Review

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The violin parts—employed only within the compass of the first to third positions—are most ably written, and afford almost a maximum of effect with a minimum of effort. The accompaniments, as usual with Herr Bohm's compositions, are always interesting, and with pleasing harmonies well support the soloist.

'First Steps for the Violin' should prove to be a useful instruction book. It comprises a number of easy and progressive studies and a collection of melodious pieces with pianoforte accompaniment. Mr. Kreuz is an experienced teacher and an accomplished musician, and he has embodied in this Primer the results of years of observation of the difficulties met with by beginners. He considers that in instruction books, as a rule, too many difficulties are introduced at each successive step. His course is divided into twenty well defined and graded steps, and the technical instruction is accompanied by explanations of musical theory. But the logic of violin fingering and not that of abstract musical notation governs the gradation of the course. Thus one of the first exercises is in the key of E on the E string, the steps being based upon the idea of finger posture. In this way a pupil is led on to play many scales without difficulty. An attractive speciality of the course is that a pianoforte accompaniment is provided to the exercises. This will be an incentive to home practice. All the valuable exercises and melodious studies so treated are in the instruction book and are also published separately with the pianoforte accompaniment. They are thus available for use as a supplement to other courses.

Beethoven. By Ernest Walker.

[Philip Wellby.]

This little volume, belonging to the 'Music of the Masters' series edited by Mr. Wakeling Dry, concerns, as the title shows, only the master's music. Limited space compels the author to be brief, yet on every page he shows himself well acquainted with Beethoven's art-work. It would be impossible, and indeed unnecessary, to review this thoughtfully written book in detail. We therefore just comment on one or two passages. In the interesting chapter on the pianoforte sonatas, for instance, the author speaks of Op. 2, No. 3 in C, as 'technically very brilliant'; but we are surprised that he does not specially single out the *Adagio*, which seems to us on a far higher plane than the rest of the work. Again, we cannot agree with his opinion respecting the sonata 'Pathétique' as 'vastly superior' to that in C minor, Op. 10, No. 1. But after all there is truth in the old proverb, *Quot homines, tot sententia*. Attention, by-the-way, is called to the thematic similarity between the opening notes of the first three movements of Op. 106. But surely the fugue theme in the *Finale* might also have been included. In referring to Beethoven's music as a whole, Dr. Walker touches on the 'burning question' of the 'meaning' of instrumental music. He thinks it highly probable that all the master's statements recorded by the friends of Beethoven were 'mere jokes.' With this we cannot agree, although we feel sure that the composer would have looked with contempt on some of the 'meanings' assigned by various writers to many of his works. Neither do we think his remark to Charles Neate, *re* always working to a picture in his mind, 'cryptic,' 'difficult' to understand. There is a 'Chronological Table of Ludwig van Beethoven's Life,' but even for a small volume too brief, and referring principally to some works, their completion, production, or publication.

Declining now, the Sun's bright Wheel. Lo, now the Shades of Night are swiftly fading. Come, Holy Ghost. English words by the Rev. John Anketell. Music by Horatio Parker. Op. 58.

Two little songs: *The Lark. The Bumble-Bee.* Words by Alice Herbert. Music by John Pointer.

[Novello & Company, Limited.]

So many modern sacred songs have a secular character that it is satisfactory to come across these three legitimate examples by Professor Horatio Parker, which are instinct with nobility and reverent feeling. The original Latin words of 'Declining now' are by Charles Coffin; they are

taken from the Paris Breviary of 1735, and their dignity and depth of sentiment are echoed in the broad, musical phrases to which they are allied. This song is designed for a baritone voice, but 'Lo, now the shades' is written for a contralto. The text is a solemn prayer for pardon, protection and peace, and the music is distinctly impressive. 'Come, Holy Ghost' is similar in sentiment, but is laid out for a soprano voice, and affords a fine opportunity for *legato* singing. These songs may be specially recommended to those who sing at organ recitals given in churches.

Mr. Pointer's 'Two little songs' are delightfully gay and dainty little ditties for a soprano voice; moreover, they are as clever as they are pretty.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

Francis Hopkinson and James Lyon: two studies in early American Music. By O. G. Sonneck. Pp. viii. and 213 (Washington: Printed for the author by H. L. McQueen).—*The Ripon Psalter*. Edited by Rev. E. H. Swann, M.A., Succentor. Pp. 258 (Ripon: W. Harrison).

ASSOCIATION OF MUSICAL COMPETITION FESTIVALS.

The Association, which was formed in May 1904, held its first annual Conference on June 27 at Messrs. Broadwood's King's Room, Conduit Street. At the morning session there was a large attendance of ladies and gentlemen associated with between thirty and forty Festivals. Lady Mary Forbes-Trefusis presided. It was stated that 244 subscriptions and a donation of £10 had been received. The officers, Lady Forbes-Trefusis as Chairman, Miss Wakefield and Dr. McNaught as Hon. Secs., and Mr. W. II. Leslie as Treasurer, were re-elected, and it was decided that they were to be regarded as an Executive Committee with power to co-opt not more than two other members of the Association. We understand that Mr. Fuller-Maitland has consented to join as one of the co-opted members.

In the course of a short discussion on the business of the Association attention was drawn to a large map starred to show places in England where competitions were held. The most noteworthy feature was the concentration of a number of Festivals in the North-Western corner of England.

Mr. Fowler (Bristol) asked why Welsh competitions were not noticed on the Association lists, and it was stated that although the idea of competitions had been adopted from the Welsh, the lines of Eisteddfodau were generally different from the English Festivals, and there had been no disposition shown by the Welsh to join the Association.

Miss Wakefield then read a paper on 'How this Association can enhance the value of the musical competition festival movement. What is the hindrance to music in England?' It was impossible to lay down hard and fast rules for the conduct of Festivals, because the circumstances of districts differed considerably. Broadly, the scheme should include (1) a plain-sailing choral work, (2) a madrigal, (3) a male-voice part-song, (4) a female-voice part-song, and 'sight-singing for all and above all' and always with words at first sight. In addition to the above there should be, say, three junior classes—(1) a unison song or a round, (2) a two-part song, and (3) again sight-singing. As to the 'hindrance to music in England,' it consisted of the want of serious purpose on the part of the general public. The drawing-room view of music is paramount in England. She looked to the competition festival promoters to improve the outlook and to stifle all that tends towards want of thoroughness. 'Every nerve must be strained, every purpose rendered purposeful to the fullest extent possible, for so, and so only, may we hope to remove an artistic reproach of which we hardly seem aware.'

Mr. Plunket Greene, in opening a discussion, deplored the prevailing lack of seriousness in musical study. No doubt great strides had been made in recent years, and much of this progress was due to the movement initiated by Miss Wakefield. A big point in the whole matter was the professional singer. What songs were in demand? Unfortunately the wrong sort. The professional singer and the publisher naturally gave way to this demand, and so fed and accentuated the appetite. A vicious circle was