THE Musical Times

ESTABLISHED IN 1844

A Christmas Greeting by Edward Elgar; Seadrift by S. Coleridge-Taylor; A Lullaby by John B. Lott; Tears, Idle Tears by J. E. Adkins; The Curfew by J. W. Elliott; The Sheep Shearing Song by C. J. Sharp; The Promise by James Lyon

The Musical Times, Vol. 49, No. 790 (Dec. 1, 1908), pp. 795-796

Published by: [Musical Times Publications Ltd.](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/907831>

Accessed: 04/02/2015 01:27

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Musical Times Publications Ltd. is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Musical Times*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

Reviews.

Forty years of Music. 1865-1905. By Joseph Bennett.
With twenty-four illustrations.

[Methuen & Co.]

When the announcement was made that Mr. Joseph Bennett was writing a book entitled 'Forty years of music,' everyone knew that its pages would be interesting and its style faultless. But curiosity was aroused as to the course he would pursue—to write a survey of music in England during his career, or to adopt the anecdotal-reminiscent method: the former appealing more to the literary musician with an historical bent, the latter to that larger circle of which the unit is known as 'the general reader.' Well, the veteran critic has chosen what he considers 'the better part,' and one and all will give his pages a hearty welcome if only for the sake of their gifted writer.

To criticise a critic, and such a master-critic, would be a serious undertaking, if not an impertinence, therefore attention will only be called to a few salient features of a volume that is readable from cover to cover. Not the least interesting portions of the narrative are the autobiographical touches here and there: the curious and unexpected way in which he was launched on his critical career; his experiences at the first of the hundred festivals he has attended, when (in 1865) he 'pinched' himself—i.e., financially—in order to 'do' it, 'going to Gloucester by the cheapest way and securing a bedroom in a row of little cottages some distance from the centre of the city. My food I could get as opportunity offered,' and so on. And then the number of friends Mr. Bennett has made, truly their number and their importance are prodigious. Here we find 'dear old Grove,' as editor of *Macmillan's Magazine*, writing to him about a suggested article on 'Cathedral choirs.' Grove said, 'The subject is not at all a bad one . . . The more lively you can make it the better . . . There must be some delicious stories to be told about those establishments, which, though current enough in choirs and cloisters, have not yet emerged into the outer air.' Just like 'G'!

Much merry matter has reference to Mr. J. W. Davison and his 'Muttonians'—Disley Peters, Thaddeus Egg, Flamborough Head (Grove), Dr. Shoe, and Dr. Silent—to Dr. S. S. Wesley, Sullivan, and many others. To attempt to pick the plums from these entertaining pages would fill many baskets; the reader must hasten to the heavily-laden trees of this anecdotal garden and gather the fruit thereof himself. Many letters give variety to the volume, which contains some amusing caricatures from the clever pen of Mr. Charles Lyall, in addition to portraits of musicians. Perhaps Mr. Bennett may some day give us a history of music in England as the result of his observations during his long and useful life.

NEW CHRISTMAS ANTHEMS.

A Song of joy. Composed by John E. West.

Sing, O daughter of Zion. Composed by Herbert W. Wareing.

Thou art My Son. Composed by Thomas Adams.

[Novello & Co., Ltd.]

New anthems for Christmas are ever welcome, for although the joyous season comes every year it is ever fresh. The example by Mr. John E. West strikes the right key-note of Christmastide, for it is truly a song of joy. The text is taken from Wither's 'Hymns and Songs of the Church,' and its jubilant character is happily reflected in the music. This is contrapuntal in character but not complicated, and the points of imitation greatly add to the interest of the work. The bright opening is well contrasted by a second section of devotional character, and the repetition of the opening theme in slow *tempo* brings the anthem to an effective conclusion.

Dr. Herbert Wareing's anthem is simpler in character. It opens with a melodious duet for soprano and tenor which occupies two octavo pages and is succeeded by a chorus in four parts. The writing has the lilt of a Christmas carol, with an example of which the work concludes.

There are no solo parts in the setting of 'Thou art My Son,' by Mr. Thomas Adams. While the music is well within the means of average choirs, contrast is secured by short passages assigned to tenors and basses in unison and by a central section commenced by the sopranos and tenors, also in unison. The music is direct in expression and the harmonic scheme is diatonic. The anthem ends emphatically with the delivery, *maestoso*, of words which form the title, allied to a cleverly-conceived cadence.

The Life of Tolstoy: first fifty years. By Aylmer Maude.

[Archibald Constable & Co., Ltd.]

In this part biography of the distinguished Russian Count, music occupies a somewhat prominent place. As a young man, Tolstoy 'devoted himself passionately to music, acquiring sufficient skill on the pianoforte to become an excellent and sympathetic accompanist. He was always susceptible to the influence of music, and in music as in literature had strong sympathies and antipathies.' Later on, in 1858 (ætat 30), he, with others, founded the Moscow Musical Society, which ultimately resulted in the formation of the Moscow Conservatoire, of which Nicholas Rubinstein became director. Tolstoy also played the guitar, sang passionate love songs, and was fond of playing pianoforte duets with his sister. One of the most interesting references to music in Mr. Aylmer Maude's attractive volume is Tolstoy's meeting with Tchaikovsky, which resulted in his sending to the composer a collection of folk-songs, with a letter in which he said: 'I send you the songs, dear Peter Ilyitch. . . . They will be a wonderful treasure in your hands. But for God's sake work them up and use them in a Mozart-Haydn style, and not in a Beethoven-Schumann-Berlioz artificial way, seeking the unexpected.' For Tchaikovsky's reply to this letter, the reader is referred to the book itself, in which he will find food for thought in regard to art-questions relating to music.

In the winter of 1861-2 we find Tolstoy teaching the peasant children of Yasnaya and the surrounding district, among the subjects being a singing-class. He adopted the system of numbers for sight-reading, as he considered it much more convenient for explaining both the intervals and the changes of key. Ear-tests formed part of the class work. One of the five conclusions at which Tolstoy arrived as a teacher of music was this: 'For the teaching of music to be willingly and fruitfully received, one must from the start teach the *art* and not aim merely at dexterity in singing or playing. Spoilt young ladies may be taught to play Burgmüller's exercises; but it is better not to teach the children of the people at all, than to teach them mechanically.' How true this is: these words of Tolstoy should be deeply pondered and acted upon by all teachers of music. Further quotation from this well-written book, which is sure to find favour with not a few readers, must be resisted.

NEW PART-SONGS.

A Christmas greeting. By Edward Elgar.

Seadrift. By S. Coleridge-Taylor.

A lullaby. By John B. Lott.

Tears, idle tears. By J. E. Adkins.

The curfew. By J. W. Elliott.

The sheep shearing song. Arranged by C. J. Sharp.

The promise. By James Lyon.

[Novello & Co., Ltd.]

Sir Edward Elgar's 'Christmas greeting' should secure a permanent place in the repertory of choral societies. Designed for two sopranos (soli or chorus), tenor and chorus (*ad lib.*), with accompaniment for two violins and pianoforte, it consequently embraces many possibilities. The text, by Lady Elgar, and written in Rome in the Christmas month, 1907, contrasts the season in Italy with that in England, and thus furnishes the composer with opportunities for

respective treatment, of which excellent use has been made. The work opens with a short instrumental introduction of considerable musical interest; the sopranos enter with the principal theme in 6-8 measure, which is taken up by the contraltos, and subsequently continued by the other voices. The vocal parts seem to be entirely developed from this material, but the writing is remarkable for its independence and variety, while the setting of the concluding words, 'Friends in storm or calm,' is peculiarly happy.

'Seadrift,' a setting by Mr. S. Coleridge-Taylor of T. B. Aldrich's poem, is described as a 'rhapsody for eight voices unaccompanied.' The music is dramatically conceived, and well rendered would prove most effective. The parts are not difficult to read, but a precision is required in the attack and an attention to gradations of vocal strength that call for careful rehearsal. A very fine climax increases the impressiveness of the *finale*.

It is refreshing to meet a Lullaby that is not in 6-8 measure. Mr. Lott has adopted triple time, and treats his subject in a novel manner. The words, by Gerald Hayward, are not perhaps what mothers habitually sing to their offspring, but the lines contain a pleasing touch of sentiment, and the last verse enables the composer to arrange an effective *crescendo*.

If the well-known lines, 'Tears, idle tears,' have been frequently set to music, Mr. J. E. Adkins's part-song is very welcome, for it is exceedingly well written and sympathetically echoes the sentiment of Tennyson's tender poem.

The 'Curfew' by Longfellow has also attracted many composers, including some of hyper-realistic tendencies, but Mr. J. W. Elliott has been content to intensify the significance of the lines rather than to illustrate them, and a charming little composition is the result.

Mr. Cecil J. Sharp's arrangement of 'The sheep shearing' folk-song as heard in Somerset is a sturdy and robust part-song, one that would provide admirable contrast amidst numbers of more sophisticated character.

'The Promise,' by Dr. James Lyon, should become popular, for its subject is the weather, and as the music illustrates the variations of temperature it will be surmised that the part-song includes much variety of expression. It ends optimistically with a confident assertion that 'We knew that the summer would come,' a gracious thought at this season of the year.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

A history of English Church Music, 1549-1889. By John S. Bumpus. Illustrated. Two vols. Pp. xvi. + 580; 6s. net per volume. (T. Werner Laurie.)

Memories of half a century. By R. C. Lehmann, M.P. With a frontispiece. Pp. x. + 362; 10s. 6d. net. (Smith, Elder, & Co.)

The evolution of modern orchestration. By Louis Adolphe Coerne, Ph.D. Pp. viii. + 280; 12s. 6d. net. (New York: The Macmillan Company.)

Studies and memories. By C. V. Stanford. Illustrated. Pp. xii. + 212; 7s. 6d. net. (Archibald Constable & Co., Ltd.)

Story-lives of great musicians. By Francis Jameson Rowbotham. Illustrated. Pp. xii. + 369; 3s. 6d. (Wells Gardner, Darton & Co., Ltd.)

A list of the musical and other sound-producing instruments of the Chinese. By A. C. Moule, B.A. Pp. 160, exclusive of plates. (Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.)

The Oxford Hymn Book. With tunes. Pp. xiv. + 922; 3s. 6d. net. (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press.)

A little book of songs. By Arthur L. Salmon. Pp. x. + 93; 2s. 6d. net. (William Blackwood & Sons.)

Esperanto self-taught, with phonetic pronunciation. By William W. Mann. Pp. 128; 1s. (E. Marlborough & Co.)

Debussy: A study in modern music. By William H. Daly. Pp. 52. (Edinburgh: Methven Simpson, Ltd.)

International anthology of musical books (England, France, Germany, and Italy). Pp. xix. + 129; 1s. net. (Breitkopf & Härtel.)

THE SHEFFIELD CHOIR IN CANADA.

From England to Canada and back in one month, within which limited period no fewer than sixteen concerts were given in the Dominion by Dr. Henry Coward and his Sheffield Choir of 200 voices, is to establish a record, and the successful completion of a musical undertaking which will rank possibly as one of the most extraordinary achievements in music of modern times. The reputation of Yorkshire singers generally, and the Sheffield Musical Union in particular, are too well known other than to say that it would prove impossible to give adequate expression to the adulation which has been unstintedly bestowed upon the British choralists by the entire Press of Canada for their magnificent work. To Dr. Charles Harriss, the bold originator of this remarkable expedition, the highest praise is justly due for his extraordinary pluck, energy, and managerial skill.

Buildings that seat from three thousand to seven thousand persons have been taxed to their utmost capacity by the huge crowds bent upon hearing the Sheffield singers. Scenes of thrilling and spontaneous enthusiasm have been in evidence from the inaugural concert given at Montreal on Monday, November 2, to the farewell concert at Quebec on Friday, November 13, where French and British Canadians vied with each other in doing honour to the famous Choir from England. Thirty thousand Canadians must have listened to the music of the first week—in two concerts at the Montreal Arena, November 2-3; Ottawa Arena, November 4; and Toronto, Massey Hall, November 5, 6 and 7. Civic luncheons at Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto; banquets galore; the great honour of being presented to their Excellencies Earl Grey and the Countess Grey at Government House; splendid functions at Sir Montague and Lady Allan's Mansion, 'Ravenscrag,' and at the beautiful residence of Sir George and Lady Drummond; and visits to the Bank of Montreal, the Houses of Parliament at the capital; supping with Dr. Harriss at 'Earncliffe,' Ottawa; the banquet given by Dr. Vogt and the Mendelssohn Choir of Toronto to 600 guests; the 'Welcome Ode' sung at the City Hall by Mr. Fletcher's Schubert Choir; the reception at the Clef Club; the *Conversazione* at the residence of Mr. Cox; the luncheons given respectively by Dr. Vogt and Dr. Ham, were some of the social functions attending this remarkable choral invasion of Canada. The first six days of the tour testified to the power of song for promoting loyalty and tightening more strongly than ever the cords which bind together the dwellers at home and their kith and kin beyond the seas.

Sunday, November 8, was an ideal rest-day, for the Choir's enjoyment of the beauty and wonder of Niagara Falls. The labours of the preceding strenuous week began anew, however, on November 9 with two concerts—one given on Canadian soil at Niagara in the afternoon, the other, in the evening, across the Border at Buffalo, N.Y. There, on American soil, His Majesty's birthday was duly celebrated by Canadians, Americans, and Britishers amid great musical rejoicing. A banquet at the Buffalo Club followed the evening concert given to the Choir by the Presidents and executive of the seven leading clubs and societies of Buffalo. Tuesday, November 10, ushered in concerts at St. Catharines and Hamilton. At the former city the Daughters of the Empire provided luncheon; at the latter place a civic reception was held in the City Hall and the Elgar Choir sang, a supper following the concert at the Hamilton Club. Concerts in Brantford and London were given on November 11, the Mayor of London presenting an address of welcome to the Choir, the citizens afterwards entertaining them to supper. Thursday, November 12, concerts took place in Lindsay and Peterboro, at the conclusion of which a special sleeping-car train conveyed the Choir to Montreal, there to board the S.S. 'Grampian' for the homeward voyage. One more concert, however, has yet to be mentioned, namely at Quebec, when the proceeds were devoted to religious institutions of the ancient and historic city. His Honor The Lieutenant-Governor Sir Alphonse Pelletier, K.C.M.G., together with the Mayor of Quebec, Sir George Garneau (who welcomed the choir to Canada two weeks ago), were present to bid the Choir God-speed. With the singing of 'Auld Lang Syne' and 'God save the King,' Dr. Coward and his splendid choral forces sailed for England.