

Review

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Te Deum Laudamus in B flat. By John E. West. (Parish Choir Book, No. 43.) [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THOUGH unpretentious, this setting of the Ambrosian Hymn is remarkably effective. The harmonies are bold and striking, and throughout the composer has steered clear of the commonplace on the one hand and the extravagant on the other. The *Te Deum* may be strongly recommended.

O Jesu! Victim Blest. By the Rev. J. Baden Powell. (Octavo Anthems, No. 301.) [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE composer of this little anthem, for solo, duet, and chorus, appears to be in sympathy with the ultra-modern school, for in the compass of five pages he indulges in a number of remarkable chromatic progressions and changes of tonality. At the same time, the musicianship is good, and if well sung the piece could not fail to prove effective.

Short Voluntaries for the Organ. By George Calkin. Book VIII. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE favourable terms in which we spoke of the earlier books of this series may be employed with emphasis respecting the present instalment. Mr. Calkin has given us six pieces, differing from one another in style, but all marked by the utmost refinement and elegance, and most of them extremely tuneful, without undue lightness of character. Organists of moderate attainments will find them equally useful and attractive.

The Office of the Holy Communion. Set to music for men's voices in D. By George Sampson. [Spottiswoode and Co.]

THOUGH presumably an English musician, Mr. Sampson writes somewhat in the modern French style. For example, in the Nicene Creed he makes the chorus sing with closed lips—a meretricious device which we trust will never become popular in the Church of England. Otherwise, however, it cannot be said that his music errs in the direction of triviality, and it is certainly effective. It is surprising however that the organist of St. Alban's, Holborn, where ecclesiastical traditions are held in such esteem, should fall into the common error of accenting the last word instead of the last but one in the sentence “Being of one substance.”

Short Evening Service in F. By H. H. Gilbert. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THIS is a setting of the Cantate Domino and the Deus Misereatur, and it deserves mention on that account as these canticles are not so much used as formerly. But it also merits notice as proceeding from an American musician. The service might have been written by an English church writer of a century ago, say of the time of Kent, Nares, or Clarke-Whitfield. But our transatlantic cousins move quickly in art matters and no doubt will soon establish a national school of sacred music. Meanwhile every effort in this direction will be watched with interest.

Behold the days come. Anthem. By the Rev. H. H. Woodward. [London Music Publishing Company.]

THERE is so much evidence of talent in this composition that we regret to be unable to give it unqualified praise. Mr. Woodward would appear to have studied Mozart and Spohr, so luscious are his melodies and harmonies. But his anthem consists too much of snatches for solo and chorus giving the effect of patchiness rather than logical sequences. The C in soprano at the end of page 6 should surely be E. The anthem is specially adapted for the Advent season.

Three Andantes. By Hamilton Clarke. (Original Compositions for the Organ, No. 53.) [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THESE pieces are unpretentious as regards structural outline, but the composer displays considerable boldness in matters of detail. Many of his chromatic progressions strike the ear with a sense of strangeness; while, on the other hand, there are passages distinguished by melodic charm to an uncommon degree. Mr. Hamilton Clarke's compositions will repay the attention of organists, and they will be appreciated in proportion as they are known.

O that men would praise the Lord. Anthem for Harvest Festivals. By Joseph C. Bridge, Mus. Doc. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

AT the present moment there are, doubtless, a large number of choirmasters seeking diligently for new music specially suitable for the approaching harvest celebrations, and this anthem from the accomplished pen of the organist of Chester Cathedral cannot fail to receive a cordial welcome. It consists of a broad and vigorous opening chorus in A, a second movement more distinctly melodious in D, and a final chorus containing a good deal of bold and free writing, though fugal treatment is avoided. We may cite the figure of accompaniment at the words “Corn shall make the young men cheerful” as perhaps the most striking of many unconventional passages. Dr. Bridge never forgets that he is writing for the Church, while he shows that he can think for himself. His anthem should be in great request, more especially as no solo voices are required.

Thirty-three Kyries. Hymn Tunes. Composed by Robert Brown-Borthwick. [Hamilton, Adams and Co.]

CHURCH musicians are familiar with the labours of the Rev. R. Brown-Borthwick, more particularly as editor of the “Supplemental Hymn and Tune Book.” Most of the tunes in the present book are taken from that and other collections, only six out of forty-seven being new. They occasionally betray the hand of the amateur, but on the whole are good sterling compositions, and some of them are calculated to win favour with congregations. Composers of Kyries show much variety in the matter of accent, some of them placing the stress on “keep,” others on “this,” and others again on “law.” Mr. Brown-Borthwick favours the middle word, though not exclusively. The volumes are small and handy in size, and are neatly bound.

FOREIGN NOTES.

A CORRESPONDENT writes to the Berlin *Allgemeine Musik Zeitung* from Rome:—“Mozart's ‘Don Giovanni’ was performed here for the first time on June 20, and achieved a brilliant—*fiasco*. A few feeble attempts at applause were speedily drowned in the general demonstrations of disapproval, and a chorus of hissing and yells was the funeral dirge which accompanied Mozart's masterpiece to the grave, as far as this capital is concerned. By the rejection (similar to that accorded some time since to Beethoven's ‘Fidelio’) of ‘Don Giovanni,’ the Roman public would seem to lay itself open to the charge of vandalism, but for the undeniable fact that the greater part of this lamentable failure was owing to the incredibly bad performance of the work. It may well be that the chaste muse of our master scarcely appeals to the taste of the modern Italians—an accumulation of drastic effects is required now-a-days—while the lengthy *secco* recitatives, too, are but little appreciated here. Still, the incapacity shown on the part of both executants and conductor in the rendering of the work undoubtedly exculpates the audience to a considerable degree. Cotogni, a singer possessing a fine voice and artistic training, sang the title *rôle*, and to his efforts, and those of Nannetti, likewise a well-trained artist who sang *Leporello*, it was alone owing that the opera was listened to until the end.”

It is stated in French journals that Verdi's new opera, “Othello,” will be brought out at the Opéra Comique, and not at the Grand Opéra, as had been surmised, and that the Maestro will conduct the performance in person. We have recorded for some years past the various and conflicting rumours concerning this new work (alternately styled “Iago” and “Othello”) and take some credit to ourselves for not having as yet abandoned all hope of the ultimate performance somewhere, or, indeed, of the actual existence of so interesting a novelty.

At La Scala, of Milan, Halévy's posthumous opera “Noé,” orchestrated by the late Georges Bizet, will be brought out in the coming autumn.

Ponchielli's opera “Gioconda” has been revived at the Costanzi Theatre of Rome, under the Maestro Faccio, with every prospect of a long “run.” A most enthusiastic reception was accorded likewise to the same master's last operatic work “Marion Delorme.”