

Review

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accumulative in this respect as well as in power and beauty, till, from the charmingly naïve phrase commencing (p. 32)—



Then said they to Chi - bi - a - bos.

and leading, *via* this tender, expressive passage for voices unaccompanied—



"Sing,



love and songs of long - ing, &c.

into the really lovely tenor solo, "Onaway, beloved" (one of the most perfect specimens of pure musical beauty produced in recent years), we have a display of vigour and tenderness combined of which any living composer might be proud. There is nothing of "pupil's music" about this really fine example of Mr. Taylor's powers. A born musician, a young master rejoicing in his youth and strength, speaks to us here in a beautiful language more congenial to him than speech; a language moreover that, while delighting musicians and music-lovers, can also be "understanded of the people," so direct is it in utterance, so forceful in expression, so deep and true in feeling. The exigencies of space forbid our entering into a detailed analysis of the work, but we may draw attention to a few salient points. Of these not the least remarkable is the fact that, in spite of the monotonous rhythm and peculiar style of the poem—a rhythm and style that are easily burlesqued, as *vide* Mr. W. S. Gilbert's funny specimen in "Princess Toto"—the strength and variety of Mr. Taylor's musical rhythms are quite remarkable, while he steers with a strong hand, boldly and successfully, between the Scylla of clever, "learned" writing and the Charybdis of "barbaric" license and an excess of that local colour which the poem seems to invite. Few composers would have ventured on a musical setting of a long selection from Longfellow's poem, for it cannot be said that the lengthy passages descriptive of Indian customs and costumes are exactly the kind of verse that "yearns for musical expression." But the poem appealed to Mr. Taylor's imagination. Our young Parsifal rushed in where "angels," learned and wise, would have feared to tread, and he dared to set "Hiawatha's Wedding-Feast" as a cantata. The result justifies his confidence, for after perusing the score we seem to feel instinctively that if there *was* a successful way of setting the poem, then *this* is the way, and none other is possible. What could be more straightforward and spontaneous than this music, what more natural and delightful than the way in which he leads up to and produces his powerful climaxes? The means are as nothing compared with the effect produced. Study the few pages dealing with this striking phrase—

*Moderato energico.*



and note what our young composer makes of it. This sort of music refreshes us like a breath of bracing moorland air on a stifling day. And that Mr. Taylor possesses the higher qualities of head and heart which alone can produce really beautiful and noble music will be learned from many a poetic and romantic page in this work. We would especially single out the tenor solo, already referred to, the more or less unaccompanied passages preceding it, and the last five pages, where Mr. Taylor reaches his highest level. There is real grip, real heart and soul about this music. To be sure, it is all very simple and natural and not at all "profound." But if "Hiawatha's Wedding-Feast" cannot perhaps be called a great work, these simple and natural outpourings of our young friend are prophetic of great things in the future. Here is a real, Heaven-sent musician, and we feel inclined to quote Schumann *à propos* of Chopin: "Hats off, gentlemen, a genius!"

*Twelve Songs.* By Landon Ronald.

*Since we parted.* *Absence.* Written by the Earl of Lytton (Owen Meredith). Composed by Frances Allitsen. [Metzler and Co., Limited.]

MR. LANDON RONALD'S songs show talent that has been well trained, appreciation of the value of finish of detail, and intimate knowledge of what is effective, both for the voice and the pianoforte. These qualities should insure the attention of cultured vocalists. The subject throughout the book is love, and mostly love of the fervid kind. Several of the lyrics, however, have been well chosen, and in these the music attains happy sympathy with the words. This is notable in the setting of Shelley's "Love's Philosophy," the passionate whirl of the lines finding eager echoes in the accompanying strains. "To look on thee," the words by Paul England, also possesses perfect accord between text and music, and much genuine pathos is contained in "Could I but weep."

Miss Allitsen's songs are both worthy of her esteemed pen. "Since we parted" is very short, but very sweet, and the music accentuates the ardent affection which the words express. The manly sentiment which breathes in the text of "Absence" also animates the music, which rushes on with emphatic spontaneity and determined impulse.

*Novello's School Music. A Merry Christmas.* Cantata. Words by Shapcott Wensley. Music by Thomas Facer. [Novello and Company, Limited.]

No better description can be given of the design of this work than is contained in the preface, which runs as follows: "The cantata opens with a general praise of Christmas time. Then follow allusions to the pleasant re-unions and the merry round games familiar to all. The number entitled 'The Rival Dances' sets forth the respective allurements of 'The Waltz,' 'The Polka,' and the evergreen 'Old Sir Roger de Coverley.' A jocund carol by some singers 'outside in the snow' prompts kindly feelings ever associated with the season, and all ends merrily to the sound of the Christmas bells. The aim has been to provide a school cantata which shall combine brevity and brightness." The work comprises six numbers, and begins with a chorus, "We've placed all our books aside," written in two parts for sopranos and contraltos. The music is in 6-8 time and well expresses the satisfaction of holiday anticipations. It is followed by a duet, descriptive of the enjoyments of the Christmas season at home, the voice parts occasionally answering each other in effective but simple manner. This leads to a short choral recitative for the first and second sopranos respectively, and is followed by a series of vivacious choruses in two parts in praise of the waltz, the polka, and "Sir Roger de Coverley," and severally written in the rhythm of these favourite measures. The fifth number is a melodious Christmas carol, also in two parts for chorus, to which, however, is added a part for a soprano soloist, who comments upon the efforts of the choral singers. This number is ingeniously devised to produce the greatest effect by the simplest means, and the result can scarcely fail to interest its singers and its listeners. The *finale* is opened with some short passages for the soprano and contralto soloists, after which the chorus enters with a gay tune in 9-8 time and finishes the cantata in a spirited manner.