Review

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old sermons, and on perusal marvel that our ancestors could Sunday after Sunday hear a chance sentence from the Bible divided regularly into three heads (after a high-flown exordium), and then made the teacher of a moral, drawn up, certainly in the most approved form, yet altogether to the very core, lifeless, meaningless, and quite without an appeal to the heart. Too similar is the result of an abuse of musical form, for it is in the power of almost any tolerably experienced musician to write Andantes as fast as a conjuror can draw lengths of string from his mouth, yet such music has not power to touch the heart, and in all probability will share the unenviable fate of all other unrealities. But it must be of course understood that a fault of the age is being pointed out, not a fault of Dr. Spark; only, a work such as this, in which so many well known authors appear as contributors, offers to the musical thinker an opportunity of gauging contemporary claims of merit. The compositions of Smart and Steggall call for praise, those of the former especially. The name of Parratt, less known than the two already mentioned, must some day be considered a guarantee for much original thought and device. Merkel all educated organists have learnt to respect. Mr. Westbrook is mediocre. Kühmstedt is certainly not deficient in quantity, though variable in quality. A contribution from G. A. Macfarren cannot but be a valuable morceau. Professor (written in full) Graedener (Hamburg) decks the already highly decorated chorale "Ein' feste Burg" with some very uninteresting quavers and semiquavers. A movement by Barnett is pleasing, though not original. To give a careful analysis of each number would be profitless to the analyst, and tedious to the reader; suffice it to say, here are wares of all kinds, pretty, ugly, strong and weak: he can assuredly satisfy his cravings, whether they be for a high or a low class of music.

Ave Verum. Motett for four voices. Dedicated to Mr. Henry Leslie. Composed by Charles Gounod.

THAT a Motett should have an introduction of seven bars, to be sung "con bocca chiusa," or rather, not to be sung at all, but "hummed," is a strange sight for English eyes, and would be a strange sound to English ears, when performed in sacred precincts. Church musicians will be relieved to hear that this introduction may be played, if it be desired so to do. The melody of this simple, yet deep composition, is most charming, and cannot but please and delight all who make its acquaintance. The harmonies, though never more than a plain support of the air, are not wanting in occasional touches of wholesome vigour; and the general effect of the music, whether the fine Latin, or exceedingly well adapted English version be used, cannot but be impressive and devotional.

O God, Thou art worthy to be praised. Anthem by Arthur S. Sullivan.

THERE is a freshness in the style of some parts of this Anthem which ought at once to commend it to the notice of those who are looking in the right direction for new church music. The first movement especially is so bold and vigorous that its shortness is to be regretted. The Quartett which follows, though melodious and most "singable," scarcely however rises above the ordinary standard. The final chorus opens with a theme given out by the soprani alone, afterwards taken up by the tenori, accompanied by the other three voice-parts. The whole Anthem is so simple in construction as to be well within the powers of almost any moderately trained choir, and undoubtedly will be a most useful addition to the repertory of churches and cathedrals.

Il Trovatore (The Troubadour). An Opera, in Four Parts, by Giuseppe Verdi. Edited, and Translated into English by Natalia Macfarren.

THE place of this work has been so thoroughly settled by the public supporting our lyrical establishments, that it will be unnecessary for us to say one word on its legitimate claims to such a position. It is certainly one of the

most popular of all the modern Italian operas; and it will indeed be welcome news to the many who for years have followed the fortunes of *Leonora* and *Manrico* through the medium of common-place "hand-books," when they are told that for a mere trifle more than they have been accustomed to pay, they can have a splendid edition of both words and music, which is not only designed for use in following the opera during its performance, but for permanent service on the desk of the drawing-room pianoforte. In every respect the manner in which this opera is put forth deserves the warmest commendation. The translation is excellent throughout, the music indeed in very many parts flowing equally well with the English as with the Italian words— notable instances of which will be found in the Cavatina, "Tacea la notte," and the well known song, "Stride la vampa"—and attention must also be drawn to the careful manner in which all the stage directions are given, and the several important points of the score indicated. We predict a large sale for this opera.

Unbeloved. A Song for a Bass voice. Words by Gerald Massey. Music by J. Stainer.

There are so few compositions of any importance especially written for bass singers that vocalists possessing this quality of voice should thank Dr. Stainer for providing them with so excellent a song as the one before us. The placid opening phrase, in F major, is beautifully harmonised; and in the Adagio in D major (the change into $\frac{3}{4}$ rhythm being partially anticipated by the triplet accompaniment in the preceding four bars) a good effect is gained by the warding off the key-note close until the conclusion. We can scarcely reconcile ourselves to the $\frac{3}{4}$ on C, in the key of F, after the chord of D major, at the commencement of the last phrase of the song; but the return to the subject in the voice part is extremely effective; and too much praise cannot be given to the admirable manner in which the feeling of the poetry is preserved in the music. This song is likely, we think, to become a general favourite.

Tears of Childhood. Song. Written by Rea. Music by Berthold Tours.

LIKE all the songs of Mr. Tours, this composition expresses faithfully the words, without thought of the model in which vocal works must be cast to fit the market. That this is the right road for an artist to travel towards enduring fame need not be again pointed out; for it is not because this truth is so commonly set aside in the race after temporary popularity that it should cease to be admitted as a truth. We have only to congratulate Mr. Tours, therefore, on the courage he has shown in resolving to wait for, rather than to wait upon, the good opinion of the public; and can assure him that if he continue to write as good songs as the one before us, he will not have to wait long. The tender phrase at the commencement, with a charming figure in the accompaniment, crossing above the voice part, is deeply sympathetic with the poetry. Beautiful also is the whole of the musical sentence which, creeping up through the keys of C major and D minor, bursts on a *piano* phrase in B flat major, the original key being most naturally and effectively regained by a modulation into C, which becomes the dominant, the voice sustaining the high G on the chord of the dominant seventh. We are not usually so technical in our reviews; but in this case we are tempted out of our usual course by the musicianlike treatment both of the vocal and instrumental portion of this composition. Mr. Tours may have written songs which with a general audience might produce more effect, but we regard this as the most poetical of all we have yet seen by this composer.

Novello's Part-Song Book. (Second Series). A collection of Four-part Songs. Composed by J. L. Hatton.

Vol. 6, for S.A.T.B.

Vol. 7, for A.T.T.B.

THESE two elegantly bound volumes will indeed be a boon to the collectors of part-music; for, apart from the intrinsic merit of the compositions, all those most suitable for presentation in such a shape, have been so excellently re-arranged by the composer for mixed voices that they