

Review

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Album of Seven Songs. By Arthur Somervell.
Touch not the Nettle and Turn to Me. Arrangements
of Old Scotch Songs. By Arthur Somervell.
[J. & J. Hopkinson.]

SCHUBERT and Schumann, in the matter of songs, are every day exerting greater influence. More care is shown in the selection of words, and these—at any rate, with earnest composers—give form and colour to the music. Mr. Arthur Somervell is a promising worker in this department of musical literature. But although all the numbers in this Album display taste and skill, they are certainly not of equal merit. No. 1, a setting of Dibdin's "Oh, take me to your arms," is a little too quiet and prim; the song of the "Mad Lover" ought, one would think, to be sadder and wilder. "The Mother's Dream," again, is clever and interesting, but there is more intellect than imagination in the music. In "O my Queen" the passion seems from without rather than from within. The number most to our taste is the setting of D. G. Rossetti's charming poem "Three Shadows." Here the composer has caught the true spirit of the words; both melody and accompaniment reflect their dreamy character. The passionate phrase at the close is effective, and so, with their halting rhythm, are the closing instrumental bars. The characteristic "Young Sir Guyon" ballad and the quaint "Lay a Garland," from Beaumont and Fletcher's "The Maid's Tragedy," also deserve mention. The two arrangements of old Scotch songs are decidedly pleasing, especially the second.

Twelve Original Christmas Carols. Words by Mary Gillington; music by various composers.
[Robert Cocks and Co.]

New Christmastide music will shortly be in request, and as the fine old practice of carolling is once more in vogue, alike in church, chapel, drawing-room, and the open air, attention may fittingly be drawn to the above-named publication, which includes musical settings by Dr. A. C. Mackenzie, Dr. W. J. Westbrook, Mr. Arthur Godfrey, Dr. G. C. Martin, Mr. Frank L. Moir, Mr. Alfred J. Eyre, and Mr. Lawrence Kellie. For the most part these compositions are something more than mere tunes simply harmonised; they deserve recognition as part-songs worthy of attention by high-class choral societies in town and country, and to these they may be warmly recommended.

Christmas Holidays. Words by J. A. Campbell; music by Herbert W. Schartau. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

MESSRS. CAMPBELL and Schartau's little work combines music with recitation, the former being written for treble voices partly in unison and partly in two-part harmony. The vocal parts are given in Tonic Sol-fa and Staff notations, and the unpretending Cantata is well described as "suitable for the breaking-up of schools," the librettist and the composer having each discharged his share in the work in a manner calculated to win wide approval.

Si j'étais Dieu, Douleurs Divines, In the Garden (In dem Garten). Three Songs. By Maude Valérie White.
[Robert Cocks and Co.]

THE first, to Sully Prudhomme's graceful words, has a broad melody with an accompaniment which testifies to the skill of the composer as a pianist. "Douleurs Divines" is a smoothly-written song, with an excellent English version of Emile Augier's words. The last is a setting of Rückert's little poem, with a good English translation by the composer. The music is light and graceful, but the song has a dangerous rival in Schumann's setting of the same words.

Original Compositions for the Organ. Nos. 186, 187, 188, and 189. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

CONSIDERABLE attention was of course drawn to the Wedding March written by Dr. William Creser for the marriage of the Duke of York and the Princess May on July 6 last, and the piece, which forms the first number of the above series, was generally commended as being written in an appropriately cheerful style, but with the chaste dignity befitting an important national occasion. It need only be added that the march should prove generally serviceable as a concluding voluntary, and

presents no difficulty whatever to ordinarily competent organists. The next three numbers contain six pieces, two in each, by Alfred Redhead. They are written mainly in what may be termed the contrapuntal style, though without any elaborate fugal development, and are eminently adapted for church use, undue ornamentation and sensuous melody being sedulously avoided. The pieces will find favour in churches where a plain and simple musical service is in use.

Six Pieces for the Violin. By H. W. Wareing, Mus. Doc., Cantab. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE number of persons who study the violin increases daily, and it is therefore not surprising to find an increase in the musical literature of that instrument. Transcriptions are common, and to these, if well written, no exception can be taken; but original music, from an art point of view, is more profitable. These six pieces are clever, fresh, and of only moderate difficulty. No. 1, "May-Day Festival," is very bright and pastoral-like in character; it does not lack variety, but the closing section is a trifle spun out. No. 2 opens with a charmingly graceful theme, and, after a middle section, the piece is gradually worked up to an effective climax. No. 3 is a quiet, pleasing Romance; No. 4 a sprightly Pastoral Dance. No. 5 an expressive Légende, and No. 6 a lively Saltarello. The composer writes well for the solo instrument, and in many places the accompaniments are quite of a concertante character.

Ten Sketches for Violin and Pianoforte. By J. B. Poznanski. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

No. 1, "Sur le Fleuve," is a smooth flowing piece, which may serve to recall pleasant hours spent upon the river. No. 2, a "Berceuse," is soft and soothing; the *Coda*, with its delicate harmonies, is particularly attractive. No. 3 is a gentle Barcarolle; the *poco più mosso* section, with its marked change of rhythm, produces an excellent effect. No. 4, "Au revoir," is of marked simplicity; the music seems, at times, almost to speak the words of the superscription. No. 5, "L'Orientale," is graceful. No. 6, "Mazurka," is as neat as it is nice. No. 7, "La Rosée," with its light, tripping rhythm, is decidedly pleasing. No. 8, "Légende," tells of some romantic little episode. No. 9, "Gavotte," is light and piquant, and the last, "Danse des Faunes," is by no means the least interesting. The name of the composer is a sufficient guarantee that the violin part is ably written.

Quatre Morceaux pour Violon. Par Henri Seiffert.
[E. Ascherberg and Co.]

THOUGH the composer of these pieces is presumably French or Belgian by extraction, there is no valid reason why a foreign language should be used on the title page, as they are published in London. But for considerably more than a century pure Anglo-Saxon has been regarded by many as a language unsuitable to employ in connection with music, and this silly prejudice is dying hard, though we are happy to think that it is dying. M. Seiffert's sketches are brief, generally speaking tuneful, and studiously unpretentious. Perhaps the most piquant of the set is No. 2, a "Menuet" in G minor, but they are all pleasing and within the means of elementary players.

A Sea Dream. A Cantata for Ladies' voices, with recitation. Words by Shapcott Wensley; music by Battison Haynes. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE libretto of this Cantata is of the simplest character. There is a storm at sea; a maiden stands on the shore and prays for the safety of her lover; sirens assure her of their power and sympathy, and when morning dawns and the storm-tossed bark returns in gladness and sunshine, they join with the maiden in a song of thanksgiving. The music of Mr. Battison Haynes displays artistic qualities not generally looked for and not often found in compositions of this kind. It is, of course, not difficult or over-elaborate in structure, but it is full of musicianly touches and at times slightly suggestive of Schumann. Conductors of ladies' choirs will be pleased to make acquaintance with this excellent little work.