Review

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trained choir; a great feature in the work being the chorals, the harmonies of which are both musicianlike and appropriate. Many of the choruses—especially “If we walk in the light” (a canon, 4 in 2), and “Hereby we know” (unaccompanied)—contain some masterly writing, the feeling of the text never being sacrificed for undue scholastic display. We are particularly pleased, too, with the Duet for soprano and tenor, “Behold, what manner of love,” and the Quartet, “Blessed are they,” the flowing accompaniment to the latter materially aiding the effect of the voices. The organ part (as may be expected) is remarkably well-written throughout, and although we understand that the work is also scored for an orchestra, it must not be forgotten that the combinations thus attainable formed no portion of the original design.

Practical Harmony: A Manual for the use of Young Students. By W. S. Rockstro. [Robert Cocks and Co.]

MANUALS explaining every branch of music are multiplying so fast in the present day that no student should find a difficulty in obtaining the knowledge necessary for passing an ordinary examination. But it must be remembered that, however musicians may agree upon the use of chords, a very considerable diversity of opinion exists upon their origin; and pupils consequently, when filling up a paper containing a number of questions on the theory of the art, become somewhat nervous as to the particular “system” adhered to by the examiner. When, therefore, we open Mr. Rockstro’s “Practical Harmony” we know perfectly well that we shall meet with the earnest and conscientious thoughts of an accomplished artist; but we also know that these thoughts will be coloured with the opinion of the author, delivered not as opinions, but as facts, by which the student is presumed to build up his musical knowledge. In confirmation of this, Mr. Rockstro tells us in the preface to his book he is “not without hope that beginners, unable to obtain lessons, may, by their own unassisted endeavours, learn from it enough to give them such a fair general idea of the subject as may prove of inestimable use to them in their later studies.” And to show that he desires to help teachers as well as pupils, he says: “For the assistance of any who may make this laudable attempt, we have published a Key to all the Exercises contained in the book, and a series of Questions for Examination; adjuncts which we imagine will be equally acceptable to self-teaching students and tutors of only moderate experience.” There can be little doubt that those “tutors of only moderate experience,” who are compelled to purchase the Key to these Questions in order to teach their pupils how to answer them, can be of no use to any intelligent inquirers into the subject; and we therefore counsel all who do not employ the services of an accredited master to procure the book and work by themselves, assuring them that they will at least find everything logically arranged and clearly explained. To support our assertion, however, that many of the opinions of the author differ from those generally received, we may mention that the chord of the eleventh and the chord of the thirteenth are described as dominant harmonies held over, and resolved upon, a tonic bass. Now, without debating the question whether the figuring given by Mr. Rockstro is the right one, we confidently affirm that when musicians speak of the “chord of the eleventh” and the “chord of the thirteenth,” they mean a fundamental eleventh and thirteenth on the dominant, the resolution being into the tonic harmony. Again, in his chapter “Concerning Retardations” he classes as such those suspensions which resolve upwards. Of course, if it is stated that every suspension must fall to its resolution, some other term must be used to express those which rise; but if a student is made thoroughly to understand that a suspension is a note arrested in its progress, and that, when released, it moves precisely as it would have moved had it not been so arrested, there can be no occasion for subdividing these discords. If we tie a stone to a string and suspend it from the window, when the string is cut the stone falls to the ground; but if we place an air-ball in the same position, as soon as it is released it rises into the air. This is a familiar illustration, but it thoroughly explains the theory of discords of suspension. We have said that the explanations in this book are exceedingly clear; and, although

on some points our opinions may not agree with those of the author, we quite think that, from his own point of view, he has fairly made out his case, and that his “Practical Harmony” deserves a warm welcome. Before closing the volume, however, we cannot refrain from expressing a hope that in the note at the foot of page 37, where the “original” root of a chord (which would seem to imply that there is another root) is spoken of, this prefix should be struck out; and we must also mention (with reference to the author’s observations at page 55) that Handel *has* used the second inversion of the dominant seventh, although we freely admit that he has usually gone out of his way to evade it.

Crotchets and Quaverings. No. 1. By an English Musician. [Stanley Lucas, Weber and Co.]

THE author of this pamphlet tells us that he intends to issue a number every month; but as the one forwarded to us is dated “January, 1881,” and we have received none since, we have no means of ascertaining whether this promise has been kept. Unquestionably the worst part of the “letter,” as the writer terms it, is the title, which would scarcely tempt the public to peruse its contents, and certainly would lead no musician to expect some excellent and ripened thoughts upon the state of the art in England conveyed in terse and forcible language. It is very important, in considering the difference between English and foreign concerts, that we should recollect, as we are told in this little essay, that “the explanation is to be found partly in the fact that the concerts are generally given by a Society, instead of an *entrepreneur*, and still more in the taste of the ordinary public, which in England goes to concerts, and accordingly controls them, while in Germany and France only connoisseurs care for any kind of concert, but the ordinary public still has its musical taste amply satisfied elsewhere, viz., at the theatre.” After mentioning that almost every town maintains a permanent Opera, and at the theatre (which is abroad a municipal institution, where both operas and spoken dramas are given) the services of both instrumental and vocal artists are also required, he truly says that any one who wishes to organise a good concert has the means ready to his hand. Speaking of the proposition of Mr. Villiers Stanford that local orchestras should be formed in this country, he continues thus: “Fancy an English provincial town with a full orchestra resident, and a series of twenty concerts during the winter. What are the players to do on the other 345 days in the year? And how are they to maintain themselves? Will the bassoon and drum players find any teaching to occupy their spare time? In Germany, as I have explained, they would be wanted at the theatre, and on Sundays at the churches; in England they would simply have nothing to do except at occasional concerts, and they would assuredly starve.” We quite agree with our author that the endeavour to “educate” the people by mixing classical music with trashy dances and royalty ballads in the same programme is a mistake, and that is why we have never been able to become eloquent in praise of our English promenade concerts. “Instrumental music, like architecture, is a purely structural art,” it is said, “and depends for its power upon beauty of design; and without some insight into the laws of proportion—without some study of the art—no one will appreciate a Symphony.” This is all undoubtedly true, and we read on until the following passage occurs: “Where then can help be found? In what way is a musician who looks upon the art as something better than a mere trade to do his share in making the English people as celebrated for their music as they are for their poetry, their philosophy, their science, their commerce, and their empire?” Now comes the disappointment: the author has “arrived at conclusions (especially as regards the proper remedy) which will probably very much surprise many musicians.” But the announcement of this remedy, we are told, “must be reserved for another letter.” It is really too bad to propound a riddle and hold over the answer during the author’s pleasure.

Three Pieces for the Pianoforte. Composed by Paul Semler. [Duncan Davison and Co.]

THESE three unpretentious pieces are extremely melodious; and, as light sketches for drawing-room performance, will assuredly find favour with amateur pianists. No. 1,