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MUSICAL ASSOCIATION.

It has become a commendable custom with the Musical Association, when any prominent musician has ceased his life-work, to devote a meeting to kindly comment on his services to the art. Such tribute was paid, on the 8th ult., to the memory of the late Sir Robert Prescott Stewart, an honour, it must be admitted, somewhat delayed, since this esteemed Professor of Music of Dublin University died in March, 1894; but recognition has ever come slowly to genuine art workers, and so the tardy acknowledgment of the Association may be taken as a compliment. The Rev. O. J. Vignoles, who read what may be termed a biographical sketch, was at one time a pupil of the deceased, and so was able to impart to the paper a pleasant personal element, which afforded relief to the relation of the well-known facts of the musician's career. Several instances were given of his remarkable musical memory, and a curious side-light was thrown on the spirit of the period by the lecturer incidentally mentioning the custom of the choir boys spinning their tops and playing marbles in the nave of the Cathedral while Sir Robert would be practising on the organ. His influence in Dublin was very great, and it was owing to his exertions that an arts test was added to Dublin musical degrees, a procedure subsequently adopted in England.

Mr. Prendergast occupied the chair, and, in common with the Rev. D. Torrance, Mr. Southgate, and Mrs. Curwen, bore witness to the great abilities of Sir Robert as a composer, performer, and teacher.

REVIEWS.

The Eve of Saint Agnes. Dramatic Ballad by Thomas Whitney Surette. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE composer of this ballad has gone to John Keats for his text, and from the legendary poem of "The Eve of Saint Agnes" has made a judicious selection which tells the flight of the lovers *Porphyro* and *Madeline* with sufficient of the surrounding circumstances to excite interest in their endeavour. The music of the former is designed for a baritone and that of the latter for a soprano, but the solos of neither call for more than moderate vocal abilities. There are also some short solo passages for a contralto, who personates *Angela*, the compliant old dame to whom the lovers are much indebted for the success of their plans. The story is chiefly told by the choristers, who open the cantata with two well contrasted descriptive choruses, which are succeeded by instrumental "Revelry Music," well in keeping with the character of the work. *Porphyro's* arrival is described effectively by the tenors and basses in four-part harmony, and the subsequent numbers are admirably contrasted. The description of the heroine "As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon" is given in flowing four-part vocal harmony, which sometimes glides into five parts, the contraltos being divided. The last-named division of the choir relate, in melodious unison, the meeting of the lovers; but *Madeline* properly is made to speak for herself when she greets *Porphyro*, which she does in impassioned accents. The lines beginning "The frost wind blows" are set for first and second sopranos and first and second altos, and if crisply sung would form a vivacious feature. The *Finale* is well conceived. It is opened by an expressive solo for *Porphyro*, "My *Madeline*! sweet dreamer!" after which the chorus relate the progress of the storm while the lovers make good their escape and exchange the confidences usual on such occasions. This number is very dramatic in character, and, combined with a brief epilogue, ending *pianissimo*, effectively concludes a work which possesses much charm and musical interest and is admirably suited to amateur choral societies.

Novello's Octavo Anthems. Nos. 581, 583-585, 590-592. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

EXCELLENCE and variety distinguish the recent additions to this series of Octavo Anthems. No. 581, "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers," is an "anthem for sovereign's accession," and is part of the music specially composed by Sir George C. Martin for the memorable visit of the Queen to

St. Paul's Cathedral to celebrate the sixtieth year of her reign. It is hardly necessary to add that it will be found an effective anthem for Accession Day. Mr. Arthur E. Godfrey has provided No. 583, which is an anthem for soprano or tenor solo and chorus, designed for use on the fifth Sunday after Trinity, but also appropriate for general use. It opens with the words, "Be ye all of one mind," which is given to the tenors and basses in unison. The subsequent soprano solo, *Andante tranquillo*, is attractively melodious, and the words are admirably accented. This melody is taken up by the chorus in four-part harmony of a simple but effective nature. Another solo for the soprano and a passage for tenors and basses lead to the final chorus, which ends with a *pianissimo* two-fold "Amen." No. 584, "Eye hath not seen," is meant specially for Whitsuntide, but in common with the foregoing anthem is suitable for general use. The music is by Myles B. Foster, and a distinctive feature is a bass solo of dignified character which extends over two pages and affords an effective contrast to the opening and closing choruses of meditative character. "O God, Thou art my God" (No. 585), is by Bertram Luard Selby, and demands a tenor and soprano soloist. The anthem, though by no means difficult, would require a well trained choir to do it justice; but any extra practice it might entail would be well repaid in performance. In No. 590 Mr. G. F. Cobb has written an anthem for Eastertide, designed for baritone solo and chorus, that will interest well-trained vocalists. The music possesses a dramatic spirit, is effectively laid out for the voices, and the organ part has considerable independence. Another Easter anthem, "I will go unto the altar of God," by Cuthbert Harris, is provided in No. 591. This is simpler in character than the preceding number, and is of a nature that will be easily learnt by choirs of average abilities, the part-writing being melodious and easy to read. No provision is made for soloists, but a portion might be sung as a quartet, which would provide an effective contrast to the rest of the work. No. 592, "Alleluia! Now is Christ risen," by Thomas Adams, is also an excellent example of Church music for Eastertide. It is opened by the tenors and basses, who sing in unison an ancient Easter melody, of which good use is subsequently made. A feature of this anthem is the effective manner in which the divisions of the four-part chorus answer each other with happy avoidance of the executive difficulties usually associated with this device.

The Organist's Magazine of Voluntaries. Edited by E. Minshall. No. 42. [44, Fleet Street.]

THIS useful periodical publication continues to run its steady course. Perhaps the more interesting of the two compositions contained in the present number is a "Coro allegro alla marcia" in D, by Mr. Ernest H. Smith, which is suitable as an outgoing voluntary or recital piece. We question, however, whether the quaver pedal passages do not seem rather out of place; their effectiveness is hardly commensurate with their abnormal difficulty in a piece that is otherwise fairly easy and possesses some attractiveness.

The Year's Music, 1897. Edited by A. C. R. Carter. [J. S. Virtue and Co., Limited.]

THE editor of this useful book of reference claims to have provided "a concise record of all matters relating to music and musical institutions, which have occurred during the season 1896-7, together with information respecting the events of the season 1897-8." His 300 pages contain much valuable matter relating, for the most part, to concerts, whose name now-a-days is "legion" in London, in the provinces, and abroad. There is a very useful "list of new and other works performed for the first time in England during 1896-7," in addition to information relating to the great teaching academies and their staffs of professors, University degrees in music, &c. Last, but not least, there is an excellent index, which proves the wide scope of the book, both musically and geographically, as in almost consecutive lines we find "Bayreuth," "Bayswater," and "Bermondsey"! There are portraits of Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Dr. Hubert Parry, and Mr. W. H. Cummings, and one of Sir Walter Parratt forms the frontispiece.