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The Dirge of Darthula. Part-Song for Six Voices by J. Brahms; The Serenade. Part-Song for Six Voices by J. Powell Metcalfe; J. Brahms; Vineta. Part-Song for Six Voices by J. Powell Metcalfe; J. Brahms

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The Organist's Album. A Series of Original Compositions and Arrangements. By Josef Trousselle. [Marriott and Williams.]

TWELVE numbers of this publication are before us, four of which are original pieces by the editor. The best of these are No. 2, a smoothly written and melodious Romance in D, and No. 10, a "Schlummerlied." It is impossible to say very much in favour of the arrangements, either as regards the selection of the pieces or the manner in which the task of transcription has been carried out. For example, in No. 3, the March from "Fidelio," the player is directed to use the full organ, including a 16-feet trombone, and in No. 8, the Bridal March from "Lohengrin," the symphony before the return of the principal theme is again marked full organ! Even worse is the caricature of the Minuet from Mozart's E flat Symphony (No. 11). No. 4, the *Largo* from Beethoven's Sonata in D, Op. 2; and No. 6, the "Evening Star" song from Tannhäuser are much better. The curious want of judgment in some of the stop directions, and the numerous typographical errors are evidence of editorial carelessness.

Songs in a Corn Field. A Cantata for female voices, and accompaniment for pianoforte (with harmonium and harp *ad libitum*). The poetry written by Christina Rossetti. The music composed by G. A. Macfarren. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THIS melodious little Pastoral Cantata was produced at the Concerts of Mr. Henry Leslie's Choir in 1869 with decisive success. The characteristic song "There goes the swallow," sung by Madame Dolby, and the declamatory solo "Deeper than the hail can smite," by Madame Bodda-Pyne, were received with warm applause, the former being re-demanded. Since then—with the exception of the contralto song first-named, which has been a favourite both in public and private—the work seems to have been confined to drawing-room use, and we have often wondered why it was not put forward in an edition appealing to Choral Societies. Now that it has come into the possession of Messrs. Novello, as might be expected, this has been done without loss of time; and we have very little doubt that the knowledge of the very many beauties contained in the Cantata will rapidly be spread far and wide, for we can say with confidence that no more attractive composition, exclusively for female voices, exists.

Original Organ Compositions. By George F. Vincent. [W. J. Willcocks and Co.]

THIS volume contains eleven pieces, ranging from a Grand Offertoire in F to short Preludes and Interludes. We do not remember to have seen any of the composer's previous efforts, but as this is his Opus 19 he is probably a musician of some experience. In the present instance he has been more successful in trifles than in pieces of "longue haleine." His Offertoire is based on two themes, which recur again and again in various keys, but there is no regular development and the *bravura* writing is unmeaning and puerile. A so-called "Chœur" in F, and a "March Triumphant" in D (why not Triumphant March?) are also patchy and vague, but some of the smaller pieces, notably a Minuet and Trio in G, and a Meditation in A flat, are extremely pleasing. Mr. Vincent certainly possesses the gift of melody, though he does not invariably turn it to the best account.

Original Hymn-tunes. By H. J. E. Holmes. Arranged by John E. Gaul. [Conrad Herzog and Co.]

WE are left in doubt as to the respective shares of the composer and editor in these tunes as they at present appear; but as the former is an amateur we presume the task of the latter has been to correct the harmonies and generally to make the rough places plain. If so, he has scarcely succeeded, for grammatical errors, such as consecutive fifths and unresolved discords, abound. The composer has some feeling for melody, although it frequently takes a flippant and secular turn, and therefore becomes displeasing to those who prefer dignity of style in church music. A few of the fifty-two tunes in this book are unexceptionable in every sense, but as a whole they cannot be commended.

Sing-Song. Twenty-seven Rhymes. Selected from the Volume by Christina Rossetti. Set to music by Mary Carmichael. [Stanley Lucas, Weber and Co.]

CERTAINLY children cannot complain that their traditional ditties are unheeded by composers; for not only as solos, but as part-songs they are placed before juvenile and adult vocalists in a most attractive form, and even the stories of our youthful days are now often seized upon as subjects for Cantatas. The composer of these "Rhymes," although devoting her talents to the task of adding to the store of nursery musical libraries, has ignored the conventional legends, and taken some excellent words by Christina Rossetti, which we are certain will delight all the little listeners who care to admit a modern poet into their ideal world. Many of the lines are indeed admirable; and in most cases the quaint simplicity of the author has been treated most sympathetically in the musical setting. But we cannot conscientiously say that the compositions are of equal merit, nor indeed that they are free from absolute fault; as, for example, where in No. 1, between the nineteenth and twentieth bar, the melody moves up in fifths with the bass. Some of the pieces, however, will no doubt become favourites, especially No. 3, "Mix a pancake"; No. 5, "Wrens and Robins"; No. 8, "Shake the Cherry Tree"; No. 11, "Who has seen the Wind"; No. 16, "Fly away, fly away"; No. 21, "If I were a Queen"; No. 22, "Eight o'clock, the Postman's Knock"; and No. 27, "Dancing on the Hill-top." The accompaniments to all these songs are, as they should be, adapted for small hands, and there are no chords to frighten the young player.

The Dirge of Darthula. Part-song for six voices. The words from Ossian.

The Serenade. Part-song for six voices. The English version by J. Powell Metcalfe.

Vineta. Part-song for six voices. The English version by J. Powell Metcalfe.

Composed by J. Brahms. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

For the first time, these three part-songs appear published with English words, and so excellently do they sympathise with Brahms's beautiful music that we doubt whether the most critical listener could detect that the text was not that which the composer originally set. Published in the Second Series of "Novello's Part-Song Book" the circulation of these already favourite compositions, in the vernacular, must be enormously increased; for works to ensure a cordial reception amongst the people should be "understood of the people"; and we hope to see many other vocal pieces of this character issued with an English translation, especially when they can be entrusted to such competent hands.

I was glad. Festival Anthem. By John Storer, Mus. Bac., Oxon. [Novello, Ewer & Co.]

THIS anthem was composed for a recent festival at the parish church, Scarborough, of which Mr. Storer is organist. He is evidently a musician of considerable talent, his ideas being far from common-place. The anthem consists of a boldly written chorus, in which free use is made of chromatic harmonies; an extremely melodious soprano solo and male chorus, and a brief concluding chorus with a fugato. The composer is a little too fond of sudden transitions of key, and another defect is the endless repetitions of words. The sentence "I was glad" is repeated sixteen times in the first chorus. We draw attention to these points because Mr. Storer shows more than ordinary promise.

Flowers. A Cantata for female voices. Written by Edward Oxenford. Composed by J. L. Hatton. [Forsyth Brothers.]

A PARTY of maidens seeking shelter from the noonday sun, while away the time by singing the praises of the various flowers they have met with in their rambles. Nothing can be simpler than this theme; but it gives rise to some highly poetical lines by Mr. Oxenford, and some charmingly melodious music by Mr. Hatton. Two solos, two duets, two choruses, and a trio complete the work, which amateurs will, we are certain, thank us for bringing to their notice.