

Review

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The Angel's Message. Christmas Cantata. Words by Paul Gerhardt. Composed by E. Vine Hall.

His Name shall endure for ever. *His only begotten Son.* Christmas Anthems. By George Belcher.

[Weekes and Co.]

MR. VINE HALL'S church music is too well known to choirmasters to justify detailed notice of the above cantata, but it should be said that it consists of three choruses in solid four-part harmony, a tenor and a soprano solo, and that the music is simple and melodious in style.

Mr. Belcher has taken the words of his anthems from Holy Writ and set them in a straightforward and unpretentious manner which will appeal to the majority of church choirs. In 'His Name shall endure' opportunities are offered for a bass, tenor, or alto soloist and a quartet; and in 'His only begotten Son' provision is made for soprano, alto, and bass soloists and a quartet of singers.

The Morning and Evening Service, together with the Office for the Holy Communion. Set to music in the key of D. By the Rev. W. Howard Stables.

[Novello and Company, Limited.]

THE increasing number of clergymen who, in more or less degree, submit themselves to musical training is one of the most satisfactory features of modern church progress. The vicar who is not a musical ignoramus will be able to appreciate a good organist and will no longer be influenced by the undesirable suggestions for inappropriate music too often made by well-meaning but sentimentally minded members of congregations. Mr. Stables has manifestly studied music with earnestness and to good purpose. He writes with certainty and with perception of the needs and abilities of well-trained church choirs. We say 'well-trained' advisedly, for although the music presents no exceptional difficulties it demands precision and intelligence from its exponents. We are glad to note that the composer has set the jubilate, a canticle that is too often neglected in the present day. There is no necessity to describe the music in detail, but it should be said that variety is obtained by sections in verse and passages for solo voices and that each number is published separately.

VOCAL PART-MUSIC.

What ho! are all on board asleep? Composed by Henry Leslie.

Each season bringeth pleasure. Composed by T. Palmer.

It is the hour. Composed by Charles H. Fogg.

Which is the properest day to sing? Composed by Dr. Arne.

Saw ye not the pallid Angel? Composed by F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy.

Gather ye rosebuds. Composed by George Rathbone.

Creation's Hymn. Beethoven. Arranged by E. Sachs. (*Novello's Part-Song Book.*)

[Novello and Company, Limited.]

'WHAT ho! are all on board asleep?' is an arrangement from Henry Leslie's 'Syrens' duet. It makes an effective part-song and is worthy of favour.

The author's name of the text of 'Each season bringeth pleasure' is omitted, but the optimistic verses have been set to pleasing and appropriately unpretentious music by Mr. T. Palmer, and the composition will certainly give pleasure in whatever season it is sung.

'It is the hour' is yet another setting of Byron's lines, and one, be it added, that will recommend itself to musicians and that well merits the attention of choral societies. It requires careful reading and expressive singing; but when it receives these attentions the music will be found to happily echo the poetical sentiment of the lines.

No description is necessary of Dr. Arne's glee 'Which is the properest day to sing?' Saving Sunday, perhaps, the glee would be 'properest' on any day, and certainly it would make the day in which it was sung merrier withal.

Mendelssohn's 'Saw ye not the pallid Angel?' is also well known to choristers. Its inclusion in this series greatly adds to the value of this estimable issue.

Herrick's excellent and gracefully given advice contained in his lines, 'Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,' has been

set in a light-hearted but musicianly manner by Mr. George Rathbone. The entrances in imitation are admirably designed, and, crisply sung, would be most effective.

Beethoven's 'Creation's Hymn,' as arranged for mixed voices in four parts by Mr. E. Sachs, forms an imposing choral piece specially suitable to a large choir.

THE 'AGAMEMNON' AT CAMBRIDGE.

(BY OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

EIGHTEEN years have passed since the first performance of Greek plays took place at Cambridge. This excellent feature of higher University life owes its initiation to Professor C. Waldstein and Mr. J. W. Clark, who still take an active part in the management of the representations. It may not be without interest to past and present Cambridge men if I give a complete list of the plays that have been performed, together with the names of those who have specially composed music for these interesting productions:—

YEAR.	PLAY.	COMPOSER.
1882	The Ajax of Sophocles	G. A. Macfarren.
1883	The Birds of Aristophanes	Hubert Parry.
1885	The Eumenides of Æschylus	C. Villiers Stanford.
1887	The Œdipus Tyrannus of Sophocles	C. Villiers Stanford.
1890	The Ion of Euripides	Charles Wood.
1894	The Iphigenia in Tauris	Charles Wood.
1897	The Wasps	T. Tertius Noble.
1900	The Agamemnon of Æschylus	Hubert Parry.

The choice of the 'Agamemnon of Æschylus' (in the original Greek) for performance this year was as happy a thought as the selection of Sir Hubert Parry to compose the music. Six representations took place, 'by the members of the University,' at the New Theatre, Cambridge, on the 16th, 17th (twice), 19th, 20th, and 21st ult., and, let me add at the outset, with unqualified success. The cast was as follows:—

<i>Agamemnon</i>	Mr. H. H. KING, Pembroke College.
<i>Clytaemnestra</i>	Mr. F. H. LUCAS, Trinity College.
<i>Cassandra</i>	Mr. J. F. CRACE, King's College.
<i>Aegisthus</i>	Mr. I. G. BACK, Trinity Hall.
<i>A Watchman</i>	Mr. E. S. MONTAGU, Trinity College.
<i>A Herald</i>	Mr. E. L. WATT, Trinity Hall.
<i>Leader of the Chorus</i>	Mr. F. SIDGWICK, Trinity College.

A very marked feature of the performances, and one calling for special commendation, was the clear enunciation of the text, not only in the spoken parts, but in those that were sung. If one were hypercritically inclined, the action appeared to be now and then a little stiff; but in the face of such an all-roundness of excellence, this perambulating shortcoming may be placed in the category of spots on the sun.

Of the chief performers special mention is the just due of Mr. J. F. Crace, who gave a very powerful impersonation of *Cassandra*; the dramatic utterance and tragic intensity with which this gentleman played his part call for expressions of the highest praise. Hardly less successful was Mr. F. Sidgwick as *Leader of the Chorus*, whose elocutionary gifts deserve full commendation. The stage arrangements were excellent. A new scene had been painted by Mr. W. T. Hemsley; and the effect in Act i. of the beacon-fire on the hill in the distance was only one of several features of the good stage management, for which that indefatigable factotum of the Greek Play Committee, Mr. J. W. Clark, was responsible, he being treasurer, secretary, and (with Mr. H. J. Edwards) stage manager. A special edition of the play had been prepared, with the verse translation by Miss Anna Swanwick; a most admirable translation of the choruses was also made specially to fit the music by Mr. H. J. Edwards, and printed in the vocal score of the music.

It is now time to turn to the music which Sir Hubert Parry specially composed for this production of 'Agamemnon.' First of all, it is written for a small orchestra—and, by the way, a very good small orchestra those twenty-six players, mostly old Royal College of Music students, proved to be. The score stands thus: flute, oboe, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, trumpet, drums, harp, and strings. The result is a proof of what can be obtained from