

Review

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to the plan of these books, we cannot do better than quote from the preface: "The chants contained in this collection have been chosen for their attractive melody and simple harmonies. A special feature is the pitch of the reciting-note, *which in no case exceeds C natural*." This is an excellent idea which, with one exception (No. 23 in the double chants), has been strictly carried out. Moreover, "the requirements and capabilities of Village Choirs have been carefully considered in making the selection, which, it is hoped, will materially aid an important part of Divine Service." When it is stated that, in addition to those old favourites endeared by long use, the two books under notice contain chants by modern composers like Barnby, Bridge, Hopkins, Stainer, and others, there is no need to further enlarge upon the merits of these useful publications. The books are issued in a very convenient size and the printing thereof is everything that can be desired.

Langsyne. Duet for Soprano and Contralto. The words by Alexander Anderson. Set to music by Alicia Adélaide Needham. [Novello and Company, Limited.]

This life is a fleeting breath. Song. The words by Louise Chandler Moulton. Set to music by Alicia Adélaide Needham. [Boosey and Co.]

My heart's treasure. Song. The words (translated from the Irish) by Francis A. Fahy. Music by Alicia Adélaide Needham. [Chappell and Co., Limited.]

MRS. NEEDHAM has with such rapid strides reached an enviable position as one of the most popular and successful song writers of the day, that each new composition from her pen produces an excusable curiosity as to how she would succeed in other and more serious branches of her art. Wherefore we hope she may ere long produce something of greater import than the above-mentioned pieces for instance. We are not in love with the English (or Irish) ballad "as she is wrote" in these days, though the latter are in this respect, no doubt, an improvement on the "dark" days of English music. Our composers—those, we mean, with a soul above the common or garden ballad—are able to hold their own with Continental masters in the production of high-class art songs. Mrs. Needham also has in her album of "Hush Songs" written several simple ditties that have given us genuine satisfaction, even when judged by a high standard. And here we may remark that the simpler this clever composer is, the more she relies on the strength of her vocal melody without overloading the accompaniment with details, the better we are pleased. It is for this reason that we prefer the duet of the publications under notice. It is tuneful and expressive, and there is a ring of warm sentiment about it which well reproduces the homely lyric (in the Scotch dialect) with its reference to—

Langsyne when life was bonnie
An' a' the skies were blue,
When ilka thocht took blossom
An' hung its heid wi' dew.

"This life is a fleeting breath" is a sombre and stern setting of a long but impressive poem. It could be made effective by a singer with a dramatic style and a good feeling for climax.

"My heart's treasure," an impassioned Irish love song, will find many admirers. Mr. Fahy's excellent lyric strikes a somewhat tragic note, and Mrs. Needham has caught its spirit and reproduced its passionate yearning with much success.

The Office for the Holy Communion. Set to music in the key of E flat. By John E. West.
[Novello and Company, Limited.]

This setting of the Communion Service merits the attention of all choirmasters who have fairly capable choirs. The music allied to the Kyrie Eleison may be said to be indicative of that which follows. It is devotional and impressive in character, and while possessing considerable warmth of expression is also distinguished by reverential dignity. The Credo is set out with some elaborateness, short interludes for the organ being interspersed between the delivery of the sentences. The passage beginning "And was Incarnate" is given to a soprano soloist, who is answered impressively by the full choir at the words "And was made man." A similar

device, but with bass soloist, is adopted for the passages beginning "And was crucified" and "He suffered." A recurrence of the opening intonation precedes the declamation, *fortissimo*, "And the third day," and from thence to the end of the first section of the Creed the music proceeds with considerable vigour. In the second section a notable point is made at the words "Who spake by the Prophets," a fine effect being secured by the transition from the dominant chord on D to the key of six flats. The Sanctus is commenced by the basses with a flowing theme, which is answered by the other voices in the choir, and the number is concluded in a most effective manner. The Benedictus is begun by a soprano vocalist, who gives out a placid melody which is afterwards taken up by the full choir, the soloists continuing to lead them down to the words "Hosanna," which is set in contrapuntal fashion. A bass or baritone soloist begins the Agnus Dei, which contains some phrases of great melodic beauty, and this number forms a fine contrast to the Gloria, which is set with much vigour and terminates with the exposition of a fugue subject and floridly written Amen. The vocal parts are well laid out for the voice, and the organ accompaniment possesses much musical interest and independence.

A Merry Christmas. A collection of Pianoforte Compositions by modern Composers.
[Breitkopf and Härtel.]

CHRISTMAS-TIDE is a gift-giving season, but what to give, even to one's nearest and one's dearest, often causes brain racking, for the acceptableness of a present depends on the pleasure it can afford the recipient. In this respect Messrs. Breitkopf and Härtel's volume of pianoforte solos may be relied upon to please all pianists of average abilities. The collection consists of twenty-five pieces by Armand, Fielitz, Götze, Grimm, Hartmann, Hofmann, Jadassohn, Junkelmann, Keudell, MacDowell, Merkel, Nesvera, Rheinberger, Ribiollet, Sartorio, Scharwenka, Schwab, Seiss, Verhey, and Wagner, and they have been chosen with admirable discretion. Several of them are gems of their kind, and in the large majority the maximum of effectiveness is combined with the minimum of difficulty, but all of them possess musical charm.

Ständchen (Serenade); *Die Linde* (The Linden Tree). Edited and translated by Helen D. Tretbar. Music by Erik Meyer-Helmund.

[Magdeburg: Heinrichshofen's Verlag.]

BOTH these songs are worthy of the attention of vocalists. In the first a lover asks sundry questions of the cottage where his beloved dwells, and not receiving an answer, is content to commit her safety to the silent walls. Serenades, as a rule, have much in common, but Herr Helmund's music possesses some distinction and, as expected from this composer, has many artistic touches.

"The Linden Tree," in the poet's imagination, grows outside a cottage in which a loved one dwells, and has the peculiar property of communicating to her the vows of devotion which her lover has breathed on its leaves. The voice part is melodious and graceful, and the effectiveness of the song is greatly increased by the musical interest of the pianoforte accompaniment, which, however, calls for deft fingers to do it justice.

Novello's Octavo Edition of Trios, Quartets, &c., for Female Voices. Nos. 317 to 320.

[Novello and Company, Limited.]

It was an excellent idea to include in this series female choruses from cantatas, for some of the most pleasing examples of this kind are found in modern works. No. 317 is the chorus "Hasten, Oh! sisters," from the cantata "King Neptune's Daughter," by Ferris Tozer. It is written in three parts in a flowing and graceful style and is extremely easy to sing. The next number is the soprano solo and chorus "Fairest of lands," from "The Sun Worshippers," by A. Goring Thomas. This makes more demand on executive abilities than the preceding number, and the soprano soloist is in one instance called upon to touch the high B natural. The chorus parts also require singing with vivacity and brightness; but any trouble expended will receive its reward. No. 319, entitled "Eidola," is a