

Review

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from what is peculiar to a later time—hence, he uses some modernisms of harmony such as Kent, and Nares, and their fellows could never have conceived, and which are consequently out of keeping with the general material and structure of his work. His final fugue is, or has the air of being, somewhat laboured. We write fugues under great difficulties in this age compared with those which beset our predecessors, who lived in a fugal atmosphere, hearing fugues, singing fugues, playing fugues, and making fugues, so that the contrapuntal idiom became their vernacular, and they expressed themselves as naturally in its form as we do in the phraseology of our own time. A little stiffness may then fairly be forgiven, since few of us escape it, if a fugue be indispensable in a piece of now-a-days Church music. On the whole, this anthem disappoints the expectations raised by Dr. Crowe's Communion Service, lately reviewed.

"*The Lord is my strength.*" A short, easy, full Anthem for Easter Day. Composed by Albert Lowe.

This anthem amply fulfils the announcement on the title-page; it is "short," and "easy," the subjects moreover, being both melodious and well harmonized. The change of key at the words "Open me the gates," is good; and the "Adagio Religioso" which follows, serves well as a contrast. We question, however, the policy of starting the voices in unison at the return to the original key and time, as we have already had enough of this effect before the commencement of the "Adagio." The unexpected chord of B flat, after the lingering of the voices upon D, is a point worthy of attention; and the manner in which the harmonies flow towards the final close is well deserving of commendation. The anthem will, we think, be found extremely useful wherever a desire is felt for something quiet and unpretending at the Easter-day service.

*The Organist's Quarterly Journal.* Edited by William Spark, Mus. D. Part 17.

WITH this number, the Organist's Quarterly Journal enters upon its fifth year—an accumulating testimony of the living talent for organ composition, and of the wide esteem for this class of music. The part for January last begins with *Twelve Short Interludes*, by Henry Smart, for use between the Offertory Sentences, or at Confirmations. The plan of this series is somewhat novel, and certainly ingenious. The twelve are in truth one piece interspersed with eleven discretionary silences, for one tempo is preserved throughout, and, what still more justifies this view, some of the same phrases recur from piece to piece, and no one comes to a complete conclusion until the very last, each resting upon a half-close, or in some key different from that of its commencement. Thus, No. 1 begins in G and ends on a chord of D, and No. 2 begins with the same theme in D and closes in G, and this said theme reappears in Nos. 6, 9, and 12. Again, the matter of No. 11 is integral to the next piece, and in this manner one design encompasses the whole cluster. A remoter change of key than any of the others have, from that of the foregoing interlude, marks No. 5; this presents what may be called a second subject or episode, and is to us the most interesting of the twelve. They have all greatly the air of improvisations, but this in no respect unfits them for their purpose. Mr. Smart has been one of the most frequent contributors to the work, and though he has put forth compositions of more musical importance, he has furnished nothing that better supplies a need than his present essay. A second movement follows of the *Sonata* in F, by Mr. Silas, of which the first instalment was issued in a previous number of the Journal. It is an Andante con moto in B flat, and a decided advance in merit upon the opening Allegro. A few preludial bars introduce the chief subject, a well sustained melody; this is relieved by an episode wherein the pedals have a conspicuous duty; and then, in Rondo wise, the prior matter comes again without modification, and a short coda closes the whole. The unbroken continuance of one figure of accompaniment throughout the first theme at each time of its presentation, and of another throughout the episode or Trio, must be regarded as weakness in the construction. The author's admirers will look with interest for the final movement in the next coming number. A *Concluding Voluntary*, the 63rd work of Herr Philipp Tietz, stands next in order; it is "Fugato" in form and grave in matter. It is succeeded by an *Offertoire* by Mr. Robert Hainworth—we would gladly know the distinction between an *Offertoire* and a piece of music for the Offertory—whose notion must be that alms-giving flows nimbly, since he accompanies it with an Allegro Vivace. The last piece is a *Prelude* by the accomplished organist of Chichester, Mr. Francis Edward

Gladstone, which is on a parity with other of his productions that have been noticed in these columns.

*Schumann's Songs.* Edited and in part translated by Natalia Macfarren.

FOR many years the instrumental music of Robert Schumann has been so steadily making its way in this country that his compositions, either for pianoforte or orchestra, need no longer the advocacy of his zealous partisans to ensure a welcome, even with a mixed audience. His Symphonies, Concerto, and smaller works for the pianoforte have now thoroughly taken rank amongst the stock pieces, both for the concert-room and the drawing-room; and there can be little doubt that a closer acquaintance with them will but reveal new beauties. But his songs are by no means so well-known; and the volume now before us comes, therefore, at a most opportune moment, for those already acquainted with many of the vocal gems contained in this collection will be glad to possess them in so attractive a form, and those who are strangers to them will, we are certain, discover in them a mine of wealth almost inexhaustible in its resources. The volume is announced as a first instalment only of the composer's songs, in the order of their production; and in the Preface it is stated that although it is not considered desirable to re-publish all his songs, wherever there is a connecting link between the different numbers of an Opus, they will be given in their entire form, precisely as Schumann wrote them. In adapting the original English words to those songs which were set by the composer to translations, we think that the editress has been perfectly right in altering occasionally the text to suit the music; for it is obvious that notes which may sympathize perfectly with the German words may not so well agree with the English ones; and, as Mrs. Macfarren very truly says, the music should be made the "paramount consideration." It is difficult indeed to select, even for brief comment, any especial compositions from a collection in which every piece has so much real beauty, but we must make the attempt. The nine songs forming Op. 24, which commence the volume, vary much in length, but some of the shorter ones are instinct with true poetical feeling, No. 4, more particularly, a melody of wailing anguish, in E minor, with a characteristic quaver accompaniment following each accent of the bar, at once arresting the attention from the intensity of its expression throughout. Nos. 2, 5, (the latter having a charming theme, with a restless accompaniment of quavers) and 6 (the melody actually speaking the words "Stay thy oar, thou rugged boatman," and ending strangely, but effectively, in the voice part with a dominant seventh) may be cited as amongst the best of the more elaborated songs. No. 7, "On the Rhine," must have a line to itself. The simple loveliness of this theme, accompanied with the calmly flowing semiquavers, is so winning that in lingering over its beauties, we cannot but wonder that the state of art in this country should be such that inanities which shall be nameless are praised and sung, whilst treasures such as these are uncalled for. No. 9 should also become a favourite with vocalists who can appreciate real art: the melody, in true sympathy with the words, is extremely refined, and the pianoforte part—sometimes flowing in loving company with the voice, and sometimes asserting its right to an independent character—although requiring the hand of a trained artist to give it due effect, contains no such difficulties as are found even in many common-place modern vocal effusions. The next 26 songs constitute Op. 25, entitled "Myrthen." The first of these (No. 10 in the volume) is one of the most charming pieces in the collection. The words, translated by Mrs. Macfarren from Rückert, seem those originally wedded to the notes, so perfectly do they accord in every respect with Schumann's impassioned music. The melody commences in A flat, with an *arpeggio* accompaniment, divided between the two hands. After a close upon the key note an unexpected enharmonic modulation into E major expresses most sympathetically the more placid feeling of the words, the return to the key being introduced by changing C sharp into D flat on the harmony of the dominant seventh. The close of the song is extremely beautiful, the voice dwelling on the dominant 9th in the final phrase with a tenderness which cannot but speak to the heart of all listeners. A marked and highly characteristic melody is set to No. 11, "The Free mind," and in No. 12, "The Walnut Tree," we have another song of remarkable beauty, the unceasing *arpeggio* accompaniment heightening, without disturbing, the calm theme given to the singer; and an expressive phrase, which forms the symphony, breaking in with excellent effect wherever the voice pauses. No. 13, a song full of