

Review

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J. McDOWELL AND Co.

Chanson Indienne; pour Piano.*L'Invitation à la Polonaise*; pour Piano.*Saltarelle*; pour Piano.*Les Cuirassiers de Reischaffen*; pour Piano.

Par H. Kowalski.

THESE are unquestionably the best pieces by this composer which have yet come before us. We do not say that Herr Kowalski has displayed any remarkable vein of originality, but there is a freedom about his writing which deserves recognition. The "*Chanson Indienne*," in E minor, with an obstinate pedal bass, has decided character, whether that character be Indian or not; and pianists capable of drawing beauty from its simple monotony, will find it a pleasing little sketch for performance. The second piece is a graceful *Polonaise*, which, for the sake of English players, we are sorry is not published with English fingering. The passages are extremely elegant; and apart from its intrinsic attraction, it may be recommended as an excellent exercise for the cultivation of the delicacies of touch. The "*Saltarelle*" moves somewhat too much in uninterrupted triplets to justify its title—in this respect more fulfilling the requirements of the Neapolitan "*Tarantelle*"—but the theme is lively, and a good effect is gained by the accompaniment of five quavers against the two divisions in the melody—the left hand (which has the unequal group of quavers) being written in two-four, and the right hand in six-eight, rhythm. "*Les Cuirassiers de Reischaffen*" is a dashing and brilliant piece in C minor, which will repay the practice it demands. The themes are animated; and (if we except the somewhat tiresome chromatic succession of sixths) highly effective throughout.

DUFF AND STEWART.

The Streamlet. Song. Words by Mary Anne Stodart.*Spring Flowers*. Song. Words by Agnes Strickland.

Composed by King Hall.

THE flowing theme in the first of these songs is graceful and well adapted to the words. The accompaniment, too, is in good keeping with the nature of the subject, and never obtrudes itself upon the voice part, a merit especially commendable in a composer who has shown by other works that he can display his learning when it is called for. "*Spring Flowers*" is perhaps even more simple in construction, but the subject is extremely pleasing. The swinging accompaniment in crotchets, against the four even quavers in the melody, gives a character to the song which makes it additionally attractive; and the lengthening out of the word "welcome" forms an appropriate conclusion to each verse. Unpretentious ballads like these should always find favour with unpretentious vocalists.

The Tell-Tale Flower. Song. Written by M—. Composed by Ed. Reyloff.

YOUNG ladies need not be told what this tell-tale flower is, nor what tale it tells them when properly put to the test. M— has assuredly not sought for novelty in choosing a subject; but the verses flow easily to the melody of Mr. Reyloff. There is certainly no more originality in the music than the poetry; and yet, by musician-like treatment, the composer has contrived to produce a little song which will probably please amateurs who want something "pretty."

Original Correspondence.

ORGANISTS' STIPENDS, &c.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MUSICAL TIMES.

SIR,—My former letter has, in one quarter, been greatly misunderstood. I nowhere asserted that "Organists do not pay tithe, and therefore they are not deserving the consideration of the clergy." I mentioned tithe simply because I firmly hold that a man who possesses a talent that can be directly used for the praise and glory of God is morally bound to offer, irrespective of fee or reward, some portion of that talent as an act of worship to Him from whom he receives it; and when he is unable to devote extra time to the duties of his office, beyond that for which he is by agreement paid, tithe seems to me to represent the lowest sum, under ordinary circumstances, that he can render as an equivalent. The payment of tithe to an Organists' fund (for I have not recommended direct payments to the clergy, nor do I make such myself) would, with occasional help from offertories or subscriptions, or in time without these, put many an organ in good condition that is sadly out of order, or enlarge many that are too small.

The reiterated complaints of organists seem to be—"We don't get money enough," and "We don't get consideration enough;" and then they attack the clergy. I am reminded of the indorsement of a brief—"No case; abuse the plaintiff's attorney."

With regard to consideration—I firmly believe that if a man throws his whole soul into his work, and shows that he is really working for God and not for pay, he will, in almost every instance, receive all the consideration from the clergy that he may require; but if he takes no interest as a churchman in his duties, but simply sells his time to God at so much per hour as a matter of business, what possible claim, provided that his stipend is regularly paid, and he is treated with civility, he can have to the especial consideration of the clergy, I am at a loss to conceive.

With regard to stipends—If men of experience would uniformly decline inadequately remunerated posts, terms would gradually be forced up, for congregations will measure ability by the sum they have to pay for the exercise of it; but if, on the other hand, we voluntarily undertake certain duties for a certain sum, be it large or small, we ought not, as a correspondent has justly observed, to grumble at fulfilling them for that sum.

The parsimony of congregations necessitating economy on the part of churchwardens is, I believe, a greater hindrance to organists obtaining fair stipends, than the non-recognition of the importance of their work by the clergy; and churchwardens themselves often bid for re-election by paring down the cost of the services to the lowest possible sum.

Organists no doubt should be fully paid, but not according to the occasional concert scale; for an organist's work cannot be fairly looked upon as equivalent to "public playing," or as performed "for the benefit of the congregation," but for the honour and glory of God; and the moment an exorbitant charge is made or wished for, God is honoured no longer. We have not yet descended to the bathos of a trade, or professional, union, so that the rate of stipend in every case must be settled by those immediately interested in the matter; it behoves us, however, always to remember that God's Church was not instituted for clergy or laity to live by luxuriously; and that as we generally obtain most of our living by secular work, playing at church, principally on a day when we should otherwise earn nothing, we ought not to require unreasonable stipends.

No organist ought to accept an appointment unless he had permission to practise as often as he pleased on the organ. Organists have not, of course, any right to demand the use of the organ for giving lessons, and where this privilege is conceded, it may fairly claim to be reckoned as a set-off against a moderate stipend, since an organist to give lessons would otherwise require an organ in his own house. I see no objection to the practice of giving lessons on church organs, provided sufficient discretion be used with regard to the music played, so as to exclude operatic selections and the like. Most of us have depended in time past upon the church organ for our advancement, and the majority of those who study the instrument do so with the view of being of service to some church or other.

Instead of classing playing at weddings, &c., as "so much extra work, for which other work has to be neglected," I would read—"an extra hour's work, for which we can usually by a little arrangement make room, and which, but for our church engagement, we should not have the opportunity of undertaking."

I fully endorse your correspondent's statement that "the clergyman in many instances is made the means of expressing the various wishes or suggestions of as many different members of his congregation." A successor of mine at St. Barebone's, a church where in my time the offertory has been, more than once, less than a halfpenny a head from the whole congregation, and where, through the predominance of Beadledom, an organist a year is about the rule, told me that the then vicar knew nothing of music, and that he was himself worried into a state bordering on despair by the absurd and contradictory crotchets of the various would-be-musical critics of his shopkeeper congregation, all of which the vicar reported to him and wished attended to. In such a case the best course is for the vicar and organist to select some church musician, in whose judgment they can both repose confidence, and send him written details as to the manner in which the service is performed, and of the congregational objections, accompanied by a fee for professional advice and decision on the merits of the case. If an organist asked for this course to be taken as an act of justice to himself, I think his vicar would comply with his request. The result would probably be that the organist might obtain a few hints that would be serviceable to him,