

Review

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*Five-part Harmony.* By Francis Edward Gladstone. (No. 60 of Novello's Primers and Educational Series, edited by Sir John Stainer and Sir C. Hubert H. Parry.)

[Novello and Company, Limited.]

THE majority of treatises on harmony do not treat of five-part writing to any great extent. But as this higher grade, so to speak, of harmony is compulsory for the degree of Bachelor of Music at the principal Universities, candidates are often in need of some help in their five-part harmony preparation. This Dr. Gladstone supplies in a very clear and satisfactory manner in "this little book," as he modestly calls it. He says, and that truly: "The plan of this work is arranged in such a manner that anyone who is already well instructed in harmony may advance without the aid of a teacher." Dr. Gladstone tells the student what to do, how to do it, and what not to do, in language that is to the point and free from ambiguity. In each chapter he gives a problem for the student to work and furnishes a solution in the Appendix. This Primer is undoubtedly the handiwork of an expert who is fully qualified to write upon the subject of which it treats.

#### CHURCH MUSIC.

*Six Easy Settings of the Kyrie Eleison.* By Frederick Liffé.

*Magnificat and Nunc dimittis in D.* By Frank L. Moir.  
*Te Deum, Benedictus, Jubilate Deo, and Magnificat and Nunc dimittis in F.* By S. Coleridge-Taylor.

(Novello's Parish Choir Book. Nos. 414 to 419.)

[Novello and Company, Limited.]

DR. LIFFÉ'S setting of the Responses to the Commandments contains more variety and possibility than are usually found in such arrangements. The first three are simple in design and character, and should give little trouble to any choir. The melody of the fourth, in D minor, is provided with an alternative harmonization to be used after the fifth, seventh, and ninth commandments. The fifth setting is distinguished by the effectiveness of the organ accompaniment, the passage for the flute at the close being in particular a happy thought. The last of the series would necessitate some practice to secure unanimity, as the music to be sung after the second, fourth, sixth, and eighth commandments is in seven parts. The greatly increased richness in the volume of tone will, however, well repay any extra time devoted to its rehearsal.

The music to the Magnificat and Nunc dimittis composed by Mr. Frank L. Moir combines simplicity and effectiveness in a notable degree. The portions in solid harmony are relieved by some clever entrances in imitation and passages in unison for sections of the choir, and the voices are admirably sustained by the organ accompaniment.

Mr. Coleridge-Taylor's music is so distinctive that unusual interest is attached to his settings of the Church canticles. It may be premised that each bears the stamp of strong individuality. In precisely what this individuality consists it would be difficult to say. Technically, there is a subtle intermixture of the major and minor modes, frequent use of chromatic harmonies, and brief excursions into unrelated keys, while the accompaniment is frequently made to comment, as it were, on the text. But this description does not convey an idea of the freshness and singular attractiveness of the music, which holds the attention while it accentuates with peculiar force the meaning of the words. The vocal parts will be found easy to sing, for the harmonic changes are well approached, and the composer has manifestly avoided contrapuntal complexities. Notable points in the *Te Deum* are the words "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth" being delivered *forte*; the bold enharmonic change at the sentence "Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven"; and the impressive effect of the unaccompanied seven-part writing at the passage "We therefore pray Thee." The *Benedictus* contains a section of fourteen bars for the sopranos in unison, which might, when desired, be sung as a solo. The music is less intense in expression than that of the *Te Deum*, but otherwise it has much in common with the setting of the great Easter hymn. The *Jubilate* starts in four parts unaccompanied, save for a pedal C, in genuine jubilant strain which, at the entry of the organ, is intensified by the repetition of a figure in the accompaniment. The *Gloria*

is very stirring. There is an expression of chastened rejoicing in the music to the *Magnificat*, which is in most happy consonance with the text. The passage "And His mercy is on them that fear Him" is set for the sopranos in two parts, and the portion beginning "He remem'ring" is intended to be sung without assistance from the organ, except for an occasional chord to maintain the pitch. The strains accompanying the *Nunc dimittis* are beautiful in their unaffectedness and tranquillity.

#### PIANOFORTE MUSIC.

*Vier Klavierstücke.* Op. 17.

*Vier Lyrische Stücke.* Op. 28.

*Vier Stimmungsbilder.* Op. 37.

For Pianoforte solo. By Alexander von Fielitz.

[Breitkopf and Härtel.]

THE above pieces form part of Messrs. Breitkopf and Härtel's admirable series "The Pianist's Library." The "Klavierstücke" are severally named "Ritornelle," "Consolation," "Romanze," and "Novelette," titles which are appropriate to the music they respectively head. The "Ritornelle" is particularly pleasing, "Consolation" contains much that is satisfying to the ear, the "Romanze" is short but expressive, and the "Novelette" suggests the modern story full of stirring incident.

The four "Lyrical pieces" bear no names, but the music contains pleasing fancies. The second piece in particular is a charming composition of poetic and tranquil character.

The "Tone-pictures" are similar in character. The first, entitled "Idylle," is an expressive little piece in G minor. This is followed by an "Entr'acte" of graceful nature, a movement of some dignity entitled "Hymnus," and a vivacious "Capriccioso," which demands an agile left hand.

#### SONGS.

*Starlight.* With Violin obbligato. By May Pettifer.

*The Troubadour's Serenade.* Words by Thomas Moore. Music by May Pettifer.

[Hammond and Co.]

INASMUCH as Miss Pettifer has succeeded in obtaining the diploma of Associateship from the Royal College of Organists, she may be accounted a well-trained musician, and indications of this are plentiful in these songs. Originality and distinction they do not possess, but they are well laid out for the voice, and the music is pleasing by reason of its good workmanship. "Starlight" is furnished with Italian as well as English words, and is best suited to a contralto voice. To those thus gifted it may be recommended as affording a change of sentiment from the expressions of unrequited love which contraltos are usually asked by composers to interpret, the theme of "Starlight" being love of one's native country.

"The Troubadour's Serenade" is a good setting of Moore's impassioned words, the singer being afforded opportunities for impressing their significance and the harmonic scheme being rich and well varied.

#### PART-SONGS.

*The Merry Bells of Yule.* Words by Tennyson. Music by E. W. Naylor.

*The Song of the Zetland Fisherman.* Words by Sir Walter Scott. Music by Sir George Elvey.

*A Fortunate Island.* Words by Norman Gale. Music by Basil Johnson.

*When first I came to court.* Words by Austin Dobson. Music by C. H. Lloyd.

*The Silent Land.* Words by Longfellow. Music by Harold R. White.

(Novello's Part-Song Book. Nos. 813 and 814, 816 to 818.)

[Novello and Company, Limited.]

MR. NAYLOR has chosen for his text *Cantos 28 and 30 of "In Memoriam."* The part-writing is in four, five, and eight parts, some of which cleverly suggest the pealing of the "Merry Bells of Yule." Other devices employed to secure variety are also very ingenious, and the part-song will be found to well repay any extra practice it may require to do it full justice.

It is doubtful if Zetland fishermen ever sang in the style of Sir George Elvey's music to Scott's lines, but the composition is a very pleasing four-part song, which will present no difficulties to fairly trained choirs.

Although Mr. Basil Johnson has set Mr. Norman Gale's lines in eight vocal parts, the music is easy, all awkward intervals and treacherous entrances being avoided; moreover, the part-writing is flowing and melodious in character. An *ad libitum* pianoforte accompaniment increases the effectiveness and richness of the harmonic scheme.

The spirit of Mr. Austin Dobson's lines "When first I came to court" has been admirably caught by Dr. C. H. Lloyd, and the music suggests the period of the subject with a fidelity that accentuates its old world sentiment. The composition is dedicated to "Lionel Benson and the members of the Maggie Madrigal Society," and the vocal parts have manifestly been written in remembrance of the abilities of the singers who have adopted the name of the inquisitive bird. Precision of attack and crispness of articulation are absolutely essential factors in the interpretation of this madrigal, which, it should be added, has two independently written soprano parts as well as the usual alto, tenor, and bass parts. Its difficulties, however, are by no means extraordinary, and are such as will interest a capable body of choristers.

Mr. Harold R. White has set Longfellow's familiar lines "The Silent Land" with a repose and dignity whereby the composer has happily caught the spirit of the lyric. Although the music is written mainly in four parts, the alto, tenor, and bass are occasionally divided, with the result that the harmonies are greatly enriched. This part-song will not be found difficult, but it requires expressive and careful singing—this, of course, is in its favour.

#### PROFESSOR NIECKS ON "THE TEACHING OF MUSICAL HISTORY."

PROFESSOR NIECKS chose, for the paper which he read at the Musical Association, on the 10th ult., the above ambiguous title to enable him to speak on "the teaching of music" in more than one sense. His objects were, on the one hand, to present to the Society a plea for a proper and more general study of musical history, and, on the other hand, to propose for discussion some views of perennial interest.

The state of matters, he said, which all serious musicians must deplore, and must wish to be changed, consists in that the history of music is too little taught, and, when taught, oftener improperly taught than properly. Nothing could be more lamentable than the neglect of musical history in music schools, abroad as well as in this country. In most cases the directors neither appoint a properly qualified teacher nor exact the attendance of the pupils. Few students care for anything but playing, singing, or composing. Theory is irksome to them, and shirked as much as possible, and history they regard as a superfluity and fatuity. Those who are ambitious of becoming *virtuosi* do not know that being a singer or player is not synonymous with being a musician; they do not see that a musician's training comprises many more things than technique; they have no suspicion that the most prodigious vocal or instrumental acrobat may after all be but a poor creature as an artist. The directors of music schools should not allow students to choose what they like, but should force them to do what is good for them. The directors ought to impose upon all systematic courses of theory and history, obligatory not merely in print, but also in deed. The lecturer admitted the difficulty of realising the idea, but held that there is no other way of putting a stop to the unlimited increase of strummers, fiddlers, and vocalisers, that remain immature and undeveloped to the end of their days. Maturity can only be obtained where the study of playing and singing is combined with other studies. Unless a music student acquires a thorough knowledge of the texture and structure of the art, which harmony and counterpoint, on the one hand, and form, on the other hand, teach, he will never outgrow the helpless stage of artistic infancy.

Professor Niecks, after pointing out the almost generally unsatisfactory nature of historical examination papers (those of the Universities not excepted), which hardly contain anything but questions about dates, names, and titles, turned to the question of what history can do for the musician. The historian Ambros writes that we can

understand the developed art only after understanding its earlier stages and gradual growth; and that history teaches us a serious truth—namely, that in times which the gay world of to-day no longer knows the noblest lived and laboured, and left rich treasures for humanity; that in the domain of art, as elsewhere, the sum of our experiences, but not the intelligence and talent has become greater. Although the bearing of history on practice, the lecturer went on, is less obvious than its bearing on general culture, being partly indirect, it is nevertheless very real. By the analysis of the techniques and styles of different periods, schools, and individuals, history gives the student insight into the changing texture and structure of his art. By the description of the character of the artists and their social and other surroundings, it reveals to him, at least to some extent, the spirit of the art-products. And by setting forth the views of musicians of all ages, the usages as to the performances of their works, and the nature of the instruments employed, it still further enables him to realise the ways and means of times gone by. Who does not see that history, in widening the horizon of the musician, must influence his whole art-practice? Who does not see that history, in teaching the musician the things indicated, must develop his judgment, his taste, and his knowledge of how to do? After this explanation, the practical bearing of musical history can no longer be hidden even from the most prejudiced. But it manifests itself in a still more direct manner. What practical results, for instance, may be derived from the history of notation, taking the word in its widest meaning, including the use of accidents, measure, *tempo*, and marks of expression! From it musicians may learn a great deal of what is indispensable for the correct execution of older works than those of our own time. But, after all, the greatest of the benefits derivable from the study of the history of music is that it takes the musician out of conventionality, fashion, and individualism into universality; out of technical narrowness and emotional dimness into intellectual freedom and clearness—that, in short, it opens up before him an infinitude of infinite vistas.

The cause of the disbelief in musical history should not, however, be wholly ascribed to the evil disposition of the disbelievers. The common defects of history teaching are probably to an equally large extent, perhaps even to a larger extent, responsible for the lack of faith. First of all it cannot be too strongly insisted upon that chronology is not history; it is no more than the handmaid of history. Facts, unless we know their meaning and connection, are as good as valueless; it is of little use to burden our memory if we do not at the same time enlighten our intelligence. Studying history in this way does not, however, make the study more difficult. Quite the contrary is the case. Having acquired a knowledge of the great movements and chief stages of development of the art, it is easy to fill in and remember the details; for these are then no longer items in a chaos, but parts of an organised whole.

The history of the arts, as distinguished from general history, has to deal with something peculiar to them, and makes them peculiarly difficult to the general student. This something is technique, its nature and its growth and changes of style. The narrative of the lives of the great composers does not constitute a history of music; it is, in fact, only a subordinate accompaniment of the real history, of the account of the developments and vicissitudes of melody, harmony, counterpoint, form, and last, but certainly not least, the spirit that prompts these, and expresses itself through them.

History, then, is chiefly concerned with movements—social, political, moral, religious, and artistic. Now these movements appear and disappear, we cannot tell when or how. They do not begin and end with the abrupt clash of a military band playing at the head of a marching regiment. No, they creep in softly, and die away slowly. We do not notice them till they have gained strength, and find ourselves again in the dark as regards their later stages and final extinction. And history is not a *series* of movements, a series in which every new movement starts when its predecessor has completed its course, neither sooner nor later. No, there are always a number of movements going on simultaneously, differing in vigour, length of course, and time of starting. In short, history, instead of