

Review

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keynote followed by its octave, ninth, and seventh. By a curious coincidence these notes are practically identical with the opening of the national anthem, an accident of which excellent use is made in the subsequent choral number. Although the chief part of the music is of a diatonic character, and frequent use is made of unison, the part-writing possesses much independence, and musician-like recourse is frequently made to contrapuntal devices, notably in the chorus "England, glorious England," in which a ground bass is impressively reiterated for sixteen bars. It is hardly necessary to add that the work is admirably suited to choral societies, both small and great, by whom its performance this year would be peculiarly appropriate and could scarcely fail to be attractive.

Victoria—Our Queen! March for full orchestra. By John E. West.

Imperial March. By Edward Elgar. Op. 32.
[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

JOYOUS marches will, of course, be much in demand as the "Diamond" celebrations approach, and the attention of musical directors may be drawn to the two examples above-mentioned. The first is founded on themes from the late Sir Joseph Barnby's "Patriotic" chorus and is arranged for pianoforte solo. The brief introduction savours of Wagner in a slight degree, but the spirited principal theme, in E flat, is bold and thoroughly English in character. Later on the music becomes more elaborate, but although clear in design and not difficult to play, the March comes to a most jubilant and triumphant conclusion.

Mr. Elgar's March is wholly original, and is well worthy of the composer, who wrote two of the most successful works produced at last year's autumnal festivals. It is in the key of B flat and is in strict march form—that is to say, a principal section, followed by a so-called trio in the subdominant key, and then a recapitulation. Very strong rhythm is preserved throughout, and the style is distinctly modern and free, but without lawlessness. The march would assuredly prove effective if rendered by an orchestra, the present edition being for pianoforte solo only.

The Queen's Song. By Eaton Fanning.
All hail the Glorious Reign. By Frederic H. Cowen.
[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

WITH words supplied by such an eloquent poet as Sir Edwin Arnold, it would have been strange indeed if Mr. Eaton Fanning had failed to do justice to his reputation, and he has certainly sustained it in the present instance. The two compositions above-named form Nos. 764 and 778 of Novello's Part-Song Book. The first is very vigorous, and the principal refrain is most inspiring. There is an alternative section of a more placid and peaceful nature, and the words of this are prayerful.

Mr. Cowen's composition is styled a Commemoration Ode for chorus and orchestra, or for unaccompanied chorus, the joyous words being from the pen of Mr. Clifton Bingham. The piece is very similar in character to the last-named, and the two might well be bracketed in programmes of orchestral concerts.

Twelve Hymns with Tunes. Suitable for use at Services held in commemoration of the Queen's long reign.
[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THIS is a handy little publication in ordinary hymn-book size, and it should be specially noted that the words and music are, in most instances, new. The verses are by esteemed authors, including the Rev. S. Baring-Gould, the Rev. W. J. Ferrar, Mr. Francis T. Palgrave, the Rev. Bernard Reynolds, and the very Rev. the Dean of Rochester. Some of them are beautiful in idea and expression, but we will not be invidious and make comparisons. With regard to the music, it would be difficult to collect a stronger list of names. Among the most effective tunes are those to "Children, send a song of praise," by C. H. Lloyd; "English hearts and English voices," by Walter Parratt; "From the deep heart of our people," by A. C. Mackenzie, somewhat in the olden style; "Happy children we have been," by Arthur Sullivan; "Let all the land with one accord," by Haydn Keeton; and "O King of kings,"

by J. F. Bridge. These tunes are some of the best, but all are good, and the whole series might well be sung at the Services of song which are likely to be numerous in June next. The other composers included are Joseph Barnby, Battison Haynes, G. C. Martin, and J. H. Maunder.

Of Winter Blossoms. Song. Words by Mrs. Fuller Maitland. Music by Catherine Adelaide Ranken.
[E. Ascherberg and Co.]

SOME poetical and dainty lines have been set in a most pleasing and sympathetic manner in this song, which may be warmly recommended to cultured soprano and tenor vocalists. The little ditty is pre-eminently one to which the quotation "Short and sweet," in its best sense, may be aptly applied.

Caprice for Pianoforte and Violin (or Flute). By Kate Willis. [Charles Woolhouse.]

MISS WILLIS has written a melodious Andante which amateur violinists, with a moderate amount of executive facility, will find a pleasing medium for the display of their power of expression and skill. The pianoforte part is simple, but by no means devoid of interest.

MUSIC IN BIRMINGHAM.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT).

THE Festival Choral Society gave, on the 4th ult., Dvorák's dramatic cantata "The Spectre's Bride," Dr. Hubert Parry's exquisite choral setting of Milton's Ode "Blest Pair of Sirens," and Schumann's Pianoforte Concerto in A minor (Op. 54). Dr. C. Swinnerton Heap appeared on that occasion in a dual capacity—that of conductor and pianist. The revival of "The Spectre's Bride," after a lapse of eleven years, came upon the audience as a revelation, and was followed with the keenest interest. The performance was a magnificent one and showed the most careful preparation on all sides. The principals—Miss Ella Russell, Mr. Edward Branscombe, and Mr. Bantock Pierpoint—discharged their duties with the utmost satisfaction. Dr. Parry's "Blest Pair of Sirens" was rendered by the choir with wonderful tone-power and precision, and, in my opinion, received an even better rendering than at the Festival of 1891. Dr. Heap played the Pianoforte Concerto with marked intelligence and faultless technique, the orchestral accompaniments being directed by Mr. Fred. Ward.

Mr. Stockley's Orchestral Concert, which took place on the 12th ult., included in its programme Beethoven's Symphony in C minor, the "Tannhäuser" Overture, Scharwenka's "Andante Religioso," Overture to "Athalie," a Romance for small orchestra by Mr. E. W. Rickett, a local musician, and Raff's Suite (Op. 200) for pianoforte and orchestra. The Romance is scored for strings, flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, and four horns, and shows considerable talent in the direction of orchestral colouring; but the composition is too restless in character, too impetuous, as if the composer intended to put a life's history into a short form. Dr. Winn played the Cavatina and the Gavotte from the Suite by Raff with scholarly conception. Mr. Meacham presided at the organ.

The Midland Musical Society gave, under Mr. H. M. Stevenson's conductorship, a praiseworthy performance of Mendelssohn's "St. Paul," which has not been heard here for many years. The performance took place in the Town Hall, on the 13th ult., and attracted a large and popular audience. The principals were Miss Maggie Jaques, Mr. Samuel Roper, Mr. William Evans, and Miss Minnie Hackett. Mr. George Halliley presided at the organ in place of Mr. C. W. Perkins, who has been indisposed for some time past and is still confined to his house.

Messrs. Harrison's third popular Concert of the current series was given in the Town Hall, on the 15th ult. The artists were Miss Ada Crossley, Mr. Edward Lloyd, and Mr. Watkin Mills, the Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir, Mr. Mark Hambourg (pianoforte), Mr. W. Henley (violin), Mr. Jean Gérardy (violoncello), and Mr. Speaight, accompanist.