Review

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eight parts; but we think Mr. Clarke runs some little risk in leaving it without accompaniment. Unless in the hands of a very good choir, the pitch would be likely to fall, in which case the entry of the organ pedal at the end would have an effect the reverse of agreeable. We can recommend the anthem for those choirs that can manage it; but it is not particularly easy to sing well.

Six Short and Easy Anthems, by Frederick Iliffe, Mus. Bac., Oxon., Book II. (Novello and Co.) This set of anthems is a continuation of the series of six which we reviewed some time since in the *MUSICAL TIMES*. We can only repeat what we said on that occasion—that Mr. Iliffe knows how to make his music easy without making it either poor or dry. We consider the second series quite equal to the first. Our own favourite is No. 9, "Fret not thyself because of the ungodly," which displays much feeling, but all are so good that opinions will no doubt differ as to which is the best. We can warmly recommend them. By the way, Mr. Iliffe, is not the A in the alto in the last bar but one of the first page of No. 7 a misprint for G? We certainly think so.

Short Pieces for the Organ; edited by W. Spark, Mus. Doc. Books 5 and 6. [Ashdown and Parry.]

It may be said of these arrangements, as of many others, that their design is better than their execution. It is certainly well to provide organists with easy pieces, as opening or middle voluntaries, not occupying more than two or three minutes each in performance; but in making his selections Dr. Spark ought to bear in mind the original intentions of the various composers, and these he sometimes appears to overlook altogether. In the two books now before us we find some very astonishing things. For example, at page 4 of Book 5 is given an "Andante grazioso" by Dussek, said to be "from the pianoforte works," and so it certainly is—a long way from them. It is a fragment; that is to say, the beginning and end of the Rondo from his Sonata for Piano in G (Op. 35, No. 2), which in the original is not an "Andante grazioso" at all, but a "Molto allegro." It is, to say the least of it, taking a great liberty thus to alter entirely the character of a composition. Again, in Book 6 we find a "Larghetto" by Weber, which is the sixth of his variations on "Vien qua, Dorina bella" detached from its context, and thus rendered meaningless, and with four bars (we presume from the pen of the editor) tacked on at the end! The last piece in this book, entitled an "Andante sostenuto," by Mendelssohn, is a preposterous concoction from the "Dix-sept variations Sérièuses," including the theme, the tenth and fourteenth variations, and the last few bars of the coda, which, being in their original form utterly unsuited for the organ, have been stretched upon the Procrustean bed of the editor till they are distorted almost beyond recognition. Many of the other pieces are not so badly treated as those we have named; but we are much surprised that a musician of Dr. Spark's standing in the profession should allow his name to be associated with proceedings so inartistic as those which we have pointed out.

Six Original Pieces for Harmonium or Organ, by Michael Watson. [C. Jefferys.]

By "organ" we presume Mr. Watson means "American organ," because these pieces, it may be said at once, are quite unsuited for the "King of Instruments." Moreover, Mr. Watson has so clear an idea of the capabilities of the harmonium that it would be an insult to his common sense to suppose him not to know that, while an organ piece may often be rendered effective on the harmonium, the converse will very seldom be the case if the specialties of the latter instrument have been properly taken into account by the composer.

Of musical literature for the harmonium the supply is very small. In most cases players have to content themselves either with pianoforte pieces or with those nondescript arrangements "for organ or harmonium" which, in attempting to serve both, become useless for either. We therefore cordially welcome Mr. Watson's *Six Original*

Pieces. They are written in the ordinary forms of modern drawing-room pieces, and make no pretensions to the classical. Without displaying any very decided originality, they are melodious and pleasing, while they are effective without undue difficulty. The treatment of the stops, also, which is carefully marked throughout, is judicious, and shows that Mr. Watson thoroughly understands the peculiarities of the instrument. We must also commend his wisdom in writing for only a moderate-sized harmonium (with four rows of vibrators), instead of relying for his effects on stops but rarely to be met with. In only one case do we differ from him. In the March (No. 5) he has directed the "Expression" stop to be put in when the "Grand Jeu" is drawn. This we think a mistake. We hold that the "Expression" should *invariably* be used, except when the harmonium is intended to imitate the passionless tone of the organ, which is not the case here. We recommend these pieces to harmonium players as a useful addition to their limited *répertoire*.

A Collection of Organ Pieces; composed by Charles Joseph Frost. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE present volume, containing 120 pages of large oblong folio, is precisely one of those publications which presents the most difficulty to a conscientious reviewer. On the one hand, there is so much sterling work in it, and so much care has evidently been expended upon it, that it would be not only cruel but really unjust to the author to condemn it; but on the other hand there is so little real individuality about it, and some of the twenty-four numbers of which it consists are so very dry, that one cannot unreservedly commend it. We are inclined to think that the fairest judgment we can pass upon the work is to express an opinion that Mr. Frost has very little to say, and says it very nicely. It is in the shorter numbers of the work that we consider him most successful, such, for instance, as the Prelude, p. 20, the Allegro maestoso, p. 31, or the Preludes, pp. 34 and 94; the longer and more elaborate pieces are too frequently very diffuse, the subject matter not being interesting enough to reconcile us to their length. This is especially the case with the Sonata in A minor, which occupies twenty-seven pages, several of the themes of which are decidedly pleasing, but which, as a whole, suffers terribly from prolixity. The volume, nevertheless, contains many numbers which organists will find useful as voluntaries.

Andante in A flat major for the Organ; composed by W. S. Hoyte. [Weekes and Co.]

This pleasing movement, though not of any striking originality, is likely to find favour with organists. It is smooth and flowing in character, and demands neither an unusual amount of execution in the player, nor an exceptionally large instrument for its proper performance. In its style it approximates more nearly to the better class of French organ compositions than to any other school. There is only one point in it which we do not like, the "false relation" at the end of the first line of page 3, the effect of which is to our mind decidedly unpleasing.

Joyous Thoughts. Scherzo for Piano, by Alice Hart. [Duff and Stewart.]

If this little sketch were at all difficult, the key, B flat minor, would frighten the majority of amateurs; but, although marked "Vivo," the passages will trip off easily enough, even when set in motion by only moderately trained fingers. The theme is attractive, and treated with musicianlike skill throughout; the subject in the tonic major, with the melody in the left hand, is excellent as a contrast; and praise is due for the absence of any unduly complicated harmonies. We think it a pity that the conventional arpeggios should have been so freely introduced in a piece which would have sufficiently suggested "joyous thoughts" without them; but we presume that they have their mercantile value. In kindness to the composer we may mention that nine out of ten amateurs will play A natural in the bass of the seventeenth bar, page 4.