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REVIEWS.

The Triumph of Victoria. Madrigal for five voices. The words and music by J. Stainer.
[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

IN advance of the flood of music which will doubtless set in to celebrate this, the Jubilee year of the Queen's reign, we have here a five-part Madrigal, composed by an artist whose talent and position sufficiently entitle him to be acknowledged as "Composer Laureate" on an occasion of national rejoicing. More especially in a composition of this kind there is always a slight sensation of working in fetters when setting the verses of one who, however good he may be as a poet, is not himself a musician; and we are glad, therefore, to find that Dr. Stainer has, in this Madrigal, supplied his own words, which we may here say are thoroughly reflective of the feeling of the people, and admirably suited for singing in large public assemblies. The music—scored for two soprani, alto, tenor and bass—has all the bold simplicity which should characterise national compositions, combined with that true flavour of the Madrigal which appeals to all music-loving Englishmen, and most appropriately recalls the day when, in these works, the virtues of a former English Queen were glorified by the native composers of her reign. The broad diatonic harmonies throughout the composition, the several interesting points of imitation, and the sympathetic colouring of the words, will certainly make it a general favourite; and we conscientiously recommend it, not only as a worthy musical tribute to a Sovereign who for fifty years has reigned in the hearts of her subjects, but as a valuable contribution to the repertory of choral music, which will be heard with pleasure long after the event which called it forth has passed away.

Novello's Services of Sacred Song. Scenes from the lives of Abraham, Moses, Elijah, and Daniel.
[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THESE Services of Song are part of a series which Messrs. Novello are bringing out, under the editorship of Dr. Troutbeck of Westminster Abbey. The first service is by the Editor, the second by Archdeacon Farrar, the third by the Rev. R. F. Dale, formerly one of the Assistant Masters in Westminster School, the fourth by the Rev. A. Gerald Bowman, Vicar of St. Andrew's, Westminster. These numbers are already published. They will shortly be followed by one on St. John the Baptist, and another on St. John the Evangelist, by the Rev. H. A. Cotton and the Rev. E. Price, Minor Canons of Westminster. A seventh service, by Mr. Brammall, compiled before this series was projected, has been adopted into it. The main features of these services of song are those of similar services which have already been published by the Sunday School Institute and others. Services of song at first found favour chiefly among Nonconforming churches, simplicity, elasticity, and picturesqueness being among their most prominent characteristics. There is in a service of song some resemblance to an oratorio. The subject is usually Scriptural, often biographical, and description is interspersed with reflections and direct teaching. For the sake of those (we hope they are few) to whom services of song are yet unknown, we may point out that the descriptive portions are generally in the form of readings selected from the Scriptures, taking the place of the narrative portions of the oratorio, leading up to appropriate and suggestive hymns, songs, or choruses, which answer to the choral numbers of the oratorio. In the series before us the most striking and noteworthy scenes in the lives of the four Old Testament saints have been chosen, and are described and illustrated in the manner indicated above. The tunes are chiefly, though not exclusively, taken from the Hymnary, and not only well-known hymns, but hymns as yet but little known, and others newly written, as well as new tunes, have been introduced. We take this occasion of remarking how convenient an opportunity is given by the getting up of a service of song to teach the children of a parish fresh hymns and tunes, and so to help to add to the general stock of both. We would also call our readers' attention to the power of compression which is given by the sub-division into scenes. Should any service

appear to be too long as a whole, selections from it can easily be made, without giving a sense of mutilation. It is scarcely necessary to add that in accuracy, clearness of type, attractive appearance, and let us also specify cost, these services leave little to be desired.

The Hygiene of the Vocal Organs. A Practical Handbook for Singers and Speakers. Second Edition. By Morell Mackenzie, M.D., Lond. [Macmillan and Co.]

WHEN so eminent a member of the Medical profession as Dr. Mackenzie offers to the world the result of very many years of practical experience upon the hygiene of the vocal organs, not only those engaged in teaching singing and elocution should diligently read and study his remarks, but the general public may materially benefit by his sound advice upon the true method of using and preserving the voice. "Now-a-days," says our author, in his introductory observations, "the supreme importance of hygiene is universally allowed, and the goddess of health-preservation bids fair to take precedence of her father, Æsculapius the healer. In other words, the sanitary engineer is abroad and threatens to displace the doctor." Assuredly, it is better to ward off diseases than to endeavour to cure them after they are contracted. As Dr. Mackenzie observes, "the right use of the voice is the chief factor in the maintenance of its quality"; and we are convinced that if the precepts so lucidly laid down in this book are rigidly followed, the vocal organs may through a long life be kept in a fairly healthy condition. One attraction in this work is that in no respect does its author intrude upon the ground of the artistic teacher: "I have no pretension," he says, "to speak with authority as a musician or even as a physiologist, and in the following pages I do not profess either to teach singing or elocution, or to throw new light upon the obscurer problems of voice-production. Matters belonging to either of these provinces are dealt with only in their relation to the well-being and functional efficiency of the vocal organs. That is a subject on which I may, with less presumption, claim a hearing." As a friend, then, to the vocal professor, Dr. Mackenzie may be freely consulted; and a careful perusal of his book has proved to us how profitable will be the result. It need scarcely be said that the anatomy of the vocal organs is described with remarkable clearness; and before explaining what takes place in the larynx whilst the voice is being produced, an excellent account of the structure and use of the laryngoscope is given. By means of this wonderful little instrument its real inventor, Manuel Garcia, succeeded in seeing his own larynx, and watching its movements in respiration, in the formation of vowels, and in singing. In detecting disease Dr. Mackenzie is of opinion that the laryngoscope is invaluable; but that it has added little to our knowledge of the *physiology* of the larynx. This may, of course, be because so much was known of it before; but if only as an aid to the treatment of disease, it is impossible to over-estimate its importance. The chapter on the singing voice contains an admirable exposition of the "Registers"—a subject which our author truly tells us has called "combative professors to battle like a trumpet"—and several illustrations of the male and female glottis in the act of producing high and low notes, as viewed through the laryngoscope, are given. In the observations upon the training of the singing voice, the author makes some excellent suggestions as to the selection of a teacher, giving us, as a tolerably safe rule for the guidance of pupils, or their parents and guardians, the testing of a master's power of imparting good instruction by actual results. Do those who have studied with him sing well? and do their voices last? In the choosing of a pianoforte, we should say, do the instruments of this maker emit a good tone? and do they wear well? but if people will decide without such enquiry in either case, they should not expect sympathy when they find that they are grossly deceived. In treating of "vocal gymnastics," Dr. Mackenzie says: "Frequent short exercises in respiration should be carried out both in the erect and in the recumbent position. In standing, the body should be held upright, the head kept erect, but not thrown back; the act should be performed naturally, without flurry or violence, and at regular intervals, care being taken that the collar-bone does not rise to any perceptible extent whilst the lungs are being expanded.