Review

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David, together with the old canticles, with some new ones alluded to above; Proper Psalms, and selections of Psalms pointed for chanting, and set to appropriate chants, adapted to the use of the American Church, by Alfred Fox, of Cleveland, Ohio; D. E. Hervey, of Newark, New Jersey; and Henry King, of St. Paul's Cathedral, London.

The book is furnished with an admirable selection of single and double chants, such as have for the most part been associated in the minds of worshippers for a long period of time in the Old Country, and which will doubtless also commend themselves to members of the Church in America. The judgment which has guided the selection commands admiration. There are one or two differences of arrangement which will not fail to strike the observant reader, and those acquainted with liturgical peculiarities.

The American Church ordains that special or Proper Psalms shall be used on no less than sixteen "certain" days in the year, being ten more than the Church of England provides for. Besides these, there are several selections of Psalms intended to be used instead of those for any ordinary day, at the discretion of the Minister. This provides, not only for national, but also for local celebrations of particular importance as they occur. This latitude of arrangement, however, has given the musical editors a considerable amount of extra labour in selecting appropriate chants, so as to gain the necessary amount of variety. In the first place, it was imperative to bear in mind the words of the opening paragraph of the preface, which gives directions as to the use and appropriateness of the chants, so as to keep the new matter uniform with the old. This accounts for the prevalence of single chants throughout the book. Where it was possible, modern double chants from "St. Paul's Cathedral Chant Book," and other sources, have been introduced. All of these chants are of tried value, and some by Martin, Turler, Elvey, Hervey, Barrett, and others, are rightly considered as so fitly connected with the words of certain Psalms as to be held to be among the grandest inspirations of their kind. In the service for the Burial of the Dead in the present book, the Psalm is made up of part of both Psalms in the English book. To this arrangement a double chant as well as two single chants have been used with good and striking effect. To English readers, many alterations will not pass unobserved. Thus in the Venite, for the last four verses, two verses of Psalm 96 are substituted; in the Te Deum, verses 12, 16, 28 differ from the Anglican version; in the Benedictus, verse 32 is omitted; two canticles are added to Evensong, and Psalm 141 is transferred to Evening Prayer. An occasional change of key has been made in some of the chants employed in sequence, probably in order to avoid the violence of tonal transition, but, as a whole, the selection of chants has not only been admirably, but it has been reverently and thoroughly done, and the musical portion of the American Psalter is an interesting monument of patient and careful work.

Eight Pieces for the Pianoforte. Composed by Anton Strelezki. (Op. 47.) [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE high Opus number of this composer's works shows that he has for some time taken his place before the public as a composer; and, judging from the freedom with which he writes for the instrument, we may imagine that the pianoforte has chiefly claimed his attention. Notwithstanding the multiplicity of compositions especially appealing to the cultivated taste of pianists daily published, there is always room for artistic sketches like those now before us, and we are glad to make acquaintance with, and introduce to those in search of novelty, such excellent specimens of thoughtful and refined workmanship. With the exception of No. 4, "In the Meadows," not one of the pieces challenges our criticism as to its applicability to a fanciful title; and this we are inclined to consider a merit, seeing how much the purely musical value of a composition is often obscured by the thought of its fidelity to the composer's avowed intention. No. 1, a melodious and unpretentious "Notturmo," and No. 2, "Aubade," create a favourable impression of the author's power of writing graceful and melodious music, the harmonies throughout being thoroughly in keeping with the subjects. In the "Aubade," especially,

the winning nature of the theme and its fanciful treatment will delight all pianists who desire to rely rather upon the eloquence than the elasticity or force of their fingers. No. 3, "Mélodie," has a placid theme in F major, with a continuous arpeggio accompaniment and some effective modulations thoroughly in keeping with the feeling of the piece. No. 4, "In the meadows"—already mentioned as the only "character piece"—not only justifies its title, but will assuredly assert, by its intrinsic excellence, a high—if not the highest—claim to a prominent place amongst its companions. The simplicity of its opening phrase is carefully preserved throughout this charming little musical picture, which is as exhilarating as a walk in the country. Of the two dance pieces, No. 5, "Mazurk," and No. 8, "Valse Impromptu," we give the preference to No. 5, which has the true feeling of the Mazurka without being an obvious imitation of the standard compositions of this character which flood the market. No. 6, "Miniature," and No. 7, "Impromptu," are happily named, the first being a highly finished little sketch of but small pretence, and the second just such a specimen of a "song without words" as an accomplished artist might improvise. That these attractive pieces will speedily make their way to public favour there can be no doubt, and we may even predict that some will be published in separate form.

Brennende Fragen auf dem Gebiete der Tonkunst. Von Dr. August Reissmann.

[Wiesbaden: R. Bechtold and Co.]

INASMUCH as the opinions of a sound and practically trained musical scholar, concerning the existing status of our art, are at all times worth attention, the present volume of ten short essays from the pen of the well-known editor of the "Musikalisches Lexikon" may be perused with advantage by all who are interested in the subject. To call the various matters discussed therein "burning questions" is, however, a distinct misnomer, since they appertain, for the greater part, to the calmer sphere of musical aesthetics, and have either been set at rest long since in the minds of most men or have been flickering away, as "questions," ever since music began to speak an independent language. An author, on the other hand, so well-informed as Dr. Reissmann, cannot fail to be instructive to the general reader, especially on historical points, while his strongly marked personal bias in polemical matters can leave no room for doubt as to his artistic standpoint in the minds of those who may happen to differ from him. Among the best and most generally applicable essays of the series we may instance those on "Genius and its Development," "Progress and Reaction in the Art," "Style and Mannerism," and "Musik-Plagen," the latter dealing with the eminently practical, and in many instances doubtless "burning" question of how to regulate and confine within reasonable limits the ever-growing obtrusiveness of music cultivation in cases where it is apt to interfere with the comfort of our neighbours. The few heads just quoted of articles contained in this volume should suffice to indicate the width of range of the entire series, which, though of unequal merit, will present numerous points of special interest to the thoughtful reader.

Twelve Elementary Duets for the Pianoforte. By Emma Mundella. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

IT is not easy in the present day to write elementary music which shall commend itself to the attention of young players by any especial character; but Miss Mundella has, we think, been highly successful in the attempt to interest both pupils and teachers by composing duets in which at first the young pianist shall play the treble notes, in the highest staff, with the right hand, and afterwards the bass notes, in the lowest staff, with the left hand. As the teacher has important parts with both hands in all these duets, the little pieces are highly attractive throughout. The author truly says that duets practised in this manner "impart to the pupil a rapid appreciation of harmony, rhythm, and even of melody, which would be impossible if only solo playing were taught." We know how extremely difficult it is to introduce a new system of acquiring the

notes, considering how the present method has been sanctified by time; but we earnestly counsel thoughtful teachers to make a trial of Miss Mundella's book, and be guided only by experience as to the result. We may say that the melodious nature of all the duets contained in the volume will delight juvenile pianists, and that the ingenious manner in which the teacher's part is woven in with that for the pupil can scarcely fail to win the cordial approval of every sympathetic listener.

The Golden Fleece, a humorous Cantata; and *The Lord of Gold*, a sacred Cantata. By Edmund Rogers.

[Glasgow: Bayley and Ferguson.]

THE versatility of the composer is cleverly shown in these two Cantatas. There is a considerable amount of grace of melody interwoven with the humorous thoughts of the author of the book of "The Golden Fleece" (Mr. Joseph Despicht). The fun is genuine and hearty, and the whole treatment, inspired, as one cannot help thinking, by a study of the Gilbert and Sullivan productions, will find, as it deserves to find, much favour.

"The Lord of Gold" is an adaptation of the story of Daniel, set to effective but by no means difficult music, so that it forms an excellent addition to the number of Cantatas suitable for use in Church, for which there is now a growing demand.

Practical Hints on Boy Choir Training. By J. Edward Stubbs. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

MR. STUBBS, the Organist and Choirmaster of St. James's Church, New York, deserves the heartiest thanks of all who are interested in the subject of which he treats. His remarks are sensible, reasonable, and to the point, and whether in dealing with the facilities for carrying on choir work, or in describing the characteristics of the boy's voice, vocal training, or pronunciation, phrasing, expression, or in the giving of many valuable hints which the pages contain, he is always clear and interesting. Choirmasters may read his book with profit; they will certainly derive no little pleasure from the perusal.

Crossing the Bar. Song. Composed by William S. Hannam. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THIS setting of the Poet Laureate's well-known words is not without its good points. It exhibits due appreciation of the poetry. There is a clever modulation at the end, from E major to E flat major, which shows the composer to be possessed of some musical ability. The song is attractive, and will, doubtless, find favour with the public and take a good place in the estimation of singers. The consecutive fifths employed in the first bar of the second page, and repeated later in the song, indicate, perhaps, that the composer intended the effect they produce. There is, however, nothing gained by their use, and their introduction might easily have been avoided.

Magnificat and Nunc dimittis in the key of F. By George Shinn.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THERE are, it is true, plenty of good settings of the Canticles of the Church suited to the capacities of unambitious choirs, but there is no reason why their number should not be increased, especially when, as in the present case, the composer knows from experience the exact thing required for the use of parish choirs, and has accomplished his task with the skill of a good musician and the reverence due to the words he has chosen to associate with sound.

FOREIGN NOTES.

THE German version of Sir A. Sullivan's opera "The Yeomen of the Guard" ("Der Königsgardist") was, on Saturday, the 4th ult., produced for the first time before a crowded audience at the Carl Schulze Theatre, in Hamburg, and was received with great applause.

M. Jules de Swert has completed a comic opera, entitled "Piccolino," which is to be produced this winter at Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague.

A new theatre, to be called The Eden, is to be erected at Berlin at a cost of some £100,000, a company having been formed for the purpose; and Herr Ronacher, of Vienna, is mentioned as the probable director.

Herr Richard Kleinmichel, already favourably known in Germany by his opera "Manon," has completed a new operatic work, "Der Pfeifer von Dusenbach," the interesting libretto of which deals with an episode in the life of a "piper" of the fifteenth century, and also introduces a picturesque scene of the "Piper's Day" at Rappoltsweiler, to which we had occasion to refer in our last month's Notes.

The production of Wagner's "Siegfried"—third part of the "Nibelungen" tetralogy—with M. Wilder's French translation, at Brussels, has been delayed on account of M. Servais's refusal to conduct the work without the full orchestral complement for which it is scored by its composer.

Anton Rubinstein is said to contemplate resigning his chair as Principal of the St. Petersburg Conservatoire ere long, owing to the incessant strain of examinations.

On the 4th ult. the three hundredth performance of Gounod's "Faust" was recorded at the Imperial Opera of Vienna.

Two early operettas by great composers—viz., Mozart's "Bastian und Bastienne" and Mendelssohn's "Die Heimkehr aus der Fremde" ("Son and Stranger")—were produced and received with much interest last month by the "Gesellschaft der Opernfreunde" of Berlin. Mozart's little pastoral (composed in 1768) had never been performed previously in public.

The recently discovered charming canzonetta for three male voices, by Carl Maria von Weber, has just been published, with added German words, by the firm of Raabe and Plöth, of Berlin.

The Royal Library of Munich has just acquired a most interesting collection of autograph letters by Orlando Lasso, hitherto in private possession. Lasso (or Lassus) was for the greater part of his career Chapellmaster to the Duke of Bavaria, and died at Munich in 1594.

Handel's rarely heard Oratorio "Theodora" was performed twice by the Elbing Church Choir, under the direction of Herr Theodore Carstenn.

The performances at Bayreuth next year will comprise three representations of "Tristan und Isolde," seven of "Tannhäuser," and ten of "Parsifal," the entire series extending from July 19 to August 19. The Conductors will be Herren Levi, of Munich, and Felix Mottl, of Carlsruhe.

At the Berlin opera a new ballet, entitled "Prometheus," is in course of preparation, the author of the text being Herr Emil Taubert, and the music Beethoven's setting to "Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus." The original version of the latter being long since lost, Beethoven's music has hitherto been confined to the Concert-room; and by thus reconnecting it with the stage, the Berlin opera is undertaking a very interesting experiment.

M. P. Diaz is the composer of a new opera, "Benvenuto Cellini," which is to be brought out shortly at the Paris Opéra Comique. This is the eighth operatic work upon the subject, which was first treated, musically, by Berlioz (1838), by Franz Lachner (1840), Louis Schloesser (1845), and Lauro Rossi (1845). In more recent years the Maëstri Orsini (1875), of Naples, and Bozzano (1877), of Genoa, have each produced a "Cellini," while M. Saint-Saëns's latest opera, "Ascanio," is also concerned with the career of the great Florentine sculptor.

Signor Vianesi has definitely resigned his post as Conductor of the Paris Opéra, and M. Joseph Dupont, who wielded the *bâton* at Covent Garden during the latter part of Mr. Gye's *régime*, is spoken of as his probable successor.

The excellent Concerts directed annually at the Paris Châtelet by M. Colonne recommenced on the 19th ult., with a programme including extracts from "Lohengrin" and "La Damnation de Faust," and Grieg's "Peer Gynt" Orchestral Suite.

M. Massenet's new opera "Werther," a dramatised version of Goethe's early novel "Werther's Leiden," is in course of active preparation at the Théâtre de la Monnaie of Brussels.