

Review

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*Short Voluntary for Lent; Allegretto in D; Rêverie; Three Pieces in F, D, and G; and Marche Sérieuse.* By Luard Selby. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

It is a healthful sign that composers are turning their attention with increased zeal to the organ as a worthy medium for the presentation of their creative ideas. Transcriptions have for a long period been and will continue to be necessary, and are not to be condemned when skilfully and artistically carried out; but music composed expressly for a certain instrument must always be preferable to arrangements. The English school of organ music, of which Henry Smart may be said to have been the founder, is growing in importance, and it may fill a definite position in art if its best workers succeed in avoiding modern Teutonic ponderousness on the one hand and modern Gallic flippancy on the other. The present pieces are Nos. 11, 16, 22, 23, and 24 of a new series of "Original Compositions for the Organ," by various native composers. Mr. Luard Selby is evidently a musician who is not disposed to walk tamely in the footsteps of his predecessors, his independency of thought being exhibited even in the opening bars of the Lent Voluntary. It is a sketch in three flats, but whether the tonic is E flat or C minor we are left in doubt until the close in the major key. The Allegretto in D is far more pleasing, and, we may add, more satisfactory in a musician's sense. The principal theme in 3-4 time is extremely melodious, and the middle section, Allegro in G minor, is in excellent contrast. The Rêverie is a flowing Andante con moto in A, 3-4 time, with a brief middle section in the relative minor. The three pieces are more vigorous in character, and will be useful as concluding voluntaries. In the Marche Sérieuse the composer indulges freely in double notes on the pedals, and the piece is remarkable for some abrupt and startling transitions of key. On the whole it is not the most attractive number of the series.

*The Soldier's Mother.* Song for Mezzo-Soprano or Contralto, with Clarinet obbligato. Words by James Baden Powell.

*I am a little Milking Maid.* Boddice's Song from "The Blue Lady of Mildenhall." *Monthly Packet*, 1880.

*Over the Sea.* Canzonet. Words by H. Knight. Composed by James Baden Powell. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

IN the first two of these songs the want of definite design is observable, a few fragmentary phrases being so often repeated—sometimes with variety in the harmonies and figures of accompaniment—as to become tiresome. "The Soldier's Mother" has this peculiarity in an inordinate degree; but the simplicity of the second song on our list makes such musical reiteration less felt. "Over the Sea," however, is a highly effective composition, both melody and accompaniment being in true sympathy with the poetry. We shall be glad to welcome Mr. Powell with other songs as good as this.

*Impromptu Gavotte.* For the Pianoforte. By Walter Macfarren. [Stanley Lucas, Weber and Co.]

AMONGST the many pieces of this kind by Mr. Walter Macfarren, the one before us should certainly take high rank. The melodiousness of the subjects—especially that in the tonic major—must commend the composition to all hearers; and there is just sufficient work in the last page to please those ambitious pianists who wish to have "something to do." There can be little doubt that this "Impromptu Gavotte" will become a general favourite.

*Leslie's Songs for Little Folks.* By Henry Leslie. [Cassell and Company, Limited.]

SOME years ago a volume was published by Messrs. Cassell, called "Little Songs for me to sing," the music by Henry Leslie, and the illustrations by J. E. Millais. The book now before us is a reprint of the former one, with the addition of several new songs, a frontispiece by Millais, and an illustration by H. C. Selous. All these fresh contributions are fully worthy to rank with their companions; and at the approach of a season when "little folks" look for such offerings, the publication of so refined and attractive a combination of musical and pictorial art is well timed.

*The Prodigal Son.* A Cantata. The words from the revised Edition of the New Testament.

*The Fisherman's Wife.* Song. Words by Claxson Bellamy.

*When the soft light of Sunset.* Song for Baritone. Words by A. M. H.

*Three Songs.* Song. Words by Claxson Bellamy.

Composed by R. P. Paine. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

A CALM examination of these compositions convinces us that where Mr. Paine has been the least ambitious he has been the most successful. He tells us in his preface to the Cantata that he has especially designed the work for young people in churches, chapels, and Sunday-schools, who are capable of "singing a solo, recitative, or playing an accompaniment on piano or harmonium, and even the organ, as well as in chorus." We cannot say whether the want of an "Oratorio in miniature" really exists to the extent that Mr. Paine imagines; but, if so, his unpretending little work may find some favour where music of more importance must of necessity be excluded. Even for "young people," however, the part-writing must be pure; and we can scarcely pass without a protest such consecutive fifths as occur between soprano and bass in the last bar but one of the quartet "And the son said unto him." Some of the choruses, although very brief, would prove effective in performance; and in many of the solos the words are well expressed. The songs—especially "The Fisherman's Wife" and "When the soft light of sunset"—are exceedingly simple in the vocal part, but the accompaniments are laboured and distressing to the voice; indeed, it often appears that the composer is trying to find how many harmonies he can fit in to the notes of the melody. The same fault is observable in "Three Songs," but the pianoforte part is in this composition more sympathetic with the voice.

*Music.* By Henry C. Banister. Eleventh Edition. Revised, with new Appendix. [Deighton, Bell and Co.]

A REVIEW upon the new edition of this work, on which we have already expressed a highly favourable opinion, would be quite unnecessary were it not that from time to time it has received various modifications, and that in this (the eleventh edition) a very important appendix is added, explaining the theory and giving examples of those "fundamental" chromatic chords upon which the system propounded by the late Dr. Alfred Day is based. As Mr. Banister's book does not enunciate any absolute "method" throughout, it is quite consistent with his design that the author should place these views before his readers without committing himself to belief or disbelief in their truth. We may also say that since our notice of the work when it first appeared the many "modifications" to which we have alluded justify us in strengthening our then recorded estimate of its value as a text-book.

*The Children's Christmas.* Nine Christmas Scenes. Words by R. Spence Watson, LL.D. Music by Myles Birket Foster. [George Routledge and Sons.]

THESE short musical Christmas Scenes will be a welcome present to the many children who look forward to having something new, as well as appropriate to the season. It is not always that songs written for a special occasion are considered worth preserving after the occasion has passed away; but the organist of the Foundling Hospital has here given us music which, although simple, is good of its kind; and having associated himself with an author who has the rare faculty of sympathising with the juvenile mind, there can be no reason why the nine little pieces here given should not last for many Christmases to come.

*The Lord is in His Holy Temple.* Anthem for Dedication or General use. Composed by Gordon Saunders, Mus. Doc. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THIS smooth and musicianlike setting of the words may be found useful for its intended purpose. The movement in 3-2 is perhaps the most effective portion of the anthem; but there are some good contrapuntal points in the final chorus, "O come, let us worship."