev. L. S. Tuckwell.

[Novello and Company, Limited.]

THE compilers of this "complete set of chants adapted to the Book of Psalms, specially selected for parochial use," were associated together as organist and precentor at Magdalen College Chapel, Oxford. Their competence for the work is therefore beyond question. A quotation or two from the preface will show the guiding principles upon which they have compiled their book: "Care has been taken in this Collection to make use of those Chants only whose reciting notes are well within the compass of ordinary voices. To all the voice-parts attention has been paid in this respect. But some beautiful and useful Chants which do not fulfil these conditions have been either given as alternatives or placed in the Appendix." Nothing could be better than such considerations. The next quotation is of an equally common-sense nature. "The appropriation of each Chant to its particular Psalm has not been made experimentally; in a large number of cases the Chants have been sung for many years to the very Psalms to which they are here attached, to the satisfaction and edification of choirs with which the Editors have been associated." In addition to many chants (276 in all) both old and new, herein set forth, the Editors contribute thirteen new specimens in the proportion of seven to six between them. The practicability of this collection admits of no dispute.

*An Album of Twelve Ballads for Bairns.* Composed by Alicia Adélaïde Needham. [Boosey and Co.]

CHRISTMAS time is the children's carnival, and Mrs. Needham's volume of ballads comes very seasonably and is calculated to brighten many homes this winter where little folks hold sway. But although words and music are such as will surely appeal to budding minds, most of the songs will please those of older growth, for several speak as in allegory of life's experiences, and now and again the lines are in turn humorous and pathetic. The music also, although for the most part simple and only demanding moderate executive means, is always musically, appropriate to the text, melodious, and vivacious. It may be added that one of the songs is a setting of J. W. Riley's much recited little poem "Little orphan Annie."

*The North Coates Supplemental Tune-Book.* A collection of tunes composed by T. Richard Matthews.

[Novello and Company, Limited.]

THIS is a new and enlarged edition of a book containing upwards of 100 tunes by the Rev. T. R. Matthews, who has been rector of North Coates, Lincolnshire, for the past thirty years. The preface gives the purport of the collection in the following words: "Most of these tunes were composed for use in North Coates Church, the choir of which included several members of the composer's family. Hence the title of the book. The aim of the composer has been to supply tunes of such simple melody and harmony as an ordinary village choir can sing without difficulty." The mere fact, however, that Mr. Matthews' tunes have found their way into nearly all the current hymnals of the day is a sufficient proof that they are of no ordinary amateur genus. A very commendable characteristic of these tunes is their devotional simplicity. Their melodies and harmonies flow naturally, and, moreover, there is an entire absence of that straining after effect and originality which not only disfigures so many

modern hymn-tunes, but causes them to be unvoiced and, therefore, unacceptable to both choirs and congregations. It would facilitate the use of the book were an index of the first lines of words provided in addition to an index of tunes.

*La Mascarade.* Suite for the Pianoforte for four hands. By George Aitken. (Op. 14.) [Leonard and Co.]

THIS suite consists of three pieces, the first of which is entitled "Rendezvous." It is in waltz measure, and the principal melody has a swing and a lightheartedness that indicate that the meeting is a happy one. The second movement is entitled "Danse," and a very gay dance it is, suggestive of a masked ball. Towards the close an effective contrast to a well worked-up *stretto* is made by a return to the waltz theme. The third number, called "Le Retour," is equally bright, and seems to imply that the "parting was well made." The music is unpretentious and very easy to read and play, and it possesses a vivacity and gaiety that make it decidedly attractive.

*Six Easy Pieces for Violin and Pianoforte.* Second Set. In two books. By Max Oesten.

[Novello and Company, Limited.]

THESE pieces are quite easy, the first book lies within the compass of the first position, if necessary. They are charming, particularly "Evening in the wood," "The Orphan," and "Love Song." Written with real musicianly skill, there is no feeling of the composer being cramped in writing below a certain degree of difficulty. They are excellent pieces for young players.

*Air de Ballet, Lamento, Romance, Gavotte, Amoroso, and Moto Perpetuo* (Op. 1, Nos. 1 to 6). For Violin and Pianoforte. By Percy Pitt.

[Novello and Company, Limited.]

VERY interesting pieces for violin and pianoforte, of which doubtless *Air de Ballet, Romance, and Amoroso* will be favourites. The spirit of the compositions is distinctly modern, as will be imagined from Mr. Pitt's training and associations. The pieces are full of interest to both players; the accompanist has no dull moment. The composer may well be proud of his Opus 1.

*Three Characteristic Pieces for the Pianoforte.* By Mary Carmichael.

*Etude-Caprice for the Pianoforte.* By Helena M. Hobson.

*The Spinning-Wheel.* Sketch for Pianoforte. By Hugo Willemssen. [Edwin Ashdown.]

MISS CARMICHAEL'S pieces are respectively named "Spring Song," "Lullaby," and "Rustic Scene," and they are each pleasing and well written examples of their class. They present no exceptional difficulties to the executant, but require a crisp touch and a sympathetic style to do them justice. The most attractive is the "Spring Song," which is very bright and gay. The "Lullaby" is graceful and very easy. Miss Carmichael's rustics are more refined than commonly imagined by composers, but this may correct itself in the twentieth century; in the meantime the piece will doubtless prove acceptable in many drawing-rooms.

The *Etude-Caprice* is a melodious and vivacious little piece, by no means difficult. It affords good opportunities for the cultivation of the *staccato* touch both from the wrist and the finger.

Spinning-wheels have a strong family resemblance, and when a composer sets himself to illustrate the revolutions of the wheel of romance he puts his powers of originality to a severe test. In this instance the traditional whirr passages are allied to pleasing melody which imaginative listeners may associate with the dreams of a *Marguerite* who has recently met her *Faust* for the first time.

THE "Professional Pocket Book" for 1900, published by Messrs. Rudall, Carte and Co., has, as usual, made its timely appearance. Its usefulness to professional musicians and others who have hourly engagements is too well known to need any recommendation.