

Review

Source: *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, Vol. 22, No. 466 (Dec. 1, 1881), p. 647

Published by: Musical Times Publications Ltd.

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3358038>

Accessed: 21-06-2016 16:56 UTC

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The Organist's Quarterly Journal of Original Compositions. Edited by William Spark, Mus. Doc.
[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THIS publication has now reached the very respectable age of thirteen years, and no doubt it has in that time exercised a considerable influence both upon composers for the organ, and performers upon that instrument. In looking back over the long vista of compositions embraced in this period, we find a very fairly representative collection of pieces, the study of which will give, upon the whole, a very good idea of the condition of organ music in at least three of the musical countries of Europe: Germany, France and England. No doubt the difficulty of sustaining a tolerably level standard of excellence in each number is great, but even allowing a generous margin for difference of opinion, there are many pieces to which the words launched at an unfriendly critic in the editor's preface to the current number may be applied with justice. "Cold mechanical music, of great correctness but little beauty, without genuine melody or that tenderness of heart which inspires happy touching thoughts," can not unfrequently be found in the pages of this journal; and, on the other hand, music quite as regrettable, of the light and flippant school, is not entirely a stranger. At the same time it would be very ungrateful not to remember the many excellent and varied examples of organ music which, it is not perhaps too much to say, might not have seen the light had not this periodical been in existence. Of the two numbers now before us we can safely say that they sustain the reputation of this publication. In them is to be found music for musicians of very different shades of thought, and also pieces suited not only to the adept, but to the less skilful player. In the number for July we must single out for favourable mention "Two short and easy preludes," by Charles Joseph Frost, both graceful and interesting, and, as the title suggests, easy; also a Minuet by James J. Pye, Mus. Bac. The Fuga at the commencement of the number, which is of a severer kind of excellence, would make an effective voluntary if played upon a large organ. In the current number the B.A.C.H. fugue, by W. Conradi, is perhaps the most important item.

Elementary Principles of Music and Elements of Harmony, adapted for those Studying the Pianoforte. By W. Adlington. [Wood and Co.]

MR. ADLINGTON tells us that he has written this little work especially for those who do not intend to study the whole theory and science of music; and viewed in this light we think he has successfully accomplished his task. The conventional method of writing the minor scale—with the sixth and seventh raised in ascending, and restored to the signature in descending—is given; and the chromatic scale ascending in sharps and descending in flats—without a word as to how it is to be noted when a number of sharps or flats are placed at the signature—also appears, as it has so long appeared in the instruction-books of the past. We will not here stop to discuss these questions, but are certain that the author will thank us for saying that the word *appoggiatura* comes from *appoggiare* (with two "g's"); and that what he calls a "short *appoggiatura*" is an *acciaccatura*. *Appoggiare* signifies to lean upon, and *acciaccare* to crush; and the two musical words derived from these verbs precisely express their meaning. We also wish to call Mr. Adlington's attention to the second exercise at page 44, the key of which would assuredly puzzle any student. These little defects could be easily remedied in a new edition; and as we see by the title-page that the copy of the work forwarded to us belongs to the "fifth thousand," they evidently must for some time have escaped detection. We are glad to find handbooks of this kind increasing; for it is unquestionably good to secure a solid foundation to build upon—even if you should never build.

O ye that love the Lord. Anthem. Composed by F. A. W. Docker. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THIS is an anthem of a very manageable length in three movements. The first opens with a soprano solo in F, 3-4 time, the melody of which is distinctly vocal and pleasing, and also easy of performance. It is then repeated in

harmony by the chorus. We may be allowed to mention that the time-word *adagio* is rather misleading; the metronome mark being 104 to the crotchet. The second movement, which is in the dominant, opens with a vigorous and effective lead for the basses, followed by a second subject for trebles. The first subject is then taken up by the full choir, when this short movement is brought to a close. The following movement, in the tonic, to the words "Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous," is, like its predecessor, bright, spirited, and easy, and brings this unpretentious but effective composition to a satisfactory termination.

There were shepherds abiding in the field. Easy Anthem for Christmas. By E. A. Sydenham.
[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THIS is another competitor for favour this Christmas-tide, and in many ways it is well deserving of it. Though it does not exhibit great powers of invention on the part of the composer, yet, on account of its generally melodious character, it may be said to be a gain to music of this class; and choirs of not very great resources ought to be acquainted with this tolerably short anthem before making their selection for Christmas-Day.

Reverie, in D flat. For the Pianoforte. By Claudius H. Couldery. [Lamborn Cock.]

It is not often that in passing through the mass of pianoforte music forwarded to us for review our attention is arrested by a composition upon which we can conscientiously bestow more than qualified praise; but Mr. Couldery's *Reverie*, although simple and unpretending, is so full of melodic grace, and the theme is so tenderly and artistically treated throughout, that we unreservedly commend it to those amateurs who, whilst wanting something both new and "pretty," are not disappointed when they find that a piece is a little out of the groove into which our "drawing-room music," as it is termed, seems rapidly settling down. Apart from the tunelessness of the principal subject, we are especially pleased with the ornamental passages which grow around it. At the pause towards the conclusion, the two short cadences are most effective, and the coda is in thorough sympathy with the character of the piece. We are glad to welcome a composer who can by such legitimate means invest a mere trifle with so much interest.

Holy Worship. A Sacred Song. Words by L. C. C. C. Composed by A. E. Tozer. [Novello, Ewer, and Co.]

THERE is good feeling for sacred music evidenced throughout this song, but the prayer of the choirboy—"Open Thou our lips, O Lord, and our mouth shall shew forth Thy praise"—requires something more than smooth and faultless writing to arrest the attention. The truth is that texts like these are sufficiently sanctified without the aid of musical setting, and it is genius alone which can intensify their effect upon the mind by such means. The quaver accompaniment in the portion which leads up to this prayer wants relief. The best part of the song is where the modulation into B major occurs, on the words "For he knew that Christ was there."

Call the ewes to the knowes. Duet. The words adapted from Robert Burns. Composed by John Bulmer, M.A. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE only defect in this Duet is its monotony. The melody is attractive, with just enough Scottish character to adapt it to the words, and the harmonies are well written throughout; but the effect of the voices singing separately and then together almost the same notes becomes tiresome, even with the slightly varied accompaniment. Certain indications in this unpretending vocal piece seem to suggest that the composer might do better things.

The King and the Miller of the Dee. Poetry by Charles Mackay. Music by Alfred Blume. [B. Williams.]

As baritone singers are by no means plentifully supplied with effective songs, they will be glad to hear of this really excellent addition to their stock. The bold modulations in the music give much force to the conversations of the