

Next Season's Novelties

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- Mr. Herbert Hodge, Parish Church, Dunmow—Gavotte moderne in A flat, *Lemare*.  
 Mr. R. H. Turner, Portsmouth Parish Church—Sonatina in A minor, *Karg-Elert*.  
 Mr. Alfred R. Stock, Crystal Palace—Cantilène and Grand Chœur, *H. A. Wheelodon*.  
 Mr. E. Percy Hallam, St. Mary's Church, Bury St. Edmunds—The Pilgrim's Progress, *Ernest Austin*.  
 Mr. Allan Brown, Crystal Palace—Grand Chœur in D minor, *Hollins*.  
 Mr. Albert Orton, Selfridge's—Fugue in G minor, *Bach*.  
 Mr. G. W. Nusum, Town Hall, Georgetown, Demerara, British Guiana—Offertoire in G, *Lefebure-Wely*.  
 Mr. E. J. Allen, West Norwood Wesleyan Church—Toccata in G, *Dubois*.  
 Mr. Henry Riding, Chigwell Church—Nocturne, *Purcell f. Mansfield*.  
 Mr. C. F. Nidd, University of Calgary—Postlude in C major, *Batiste*.

## APPOINTMENTS.

- Mr. W. A. S. Ballard, organist and choirmaster, St. Andrew Undershaft, Leadenhall Street, E.C.  
 Mr. T. P. Bentley, organist and choirmaster, Dawe Wesleyan Church, St. Anne's-on-Sea, Lancs.  
 Mr. E. W. Bundell, organist and choirmaster, Parish Church, Woldingham, Surrey.  
 Mr. W. Lynnwood Farnam (of Christchurch Cathedral, Montreal), organist and choirmaster, Emmanuel Church, Boston, U.S.A.  
 Mr. J. Clifford Higgin, organist and choirmaster, Alexandra Road Congregational Church, Blackpool.  
 Mr. George F. Robertson, organist and choirmaster, Parish Church, Llangollen.  
 Mr. Arthur Sharp, organist and choirmaster, Roby Parish Church, Lancashire.  
 Mr. Tom Smith, organist and choirmaster, Fairhaven Wesleyan Church, near Lytham, Lancs.  
 Mr. H. Taylor, organist and choirmaster, St. John's, Waterloo, Liverpool.  
 Mr. William C. Webb, organist and choirmaster, Free Church, Hampstead Garden Suburb.

## NEXT SEASON'S NOVELTIES.

By HARVEY GRACE.

The reviewing of music is a plaguey task. Before one can deliver an honest opinion based on a knowledge of the work in hand, one has to spend an amount of time often out of proportion to the result. Neither editors nor readers want more than a few words about a given piece of music. But those few words, which take perhaps five minutes to write, can be arrived at only after anything of from five to ten times the number of minutes spent upon examination. Then, too, composers have a pesky way of getting into a vein. When I take up so-and-so's latest work I know pretty well what to expect. Rarely is my task made less humdrum by a surprise. Musing thus, at the end of a particularly uninteresting batch of 'novelties,' it has occurred to me to undertake a much more congenial labour. Change of work is holiday. Away with the reviewing of published music! Let me write a critical notice of some not only unpublished but uncomposed as well,—strains that never were on sea or land, by composers equally apocryphal. No sooner said than done, and you may take my word for it that the task is much easier than ordinary reviewing. I give here the result, hoping that as I enjoyed the criticising of these shadowy geniuses, you may take some pleasure in the reading. Knowing the touchiness of the artist, and the dreadful penalties that lie in wait for the libellous, I have been at great pains to invent names that shall not suggest any composer now happily in the flesh. But this is (nominally, at all events) a free country, and if you, with a jaundiced eye, choose to read any satirical intent into what follows, why, 'tis your offence, not mine.

'Six motets for unaccompanied singing,' by Amos Plimmer (Cashdown & Co.).—It must be some twenty years since Mr. Plimmer began the series of a *cappella* works that has led to his being known as the English Palestrina. Never was title better earned. Ecclesiastical music in this country was in a parlous state before his advent. The sickly inanities of R. L. de Pearsall, Stanford, Parry, and their foul brood of imitators held undisputed sway. Now their meretricious strains are rarely heard. Instead we have the noble austerities of Plimmer and his enthusiastic fellow-workers in the cause of artistic purity—Hodgkinson, Smeale, Flinders (A.), and Gathercole. The volume under notice shows no falling off from the high standard Mr. Plimmer himself set. In one respect the work is a new departure, *i.e.*, in the choice of words. It is dedicated to the organist of the Ethical Church, and in a preface, the composer explains that he has chosen the text with a view to performance in that and similar places of worship. 'Nothing,' he says, 'that recently Palestrina's "Papa Marcella" Mass was sung at the Ethical Church, adapted to words in accordance with the tenets of that sect, it occurred to me that there was room for polyphonic settings of a text that could give no offence in that or any other quarter. The provision of such settings would do away with the necessity of adapting works written for the Catholic Church,—a proceeding which certainly savours somewhat of Vandalism.' Mr. Plimmer in his choice of words, displays not only great skill in avoiding anything of a contentious nature, but shows sound literary taste as well. He has gone to that best-loved and most widely-read of all Latin authors,—Smith, whose *chef-d'œuvre*, the 'Principia,' is such a mine of sound incontrovertible truths. Of the six motets, perhaps the palm must go to No. 5, 'Ego te monebam.' Space will not permit of extensive quotation, so I must content myself with the wonderful opening bars:

Ex. 1. E - go te mon - e - bam . . . . .

E - go te mon - e - bam . . . . .

E - go te mon - e - . . . . .

. . . . . te fle - bas

- bam

Note here the somewhat pedagogic treatment of 'monebam,' and the poignant discord at 'flebas,'—both master-strokes of descriptive writing. The collection is full of such instances—*e.g.*, in No. 3, a tender setting of 'Magister puero tres libros dat,' where we find the number of books indicated by a *neuma* of three notes. In such subtleties the composer stands alone. As said above, the whole of this collection is worthy of him, but I may be allowed to express a preference for (in addition to the two already mentioned) the opening number, a superb double-choir setting of 'Magnus est numerus puerorum.'

'At the old convent gate.' Semi-sacred song, by Harold C. Laptrap (Church & Co.).—Here we have this deservedly-popular song-composer in his most alluring vein. The poem, a tender lyric by Wotherspoon, tells us of an orphan child who, after two verses of cruel neglect, finds a resting-place on the steps of the convent gate—hence the title. There, with the gently-falling snow for a coverlet, she falls asleep, while the voices of the nuns are heard singing their vesper hymn. We quote the last verse—surely Wotherspoon at his very best:

'There in the dusk, at close of day,  
 Sleeping, but beautiful she lay.  
 The snow fell thick on hedge and field,  
 In cloisters dim the voices pealed—  
 "Homocœa! Homocœa!"'

Here is the composer's original and imaginative treatment of the end :

Ex. 2. *religioso.*

In cloisters dim the voices pealed, "Ho - mo - ce - a! Ho - mo - - - ce - a!"

It remains only to add that Mr. Laptrap, with characteristic thoroughness and feeling for the fitness of things, has written a part for harmonium or organ, which adds very materially to the effect. We note that Madame Sarah Summerbee and Mr. Roderick Manktelow are announced to sing the song at all their engagements. This recognition by leading English vocalists of the good work of native composers is a welcome sign of the times.

'Possum Rag,' by H. Welford Dairies (Nestlé, Cowes).—The gifted organist of the City Temperance Church is well known as a successful writer of dance music. 'Possum Rag' bids fair to join his other successes in the repertoire of our mechanical street musicians. It is no small feat, this of writing strains that shall appeal to the least intelligent and the most criminal sections of the populace. Long may the composer's beneficent muse thus bring sweetness and light into the dark places of our teeming centres of population! We quote the final cadence as an instance of the genial conductor's originality in harmonizing a simple tune. The imitative character of the tenor part in the penultimate bar will not—indeed, cannot possibly—escape the observant reader. It is in such clever touches that the master hand reveals itself. Scholarship is like murder—it will out :

Ex. 3.

'Symphonic variations on an original theme,' for full orchestra, by Johann Thompson. (Witzig und Wittwenstand, Berlin).—It is with regret that we perceive Mr. Thompson to be under the necessity of going abroad to find a publisher for this splendid work. Splendid it is, in every sense of the term. A fine, broad theme :

Ex. 4. *Nobilmente.*

with virility in its every note, skilfully varied, and richly scored, such, in few words, is a description of this, the composer's *magnum opus*. Among the many impressive passages with which the work bristles, we must mention specially the broad diatonic treatment of the theme which forms such a striking feature in the noble and sonorous Coda :

Ex. 5. Brass. *fff pesante.* 8ves.

and the frenzied canonic treatment which follows :

Ex. 6. Strings & Wood. *Con fuoco.*

Horns & Bassoons. *fff*

Trombone.

Bass Trombone & Tuba.

&c.

It is Mr. Thompson's ability to evolve such typically British strains as these,—great tunes, racy of the soil—that has made his name honoured in America, Europe, everywhere, in fact, but in his own country. But his day, even here, will come. As we go to press, we hear a whisper of a private subscription among his admirers to pay for a performance of this work at Queen's Hall during the coming season. So mote it be! And may we be there to hear!

'Rêve d'Amour,' pour l'orgue, par Max Rigour (Bock & Pilsener, Munich).—A fine example of this craggy German genius. Herr Rigour is at his best in dealing with elemental subjects, and in this work we find the same stark, almost brutal, strength that has made his name one to conjure with. We quote the fine principal theme :

Ex. 7. *Sw. Voix phénacétine.*

Ch. *lieblich.*

Ped.

&c.

'Symphonic variations,' by Ezra Reed (Dunces, Hay & Franter).—Mr. Reed in this work adds materially to his already high reputation as a composer of serious organ music. The theme is a contracted version of a well-known English air, further disguised by being put in the minor :



There are twelve variations, all full of the daring originality we expect from the composer. It may be of interest to give the opening of the more striking among the number. The fourth, for example, is a sombre movement, with a theme of three notes, derived from the first bar of the air, treated as an *ostinato* :

Ex. 9. *Lento pesante.*



The seventh is a delightfully piquant Scherzo, opening thus :

Ex. 10. *Presto scherzoso.*



The eighth is a striking example of Mr. Reed's audacity. We have the theme in G major, with an accompaniment in A♭! It sounds almost too bad to be true, so we quote the first six bars :

Ex. 11. *Moderato. espress.*



You will note that the tenor part gives us a free version of the theme, against its augmentation in the treble.

How the composer keeps this difficult business going for three pages can be ascertained only by the purchase of a copy. This variation alone is worth the price charged. It is full of a poignant, bitter emotion that reveals itself only after long, long acquaintance.

We are on plainer ground in the next variation, a simple movement called 'Prelude,' and calling for the use of Diapasons only :



No. 11 goes still further in the matter of simultaneous employment of different keys. The theme appears in G in the treble, with a canon in the 6th below in B major, while the pedal (which also dallies with the opening three notes) is in A♭ :



Our composer, however, has by no means exhausted the possibilities of his material, as we find in the twelfth—and last—variation. This can only be described as a contrapuntal *tour de force*. Double and triple fugues have been written often enough—perhaps more often than enough. It is left for Mr. Reed to give us a sextuple fugue. He keeps us in the dark as to his intentions, merely heading the variation with the word 'Fugue.' However, we find subject after subject introduced and duly developed, until after some fifteen pages of glorious polyphony we have a stupendous climax in which all the subjects are combined. They are labelled, too, and we find that they are without exception fragments of well-known airs, including that from which his theme was derived :

Ex. 14.

A - - bend - - lich

They all ran af - ter the farm - er's

Three blind mice.

De it ev - - er so hum - -

Brit - - ons nev - er, nev - er,

Al-lons en - fants de la pa - tri - -

dām - mernd . . . um . . . schloss mich

wife, . . . Three blind mice.

ble.

nev - er shall be slaves.

It will be noticed that here, as elsewhere, Mr. Reed shows himself able to combine themes not in the same key. The quotation from 'Rule, Britannia,' though in B♭, goes quite amicably with its five companions, who are faithful to the key of G major. There are a few licences in the part-writing, but these merely serve to show that Mr. Reed despises the obsolete rules to which lesser men kow-tow. He may (and probably does) say with that other great composer, Mendelssohn (or was it Mozart?), 'Rules? Rules?? *À bas* the rules! They are all my very humble, obedient servants!'

Such music as this brings credit to the composer, profit (we hope) to the publisher, and glory to the Empire—an Empire (to quote the memorable words of one of the greatest of our statesmen, still happily with us) 'on which the sun never sets.'

In connection with the performances of excerpts from 'Parsifal' under Sir Henry Wood at the Coliseum, as a series of musical tableaux, an interesting and instructive booklet by Mr. Richard Northcott was issued and obtained a wide circulation. It contains pictorial representations of Mr. Byam Shaw's scenic designs, a concise and helpful description of the story and the music, from which thirteen themes are quoted, and a short history of the opera. The management and Mr. Northcott are to be congratulated on the production of this excellent aid to the understanding of the work.

## Reviews.

*Tschudi, the harpsichord maker.* By William Dale, F.S.A.

[Constable & Co., Ltd.]

This is a delightful book to see and still more to read. It relates in an attractive style the life history of Tschudi, the celebrated harpsichord maker, who for a time dwelt in Meard Street, off Dean Street, and later in Great Pulteney Street. Burckhardt Tschudi, or, as he afterwards anglicised his name, Burkat Shudi, was the friend of Handel and the founder of the great house of Broadwood. He was born on March 13, 1702, at Schwanden, in the canton of Glarus, in Switzerland, where his father was a man of some importance. Burckhardt left his native valley in 1718, and came to London to try his fortune as joiner and cabinet-maker. He married Catherine Wild, the daughter of Jakob Wild, who had preceded Shudi in leaving Schwanden for London. He worked for Tabel, a well-known maker of harpsichords, and he was a fellow-workman with Kirchmann, who afterwards acquired Tabel's business. The story of his capture of this business, which is quoted in Mr. Dale's book, from Rees's 'Cyclopædia,' shows that Kirchmann was not in the habit of wasting time. It runs as follows:

'Kirchmann worked with the celebrated Tabel as his foreman and finisher till the time of his [Tabel's] death. Soon after which, by a curious kind of courtship Kirchmann married his master's widow, by which prudent measure he became possessed of all Tabel's seasoned wood, tools, and stock-in-trade. Kirchmann himself used to relate the singular manner in which he gained the widow, which was not by a regular siege but by storm. He told her one fine morning at breakfast that he was determined to be married that day before twelve o'clock. Mrs. Tabel, in great surprise, asked him to whom he was going to be married, and why so soon? The finisher told her that he had not yet determined whom he should marry, and that if she would have him he would give her the preference. The lady wondered at his precipitancy, hesitated full half an hour, but he continuing to swear that the business must be done before twelve o'clock that day, at length she surrendered; and as this abridged courtship preceded the marriage act, and the nuptials could be performed at the Fleet or May Fair without loss of time or hindrance to business, the canonical hour was saved, and two fond hearts were in one united in the most summary way possible just one month after the decease of Tabel.'

Kirchmann became a rival to Shudi, the former claiming the patronage of the King, whilst Shudi enjoyed the patronage of the Prince of Wales. As Mr. Dale says, the most important factor in Shudi's success was his friendship with Handel, who was a constant guest at Shudi's table. It is this connection of Shudi with the great composer that led Mr. Dale to give a reproduction of the portrait of Handel, which, by the kindness of the Earl of Malmesbury, we also are able to reproduce and give to our readers as a special supplement (see p. 505). Soon after Shudi and his family removed to Great Pulteney Street, a picture of himself and family was painted. This is reproduced in Mr. Dale's volume, and we also are able to reproduce it by the kindness of Lieut. Evelyn Shudi Broadwood, the owner of the original. Mr. Dale says:

'Shudi is engaged in tuning a harpsichord, which is placed on a richly gilt stand, and is evidently something out of the way. He wears a flowing dressing-gown. His wife, Catherine Wild, takes her tea, and the two young boys stand near. The attire of all the family and their surroundings betokens a prosperous man. It was painted so as to fill a space in the panelling over the fire-place in the little front parlour of Shudi's house in Pulteney Street, and there it remained until some fifty years ago. Unfortunately the name of the painter is not known, and speculation has been rife.'

Mr. Dale gives reasons for supposing that the picture is by Mercier, and he states that it was painted about 1744. According to a family tradition, the harpsichord Shudi is tuning is one which he presented to Frederick the Great, in honour of the issue of the Battle of Prague; but this great event did not take place until 1757.