

Review

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is more in the second piece—a well constructed study—which may be confidently recommended as good practice for the close playing of *legato* semiquavers in the right hand. The lingering on the dominant harmony of E minor, and the re-entry of the first subject in G major, through the dominant 7th, is an effective point. The title of the composition is somewhat fantastic; but custom seems to have decided that such names shall be given to modern pieces, and there is no reason why M. Jules Egghard should not be in the fashion.

*Dropping Down the Troubled River.* Sacred Song. Poetry by the Rev. Horatius Bonar, D.D. Composed by Henry Smart.

MR. SMART has here wedded a charming melody to some earnest and thoughtful words, the attraction of the song being materially aided by the truly musician-like manner in which it is harmonised. The flowing accompaniment is in excellent keeping with the character of the poetry; and the theme is so thoroughly vocal as to ensure the sympathy of the singer. We particularly admire the interrupted close on C sharp minor (6th bar, page 2), a very good effect being gained by reserving the harmony of E major until the conclusion of the symphony.

*A Soldier's Song.* Words by Dr. J. F. Waller. Composed by Charles Oberthür.

WE often wonder who sings those songs which daily appear, the words of which seem to us suited neither for the concert-room nor the drawing-room. At one time we are called upon to review an effusion graphically describing the painful death of a young and loving child; at another our sympathies are aroused for a beautiful and confiding girl, whose heart is breaking through three verses for a personage known only as "him," who has basely deserted her; and in the "Soldier's Song" before us we are told that the "fight is o'er," that the plain is "red with patriot slaughter," and that one warrior still fights, "though deadly wounded." Now, unless composers are compelled to appeal to the public through clap-trap, sensational verses, in order to cover the weakness of their music, we cannot see why such subjects as these should be selected; it cannot be affirmed that the words are rendered additionally attractive by one grain of poetry; and musicians, therefore, who lend the weight of their names to make such manufactures saleable, should be reminded of the responsibility they hold as missionaries of the art in the country where they exercise their talents. M. Oberthür's patriotic effusion is neither better nor worse than the many songs of its class we are constantly expected to notice. The melody is bold, and, if we except a somewhat unpleasant descent of fifths between the voice-part and bass, in the 4th bar of page 3, we have no fault to find with the harmony.

#### METZLER AND CO.

*The Office of the Holy Communion*, in G major. By James J. Monk.

THE simplicity of this series of pieces is such as to ensure their good performance and their consequently good effect. We cannot agree with the strong emphasis placed on the first syllable of the word "upon" in the Kyrie. There is abundant precedent for this, it must be owned, in the older Church music: but it must be remembered, too, that when the best specimens of such music were written, the rules of accent were very ill defined or wholly indefinite; now that such matters have a fixed principle, and musicians, as well as the world at large, know how English should be pronounced, the strong exceptionality from general and right use must not pass without a protest. We fail to perceive the purpose which doubtless underlies the repetition of the music for the Responses to the Commandments, on the words beginning, "and peace on earth," in the Gloria. Can it be meant that earthly peace can only arrive to us through our fulfilment of the laws of heaven? If so, the application seems somewhat strained. Again, the pertinence is not evident of the first phrase of Reading's capital tune, "Adeste fideles" to the continuation of the Angel's Hymn, except it may mean that the faithful are invited to

come and join in the praise, and blessing, and worship. A curious technical point occurs in this piece on the word "mercy," when the Lamb of God is deprecated; it consists of a progression from the chord of G to that of A flat and back again, involving the forbidden succession of 5ths, while the note G is sustained, pedal-wise, above the entire harmony and the unisonous melody of the voices. The offertory sentence, "Let thy light," is smoothly and prettily set as an anthem, despite the express rubric that all these passages are to be read by the Minister; there is many a precedent, however, for this breach of Church discipline, and we should be glad to suppose that here, as elsewhere, the merit of the music may justify the dereliction. The interpolated words to come before and after the Gospel differ slightly from those in other settings, and why not? since there is no authority for such a passage in any Prayer Book now in use. There is some harmonic confusion in a phrase much resembling that which opens the Kyrie, and on that same syllable "up," which was there falsely, but is here justly, accented, in the first choral reply in the Sursum Corda, the F natural to which is unresolved, and consequently induces a bad effect from the F sharp in another part which presently follows. There is enough merit in the Service to repay the easy amendment of the incidents of which we complain, and we urge the author to take this into consideration.

#### J. B. CRAMER AND CO.

*The Spinning Song, from Wagner's Opera, "Der Fliegende Holländer."* Arranged for the Pianoforte by Jules Brissac.

THE various Transcriptions and Fantasias from Wagner's Operas afford undeniable proof of their growing popularity; and the managers of our lyrical establishments may rest assured, that, instead of leading the public taste towards his works,—as they might have done a year or two ago,—the absolute necessity of producing them will shortly be forced upon them by the pressure from without. The characteristic and melodious "Spinning song," which forms the subject of the piece before us, is here excellently transcribed; and although from the nature of the song, the fingers must be somewhat severely taxed, there is nothing in the arrangement, admirably as it recalls the effect of voices and orchestra, which cannot be accomplished by a moderate pianist. As an exercise, as well as a composition well adapted for performance, this pianoforte arrangement of one of the most favourite pieces in the only Opera by Wagner yet heard in this country, may be confidently recommended.

*Mysterious Serenade. The Chapel.* Nos. 1 and 2 of original songs, with German and English words. The English version by Thomas Oliphant, Esq. Composed by J. L. Hatton.

A FOOT-NOTE in the first of these songs conveys the following hint to amateurs: "The accompaniment to this song must be played with the utmost freedom and lightness of touch, otherwise the effect intended by the composer will be entirely destroyed." We can readily forgive Mr. Hatton for this gentle admonition, the song mainly depending for its success upon the sympathy existing between vocalist and pianist. There is a charming simplicity in the melody of this "Serenade," which is presumed to be heard by a weary child, whilst its mother is watching at the bedside. So delicately is it handled by the composer throughout, that it should not be attempted by any who cannot approach it with an artistic appreciation of its refined and poetical beauty. "The Chapel" is also a happy setting of the words, which are indeed admirably adapted for music. The sudden change in the feeling of the music where the shepherd's merry strain is interrupted by the passing bell, is so thoroughly unlike the conventional trickery of our sentimental ballad-mongers that we cannot but marvel how it is that compositions like this should be comparatively unknown, while, even in our best concert-rooms, mere common-place ditties are received with tumultuous applause: do the rules of the "Royalty" system positively *exclude* songs of a high character?