

Review

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its contents which we have given does not induce readers to get the book for themselves, nothing that we could say would be likely to do so. We shall await with interest the appearance of the second volume.

Communion Service, in Unison, with Organ Accompaniment; by Philip Armes, Mus. Doc.

THE fashion of writing, and we presume also of singing, services in unison seems within the last few years to be decidedly on the increase. This may, perhaps, be partly owing to the more general introduction of Gregorian music in a certain section of the Established Church, and probably also in part to the self-evident fact that such services make far less demands upon the choir than those that are written in harmony. There are, however, certain points which are too frequently lost sight of by the composers of unison services. In the first place, music which is to be sung by a large mass of voices in unison (for we are assuming that in these cases the congregation as well as the choir join in the singing) requires great breadth of melody: mere prettiness is out of place: a dignified and stately character should predominate. Besides this, the treatment of the organ *obbligato* demands care on the part of the writer. If nothing is given beyond an accompaniment of simple chords, an effect of monotony will probably result; what is generally known as a "free organ part," with independent melody, is the most suitable, care being of course taken that nothing inconsistent with the sacred character of the music be introduced.

These remarks have been suggested to us by Dr. Armes's service, which we consider one of the best specimens of its class that has come under our notice. The opening "Kyrie" is very ingenious, the same melody being harmonized in three keys—B flat, F, and D minor. The "Credo" is an excellent setting of the words, and by no means difficult to sing, though a little attention to the "accidentals" will be required from the choir. The enharmonic change of notation (from G flat to F sharp) at the words "And was crucified," which is very effective, will also demand a little care from the singers. The "Sursum corda" and "Sanctus" are necessarily so short as to offer but little scope to the composer; but the concluding "Gloria in Excelsis" is another capital number. Here again is another enharmonic change (p. 11), at the words "Thou that takest away the sins of the world," which, however, presents no difficulty in performance. The entire service is one which is likely to be popular, the organ part being of more than average interest, and the harmonies throughout excellent.

The Office for the Holy Communion; set to music in the key of E flat. By S. P. Tuckerman.

WE believe we are correct in saying that Dr. Tuckerman is the only American composer whose music has found its way into our cathedrals. Those of his works with which we are acquainted are certainly not undeserving of that honour, being not only very melodious but written in a thoroughly ecclesiastical style. The present is rather an elaborate setting of the Communion Service, occupying in all nineteen pages. There are no pretensions to contrapuntal writing in it; the voices move together throughout; and the work is evidently designed for general utility rather than as a means of showing the learning of the composer. It contains a "Kyrie," sentences before and after the Gospel, the "Credo," "Sursum Corda," Preface and "Sanctus," and "Gloria in Excelsis." A peculiarity of the work is the large predominance of unison passages for voices. As the work is not professedly a unison service, we cannot but think that Dr. Tuckerman has introduced such passages almost too frequently, and thereby diminished their effectiveness. This, however, is altogether a matter of taste, and in no way affects the merit of the work. The gem of the Service we consider to be the "Sanctus," in five-part harmony, but each movement contains much that is interesting. It may be as well to point out that on p. 7, first line, last bar, a ♯ is wanting before the A in the alto.

There be none of beauty's daughters. Song. Poetry by Lord Byron.

Wert thou like me in life's low vale. Ballad. Poetry from Sir Walter Scott's "Legend of Montrose."

Composed by S. S. Wesley.

IT is good that the public should know some of the secular compositions of the late Dr. Wesley (organist of Gloucester Cathedral), and we are glad, therefore, to find that these two songs, which have been some time out of print, are now re-published and issued by a firm so long associated with the Doctor's sacred works. That they are in every respect worthy of the high reputation of their composer may be confidently assumed; but singers may, perhaps, not expect to find that, as songs for drawing-room performance, they are infinitely more vocal and melodious than most of those modern effusions which are merely "made to sell." No. 1 will require a good accompanist, for the instrument and voice have equally important parts throughout. The harmonies are extremely beautiful; and amongst the many effective points may be mentioned the delicate colouring of the phrase commencing "And the midnight moon is weaving." The second song is in the true ballad form, but lifted above the level of the majority of works of this class by the manner in which it is treated. We commend both these compositions to vocalists who would desire to choose rather what is good than what is new.

WEEKES AND CO.

On Tuning the Organ; by A. Hemstock (Organist, Diss).

THIS little pamphlet, of 32 pages, is written by a practical man who understands his subject, and contains much useful information. It must, however, be added that the manner is not equal to the matter, as Mr. Hemstock's style is a close imitation (whether intentionally we cannot say) of that of the celebrated Mrs. Brown. In proof of this assertion it will be sufficient to quote one sentence (p. 26):—

"Every organist ought to be acquainted with the interior of the instrument that he has the care of, as little faults continually occur, and the inconvenience that is caused, such as the whole manual not being able to be used, the remedy in many cases is so simple, provided the organist knows where to alter it, and in that case often prevent the builder coming a great distance for perhaps a few minutes' work when he gets to the instrument, and save great expense very often."

LAMBORN COCK.

Minuetto Sentimentale; for the Pianoforte.
Cantilena Affettuosa; Do.

Composed by Franz M. D'Alquen.

THE affected titles of these two pieces will certainly not attract, and may repel, purchasers; for when music will not establish its own character it is not worth hearing. Beethoven went so far as to say that those persons who could not *feel* the time of his compositions should not attempt to play them, but this is perhaps expecting rather too much. The "Minuetto" before us, in F minor, with a "Trio," in the tonic major, is a musician-like piece, and may be commended for containing some quiet and unobtrusive writing, which is refreshing in these days of pretence. The second piece—a *Cantabile* melody, with a flowing semi-quaver accompaniment divided between the two hands—has a second subject in the relative minor which forms an effective contrast. Without displaying any feature of special interest the composition is fully equal to the average "drawing-room music" of the day.