

Review

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words which Mr. West has set to music, and their exhortation to faith, are impressed by the dignified character of the music, and the *pianissimo* ending which dies away into silence finely suggests 'The Peace which passeth understanding.'

*Communion Service.* For Men's Voices. By John Stainer. [Novello and Company, Limited.]

This Communion Service was one of Sir John Stainer's latest compositions, and it forms a worthy continuation of the Morning and Evening Services (for men's voices) that emanated from his pen. Although the name of the composer is sufficient indication of the importance and value of the music, a description of its design may be useful. Its most distinctive portion is the setting of the Nicene Creed, which is a fine example of its composer's genius and thorough comprehension of the spirit of English Church music. The passage beginning 'And was Incarnate' is written for tenor solo, the interest of which is much increased by the originality of the organ accompaniment. The fugal writing at the close is extremely clever, and, be it added, effective. This portion makes somewhat exacting demands on the singers, but this has been realised by the composer, who has provided an alternative ending. The Offertory Sentences that have been set are 'Lay not up for yourselves,' 'Godliness is great riches,' 'Give alms of thy goods,' and 'Be merciful after thy power,' the music to each admirably reflecting the spirit of the words. The *Sanctus* is simple but peculiarly impressive; the *Gloria* starts with a fine, bold phrase *alla cappella*, and includes tenor solos. A threefold Amen furnishes an effective conclusion.

#### NEW SETTINGS OF THE BENEDICITE.

*Benedicite, omnia Opera, No. 2 in G*, by Arthur E. Godfrey. *In G*, by R. Bernard Elliott. *In C*, by C. Hylton Stewart. *In E flat*, by Edward C. Bairstow. [Novello's Parish Choir Book.] [Novello and Company, Limited.]

Mr. Godfrey's setting of the 'Song of the Three Children' is somewhat novel in character, and the canticle is treated in such an ingenious manner that much of its monotony is avoided. It should be added that the unison voice parts are richly harmonised in the organ accompaniment. The music by Mr. Elliott is of the simplest character, three double chants are provided for as many sections of the canticle, with a fourth chant for the *Gloria*. The settings by the Rev. Hylton Stewart and Dr. Edward Bairstow are arranged according to the plan of the Paragraph Psalter, which divides the *Benedicite* into sections, each of which is differently treated in double chant form. Dr. Bairstow's setting is perhaps the more effective of the two, owing to the organ part being more fully treated, but both arrangements merit the attention of organists and choirmasters.

#### NEW SONGS.

*Fünf Lieder* (Op. 18), *Fünf Lieder* (Op. 19), *Wo kann mein trauter Ritter sein?* (Op. 33), *Elfenliebe* (Op. 35), *Rhapsodie* (Op. 37), *Persisches Lied* (Op. 38). *Fitnes Gesang. Ein Cyklus von sieben Gesängen* (Op. 40). Von Bertram Shapleigh. [Breitkopf und Härtel.]

New songs are heavily handicapped, for they are at once mentally compared with the rich heritage of the past. Then again, new songs are at a disadvantage just because they are new; only time can show whether any apparent merit is lasting, or whether any latent beauty will reveal itself. The songs of Mr. Bertram Shapleigh are undoubtedly interesting, and yet we often feel that they are made, and well-made, rather than inspired. Sometimes they run on familiar lines, and it is only by certain quaint and at times forced harmonies that the ordinary character of the music is disguised. In other songs, however, there is individuality and charm. Among the most successful we reckon 'Was I but dreaming' (Op. 18, No. 4), 'Song of a Bird in the Oasis' (Op. 19, No. 2), which has a fresh melody and dainty accompaniment, the *Rhapsodie* (Op. 37), and especially the 'Fitne' cycle (Op. 40). The excellent English versions of the German poems are by Mrs. Shapleigh.

*An Even-Song.* Words by Celia Thaxter. Music by Horatio W. Parker.

*Songs of the Seasons.* Words by J. M. Hadow. Music by H. A. J. Campbell.

[Novello and Company, Limited.]

The words of Professor Parker's 'An Even-Song' are somewhat enigmatical, but the music is graceful, and expressive of the sentiment which is attributed by poets to two people in a boat in the moonlight. The little poems by Mr. Hadow, and set to music by Mr. H. A. J. Campbell, form a song cycle commencing with a swain in a hopeless frame of mind, who in the winter sees 'answering love in his sweetheart's eyes'; in the spring receives prophecies of hope with the return of the swallows, and in the summer finds consummation of his aspiration. Mr. Campbell's music faithfully follows the sentiments of the gentleman and accentuates the spirit of the lines. The addition of parts for first and second violins to the pianoforte accompaniment will doubtless add to the acceptableness of these pleasing compositions.

#### PART-SONGS.

*Close to my Heart.* Words by L. Lowndes. Music by William Davies.

*The Fisher Boy.* Words by Eliza Cook. Music by John E. West.

*The Chase.* Words by Edward Oxenford. Music by Edward German.

*Faithless Nelly Gray.* Words by Tom Hood. Music by C. Lee Williams.

*The Highland Laddie.* Words by Robert Burns. Music by H. Elliot Button.

*To a Red Rose.* By Hamilton Clarke.

[Novello's Part-Song Book.]

[Novello and Company, Limited.]

The composition of Mr. William Davies is an admirable example of solidly harmonised melody. Happy use is made of harmonic transition at the words, 'Oh, cruel Time,' and the return to the key of the piece is effectively managed. Mr. West has allied Eliza Cook's lines to music possessing a lilt that accentuates the poet's opinion that the 'Fisher boy jolly lives.' The part-writing is cleverly designed, and the several voices possess independence which will interest well-trained singers. Hunting songs are not perhaps now so popular as once they were, but 'The Chase' would certainly secure the favour of any audience, for Mr. German's music goes with a swing and dash that stir the pulse. 'Faithless Nelly Gray' has been most cleverly set by Mr. Lee Williams, whose music reflects the wit of Tom Hood's 'pathetic ballad.' The composition requires crisp singing, but it will fully repay any extra trouble bestowed on its rehearsal. Mr. Elliot Button has happily caught the spirit of Burns's lines, and the music has sufficient Scotch character to suggest the nationality of the poet. Grace and daintiness are the distinguishing features of Mr. Hamilton Clarke's part-song, which is eminently suitable to well-trained small choirs.

#### PIANOFORTE MUSIC.

*Happy New Year!* A choice collection of pianoforte compositions of medium ability by modern composers.

[Breitkopf and Härtel.]

In this attractive album, twenty-five compositions have been contributed by twenty-two different composers, of whom five are Englishmen. The names of Hermann, Goetz, Raff, the Scharwenkas, John Francis Barnett, Hans Sitt, Graham P. Moore, and others, are a sufficient guarantee of excellence. While the pieces are of the lighter order, they have not the slightest taint of triviality, and we can heartily commend this attractive volume as an appropriate gift book at this present-giving season of the year.