Review

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The Italian Registers. By Frederick Helmore.
[Masters and Co.]

IN this small pamphlet of some thirty-six pages there are many valuable remarks concerning the management of the three Registers of the Voice, designated in Italian "Voce di petto, voce di gola, and voce di testa." They are the outcome of a long experience, and may be read and studied with profit even by teachers, as well as by the taught. Mr. Helmore has no very high opinion of the koo-koo syllables employed for vocal exercises, but he attempts to prove too much when he proposes (p. 23) what he calls an amusing experiment, "Place," he says, "Bottasini (*sic*) and Norman-Néruda behind a screen, and there will be occasionally the same difficulty in distinguishing the double bass from the violin." This is absurd, and will do much to lessen the value of a work otherwise marked by shrewdness and commonsense.

Christian the Pilgrim. Sacred Cantata. By Wilford Morgan. [Morgan and Co.]

IN this adaptation of the main incident in the immortal story by Bunyan, "The Pilgrim's Progress," the author of the libretto, the late Arthur Matthison, has kept in mind the important need of dramatic contrast. The composer has intensified this quality by the character of his music, and has produced a work which has many of the elements required for popularity. His recitations are bold and emphatic, his arias melodious and pleasing, and the choruses are well written and effective. These qualities are all obtained without resorting to difficulties in device and treatment. The passages are easy enough for an ordinary choir to be able to read straight off. Such difficulties as exist are to be found in the accompaniments, and these, while they serve every purpose, need not daunt the most modest of players.

Three Pieces for the Pianoforte. By Walter Porter.
[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THERE is a degree of finish and elegance in these pieces which will recommend them strongly to pianists of refined tastes. No. 1, in F, is a gavotte, and though the gavotte form may be regarded as almost exhausted, Mr. Porter has managed to impart some freshness to his example, the chromatic opening of the principal subject at once arresting attention. The re-appearance of a few bars of the trio just before the close has a very Beethovenish effect. Nos. 2 and 3 are Impromptus in B minor and E flat respectively. The first of the two is a lively little piece in 6-8 time, with a somewhat rustic flavour; the other is more sedate and has the character of a song without words. All three pieces are pleasing as well as simple, but we must give our preference to the gavotte.

Three Children Sliding; A Ryghte Merrie Geste; The Snow-white Doe. Humorous Part-Songs. By W. W. Pearson. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THAT humorous music need not be vulgar the great masters from Haydn onwards have frequently demonstrated. The verses which Mr. Pearson has chosen in these compositions are nonsensical enough, but the music in each instance is worthy of consideration for its artistic qualities. Moreover, it is not remarkable for simplicity; the florid style of some of the old glee writers is caricatured with capital effect and only singers accustomed to this kind of music could render justice to these part-songs. As to which is the best of the three, opinions may differ; but we give our preference to "The Snow-white Doe," in which the well known hunting song rhythm is happily travestied.

Magnificat and Nunc dimittis in F. By J. Baptiste Calkin. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THIS is one of the best settings of the evening Canticles, for ordinary use, we have met with for some time. The music is flowing, elegant, and melodious, without being in the slightest degree trivial, and modern without extravagance. Perhaps the most original point in the service occurs at the very end, where an unexpected second inversion of the triad of A major is resolved on the dominant ninth of the original key. The effect of this is very bold and striking.

Polonaise in A; Caprice in D flat; Reverie in B. By Frederic W. Clarke. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THESE pianoforte pieces are, unfortunately, posthumous publications. We say unfortunately, because the composer was evidently possessed of far more than average ability. The principal subject of the Polonaise, with its bold and free yet perfectly legitimate harmonic transitions, proves the freshness of his ideas. This piece is the most ambitious and, on the whole, the most original and effective of the three. The Caprice may possibly recall the favourite Arabesque of Schumann, but it is none the worse on that account, and the Reverie is an elegant and pleasing trifle. All three are written in a style indicating that the composer was a master of his instrument.

If Doughty Deeds. By C. Lee Williams. Novello's Part-Song Book, Second Series. *If Doughty Deeds.* By Gerard F. Cobb. The Orpheus, New Series.
[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

IT is interesting to compare these two settings of Graham of Gartmore's verses. The first-named is for mixed voices and is a remarkably bright and spirited part-song certain to win high favour with choral societies. The other is for male voices only and Mr. Cobb has to some extent adopted the style of our English glee writers of a century ago. The *sol* passages are more modern and so is the effective *Coda*. The composer has provided a well written pianoforte accompaniment, obbligato.

Pieces by Handel. Arranged for the Organ by W. J. Westbrook. [Weekes and Co.]

DR. WESTBROOK is a veteran in the art of transcription, and his name is generally a criterion of excellence. The present book contains eleven of Handel's most familiar airs and choruses from "The Messiah," "Samson," "Solomon," "Judas," &c. There is no unnecessary piling up of difficulties, and the only fault we can find with the arrangements is that the division of the notes between the two hands is not indicated as clearly as it might be. Students who use the original edition of Mendelssohn's organ works are frequently perplexed from a similar cause.

The Syrens of the Sea. Words by Walter Parke. Music by Florian Pascal. [Joseph Williams.]

THE author of the words has selected a theme for his verses which has done duty over and over again since the days of Virgil. He has been successful in one respect. He has inspired the composer to write some very graceful music in his Cantata far more original than the subject with which it is associated. It is set for soprano solo, female chorus, and orchestra. The vocal parts are very good, and the pianoforte arrangement suggests some degree of delicacy of colour.

Twilight. A Glee. By Joseph L. Roeckel.
[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

AN excellent piece of part-writing, well laid out for the voices, and likely to be extremely effective when well sung. It is a "glee" only in name, as it possesses none of the characteristic qualities required in that form of composition, the chief of which are contrasted movements and independent melodiousness in the several voice parts. It is of some degree of novelty in construction, being a part-song in Rondo form, with a *Coda*, and is clever enough and striking enough to suggest a fresh departure in the treatment of the part-song.

Six Romances for the Pianoforte. By G. A. Macfarren.
[Edwin Ashdown.]

ANY posthumous publications by the late revered Principal of the Royal Academy of Music cannot fail to command attention and interest. These Romances, which have been edited and fingered by Mr. Walter Macfarren, are brief and easy sketches, written with the utmost refinement of manner, and in style may be said to be a compound of Mozart and Mendelssohn. Better models of course young players could not have, and we recommend the series to the notice of teachers as being thoroughly sound and healthy music.