

Review

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in chorus," has been made by the experienced hand of the Rev. J. Powell Metcalfe, M.A. It is novel in idea, and is intended as an attempt to carry out the "Reading of the Great Bible" with the aid of music. The story selected for the reading has its narrative based upon the old church monotone with the traditional inflections, sustained and illustrated by organ accompaniment. The choruses are designed to enforce the salient points of the story. The construction of the book is excellent as a whole. It is, however, in our opinion, a grave mistake to introduce any words from the New Testament as gloss to the story, and the texts "The trying of your faith," "The wind bloweth where it listeth," and others as illustrating the obedience of Elijah to the command of the Lord do not fall gratefully upon the mind in connection with the story. The first makes a pretty choral-like chorus and the second a graceful solo for soprano, with a chorus, but their applicability is doubtful and questionable. Mr. Gray's music is pleasing if not strikingly original. In his desire to be interesting he seems to pose for prettiness, and some of his themes—in old fashioned ballad form—fit the words as uncomfortably as some of the words fit the subject. The idea is very good and will doubtless command a welcome. It may be worked with considerable profit in similar stories from the Bible, and so promote the great object which is sought to be gained.

*Eve.* A Mystery, in three parts. Poem by Louis Gallet. English version by F. Hueffer. Music by J. Massenet. [Joseph Williams.]

WE have not yet had a performance in London of one of M. Massenet's "Mysteries," and it is easy to understand the reluctance of choral societies to present the public with works in which sacred characters are travestied in a manner likely to be regarded as blasphemous. In any case they could never be given with stage accessories as in Paris and Brussels. Some two years ago we noticed the English edition of "Marie Magdelene," an earlier work than the present, and laid out on a larger scale. "Eve" is divided into three parts and an epilogue, called respectively the Birth of Woman, Eve in Solitude, the Fall, and the Curse. It should be remarked that the poet identifies original sin with love, and the language is for the most part that of glowing passion and sensuous word painting. The translator has well preserved the spirit of the original, and, rightly enough, has not thought it his duty to improve upon it. Those who are acquainted with M. Massenet's music, and with the modern French school of composition generally, will guess that "Eve" presents the usual characteristics of that school. Dreamy voluptuous melodies, *tremolando* passages for the strings, and sweeping *Arpeggi* predominate in the earlier part, and after the Fall, the music becomes dramatic and realistic in the highest degree. It would, of course, be absurd to look for the essential features of oratorio—breadth, power, and fugal writing. The work is highly esteemed in the land of its birth, but public taste must undergo a considerable change if it is to become popular in this country.

*The Angels of the Bells.* A short Cantata for Female Voices. Written by Helen M. Burnside. Composed by Myles B. Foster. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE argument of this charming little Cantata is thus stated by the composer: "Three new bells have been presented to a church to complete the full peal. They are christened 'Joy,' 'Love,' and 'Peace,' and are to be rung for the first time on Christmas morning. The sponsor angels are hovering around them, Peace being the first to touch her bell with her palm-branch, as the sun rises." The opening chorus, marked *Allegretto gioioso*, is melodious, graceful, and thoroughly sympathetic with the subject. Sufficient contrast is gained by simple means, and the harmonies throughout are most appropriate. This is succeeded by a placid solo for the first soprano (Joy), and then the second soprano and contralto (Love and Peace) unite in a brief duet, followed by solos for all the voices, that for contralto leading into a very effective little duet for second soprano and contralto. Closing in E flat, a short Recitative in G ushers in the final chorus, in the same key, a jubilant and attractive composition, which, without any undue pretence, undoubtedly evidences the hand of a skilled master, and

brings to a satisfactory conclusion one of the most pleasing and artistic little Cantatas for female voices which has lately come before us.

*The Auld Scotch Songs, harmonised and arranged.* By Sinclair Dunn. Part I. [Glasgow: Morison Brothers.]

THE opportunity of obtaining twelve Scotch songs of the most popular character, with pianoforte accompaniments, for sixpence, is temptation enough even to Scotchmen to "gar the bawbees bang." The "songs" in this, the first part of an intended series, are well printed it is true, but the manner in which they are edited and provided with accompaniments is scarcely so artistic as might have been. After the somewhat self-sufficient preface, in which the editor deprecates "the many indifferent collections which have been foisted on the public by those who really do not understand our national songs and their treatment," the "people" for whom this edition is ostensibly prepared have a right to expect something better than the work done by George Farquhar Graham, George Alexander Macfarren, John Muir Wood, and others among the moderns, to say nothing of the somewhat blind labours of Haydn, Beethoven, Kozeluch, Pleyel, and others of the ancients, whose arrangements have been "foisted on the public." The only thing in which the present editor is in advance of all the above-named musicians is in the assumption of his own superiority.

*Musical Dictation.* A Practical Guide for Musical Students. By Frédéric Louis Ritter. (Music Primers, No. 29, Part 1.) [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THIS latest addition to Novello's most useful series of Primers gives examples of musical sentences for dictation culled from composers of all nationalities and epochs. In this Dr. Ritter supplies a want distinctly felt, not only by teachers, but also by examiners, who in the present day are almost as numerous. The reason which prompted the thought of writing the book, as stated by the author, will be admitted by all who have thought upon the matter. "I have almost invariably found that even able pianoforte or vocal students well grounded in the rudiments of music, when asked to write down from memory the melodic passage of the first bar only of the simple piece or song they have just been playing or singing for me correctly by heart, can absolutely not do it; to fix the respective pitch of the different notes of the melodic passage, and especially the division of time, presents unsurmountable obstacles to them." Other teachers have doubtless felt the same. The existence of such a book was a necessity which would have become pressing sooner or later. It has now appeared, and will unquestionably satisfy the growing need.

*Original Compositions for the Organ.* By Otto Dienel. No. 11. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

WE have so frequently drawn attention to the merit of Herr Dienel's organ compositions that there is no occasion to speak further of them in a general sense. In the present number the Berlin Organist has given us a Second Concert-Satz (movement) in D minor (Op. 22). By employing the term concert-piece the composer may wish it to be understood that his work is not to be regarded as a church voluntary. It is certainly bright and animated, but not by any means so trivial as many pieces by French composers which are very popular with congregations. The work starts with a vigorous *Allegro* based on one persistent figure, momentarily relieved by a quiet second subject in the relative major. A change of measure from 2-2 to 6-4 serves to introduce a new theme in F minor, which is used as the exposition of a fugue. Science, however, proceeds no further, and the fugue theme is blended with the original figure, and has an important share in the working up of the peroration in the tonic major. The piece has one important recommendation: its difficulties are so moderate as to be easily overcome by players of ordinary skill.

*Magnificat and Nunc dimittis in B flat.* By W. G. Wood. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

CONSIDERING the vast number of new settings of the Canticles which are now appearing, it might be thought impossible for a composer to impart any individuality to work of this kind without passing the bounds of simplicity