

Review

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There is nought on earth so fair. Aria from "Peasant's" Comic Cantata. Composed by John Sebastian Bach. Words by Mrs. William Newton. Edited by Samuel Reay. [Weekes and Co.]

IN our notice upon Bach's Peasant's Comic Cantata some time since, we said "The soprano solo 'There is nought on earth so fair' is so striking that we cannot but wonder that we never hear it in the Concert-room." As this remark is printed on the title-page of the song, we may confidently hope that our review has led to the publication of one at least of the numerous gems which have been so long hidden in these forgotten works, for the resuscitation of which we are indebted to Mr. Samuel Reay. We earnestly trust that, now these caskets are opened, their contents may become known to all who respect the name of Bach; for we can assure them that we have only drawn attention to one amongst many which are thoroughly worth preserving.

Come, my soul. Anthem. Words by W. A. Barrett, Mus. Bac. Music by G. C. Martin, Mus. Doc. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THIS anthem, forming No. 283 of Novello's Octavo Series, would claim attention if only on account of the words being original, and not, as in nearly all instances, selected from Holy Writ. But the music is almost equally removed from the conventional style. It opens with a vague and mysterious symphony, leading to the first enunciation of the principal theme, a phrase in A minor, given out by the tenor and imitated by the other voices. The general manner is a curious mixture of the archaic and the modern, effective in its way, though a little confusing at first. After the opening the voices move together, either in solid harmony or unison, and the anthem is therefore not difficult, while its freshness and vigour will find it plenty of admirers.

Songs for Little Ones. Words by F. A. R. Music by Melina Gepp. [Weekes and Co.]

"LITTLE ones" at all musically inclined will certainly welcome this elegant volume, containing twelve songs most beautifully illustrated by C. L. Hardcastle. The words are as simple and healthy as the music; and vocalists in the nursery should feel themselves highly honoured by the publication of such a pleasing offering for their holiday moments.

A Sunny Beam; A red, red rose; Wanderer's Song; Evening Song. By R. Schumann. Arranged by G. F. Grover. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THESE pieces, forming Nos. 511 to 514 of "Novello's Part-Song Book," are arrangements from the composer's *Lieder*. Whether there is any justification for this method of treatment is a point on which musicians are not likely to agree. But all must admit the effectiveness of these beautiful little gems in their present form, and the skill with which Mr. Grover has accomplished his work of transcription.

Romance for the Pianoforte. By Henry Charles Banister. [Stanley Lucas, Weber and Co.]

THIS unpretentious little pianoforte Sketch should be welcomed by all who are attracted rather by the delicate and refined treatment of a simple theme than by a display of scholastic profundity, especially when the composer has already proved his power to grapple with music of a severer style. The passages lie throughout most gratefully under the hands; and apart from its intrinsic merit, the piece will be found an excellent study for touch.

Merry Little Songs for Merry Little Folk. Written by L. H. F. Du Terreaux. Music arranged by Alberto Randegger. [Joseph Williams.]

AN excellent collection of pleasing and simple melodies, arranged with appropriately easy accompaniments, and set to "merry" words for children. "The Christmas Tree," "The Cuckoo" (in which, by the way, the bird's call is a minor third), "Wonderland," "The Stubborn Fox," and "The King's Feast," are exceedingly attractive little ditties.

Three Canons, Concert Fantasia and Fugue. By W. G. Wood. Nos. 14 and 47 of "Original Compositions for the Organ." [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

MR. WOOD'S Canons are "two in one in the octave," with an independent pedal part. This device materially simplifies the task of writing a canon, but the old masters would have scouted it as unscientific. Now-a-days, however, the production of effect is the one thing sought after by composers, a display of scholasticism for its own sake being regarded as mere pedantry. Judged from this standpoint, Mr. Wood's pieces may be commended, especially No. 3, in which the lower canonic part follows the upper at the interval of a crotchet. The Fantasia commences with a spirited movement in C minor, leading to a melodious and extremely well-written Andante in the relative major. The Fugue, in C major, is based on a bright and well-marked subject, and is worked out with much vigour, the peroration being especially effective. If a little too secular for church use, the work would prove a welcome item in a recital programme.

Order for a Flower Service. By Rev. W. H. C. Malton, B.A. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE music to the "Antient Carol" contained in this short Service demands a word of commendation, as being appropriately fitted to the words. We may also say that the directions for conducting the Service are well considered.

Transcriptions from the Works of Mendelssohn. For the Organ. By George Calkin. Book 4. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THIS book contains a considerable portion of the 42nd Psalm, arranged in such a manner as to be within the means of even elementary players. Of course a transcription of this nature does not convey a full idea of the beauty of the original work, but, in its modest way, it is well done.

FOREIGN NOTES.

THERE is every prospect of Wagner's "Lohengrin" being performed for the first time before a Paris audience during the coming winter season at the Opéra Comique, the proprietor, M. Carvalho (a personal friend of the late poet-composer), having acquired the right of performance from the widow. M. Carvalho, however, though courageously entering upon the venture has (as appears from a letter recently addressed by him to the Paris *Le Matin*) serious misgivings as to the ultimate success of the undertaking. After all that has been said in these columns respecting the existing antagonism against Wagner's music in France, and especially against the performance of an *entire* work by that composer, it is needless to point out the otherwise incomprehensible fact that M. Carvalho should be running a serious risk, from a theatrical manager's point of view, in presenting one of the operatic master-pieces of all ages to his countrymen. There is the political, or "patriotic," antagonism militating against his undertaking generally; there is, moreover, the antagonism of the leading musical press refusing to countenance even its fair trial on national artistic grounds. Surely, the resolution arrived at by M. Carvalho amounts to an heroic one! Nevertheless we, who have followed the drift of the musical current in the French capital, with an especial eye to that modern phase of the development of the art which, rightly or wrongly, culminates in our opinion in the works of Richard Wagner, venture to predict a decided success to M. Carvalho's "Lohengrin" performances, which will prove the forerunner of the same master's "Meistersinger" and "Tristan und Isolde," under similar auspices.

A commemorative tablet, bearing the following inscription, has just been placed against the house at Côte St. André (Isère), where Berlioz was born—viz., "In memory of Hector Berlioz, born in this house on December 11, 1803, erected by his countrymen, equally proud of his genius and of his fame." Poor Berlioz! In reading the above sentiment one cannot help remembering the contemptuous way in which his *genius* was treated by his own countrymen during his lifetime, and how little they heeded the first indications of his growing fame outside of France.

The *Grand Prix de Rome* of the Paris Conservatoire, for the composition of a cantata, has been awarded this