

Review

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cessor for tenor, exacts a good deal from the executant. A Song for contralto, "My spirit him describes," is, judged by the taste of the present day, more ingenious than pleasing, but after it the Cantata closes well with a Choral, "O Jesus Christ, thou dearest Lord," the simple beauty of which will unite all suffrages in its favour. We repeat that musicians everywhere cannot but find pleasure in adding this work to their Bach collection.

Palestine. A Sacred Oratorio. The words by Reginald Heber. The music by William Crotch, Mus. Doc., Professor of Music in the University of Oxford. Edited, and the Pianoforte accompaniment revised, by Berthold Tours.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

PUBLIC attention having been called to the merits of this fine work by its performance at the Sacred Harmonic Society during the past month, the appearance of this octavo edition is well timed; for there can be little doubt that, although English composers are rising around us who have won a fame as Oratorio writers, we can ill afford to ignore one who proved his worth at a period when the production of a composition of such importance was regarded almost as an act of daring. It seems strange indeed that so little should be known of an artist who was not only celebrated as "Master Crotch, the Musical Child," but who was Professor of Music at the University of Oxford, Principal of the Royal Academy of Music, lecturer on the art at the Royal Institution, and the composer of several sacred works, including another Oratorio besides the one just published, called "The Captivity of Judah," which was produced in the theatre at Oxford in 1834, on the occasion of the installation of the Duke of Wellington as Chancellor of the University. Mr. Berthold Tours has most carefully edited and skilfully revised the pianoforte part of the edition of "Palestine," which for the first time places the work in a form appealing to the many; and Choral Societies will now have an opportunity of adding to their *répertoire* an Oratorio of which, indeed, every countryman of its composer has a right to feel proud.

Elijah. A Sacred Oratorio, by F. Mendelssohn Bartholdy. Pianoforte arrangement by Berthold Tours.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE arrangement of an Oratorio for our household instrument is by no means an easy task; for on one hand there is the danger of crowding in so many of the choral and orchestral parts as to weary the performer and dissatisfy the listener; and on the other there is a fear that in the attempt to simplify the score sufficiently to bring the transcription within the reach of average players the effect will be feeble. Mr. Berthold Tours has, we are bound to say, steered clear of both these difficulties, and has presented us with a pianoforte version of Mendelssohn's popular work which vividly recalls its numerous beauties in the original form. We may especially point to the choruses, "Yet doth the Lord see it not," "Blessed are the men," "He, watching over Israel," and "Behold, God the Lord," as masterly specimens of arrangement; and the duet of the Prophet with the Widow is also skilfully brought under the hands. This transcription will no doubt be widely spread amongst musical amateurs.

Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in F. By E. H. Birch, Mus. Bac.

The Creed of St. Athanasius. Composed by E. H. Birch, Mus. Bac.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

MR. BIRCH'S Evening Service is quite modern in thought and feeling, and, without being secular in style, is altogether free from the dryness which characterises much of the older cathedral music. The music will be found by no means difficult, and is likely to be popular. We must, however, express our regret that Mr. Birch should have chosen the form of a "Canon 4 in 2" for the Gloria of the Magnificat; because, though correctly written, it is not equal to the rest of the piece. It seems to us rather laboured, and the composer would, we think, have been better advised to give his imagination freer scope, instead of fettering it with the limitations he has imposed upon

himself. It is not every one, even of good musicians, who can write a really effective "Canon 4 in 2."

The "Athanasian Creed" is simply a double chant with varied harmonies, which requires no detailed notice.

The Morning and Evening Service set to music in the key of A. By F. Mendelssohn Bartholdy.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

BOTH choirmasters and choristers will hail with great satisfaction this grand service in its new octavo form—a form by the way which has almost entirely, and we think very wisely, taken the place of the old single parts. There are two versions of this work, Breitkopf and Härtel's and the one we have been most accustomed to see in this country, Messrs. Novello's. In this new edition Dr. Stainer, who has edited the work, has given us one or two valuable and important changes derived from the German version, and the service now stands in such a complete and readable form as to bring it within reach of the capabilities of many choirs who have hitherto been unable to perform it with effect.

The Union Psalter. Psalms and other portions of Scripture pointed for chanting. By William Lockett, Organist of Union Chapel, Oxford Road, Manchester.

[Hodder and Stoughton.]

THIS little book is published for the use of Nonconformists, and in its way is most commendable. Undoubtedly the pointing of a Psalter is a most difficult task, because the same passage may frequently be read or accented in more than one way. However, of the book under notice it certainly may be said that upon the whole the pointing *assists* in giving an intelligent reading of the text, which is saying much in its favour. We have long noticed the improvements which are taking place in the architecture of places for Nonconformist worship, and congratulate those who belong to this class of the community on having a book which must tend to greatly improve the ornateness of the musical part of their services.

Our conversation is in heaven. The righteous live for evermore. Anthems for four voices. Composed by Oliveria L. Prescott. [Stanley Lucas, Weber and Co.]

MISS PRESCOTT is a student at the Royal Academy of Music and a pupil of Professor Macfarren. Several of her compositions have from time to time been performed at the Concerts of the Academy pupils, and occasionally also elsewhere. The Anthems before us give proof of sound training, and are highly creditable as a student's production, but they are of scarcely sufficient importance to enable us to pass any opinion as to the amount of inventive power possessed by the composer. "Our conversation is in heaven" is simply a piece of smooth and flowing part-writing. "The righteous live for evermore" is more interesting in its ideas. The episode at the words, "Therefore shall they receive a glorious kingdom," is very good, and the return to the first subject on page 6 is well managed. Miss Prescott's vocal harmony is so correct that we are surprised to find that she has not been more careful with her organ part. In the last two bars of the first page she gives consecutive octaves between extreme parts, which are the more noticeable from the fact that the upper part is above the voice, while another instance of consecutive octaves in the organ part may be seen in the last bar but one of page 2.

Shew me Thy ways, Full Anthem; *Save me, O God,* Full Anthem, composed by Alfred Alexander (Novello, Ewer and Co.), are two short pieces by a composer whose name is new to us. They show very good musical feeling, and are well written for the voices. The enharmonic change at the foot of the second page of "Shew me Thy ways" looks harder than it is in reality. We can recommend these little Anthems to parochial choirs.

An Order of Service for use at a Harvest Thanksgiving (Novello, Ewer and Co.) is issued by the London Gregorian Choral Association, and will be found well adapted to its object in churches where Gregorian music is used.