Review

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REVIEWS.—(Continued.)

Coronation Song. Words by Lord Tennyson. Music by F. Elvira Gambogi.
The Dream Garden. Words by Mabel Greenwood. Music by David Emmell.

[Metzler and Co.]

The first of these songs is a stirring setting of familiar lines from Tennyson's 'Coming of Arthur.' The martial and patriotic spirit of the text has been most happily caught, and the vocal part possesses a breadth of phrasing that makes the song available for the concert-room. Baritones with a vigorous style will find it an attractive addition to their repertory, and one in touch with the present sentiment. 'The Dream Garden' is a dainty and reflective song of refined character designed for a tenor voice. The accompaniment calls for deftness of execution, but the *arpeggi* lie well under the hand.

The Muses Gardin for Delights, or the Fift Booke of Ayres. Composed by Robert Jones. (Oxford: B. H. Blackwell.) A reprint of the words of an interesting seventeenth century song-book, which, till the recent discovery of a copy in the library of the Earl of Ellesmere, at Bridgewater House, appeared to have been lost. This charming and beautifully-printed little book of long ago has been edited by Mr. Barclay Squire, a most trustworthy expert in such matters, who contributes to it an excellent introduction. — *Treatise on Musical Intervals and Temperament.* By W. S. B. Woolhouse. (Charles Woolhouse.) The third edition of a reliable and concise treatise on the elementary principles of music scientifically demonstrated. — *Hazell's Annual for 1902.* Edited by William Palmer. (Hazell, Watson, and Viney, Ltd.) The seventeenth issue of a cyclopædic record of men and topics of the day. One of the new features of the present volume is the article 'Music, 1901,' which adds to the value of this useful book of reference. In future, however, the horizon should be extended beyond London and the two provincial festivals of the year. — *Willing's Press Guide.* (James Willing, Junr., Ltd.) An excellent handbook, in the twenty-ninth year of its publication, to the newspapers and magazines of the United Kingdom, with a list of the principal Colonial and Foreign journals, in addition to a variety of general information relating to periodical publications. A wonderful shillingsworth. — The indispensable *Musical Directory, Annual, and Almanack for 1902* (Rudall, Carte, & Co.), makes its appearance under interesting circumstances, as this handy book has attained its jubilee. Congratulations thereupon. *The Musician's Calendar.* Compiled by H. J. Waterlow. (Breitkopf and Härtel.) A compact, if not exhaustive, twelve pages of birthday and deathday information. The following days are blank: (1) Feb. 9, (2) June 24, (3) Aug. 4, and (4) Sept. 27. We venture to fill up three of them with the birthdays of (1) Johann Ludwig Dussek, (2) Plunket Greene, and (4) Heinrich Adolf Wollenhaupt.

Dr. McNaught addressed large meetings of school teachers on school singing topics during last month. On the 9th ult., he was at Newcastle to meet the representatives of the Friends' School; on the 17th ult., at University College, Nottingham; and on the 18th ult. at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street. On the 23rd ult., he lectured to the London Sunday School Choir Guild, on Choir training, at the Lecture Hall, Old Bailey.

Professor J. A. Fleming gave a Lecture on 'Sound Waves,' at the Royal Institution, on the 4th ult., when he introduced in illustration a new musical instrument, entitled the 'Stroh Violin,' in which the inventor, Mr. Augustus Stroh, does away with the sound box entirely, the body of the violin consisting of a simple piece of wood, and the bridge resting on an aluminium lever; this lever in turn rests on a round disc of aluminium communicating with a trumpet, the open end of which points in the same direction as the head of the violin. The instrument when played upon produced a beautiful tone, but it remains to be seen whether the new invention will win its way into popular favour.

THE ROYAL CHORAL SOCIETY.

THE REVISED VERSION OF THE 'BLIND GIRL' CANTATA.

Who can estimate the value of afterthoughts? Are they for better, or for worse? Every artist worthy of the name will agree to the betterment form of reply. And is it not true that the man who never makes a mistake never makes anything? These forewords are suggested by the metamorphosis which the cantata of the 'Blind Girl of Castél Cuillé' has undergone through the revising process of its composer, Mr. S. Coleridge-Taylor. When the work was produced at the Leeds Musical Festival of last October—for which it was commissioned—there was considerable shaking of heads at the shortcomings of the libretto and the errors of judgment in connection with the music, compared with the 'Hiawatha' standard. The young composer had a fine example in Mendelssohn—the master reviser, who most carefully overhauled his oratorio of 'Elijah' after its first performance at Birmingham.

The extent to which Mr. Taylor has seen things in a new light in this, his latest choral work, was revealed at the performance of the revised cantata at the Royal Albert Hall on the 23rd ult. The two most important changes that have been made whereby the composer has considerably altered and greatly increased the effectiveness of his work are these: The music originally assigned to *Paul* (the brother of the Blind Girl) has been transposed, and is now sung by a boy instead of by a baritone; and a new solo part has been written for the cripple *Jane*, whose weird sooth-sayings were at Leeds uttered by the chorus. Moreover, many other changes for the better have been made here and there, and these make it almost a new work. Those who, like the present writer, heard the 'Blind Girl,' at Leeds, and in London the other evening, could not fail to be struck with the manifest improvement, if not a transformation, that has been effected throughout the work. One feature that stands out prominently is the choral portion of this cantata. The music assigned to the choir is exceedingly melodious and grateful to the singers. The great choir at Albert Hall sang the choruses in a refined and artistic manner, and in so doing reflected the greatest credit upon Sir Frederick Bridge, who had evidently taken special pains to secure a satisfactory performance of a work that should now start on a new lease of life.

Madame Albani, as the exponent of the *Blind Girl*, achieved even a greater success than she made at Leeds, and the part of *Jane* was excellently sung by Miss Edna Thornton, of whom more will undoubtedly soon be heard. The music of *Paul*, originally sung by a baritone, and now assigned to a boy's voice, received quite an exceptional rendering on the part of Master Percy Phillips, the possessor of a very beautiful voice, who is, moreover, imbued with natural musical feeling in addition to a high degree of intelligence. His enunciation, too, is irreproachable. We understand that he has been trained by Mr. James Bates, and that he is the solo boy at St. Augustine's, Queen's Gate, of which church Mr. John E. West is the organist and choirmaster.

The second part of the concert consisted of a selection from Handel's rarely-heard 'L'Allegro.' This work was composed, performed, and published in the year 1740, and altered and added to in the following year—curiously enough, like unto Mr. Coleridge-Taylor's cantata! 'L'Allegro' contains the well-known air, 'Sweet bird,' with its flute obbligato (admirably played by Mr. Vivian). The risible faculties of the staid tenors and basses found full scope in 'Laughter holding both his sides' in the ha! ha's! from both sides of the orchestra. In the chorus 'Come and trip it as you go, on the light fantastic toe,' Handel has his little joke. At bars 11 and 12, while the sopranos, altos and tenors are singing the words 'as you go,' the basses, according to the autograph, are engaged upon 'ta-ra-ra-ta, ta-ra-ra-ta ta.' The soloists, in addition to those who took part in the 'Blind Girl,' were Miss Maggie Purvis, Mr. Charles Saunders, and Mr. Andrew Black. Sir Frederick Bridge conducted both works, and Mr. H. L. Balfour occupied his accustomed place at the organ.