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Slumber, Beloved. From the "Christmas Oratorio" by J. S. Bach
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Vierteljahrsschrift für Musik - Wissenschaft. Herausgegeben von Friedrich Chrysander und Philipp Spitta; redigirt von Guido Adler.

[Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel. 1885.]

A QUARTERLY musical journal issued under the auspices of the well-reputed biographers respectively of Handel and Bach, should command the attention and support of all English amateurs conversant with the German language. The new periodical is practically a resuscitation in a more popular form of the late excellent, but somewhat too aristocratically exclusive publication entitled "Jahrbücher für musikalische Wissenschaft," whereof Herr Chrysander was the editor. In its present first number, the "Vierteljahrsschrift" gives an earnest of the high standard at which it aims, and of the general interest attaching to its pages, as exemplified in a prefatory article by the editor, "On the Study of Musical Science," followed by some very interesting and instructive remarks on "Ancient Hindoo Music in connection with Religious Sacrifices," from the pen of Herr Chrysander. As a relief to the very learned treatise by the latter author, Herr Spitta adds a highly entertaining and no less instructive discourse anent some peculiar phases in the development of the German *Volkslied* during the eighteenth century; this being by far the most elaborate paper in the present number. Critical and bibliographical observations complete the contents of the new Quarterly, to which, in the best interests of the art itself, we heartily wish every success.

The Te Deum, Benedictus, Magnificat, and Nunc dimittis in D. By B. Agutter. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THERE is a note on the title-page of this Service stating that orchestral parts may be obtained. The expectations of an elaborate accompaniment which this announcement arouses are duly fulfilled. Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of the work is the prominence, and even difficulty, of the organ part. The writing for the voices is so simple that an indifferent choir could master it with ease, but Mr. Agutter revels in florid and chromatic passages for the organ which, interpreted by an able executant, would doubtless be extremely effective. Old-fashioned church musicians may possibly shudder at some of his progressions, as, for example, in the eighth and ninth bars of the symphony to the Magnificat. Speaking generally, his Service may be taken as a sign of the times. It is difficult, if not impossible, for a composer who confines himself to ordinary four-part writing to infuse any freshness into his work. But even as in large compositions intended for the concert-room or the theatre, the orchestra is now made to pursue an independent course, so Mr. Agutter may prove a pioneer in the path of new developments in Service music. As to how far it is advisable to travel along the road he has indicated we express no opinion at present. The subject is a wide one and capable of being discussed from many points of view.

Sonatina for the Organ. By Arthur B. Plant.

Andante for the Organ. By Seymour Smith.
[Weekes and Co.]

MR. PLANT modestly describes his work as a Sonatina, but it is in three movements, the first of which is developed at some length, and in regular Sonata form. In this section the influence of Mozart is perceptible, while the final fughetta is suggestive of Handel. Here and there a little crudeness is perceptible, but on the whole the Sonatina is pleasing, and makes no great demands on the skill of executants. Mr. Seymour Smith's Andante is a trifle, containing a very tuneful, if somewhat secular, melody, accompanied in the style of a simple ballad. It is within the means of elementary players.

Album of Duets for Violin and Piano. By Arthur Carnall, Mus. Bac., Cantab. [W. Morley and Co.]

THE immense increase in the study of the violin has caused a demand for easy music, suitable as introductory to the works of the great masters. The four little pieces in the present volume are adapted to the needs of elementary players, being tuneful and pleasing, as well as exceedingly simple, the violin part being throughout in the first position.

Original Compositions for the Organ. Nos. 37-44.
[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

IF original compositions for the organ do not eventually supersede arrangements it will not be owing to any lack of the former, for musicians are supplying the material at a rapid rate. The first three numbers of the present series contain extremely well-written pieces in various styles by Mr. B. Luard Selby. These are all effective, but we give the preference to No. 39, a Postlude in D, in what may be termed the Handelian style modernised. Praise must also be awarded to No. 40, a somewhat elaborate movement *andante grazioso*, by Dr. C. S. Heap. This would prove effective at recitals. Nos. 41 to 44 consist of pieces by Mr. Berthold Tours, taken from the *Organist's Quarterly Journal*. The name of the composer is almost sufficient to ensure their favourable reception by organists, and expectations will not be disappointed. The most important of the set is a Fantasia in C, No. 41, a brilliant and showy piece, though not too secular for church use. A melodious and piquant Allegretto, No. 42, and a lively Postlude, No. 44, are also certain to please.

Sarabande and Gavotte in A minor. For the Pianoforte. Composed by A. W. Whitehead.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE rage for writing these old dance tunes seems still on the increase; and we may presume, therefore, that the market for them, although tolerably well supplied by this time, is not overstocked. Of course, when a composer has anything to say worth hearing, we do not much care what form he chooses for his medium of communication; but merely smooth and faultless music acquires no additional force by being cast in the shape of Gavottes, Sarabandes and other relics of a past age. Mr. Whitehead's two unpretentious pieces are neither better nor worse than the many modern imitations of the style of the old masters which have preceded them; but there is nothing which stamps the slightest individuality upon either composition. The harmonies, however, are appropriate, and carefully written throughout; sufficiently so, indeed, to make us believe that when the composer relies entirely upon himself, he may be more successful.

The Child's way to Heaven. Song. Written by the Authoress of "The Dove on the Cross," &c. Composed by William Carter. [Playfair and Co.]

WE cannot too strongly protest against the maudlin sentimental style of music, a specimen of which is furnished by the song before us. "'Oh, I am weary of earth,' said the child,"—the first line of this composition—certainly prepares the mind of the hearer for what is to follow; but what does follow is not only unpleasing, but unnatural. It is unnecessary to repeat the tale which tells us of the manner in which the child finds its "way to Heaven"; for this has been treated *ad nauseam* by poets who write "lines for music"; but the little creature kneeling down "on the damp green sod," and praying to be taken from a world the many beauties of which should fill its mind to overflowing with joyfulness and love is scarcely a scene, we think, to be vividly placed before a happy drawing-room audience, or a healthy English home. The music follows the words with due sympathy. We have the minor key where pathos is called for, and the conventional arpeggios come in at the proper time. The authoress of "The Dove on the Cross," at least, cannot complain that her poetry has not received an appropriate musical colouring.

Slumber, beloved. From the "Christmas Oratorio." Composed by J. S. Bach. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THANKS to the untiring efforts of the rapidly increasing number of Bach lovers in this country, not only the instrumental, but the vocal works of this composer are becoming tolerably familiar to English amateurs. To those still unacquainted with the lovely Slumber Song now before us we cordially commend it as the most appropriate music for the Christmas season. The study of such compositions is the best antidote to the ephemeral music of the day; and we cannot too much impress upon teachers the desirability of introducing them to their pupils.