Review

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contrasts and effects, these being obtained by the voices sometimes singing in unison with variously harmonised organ accompaniment. In the Benedictus further variety is obtained by the verses being alternately sung in unison by the men and boys of the choir, with varied harmonies for the organ accompaniment.

Choirmasters in search of an easy setting of the Te Deum in unison, with occasional four-part choral writing, will find such an one in G, provided by James Shaw, in No. 409. Varied harmonies and independence in the organ accompaniment provide effective contrast.

No. 410 is the Jubilate set by the same composer as that of the preceding number. The key is G and the style is similar to that adopted for the Te Deum. The last verse is written for bass solo, or all the basses in unison.

No. 411 provides a simple arrangement of the Te Deum in B flat by John P. Attwater. The vocal writing is chiefly in four parts and is diatonic in character. A transition to the key of G flat for verses twenty and twenty-one, which are intended to be sung unaccompanied, forms an impressive episode.

In No. 412 Mr. Arthur H. D. Prendergast has set the Magnificat and Nunc dimittis in continuation of Boyce's Morning Service in C. He has made deft use of some of the phrases of the latter in the Magnificat and employed Boyce's setting of the Gloria of the Jubilate for that of the Nunc dimittis. Mr. Prendergast has also cleverly imitated the style of the old composer, and the result is worthy of wide favour.

A simple arrangement of the Te Deum in chant form, by Sir John Stainer, will be found in No. 413. A quadruple chant in A flat has been adopted with modifications to meet the requirements of the text. The organ part doubles the voice parts save where the latter are in unison, when simple but effective harmonies are written for the instrument.

Autumn Glory. By E. L. Newman.

Morceau Caractéristique. By William Milner.

Valse Caprice. By Ernest Dale.

[Weekes and Co.]

AMATEUR pianists in search of solos of light and pleasing character and moderate difficulty may be recommended the above pieces. "Autumn Glory" is a reverie, and manifestly the thoughts which have prompted the musing fit have been pleasant.

The "Morceau Caractéristique" (why not "Characteristic piece"?) is bright and interesting and very effective considering the moderate demands it makes on the player.

The "Waltz Caprice" has little capriciousness, but it is graceful and alluring, and would repay any practice it might require.

New Anthems for Advent. Novello's *Octavo Anthems*. Nos. 607 and 616. *The Night is far spent.* Composed by Myles B. Foster. *Blessed are they.* Composed by Hugh Blair.

[Novello and Company, Limited.]

THE words of both these anthems are taken from the New Testament, and both compositions merit wide acceptance. Mr. Foster's work is remarkably well knit, and it is certainly one of the best of his many productions in this form. It is in four vocal parts throughout. The opening is spirited and contains some effective imitative entrances, which, however, will not be found difficult of execution. The second section, in triple measure, is dramatic in character, and an impressive passage caused by a simple enharmonic transition occurs at the words "Lest coming, He find you sleeping." A return to the principal theme leads up to a vigorous conclusion.

Whereas Mr. Foster's anthem exhorts Christians to be on the alert and watching for their Lord's coming, the text of Mr. Blair's composition sets forth the blessedness of those who are watchful. The music of the latter is consequently of a flowing and graceful character, and the part-writing is smooth and grateful to sing. There are no vocal solos, but there are several fugal entrances which give point and interest to the music. Considerable contrapuntal skill is shown in the treatment of the voices, and several very happy effects are produced by simple means, notably in the closing bars, which, sung by a carefully trained choir, would be very charming.

The 'Prentice Pillar. A romantic Opera in one act. Words by Guy Eden. Music composed by Reginald Somerville. [Novello and Company, Limited.]

THE merits of Mr. Somerville's opera were recognised on the original production of the work on September 24, 1897, at Her Majesty's Theatre, during a season of English opera, under the management of Mr. E. C. Hedmond, and as now issued by Messrs. Novello it may be warmly recommended to operatic companies and amateur operatic societies. Only four characters are required, respectively possessing soprano, tenor, baritone, and bass voices, and the vocal writing does not present exceptional difficulties. Only one scene is required for the telling of the poetical story, and the instrumental music has been effectively arranged for the pianoforte. Apart from its acceptability in its entirety, there are several songs which could be sung separately with excellent effect. The first tenor song, in particular, with its graceful melody and the opportunities afforded for expressive and impassioned utterance, would form a valuable addition to the repertory of a capable singer, and the duet, "O mighty piece of sculpture," may be recommended to all soprano and tenor vocalists.

Hohenlinden. Cantata for chorus of Men's Voices (T.T.B.B.) and Orchestra. The words by Thomas Campbell. The music by Percy Pitt.

[Novello and Company, Limited.]

THE spirit of Campbell's well-known and vivid battle scene seems to palpitate in Mr. Pitt's stirring and dramatic setting. The work was performed at the London Musical Festival, at the Queen's Hall, on May 11 last, and made so favourable an impression that it is to be hoped the composition may be heard again in central London at no distant date. Meantime, it well merits the attention of amateur choral societies, who would find in it music interesting to study and effective to sing. The choral writing is vigorous and direct in expression, and the bold and striking harmonic changes excite and sustain the attention of the listener.

MUSIC IN BIRMINGHAM.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

MOST of our concert-giving organisations have now issued their prospectuses for the coming season. The Festival Choral Society's first concert is fixed for the 19th inst., when Mendelssohn's "Elijah" will be performed. At the succeeding concerts the programmes will consist of a concert-recital of Wagner's "The Flying Dutchman" and a selection from the works of Handel, Coleridge-Taylor's "Hiawatha's Wedding-Feast," and Sullivan's "Light of the World." The new City Choral Society has commenced rehearsals, and will, during the season, bring out Coleridge-Taylor's "Hiawatha's Wedding-Feast," Saint-Saëns's "Christmas" Oratorio, and Gounod's "St. Cecilia" Mass. The societies that chiefly give the cheap Saturday evening concerts announce a number of works. The Midland Musical Society will perform Handel's "Messiah," Mendelssohn's "Elijah," and Gounod's "Faust" and "Redemption." The Choral Union promises "Samson," "Messiah," "Elijah," and "Maritana." The Choral and Orchestral Society will perform a new cantata, "A Song of Thanksgiving," by its conductor, Mr. Joseph H. Adams, and Dr. Herbert Wareing's cantata "The Wreck of the Hesperus," which has not yet been heard in Birmingham. Other works are "The Messiah," "Creation," and "Cavalleria Rusticana."

Mr. Halford's orchestral concerts have already been referred to. His exceedingly interesting series of symphonies, ranging from Haydn and Mozart to Tschaiikowsky and Stanford, will be appreciated by his supporters, who are growing in numbers. The great event of the season will be the visit, in March next, of M. Rachmaninoff, who will play the Pianoforte Concerto he has written expressly for these concerts.

Mr. Max Mossel will introduce Señor Sarasate, Miss Fanny Davies, and other distinguished artists at his drawing-room concerts, and Mr. Oscar Pollack will have a stronger array of talent than usual at the *matinées* of the Royal Society of Artists.