

THE Musical Times

Review

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Reviews.

Festival Toccata. By Percy E. Fletcher; *Praeludium Pastorale.* By John Stainer; *Fountain Réverie.* By Percy E. Fletcher. Original Compositions for the Organ (New Series), Nos. 41, 42 and 43.

The Chimes of Gloucester Cathedral. Arranged by C. Lee Williams.

Organ Transcriptions. Edited by A. Herbert Brewer. No. 19.

Albums for the Organ, No. 6.

[Novello & Co., Ltd.]

Recitalists will find Mr. Fletcher's two pieces give them a great deal of effect with very little trouble. The Toccata consists of a simple theme played in semiquaver chords divided between the hands; with a hymn-like subject by way of contrast.

In the 'Fountain Réverie' we have a slow subject in the tenor register accompanied by soft rippling arpeggios. A somewhat more agitated middle section provides effective relief. Like the Toccata, the 'Réverie' lies well under the hands, and is attractive and well-written music.

One of the best numbers in the two sets of organ pieces by Stainer is here reprinted. The 'Praeludium Pastorale' is an ingenious harmonization of a bass which slowly descends from C to CC, the operation taking about eighty bars of $\frac{4}{4}$ time to perform. The result is an unexpectedly pleasing piece of music, easy to play and pleasant to hear.

In the May issue of this journal some account was given of the tunes played by the chimes of Gloucester Cathedral. Four of these melodies have been arranged for organ solo by Mr. C. Lee Williams, two being made the basis of extended works and thus acquiring an interest beyond the merely local and historical.

The sixth of Novello's Organ Albums, like its predecessors, contains a selection of excellent pieces in handy form. Some of these have already become widely popular, while all are by composers whose names are a guarantee of excellence. The contents of the album are: 'Nocturne' Dunhill; 'Postludium' Faulkes; 'Andante Tranquillo' Higgs; 'In Springtime' Hollins; 'Madrigal' Lemare; 'Triumphal March' Lemmens; 'Allegro in B flat, Mendelssohn'; 'Chorale Prelude on 'Rockingham,' Parry; 'Praeludium Pastorale,' Stainer; 'Romance,' Tchaikovsky; 'Romance,' Sandiford Turner; 'Festal Commemoration,' John E. West.

Early Opera in America. By O. G. Sonneck, Chief of the Division of Music, Library of Congress, Author of 'Early Concert Life in America,' &c.

[New York: G. Schirmer, Ltd.]

To those who are acquainted with Mr. O. G. Sonneck's 'Early Concert Life in America,' the present volume will prove an admirable supplement. Mr. Sonneck has studied with advantage the wealth of material in the Library of Congress, and he has culled carefully the musical announcements in old files of newspapers from 1732 to 1800. Naturally, owing to the strong Puritan views of the American legislators, opera came under the category of 'plays,' and as such was practically banned from 1730 to 1770, but there were sporadic performances in many of the chief towns—all of which are duly chronicled by Mr. Sonneck. Several of these operatic performances were given in the guise of 'Moral Dialogues,' while in other cases the operas were given in concert form—with no action. Mr. Sonneck notes that the case of Miss Margaret Cheer, who acted Dorcas in 'Thomas and Sally' at Philadelphia in 1766, and who married Lord Rosehill in Maryland in 1768, 'is the first and last instance during the 18th century that an actress married a title on American soil.'

During the War of the Revolution there was amateur opera in Boston, Philadelphia, and New York, by the Thespian performers of Burgoyne, Howe, and Clinton. Some of their efforts were highly creditable, and the orchestra was almost invariably strong, consisting of the best players in the British military bands.

By a curious fatality, the first two American comic operas—Andrew Barton's 'The Disappointment,' and Peter Markoe's 'The Reconciliation,' rehearsed respectively in

1767 and in 1790—were never performed. The printed librettos of both show a great deal of ability.

With the opening of the Park Theatre, New York, on January 29, 1798, opera in America entered on a successful career. Mr. Sonneck, however, traces its development in other centres, e.g., Charleston, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Richmond, &c., and he prints elaborate tables in chronological order. There are fourteen full-page illustrations, and a facsimile of the song 'Why, hustruss, why,' in Benjamin Carr's opera 'The Archers,' produced in 1796. The book is handsomely produced by G. Schirmer, Ltd., of New York, whose London branch house is at 18, Berners Street.

Save us, O Lord, while waking. Anthem. Words from an ancient source, music by Hugh Blair (Novello's Short Anthems, No. 226).

[Novello & Co., Ltd.]

Dr. Blair's setting of the words of an old evening antiphon would serve admirably as a close to Evensong. The music is simple and devotional, and there are no repetitions of words. It should, if possible, be sung unaccompanied.

The Organ Loft. Book CVII.

[London: G. Schirmer, Ltd.]

Of the four pieces contained in this number the two best are a 'Festal Piece' by Julius Harrison, and 'Gaudemus' by Frank M. Jephson—the latter especially being a vigorous and original work.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

A short History of Russian Music. By Arthur Pougin. Translated from the French by Laurence Haward. Crown 8vo, pp. 332. Price 5s. net. (London: Chatto & Windus.)

The Harmonic Scale. By Immo S. Allen. Pp. 51, folio. Price 2s. 6d. net.

[Deighton Bell & Co., Ltd., Cambridge.]

A mathematical treatise justifying the evolution of the ordinary diatonic scale. Recognises the necessity for equal temperament for the pianoforte with its evanescent sounds, but advocates the mean tone system for the organ.

The Musical Quarterly. Vol. i., No. 3, July, 1915. Edited by O. G. Sonneck. (New York and London: G. Schirmer, Ltd.)

This admirable publication maintains the interest aroused by the first two numbers. We hope to give a review of the three numbers in our next issue.

Correspondence.

OLD ENGLISH SERVICE MUSIC.

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE MUSICAL TIMES.'

SIR,—In the very interesting article by Mr. Harvey Grace on 'Old English Service Music' in the *Musical Times* for July, there seems to be a contradiction. Page 409, column 2, we read:—'The English School remains neglected. To the middle of the 15th century we led in the world of music. *We then fell back.*' On page 411, column 2—'The appearance of the best of this old music—especially that of Gibbons and Mundy—should cause a sensation in choir and organ circles. It contains work representative of a period when England was in the van of musical progress.'

Possibly there is a printer's error; at any rate, the article will be much more useful historically if this small slip is corrected.—Yours faithfully,

EDWARD U. IRELAND.

45, Cranmer Street,
Nottingham.

August 18, 1915.

MR. HARVEY GRACE writes:—'The first of these two extracts was quoted by me from an address delivered by Mr. Royle Shore. As he was dealing with the works of Orlando Gibbons, Mundy, and other 16th century composers, his reference to the 15th century was obviously a slip.'

(Continued on page 551.)