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Review

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Reviews.

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC.

Fantasia-Variations on a Swedish Air. By William Y. Hurlstone.

Dross. By Paul Corder.

[Novello & Co., Ltd. : Avison Edition.]

Hurlstone has never become widely known as a writer for the orchestra owing to the paucity of his efforts in this direction and not to their lack of merit, as is made abundantly clear both by the work under consideration and by the 'Magic mirror' suite, whose production at the Promenade Concerts is noticed in another column. The appellation 'Fantasia-Variations' is significant of the freedom of treatment adopted by the composer in this work. The subject-theme is not so much a pedestal to a statue as a life-giving vein to living flesh, visible here and there. It is plainly traceable in the first few variations, but is then lost to view while the composer is concerned with elaborating his own accompaniments and incidental ideas. Later it again becomes recognisable as snatches of it are brought into prominence, sometimes with vehemence and sometimes with delicate fancy. The statement of the simple and ingenuous theme is preceded by a weighty introduction, which foreshadows much of the independent material of the later movements. The high faculties of the composer, well-known through the medium of his chamber music, did not abandon him when he penned this composition. His resources are handled with mastery: the effect is there not for effect's sake, and, as usual, romance and beauty capture the senses while a characteristic academic flavour earns our esteem.

Mr. Paul Corder's 'Dross' is cast in a novel form, being a continuous commentary upon the action and dialogue of a one-act stage play. The plot, unfolded by four principal and two minor characters, is a grim tragedy of destitution, pride, dishonour and treachery, the scene of which is laid in France not long prior to the Revolution. Its progress gives plentiful scope for dramatic illustration, contrast of mood, and characterization in the accompanying music, and Mr. Corder has seized his opportunities. His idiom and harmonies are up-to-date without being ultra-modern, and his work is full of vitality and interest in spite of its necessary sombreness.

Eight Organ Choral Preludes (Bach). Transcribed for the pianoforte by A. M. Henderson.

[Bayley & Ferguson.]

Any method by which the knowledge of these masterpieces is cultivated deserves wide recognition, and we welcome Mr. Henderson's arrangements as a perfectly legitimate means to that end. There are, necessarily, some awkward points for small hands, but the music is worth any trouble it may give, and we hope there may be other examples which will lend themselves to adaptation.

A Book of Thirty Hymn-tunes. By Mrs. Henry Fludyer.

[Weekes & Co.]

Though there will always be some difficulty in severing the connection of favourite hymns from their accustomed tunes, we think there are several tunes in this collection which might worthily displace some we know of. Another recommendation is that all profits arising from the sale of the book will be divided between the Queen's Jubilee Nurses and the Victoria Hospital for Children, while last, but far from least, the work is dedicated, by gracious permission, to Her Majesty Queen Alexandra.

A Kalender of Hymns Ancient and Modern for 1911. By the Rev. Robert Sealy Genge.

[London : Henry Frowde.]

This will be found indispensable to those responsible for the choice of hymns, which is not always a simple matter. Much thought has been bestowed by the compiler, and we foresee a wide adoption of his suggestions which are generally excellent.

CHORAL MUSIC.

Harvest Cantata. By Julius Harrison.

[Novello and Co., Ltd.]

This new work is composed for soprano (or tenor) and contralto (or baritone) soli and chorus, to words written by Rose Dafforne Betjemann, and is dedicated to that lady's husband, Mr. Gilbert H. Betjemann, the well-known violinist. Mrs. Betjemann's words are partly quoted from scripture, and are otherwise original. As befits the theme, they breathe a spirit of joy and thankfulness, and their imagery is such that anyone can understand. There are six numbers, two of which are solos, one for solo and chorus, and three for chorus only. Mr. Julius Harrison made himself famous by his setting of 'Cleopatra,' which was performed at a Norwich festival. All who saw or heard that elaborate and difficult work will be pleasantly surprised to find that in his setting of this Harvest cantata the composer has adopted a very simple style without anywhere degenerating into commonplace. Any well-equipped village choir could cope with the choruses, and the two solos are quite within the powers of amateur singers. Yet the music will always interest the cultivated musician. Mr. Harrison has a quite original style. There are many points of harmony, melody, and rhythmic treatment that prove this. The expression of the words is generally conspicuously appropriate. The solo, 'The winter reigneth o'er all the land,' has perhaps the fault of its prettiness and rhythmic lightness. The other solo (for contralto or baritone), 'He filleth the hungry,' is a smooth cantabile that cannot fail to please. In the last chorus there is some imaginative writing that culminates effectively in a joyous climax to the ever-useful words 'Hallelujah, Amen.' The accompaniment is written for the organ and presents no special difficulty. The cantata takes about a quarter of an-hour to perform.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

The History of Music. By Waldo Selden Pratt. Pp. 683. Price 7s. 6d. (London : Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd.)

Correspondence.

DR. ARNE'S RELIGION.

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE MUSICAL TIMES.'

DEAR SIR,—In reply to Mr. Barclay Squire's letter, I beg to say that the details I gave as to Arne dying a Catholic—as he lived—are from notes (apparently by Rev. John Kirk) in a copy of Butler's 'Historical Memoirs,' formerly belonging to Sedgley Park. I copied them some twenty years ago at St. Wilfrid's, Oakamoor (Cotton Hall). My interest was mainly due to the fact that the notes stated Arne to have been 'Organist of the Sardinian Chapel, in Lincoln's Inn Fields,' under Bishop O'Brullaghan (Bradley), an Irish Dominican friar, who was chaplain to the Embassy from about the year 1730 till his death in May, 1760, except for twelve months when he was Bishop of Derry. Therefore Arne was probably organist from 1756 to 1763 or 1764.

As to the inhuman and barbarous Penal Laws against Catholics in the mid-eighteenth century, I refer Mr. Squire to Monsignor Ward's 'Dawn of the Catholic Revival in England' (vol. i., pp. 2-4). Arne, as a Catholic, would have to enrol the deed assigning any little value—no matter how small; an expensive and perplexing obligation.

In conclusion, I am happy to have been instrumental in rescuing much biographical data relating to Arne; and it afforded me considerable pleasure to have been of some little assistance to the late Mr. F. G. Edwards in his sketch of Arne for the *Musical Times*, November and December, 1901. My latest researches regarding Arne's visits to Ireland will be found in the July issue of the *Musical Antiquary*.

Yours faithfully,

September 14, 1910.

W. H. GRATTAN FLOOD.