

Review

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## PART-SONGS FOR FEMALE VOICES.

*The earth and man. A song of morning. The rhyme of the four birds.* By A. C. Mackenzie.

[Novello & Co., Ltd.]

The modern conception of the part-song which composers and choral societies, acting and re-acting upon each other, have evolved, differs vastly from that which was current at the beginning of the century, as few will need to be told. The change was at first manifested chiefly in the output of compositions for mixed-voices and male-voices, and it is only recently that music for female-voices has been largely influenced by the new ideas. A notable addition to this category, in which the new style of expression has been adopted without reserve, has now been made in the form of the above trios by Sir Alexander Mackenzie. It must be emphasised that these works do not embody the least satisfactory feature of modern choral writing, namely, the tendency to ignore the limitations of the human brain and voice and write unsingable successions of notes. In the vocal suitability of their part-writing these trios reproduce what was best in the older style. They are all supplied with pianoforte accompaniment.

'The earth and man' is a melodious setting of verses by Stopford Brooke, shaped so as to give expression to the words and not as a squarely constructed tune. It modulates freely, but without abrupt transitions, and the interest is maintained at a high pitch by the artistic decoration and occasional silence of the accompaniment.

The words of 'A song of morning' are by Ethel Clifford. The setting has all the merits described above, and in addition a serious philosophical mood. The modulations again are far-reaching, but smooth. The accompaniment and voice-parts are singularly independent, and the whole piece moves forward with almost symphonic continuity from beginning to end.

The 'Rhyme of the four birds' is more fanciful as regards both the words—which are by Dorothea Mapleson—and the music. It is enlivened by semiquaver figures in the accompaniment, which has the characteristic independence. In the hands of a well-trained body of singers it is capable of producing some novel and beautiful effects.

*H.M.S. Pinafore* (Gilbert and Sullivan). Arranged for children's voices by Dr. W. G. McNaught.

[Metzler & Co.]

This publication should be welcome to schools and junior choirs. No other operetta has enjoyed such wide popularity. The new arrangement is made to fit the existing pianoforte score and band parts. It includes only the vocal parts, which are given in both notations.

## BOOKS RECEIVED.

*Annuaire des Artistes et de l'enseignement dramatique et musical*, 1910. Pp. 1396. (Paris: E. Risacher.)

*Madame Butterfly*. By J. C. Drysdale. Pp. 64. *The Operas of Verdi*. By J. Cuthbert Hadden. Pp. 46. 'The great operas.' (London: T. C. & E. C. Jack. New York: Frederick A. Stokes & Co.)

*Poems of the past and present*. By Marguerite Radclyffe-Hall. (A book of verses.) Pp. 125. (London: Chapman & Hall.)

*The basis of musical pleasure*. By Albert Gehring. Pp. vi. + 196. Price 7s. 6d. (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons.)

*Old English instruments of music*. By Francis W. Galpin. (Profusely illustrated.) Pp. xxv. + 326. Price 7s. 6d. 'The Antiquary's books.' (London: Methuen.)

*Clara Novello's reminiscences*. Compiled by her daughter, Contessa Valeria Gigliucci; with a memoir by Arthur D. Coleridge. Pp. 216. Price 10s. 6d. (London: Edwin Arnold.)

Owing to the heavy loss incurred on the last Brighton musical festival, the Town Council have decided to give, in place of a festival, a series of afternoon and evening concerts in the Dome during Christmas week, at popular prices.

## Correspondence.

## THE STUDY OF RHYTHM.

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE MUSICAL TIMES.'

SIR,—I am glad to find by Dr. Yorke Trotter's article in the last issue of the *Musical Times*, that English musicians are beginning to see that rhythm means something more than the elementary idea of 'counting the time.' Miss Glyn has done valuable service by calling attention to the aesthetic importance of rhythm, and it now remains to put the study on a practical basis that can be of use to students.

I notice that Dr. Trotter still adheres to the old view that we must refer to the bar as a rhythmical unit; but so long ago as 1787 the ambiguity of the bar and time-signature was pointed out by Koch in his 'Anleitung zur Composition,' and what he said still holds good.

The remarkable development of the science of rhythm that is going on abroad with such excellent practical results had its origin in Westphal's 'Allgemeine Theorie der musikalischen Rhythmik,' which appeared in 1883. Westphal and his successors, as is well known, were inspired by the Aristoxenian theory of rhythm, which has been found applicable to every branch of modern music, and I am afraid Dr. Trotter is mistaken in what he says about the Greeks. Far from relying on mathematical accuracy, Aristoxenus continually refers to the necessity of an appeal to the *aisthēsis*, the 'feeling,' as the only test, and insists that any 'proportion' that does not make this appeal must be rejected.

The word 'rhythm,' like the word 'tone' and some other musical terms, is used in a variety of senses, and it has hitherto been found impossible to invent an entirely satisfactory definition for it. I have noticed that other musicians besides Dr. Trotter dislike the use of the expression 'a rhythm' as indicating a musical section, yet since Aristoxenus, the founder of rhythmical æsthetic science, constantly uses it in this sense, we are certainly justified in doing so in common with the German and French writers.

The chief difficulty in bringing the Continental theory before English musicians seems to be that of technical terms. The English language cannot supply them all, and we must have recourse to Greek. Our musicians use Greek words every day of their lives in 'harmony,' 'melody,' 'chord,' 'orchestra,' 'chorus,' 'chromatic,' 'diatonic,' 'period,' and dozens of others that might be cited, but it would be perhaps difficult for them to assimilate the equally important technical terms of rhythm. Yet without a technical vocabulary how can a science be studied?—Yours faithfully,

C. F. ABDY WILLIAMS.

## THE TEMPO OF 'O REST IN THE LORD.'

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE MUSICAL TIMES.'

SIR,—I think all will agree with Mr. D. W. Rootham—'the words touch some of the tenderest chords of the human heart.' Truly, and therefore let us not applaud a contralto because she plays on those chords to such an extent as to ruin Mendelssohn's music. I think some at least of our singers to-day forget that Mendelssohn knew he was setting Old Testament words in an oratorio having Elijah and not Christ or St. Paul for its subject. Had Mendelssohn set some such words as 'O rest in the Lord thy God' or 'the Lord God of Abraham,' many people would have opened their eyes to the fact that 'O rest in the Lord' is not 'O rest in the Lord *Jesus*!' Sung and played away from the oratorio, as this number frequently is, has given it a New Testament character and association, of which, perhaps, the composer little dreamt, hence the more tender tempo of to-day.

The late Mr. F. G. Edwards's 'History of Mendelssohn's Elijah' contains a letter of Mendelssohn's (from Leipzig, July 28, 1846) in which he says: 'Here are the metronomes, which I beg you will give the director of the choruses; but tell him that I cannot promise they will be *exactly* the same, but *nearly* so, I think.' So the composer already felt some latitude would have to be allowed even him; but all the