

Review

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*Twelve Vocal Duets.* Composed by Ciro Pinsuti. Book II. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE second volume of these melodious and refined duets, by one of the most charming vocal writers of the day, needs but the announcement of its publication to ensure a cordial welcome in every household where music, in its purest sense, is cultivated. It is almost unnecessary to say that Signor Pinsuti can write nothing commonplace; and therefore we forewarn amateurs that pianists as well as vocalists are essential to do full justice to every composition in the book. We really envy the delight of all those who make acquaintance for the first time with the beautiful duet for soprano and contralto, "The Mermaids," which opens the volume, and happily indicates the character of its contents. Were we called upon to name our especial favourites, we should also cite No. 9, "Under the stars," for contralto and tenor; No. 11, "Love and Friendship," for baritone and soprano; and No. 12, "The Magicians," for tenor and bass; but in a casket of gems, although we may admire one more than another, either for its intrinsic beauty or its exquisite setting, all may be of equal value. It must also be said that the words of the whole of the songs, by George Weatherly, are fully worthy of the music.

*Magnificat and Nunc dimittis in F. Great is the Lord.* Anthem. By E. A. Sydenham. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

MR. SYDENHAM writes fluently and with excellent musical taste. His evening service is characterised by flowing melody, united to church-like dignity. It is for the most part in simple four-part harmony, but there is an effective little piece of writing at the words "He hath scattered the proud." The anthem is full throughout, and consists of three movements, of which the last is the most effective, though they are all written with breadth and purity of style.

*Te Deum Laudamus.* By Frederick Tolkien. [Spottiswoode and Co.]

THIS is not an ordinary setting of the Ambrosian Hymn for church use, but an elaborate work of sixty-three pages, composed in commemoration of the Queen's Jubilee. An examination of the music unfortunately leads to the conclusion that the composer has wasted his time and labour. His ideas of tonality are of the vaguest, and his part-writing shows a lamentable ignorance of the capacity of the human voice, or else, like Beethoven, he regards it as an ordinary mechanical instrument. But although it is impossible to speak of Mr. Tolkien's *Te Deum* as a musicianly achievement, it bears unmistakable traces of natural talent. Here and there impressive and beautiful phrases may be discovered, like oases in a desert, and encourage us to hope that with careful study the composer may produce something worthy of a hearing.

*Send out Thy Light.* Anthem for Whitsuntide or general use.

*Fair Daffodils.* Four-part song. By J. T. Field. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THOUGH by no means lengthy, Mr. Field's anthem is in four movements. A brief, solidly written chorus, leads to a melodious tenor solo and chorus, coming to a dominant close. A quartet for male voices follows, and is succeeded by the final chorus, which is effectively worked up, the music being somewhat in the manner of Goss. The part-song is a setting of the well-known lines by Herrick, but it is essentially modern in style, and is charmingly harmonised, with a piano accompaniment. Conductors of singing classes could not fail to like it.

*Magnificat and Nunc dimittis in F.* By W. G. Wood. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE composer of this service—which we believe is not one of Mr. Wood's most recent efforts—has managed to combine simplicity with effectiveness to a remarkable degree. Nothing could be easier than the voice parts, and even the accompaniment, though mainly independent, is such as an ordinary organist could read at sight. But the music is delightfully melodious, though free from any suspicion of triviality. Choirs and congregations will alike be pleased with Mr. Wood's service.

*The sun shall be no more thy light.* Anthem. By George Gardner. [Weekes and Co.]

*He giveth His beloved sleep.* Anthem. By George Gardner. [Patey and Willis.]

THERE is sufficient in these anthems to show that the composer possesses the divine gift of melody, albeit he is not yet a master of the genuine ecclesiastical style. There is more than a suspicion of secularity in his rhythms and accompaniments, though many will readily forgive this for the sake of the flow of rich harmony and tune. Both anthems are extremely pleasing, but we prefer the second. The last section of this would be charming but for the unfortunate repetition of words, which makes it rather tiresome.

*Te Deum, Benedictus, and Jubilate in chant form in the key of E; Office of the Holy Communion for four voices in E; Magnificat and Nunc dimittis in A.* By Edward Bunnett, Mus. Doc. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

So many services in chant form have been written of late years that it is scarcely possible for a composer to take a new departure without overstepping the boundaries of this form of ecclesiastical art. Dr. Bunnett has done very well, variety being obtained by the judicious mixture of Anglican and Gregorian phrases. The Communion Service is musicianly and church-like without much distinctiveness of character, excepting in that portion of the Nicene Creed commencing "And was incarnate," where the harmonic progressions are very striking. The Service includes the Benedictus and Agnus Dei. The setting of the evening Canticles is chiefly in unison, but a few verses are in simple four-part harmony. It is formed chiefly on a dignified but melodious phrase, and is generally plain and unpretentious in style. The composer's conservative tendencies show themselves even in the adoption of the minim as the unit of measurement.

*Blessed be Thou; If ye love Me; I will magnify Thee.* Anthems. By Edward Bunnett, Mus. Doc. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE first of these anthems is a seasonal composition, as it is specially suitable for harvest thanksgivings, which will shortly be general. It is in three choral movements, and is written in a bright yet solid and church-like manner; even the fugato episodes presenting no difficulty owing to the prevalence of smooth, diatonic progressions. The next is quiet and unassuming, in one movement, and though stated to be for Whitsuntide, is almost equally suitable for other seasons. The last is also a one movement anthem, though it is developed at considerable length. It is generally jubilant though stately in character, and if not marked by originality of idea, proves, at any rate, that the composer is familiar with the legitimate school of English church music, and is willing to abide by its leading traditions.

*A Communion Service in C.* By Gerard F. Cobb. [London Music Publishing Company.]

MR. COBB's church compositions are generally noteworthy for thoughtfulness of idea even more than for skilful workmanship, and this setting of the sacramental office deserves more serious regard than is due to the majority of Communion Services. The composer says that his aim has been to provide a service "sufficiently simple to be within reach of the musical portion of our congregations without presenting to the musician that somewhat severe and colourless aspect which simple settings are apt to wear." With this end in view the voice part is kept mainly within the compass of a sixth (E to C), but though even thus restricted it is melodious and singable, while the accompaniment is at times discursive. The work contains settings of every part of the service with which choir and congregation have to do, together with the O Salutaris, Benedictus, and Agnus Dei.

*Magnificat and Nunc dimittis in G.* By J. R. Courtney Gale. [Weekes and Co.]

COMPOSED for a harvest festival this service is appropriately bright and jubilant in character. The voice parts are quite easy, and the accompaniment flowing and melodious. It is not free from blemishes however, the words being sometimes wrongly accented.