

Review

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On the one hand there is so much evidence of earnest intention in the music that it would be harsh to condemn it altogether; while, on the other, there is so much that is faulty in it that it is impossible to express unqualified approval. The work consists of three long movements; there is first a soprano solo and chorus (verses 1 to 3), then a tenor solo (verses 4 and 5), and, lastly, a chorus (verse 6), with duet passages for soprano and tenor. The first movement suffers terribly from diffuseness; it contains no fewer than 304 bars, mostly in rather slow time; the principal subjects are pleasing, but the developments are carried on to such a length as to become very tiresome. The music, moreover, wanders too far away from the original key. For instance, immediately after the first entry of the chorus in F, that key is quitted, and a series of modulations, some of them very remote, follows for 158 bars before the original key is returned to. Thus all feeling of the tonality of the movement is lost entirely; and though it is true that we in one place find some sixteen bars in C, the dominant of the key in which the piece begins, Mr. Sewell almost immediately flies off again at a tangent. The tenor solo which follows is better as regards its construction, but less interesting in its themes; while the final chorus, with duet, "Surely goodness and mercy," is, in our opinion, the least satisfactory part of the music. Its chief subject has a strong resemblance to the opening of Mendelssohn's "Cornelius" March; and there is a general triviality of character about it which seems very unsuited to the feeling of the words. Mr. Sewell's harmony is for the most part correct; and yet, side by side with passages which seem to indicate considerable facility in part-writing, we find unpardonable errors—such, for instance, as the unresolved chord of $\frac{5}{4}$ on the sixth bar of the second page, or the consecutive octaves between extreme parts from bar 1 to bar 2 on page 49. The accompaniment is laid out for piano and harmonium throughout the work; and in this point again we meet with the most curious inconsistencies. It is quite evident that the composer has some practical knowledge of the harmonium: this appears clearly enough in the directions for registering; such a combination as that indicated in the harmonium part of page 36 shows not only an acquaintance with the resources of the instrument, but a good feeling for contrast of tone-colour. Yet we should have supposed that any one with half Mr. Sewell's knowledge of the harmonium must have been aware that with the *Grand Jeu* of a large instrument drawn, the full chords for the left hand at the bottom of page 35 would be most ineffective. The whole work is full of anomalies of this kind; and we have thought it best to mention some few of them in detail, in order to justify our opening statement that we were in doubt whether to praise the composition or not.

A Lament for the Summer. Duet. Words by A. A. Procter.

The Pride of Youth. Duet. Words by Sir Walter Scott.

Morning Song. Duet. English words translated from the German of G. Th. Stricker, by Rev. J. Troutbeck, M.A.

Life. Duet. Words by A. L. Barbauld.

Composed by Edward Hecht. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

ALL these duets are intended for two sopranos, or soprano and alto, and so carefully considered as to be equally available for either pair of voices named. Mr. Hecht has evidently much talent for vocal writing; and if his duets strike us as being occasionally more restless in tonality than seems to be warranted by the simplicity of the verses to which he has wedded his music, we can at least affirm that this is partially atoned for by the masterly manner in which he handles his harmonies. "A Lament for the Summer" has a placid theme, in A minor, with a flowing quaver accompaniment, occasionally broken by some effective syncopations. The conclusion of this duet is extremely beautiful, a good point being gained by the lingering upon the dominant, and afterwards upon the key-note, harmony at the conclusion. "The Pride of Youth" is, in our opinion, the gem of the set. The text is expressed throughout with a fidelity which cannot be over-praised, the quaintness both of melody and harmony—especially observable in the treatment of the phrase, "When six braw

gentlemen kirkward shall carry ye"—being admirably in keeping, not only with the words, but with the spirit of Scott's verses. The "Morning Song" is extremely melodious, and much character is given to the duet by the second repeating the words in answer to the first voice, the two occasionally uniting with excellent effect. In the fourth piece upon our list we have in parts that excess of modulation to which we have already alluded, and which, to us, somewhat detracts from the sympathy which should exist between a composer and his audience. In every other respect, however, the duet is worthy of its companions; and we feel assured that, whether Mr. Hecht agree with us in our observations or not, he will believe that the qualification of our praise in reviewing his clever works is as sincere as the praise itself.

Zuleika. An Oriental Scena, for a Tenor or Soprano voice and Pianoforte. Poetry by Arthur O'Shaughnessy. Music by Charles Salaman. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

As a drawing-room Scena, for voice and pianoforte, this latest effusion from Mr. Salaman's prolific pen is entitled to take high rank. The words are expressed throughout with a felicity reminding us of the same composer's "I arise from dreams of thee," in many parts, indeed, strongly resembling this excellent setting of Shelley's *Serenade*. The verses of Mr. O'Shaughnessy are extremely good, and well adapted for musical treatment. Were we inclined to be over-critical upon the result of Mr. Salaman's labours, we might say that the ear becomes somewhat weary, in so long a piece, of the almost unceasing triplet accompaniment; but much is done to lessen the effect of monotony by the everchanging harmonies, which are always most happily sympathetic with the text. By the manner in which the vocal part is written, we should imagine the Scena more suited for a mezzo-soprano than for either a tenor or soprano; but vocalists are perhaps bound to respect the composer's intention expressed upon the title-page.

The Sweetest Song. Words by E. S. Righton. [Chappell and Co.]

I'll Sing of Thee. Words by Mrs. Jane C. Simpson. [C. Jefferys.]

Composed by Robert Sloman.

MR. RIGHTON'S musical verses have suggested a melody which happily reflects the feeling of the poet; and, aided by most unexceptionable harmonies, and unobtrusive, but thoroughly appropriate, accompaniments, "The Sweetest Song" may be accepted as a welcome contribution to our fast increasing store of music for English singers by English composers. The second song has a melodious theme, the simplicity of which is in no way interfered with by the accompaniment, which chiefly moves in arpeggios. We cannot, however, reconcile ourselves to the G rising to A flat in both hands (between bars 4 and 5, page 2), not from any pedantic notion that consecutive octaves must never occur, but because we really dislike the effect.

Ballo in A major, and Bourrée in A minor. By Gluck. Transcribed for the Pianoforte by Charles Hallé.

On the Lake. Barcarolle. Composed for the Pianoforte by Cotsford Dick.

[Forsyth Brothers.]

MR. CHARLES HALLE has conferred a real boon upon classical pianists by his Transcription of Gluck's melodious "Ballo" and "Bourrée." The effective manner in which these two pieces are placed under the hands is deserving of warm praise; for although the arranger acknowledges no such things as difficulties, himself, he has a tender care for those which less experienced players may encounter, and the marking of many important notes with an "L. H." will be accepted as a most kindly hint by amateurs. Mr. Cotsford Dick's piece is more original, and fresher in treatment than his well-worn title would lead us to expect. The placid and tuneful theme with which it commences is much aided by the figure for the left hand; and the delicate subject, in A minor, which follows is not only effective as a contrast, but sufficiently attractive in itself. Like many other compositions which come before