

Review

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Let us hope, now that the means are at hand for everybody, to hear of an early production of this all but unknown masterpiece, by executants and before an audience that can both do justice to its prodigious beauty.

*Sabbath Recreations.* A set of Sacred Songs. The words selected from Holy Scripture. Composed by Charles Joseph Frost. Nos. 1 to 7.

ALTHOUGH unequal in merit, these songs have a devotional feeling which should commend them to all who believe that the mere selection of Scriptural words is not sufficient to stamp a composition as "sacred." No. 1, "I will lay me down in peace," and No. 2, "There the wicked cease from troubling," are calm and musicianlike settings of the text, which may be made effective, if well sung, but scarcely call for any special remark. No. 3, "Heav'n and earth shall pass away," contains some fervent writing, and is excellently harmonised; but the gem of the set is No. 4, "Thy loving kindness and mercy," which has a truly sympathetic melody, and is good enough to prove the "selling" song of an Oratorio, were it to be included in such a work. No. 5, "I cried unto the Lord," has a pathetic phrase, in D minor, to the words of the title, the feeling of the verses being well preserved throughout; and Nos. 6 and 7, "Seek ye the Lord," and "Them that are meek," are also worthy of praise, the latter, especially, having a vocal and appropriate theme, most effectively coloured with the harmony. The accompaniments, as a rule, are somewhat monotonous; but in all the songs they are carefully written, and well support the voice-part.

*Martial Music* ("Deutschland and Freedom evermore"). For voices only. The words translated from a German poem by Ferdinand Freiligrath. Composed by William Spark.

THIS composition, written expressly for, and performed at, the recent Festival at Leeds, is a bold and effective piece, the composer having successfully availed himself of the varied character of the words to escape a monotony too often observable in patriotic choruses. The *Andantino* phrase forms a good contrast with the brightness of the more impassioned portions of the work; a good point is gained, too by the passages for all the voices in thirds, and the treatment of the well-worn Lutheran choral, "Ein' feste Burg," deserves much praise. The composition is not of a high class, but it is one of which a musician need not be ashamed.

*Isle of Beauty.* Part-song. Words by Thomas Haynes Bayley.

*Wake, Maid of Lorne.* Part-song. Words by Sir Walter Scott.

Composed by Edward Davidson Palmer.

THESE songs are exceedingly simple in construction, but they are well adapted to the words, and generally carefully written for the voices. In No. 1, the melody is not particularly striking, but it is smooth and vocal, some little effect, too, being gained by the passage for tenors and basses in unison, answered by imitative phrases for the other voices. No. 2 has an appropriate theme, with no undue display of harmony; but we do not like the doubled leading-note in the close on the dominant, page 2; surely the chord would have been better as a 6-5 allowing the alto to sing D.

*Fair Daffodils.* Four-part Song. Poetry by Herrick. Music by Alfred Alexander.

If the many harsh harmonies and false relations in the part-writing contained in this song are jotted down in defiance of criticism, we cannot but wonder that the composition is sent for review. We should certainly call these blemishes mere crudities arising from inexperience, were we not forced to admit that in many places the treatment of the vocal parts shows the result of good training. We cannot stay to analyse, with the view of amending, this part-song; but in justification of our opening remarks, may point to the false relation between the prominent E flat in the soprano and the E natural in the alto—between bars 4 and 5, page 4—and the extraordinary succession of sevenths

on the 6th page, which the composer has marked "poco accel.," as if he were glad to get over them as soon as possible.

LIMPUS.

*Praise ye the Lord* (the 146th Psalm), set to music by Edwin J. Crow, Mus. Bac., Cantab. With an accompaniment for the pianoforte, arranged by the Author.

THIS work may be defined as a Cantata, and was apparently the Author's Exercise for his bachelor's degree, at least, it terminates with the indispensable piece in five real vocal parts, and it contains several specimens of fugal writing, and what further can be requisite in an University Exercise? It comprises a Chorus, a Recitative and Aria for tenor, a Trio for female voices leading into a Chorus, a bass Solo and Chorus, a Duet for soprano and contralto, and a final Chorus. It is correct, in the first choral fugue, to transpose the subject, G B C D, note for note in the answer, D  $\sharp$ F G A, which is real and not tonal because the tone between the subdominant and dominant, C D, would have no parallel in the semitone between the leading note and the tonic had D E  $\sharp$ F G, been given for the answer. It is incorrect in the second fugue, of which the subject begins on E and closes on B, to make the answer begin on B and end on  $\sharp$ F, for the last seven notes should be a second lower than they stand, so as to bring the close upon E. We trouble the reader with thus much of the schoolroom, because the matter of subject and answer has given occasion for some dispute of late, in this journal and elsewhere, and we wish if may be to clear up some of its mystery. There are tokens of inexperience in the composition, not the least of which is the use of high notes for separate syllables in the soprano part, and of such low notes as C for the tenor, which, if sung, could scarcely be heard. We will not enter further into details, but hope that, when he has not the fear of an examining professor before him, the organist of Ripon Cathedral will write with greater ease and proportionate success.

WEEKES AND Co.

*The Office of the Holy Communion.* Set to music by the Rev. Walter Miller, B.A., Mus. Bac., Oxon.

THIS seems to be one of the many musical compositions of the present day that owe their existence, firstly, to an author's facility in picking out chords on a pianoforte or harmonium; secondly, to his having command of opportunity for performance of what he may write; and thirdly, to the ease and cheapness with which music may now be printed. It is more correctly written generally, than are many works of its class; but the world is less enriched than the vanity of the writer may be gratified by its publication. A remarkable exception from the faultlessness that for the most part prevails, is the two-fold false relation at the words "our hearts," in the response after the tenth Commandment, where the D $\sharp$  of the bass is followed by D $\sharp$  in an inner part, and the F $\sharp$  of the top part is followed by F $\sharp$  in the bass, and the peculiarity of this progression is enhanced by the passage in 5ths of the two top parts, F $\sharp$  A B $\sharp$  D if the harmony be meant to imply the extreme badness of "our hearts," it is surely a straining of technical means to a strange end. In the Credo, we cannot admire the passages in crotchets for the organ bass that lead from one to the next of the titles of the second person, nor can we like better the changes of key these passages introduce. The immense multiplication of church music now going on is, at least, of questionable advantage to religion and to art; and the production under notice does not solve the question in the affirmative.

SIMPKIN, MARSHALL AND Co.

*The Singer's Handbook to the National Method of Vocal Music, containing the Songs, Rounds and Exercises, for the use of pupils.* By W. W. Pearson.

In the Preface to this work, Mr. Pearson quotes the following observation from a paragraph in a recent number