

Review

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THE 222nd monthly Concert of the Grosvenor Choral Society took place at the Grosvenor Hall, Buckingham Palace Road, on Friday, the 19th ult. The programme comprised "The Jubilee" Cantata (Weber) and Part-songs, &c., by Cummings, G. Converso, and Purcell. The vocalists were Miss Kate Cherry, Miss Annie Northcroft, Mr. Etherington Smith, Mr. Ortnier, and Mr. T. F. Davies. Solo pianoforte, Miss Jessie Davis; accompanist, Miss Annie Daymond; Conductor, Mr. David Woodhouse.

THE thirty-third season (1890-91) of the Monday Popular Concerts will commence at St. James's Hall on Monday, the 20th inst., and end on March 23, 1891. There will be twenty-one Concerts in all. In addition to these, there will be twenty morning Saturday Popular Concerts, commencing on Saturday, October 25, and ending on March 21. The Monday Concerts will commence at eight instead of half-past eight, and the Saturday Concerts will begin at three.

THE fifth series of Messrs. Hann's Chamber Concerts will be given at the Brixton Hall, Brixton, on the 28th inst., and November 18 and December 9. The following works, among others, will be performed: Quartets by Schubert, Mozart, Haydn, Mendelssohn; together with the Trio in B flat, Beethoven (Op. 97); the Quintet (pianoforte and strings), Dvorák, &c. Some vocal selections will be given at each Concert.

SIGNOR LAGO announces the opening of his opera season at Covent Garden on the 18th inst. The operas likely to be produced are Ponchielli's "Gioconda," Wagner's "Tannhäuser," and Verdi's "Othello," with, probably, Gluck's "Orfeo." Among the artists engaged are Madame Albani, Miss Damian, Miss Fanny Moody; Messrs. Manners, Galassi, Giannini, and Maurel.

ON Sunday, the 7th ult., an Organ Recital was given in South Hackney Church by Mr. G. F. Wesley Martin, the Organist, when the following programme was performed: Choral Song, S. S. Wesley; Adagio from Quartet in G minor, Spohr; Solemn March, G. F. Wesley Martin; Sonata (No. 5), Mendelssohn.

PROFESSOR BRIDGE'S Oratorio "The Repentance of Nineveh" is announced for performance at the Cheltenham Festival on the 29th inst.; at Holloway Hall, by the Finsbury Choral Association, on November 27; at the Hampstead Conservatoire, under Mr. Geaussen, on December 8; and at the Dome, Brighton, on December 11.

SIR CHARLES HALLÉ will, on his return from his tour in Australia, give a second season of six Orchestral Concerts, with his Manchester band of one hundred performers, on the following Friday evenings: November 14 and 28, December 12, January 9 and 23, and February 20, in St. James's Hall.

THE London Männergesangverein (or Male Voice Choir), which has had for its Conductors Sir John Stainer, Dr. Martin, and Mr. W. Hodge, have invited Mr. W. de Manby Sergison to be their Conductor, and he has accepted the post.

M. AUGUSTE WIEGAND, the Belgian Organist, will give his 500th Organ Recital at the Royal Albert Hall, on November 8.

MR. HENRY C. BANISTER'S Memoir of Sir G. A. Macfarren is now in the press and will probably be published (by Messrs. George Bell and Sons) this month.

REVIEWS.

My Musical Experiences. By Bettina Walker.

[Richard Bentley and Son.]

WITH a most enjoying frankness, Miss Walker tells us in these interesting chapters the history of her wanderings from England to Italy, and from Germany to Russia, in search of a perfect scientific method for acquiring mastery over the pianoforte. Here, in fine, is the picture of a person with a musical conscience which would never let her rest content with her achievements, but ceaselessly

impelled her onwards, and yet who found satisfaction in the companionship of her ideal. Her motto is given on the title-page: "What I aspired to be, And was not, comforts me"; and it seems to coincide with the view of her last master, Henselt, who declared to her that he never felt lonely, for his ideal was always with him. "My ideal," he said, "which I shall never, never attain—in der Ewigkeit nie erreichen werde—is more to me than anything or anybody in the whole world." Sterndale Bennett was her first instructor, and of his method and his artistic personality she gives a very interesting sketch in the opening chapter. Here are two points about him well worthy of notice: "In a school, where for many years he gave from ten to twelve consecutive hours (lessons), it was impossible to gather from his manner which was the most or the least clever pupil, so thoroughly did he interest himself in each individual." This, we may remark parenthetically, was not Liszt's way. The other point is Bennett's excellent advice as to how the *tempo* of a piece should be started: "People begin to play, and don't get into swing until they have played one or two bars. The *moto*, the beat of the piece, ought to have begun in the mind, in the feeling of the performer, before he put a finger on the keyboard." Another good saying of his was—there was more gain than loss in taking a movement somewhat slowly. On Sterndale Bennett's death Miss Walker found herself stranded as regards pianoforte playing. She had already come in contact with Tausig—a far cry from Sterndale Bennett—and would in all probability have become his pupil, had not his brilliant career been cut short by premature death. But her newly awakened ambition to study in the Lisztian School—Miss Walker, until she found salvation with Henselt, was torn in two between her romantic instincts and her classical training—was destined to be gratified all the same, and her next master was Sgambati, of whom she gives a very pleasant picture in the third sketch. Miss Walker embraced the Lisztian creed, as Sgambati himself said, with the enthusiasm of a neophyte, and for a while all went happily. She took out her diploma at the St. Cecilian Academy—an examination which seems to possess many terrors for the susceptible Italian youth—and made many interesting acquaintances. Her personal respect and sympathy for Sgambati, the more enhanced her appreciation of him as an artist and musician. But overwork and her musical conscience brought about a recurrence of dissatisfaction with her progress. We find her next at Weimar, where her residence with the grand-daughter of Hummel did not impair her devotion to Liszt. Of Liszt's reunions and the royal honours with which he was treated by his pupils she gives a curious picture. Leaving Weimar owing to ill-health, Miss Walker's next essay was with Deppe, Miss Fay's ideal teacher. In spite of his assuring her that she would have to begin all over again from the beginning, Miss Walker was prepared to make the sacrifice, when circumstances intervened which rendered it impossible for her carrying out her plan of study. So she went to Scharwenka for a while, and finally, by a happy chance, was brought into communication with Henselt, and studied with him until a very short time before his death. Of Henselt as a teacher, and in his domestic relations, she gives a wholly charming picture. His was, according to Miss Walker, "a rugged, yet warm and sturdily honest personality," utterly unworldly and full of delicate consideration.

Novello's Octavo Anthems, Nos. 359-364. Composed by Frederick Brandeis. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE name of the composer of the six anthems, Nos. 359-364 inclusive, which have been added to Novello's Octavo Series, will be new to many of our readers. Mr. Brandeis is an American musician, who, by his present work, displays no small share of the feeling, expression, and musical ability which is to be found in his English predecessors in the art of writing suitable music for use in divine worship. He has called his works "Hymn-Anthems," and he may be credited with the invention of a new title, if not with a new form of treatment. Many composers from the time of William Mundy, and occasionally before, who have furnished music for the church, have found the metrical hymn suitable for the expression of their thoughts, taken either in

entirety, by sections, alone, or in combination with authoritative Biblical words.

The first, "Think not that they are blest alone," is gracefully set. The second, "The strong foundations of the earth," opens with a bold unison phrase for the bass, which is answered, as it were, in harmony by the four voices; the like form of treatment distinguishing the whole of the hymn. The third, "While with ceaseless course the sun," more part-song-like in style, commences in C sharp minor, and has a very clever use of a modulation from E major to D flat, often employed before, but rarely with so much richness of effect, the only thing necessary to complete the satisfaction of musical requirements being unindicated. A return to the original phrase should be made, so that the anthem ending at the first double bar should complete the proposition alike to the eye as to the ear. The ear may be content with the impression that D flat major is in sound related to C sharp minor, but the eye seeks in vain for the connection. The fourth hymn-anthem, "Eternal source of every joy," is an able piece of writing for four voices, also part-song-like in character. The fifth, "To bless Thy chosen race," is, of all the series, most hymn-like in form, but the varied endings of the verses have a grateful effect. The tendency to the part-song is traceable in the last of the set, "Father, hear the prayer we offer," but it is possible that this form may be highly approved, not only in America, but also in those "choirs and places" where it is possible to import the graces of expression into the anthems employed in the Service.

In the whole of the series, the composer has not entirely bound himself by the rhythm of the words of the metrical hymns, or formulated his phrases after the pattern of the lines of the verses he has chosen. He has furnished music which emphasise the expression of the words with graceful melodic designs, while it does not illustrate the sentiment with formal diagrams of song.

Compendium der Musik-Geschichte, bis zum Ende des XVI. Jahrhunderts. Von Adolf Prosnitz.

[Vienna: Em. Wetzler.]

MANUALS of musical history are growing apace in Germany, thanks, in a great measure, to the special attention directed towards the subject, as a necessary adjunct to a sound musical education, by musical pedagogues in that country. Since our review in these columns some twelve years ago, of Dr. Langhans's admirably concise "Musik-geschichte in zwölf Vorträgen" (published in a second edition in 1879), a number of more or less meritorious "abridgments," "catechisms," and similar works on the subject have appeared in the German language; the least valuable among them testifying, at any rate, to the steadily increasing demand which has called them into existence. The art of condensing, and yet clearly defining in outline, material as yet so diffuse, and (as regards more than one epoch) as yet so obscure as that appertaining to musical history is, however, acquired by but few, even amongst those who have mastered the subject in its details. It is a pleasure, therefore, to recognise, in the present compilation, the hand of an author fully qualified for the task he has set himself—namely, to furnish a concise, yet animated, picture of the various phases in the development of the art. It is sufficiently suggestive in detail to induce further study on the part of pupils at conservatoires and other musical institutions, for whom the volume is more especially intended. We have here no mere bookmaking, but independent construction, upon a carefully thought-out plan, and that plan an excellent one. The subject is practically divided into four great periods: the pre-Christian era—a comprehensive chapter, which, however, sufficiently exhausts its pertinent material for the purpose in view; the early Christian era, extending to the year 1100; the period of the Middle Ages (1100 to 1400); and the subsequent development of the art, up to the dawn of the seventeenth century, from the achievements of which modern musical art has sprung. The volume is rendered still more useful by admirably compiled chronological tables, and a fairly representative enumeration of the existing literature bearing upon the subject here treated, and best calculated to assist the student in the pursuit of a study which the perusal of Herr Prosnitz's "Compendium" is likely to have rendered for him a most interesting and attractive one.

Four Sonatas for the Organ. By Alan Gray, Mus. Doc., Cantab. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

WE are inclined to regard these Sonatas as one of the most important contributions to the repertory of the organist which have proceeded from the pen of an English composer since the death of Henry Smart. Not that they have much in common with the elegant, flowing style of that gifted musician. Dr. Gray gains his effects less by simple and graceful melodies than by free part-writing and spirited counterpoint; but he does not fall into the error committed by so many contemporaneous composers, native and foreign, of treating the organ as if it were an orchestra. His Sonatas are pure organ music from beginning to end, and recall in their general characteristics those of Mendelssohn. The first Sonata, in G, consists of a somewhat discursive *Allegro moderato*, a very pleasing *Intermezzo* in E flat, and a bright and spirited *Allegro vivace*. No. 2, in A flat, opens with an effective, if not very strict fugue, which is followed by a somewhat quaint *Romanza* in C minor and a lengthy and vigorous *Alla marcia*. The third Sonata, in F, starts with a Prelude, in 12-8 measure, developed at considerable length, and for the most part pastoral in character. The second movement is an air in D minor, with cleverly written variations, and the *Finale*, an *Allegro vivace* in the toccata style. The first movement of No. 4, in C, is elaborate and discursive, much use being made of imitation. There are no special characteristics in the second and third movements, and the work, as a whole, is less interesting than the others. Dr. Gray's Sonatas are published separately, and organists who may not care to possess the series should commence with No. 3.

The Morning and Evening Service, with the Communion Office, in F. By Henry John King.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE author of this service is an Australian organist, and composer of the Cantata for the inauguration of the Melbourne Centennial Exhibition. It would be incorrect to assert that his setting of any portion of the sacred offices is on a level with the best services which have proceeded from our leading English church composers during the past few years; but it shows sound musicianship, and is noteworthy for the attention paid to the proper accentuation of the words. This is a matter in respect of which some excellent church musicians err grievously, sacrificing not only sense, but doctrinal significance for the sake of musical effect. Mr. King's service is simple and dignified, and, furthermore, contains many artistic touches which give promise of better things to come from the same source.

Gaudeamus. A Selection of Songs for Colleges and Schools. Edited by John Farmer.

[Cassell and Co., Limited.]

IN this collection of one hundred pieces the compiler seems to have been guided by a desire to produce quantity rather than quality, for there are many songs, such as "Here's to the maiden of bashful fifteen," "Youth's the season made for joys," "Ode to tobacco," "Down among the dead men," and the like, associated with words which even the most liberal minded among educationalists would hesitate about placing before children in schools. It is possible of course only to give out those which might be suitable for children's use, but it is impossible, if the book once falls into the hands of small people, to prevent their reading those pages which it might be desirable to keep from their eyes.

Original Compositions for the Organ, Nos. 133-136.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THESE four numbers consist of twelve "monologues," three in each instalment, by Rheinberger. The German composer has managed, within very narrow limits, to secure a great deal of variety in style, some of the little pieces being as simple in their harmonies and long-drawn syncope as the "movements for diapasons," much affected by English organists of a former generation, while others are piquant, and thoroughly modern in phraseology; as "in-voluntaries" the monologues cannot fail to be serviceable to organists.