Words, Words, Words!

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PALERMO.—An oratorio, 'Judith,' by the young composer, Salvatore Averna, has obtained the first prize of one thousand lire in the competition opened some time since by the authorities of the Palermo Conservatorio.

SOFIA.—Under the title of 'Horo-Dance,' what may be described as the first national Bulgarian opera has just been produced at the Grand Theatre. The composer is M. K. Machanyi, who, as a matter of course, has largely availed himself in his score of the folk-song element of which Bulgaria is by no means destitute.

STRASSBURG.—A noteworthy performance of Eduard Grell's sixteen-part Mass (unaccompanied) took place last month at the Church of St. Thomas, under the direction of Musik-director Münch. There was a choir of seven hundred members and sixteen solo vocalists. The remarkable work of the whilom director of the Berlin Singakademie is but rarely performed, owing to the difficulties presented by it, and there was consequently a very numerous and discriminating audience on the present occasion.

TERAMO.—A new one-act Biblical opera, 'La Figlia di Jefte,' the music by Giuseppe Righetti, has been brought out with much success at the Municipal theatre. The libretto is an adaptation of a drama bearing a similar title, by Felice Cavallotti.

VIENNA.—A number of Schubert autographs have recently been discovered in the archives of the Church of St. Peter, the most important of which is a setting, with orchestra, of a Hymn to the Holy Sacrament, which the composer completed shortly before his death, in 1828.

Correspondence.

GEORGE SMART.

SIR,—The notice of Henry Smart in your May number suggests a question as to a certain George Smart, treasurer and one of the founders of the New Musical Fund, established in 1786. He died in Edinburgh on September 4, 1818, aged sixty-seven, and was buried in St. James's Church, Hampstead Road, where there is, or was—for the 'restorers' are always at work—a tablet to his memory. Was he the father of Sir George Smart?

I am also looking after another George Smart, an inventor, who took out several patents between 1800 and 1822. He was a timber merchant, carrying on business, first at Camden Town and then at Ordnance Wharf, Westminster Bridge.

Should this letter come under the notice of any members of the Smart family, perhaps they will be able to throw some light upon these questions.

R. B. P.

[We think the George Smart, No. 1, referred to by our correspondent, was the grandfather of Henry Smart, the composer.—ED. M.T.]

WORDS, WORDS, WORDS!

SIR,—Cannot something be done to make the words of singers intelligible? Often when listening to singers, supposed to be of the first rank, I find it extremely difficult to accurately determine the language, or languages, in which their vocal efforts are being presented to their audience. There is no doubt that librettists and composers have something to answer for in so serious a shortcoming, as they often handicap the vocalists by their handiwork. But for all that, the singers are the culprits. I am afraid they are getting worse and worse. 'A national defect,' they may be inclined to retort. And there may be some truth, though no justification in the observation. The other day, before I came here, and while walking along a main thoroughfare in a highly respectable neighbourhood, I overheard this remark from a respectfully dressed person: 'I hav'nt an ocean in my head.' I thought to myself: 'If you had, it would certainly be a serious case of water on the brain.'—Yours reflectively,

PLAIN SPOKEN.

By the sad sea waves. August 20.

Brief Summary of Country and Colonial News.

We cannot hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed in this summary, as the notices are either collated from local papers, or furnished by correspondents.

CHERTSEY.—At the Parish Church, on the 9th and 10th ult., in connection with the Coronation celebrations, there were performed the 'Coronation March' (Meyerbeer), Coronation anthem, 'Zadok the Priest' (Handel), Te Deum in F (Smart), and Coronation Prize March (Percy Godfrey). At All Saints' Church, on the 12th ult., the same music, with the addition of Clare's Magnificat in D, was given. The accompaniments at all the services were rendered by a small orchestra under the direction of Mr. F. Monk, organist and choirmaster, who presided at the organ on both occasions.

CHRISTCHURCH (New Zealand).—The Musical Union gave their second concert of the season in the Canterbury Hall, on June 24, when Sullivan's 'Golden Legend' was performed for the first time here, preceded by Handel's Coronation Anthem 'Zadok the Priest.' The choir sang with excellent attack and tone, being especially good in the Evening hymn 'O gladsome light,' and the choral epilogue 'God sent His messenger the rain.' The orchestral accompaniments were admirably played throughout; Mrs. Burns, Miss Maud Graham, Mr. Percy Aylmer, and Mr. H. M. Reeves were the solo vocalists, and Mr. F. M. Wallace was as usual an able conductor.

MATLOCK BANK.—Miss Lucie Johnstone gave a successful concert in Victoria Hall, on the 21st ult., when she was assisted by Madame Adelaide Mullen, Mr. Henry Beaumont, Mr. Hulbert L. Fulkerson (vocalists), and Miss Ethel Knapp (pianoforte). Mr. Fulkerson gave the music-recitation entitled 'Te Deum' (Stanley Hawley's music) with powerful effect, and Miss Lucie Johnstone rendered her songs with artistic charm. Miss Gertie de S. Webster accompanied, and Miss Ethel Knapp's pianoforte solos were much appreciated.

MELBOURNE (Australia).—The programme of the North Suburban Choral Union's Concert on June 10, given at the Masonic Hall, Ascot Vale, included Cowen's cantata 'St. John's Eve,' Macfarren's part-song 'Break, break, on the cold grey stones, O sea,' Mendelssohn's 'Son and Stranger' overture, and Strauss's concert waltz 'Morning Leaves' (the last two being given for the first time here)—the inclusion of the last being apparently due to a remark in THE MUSICAL TIMES of January last, apropos of the introduction of good light music in classical concert programmes. The solo vocalists were Miss Doris Carter, Miss Florrie Gordon, Mr. G. Baulch, and Mr. T. H. Lightfoot. Mr. E. A. Jäger conducted.

WELLINGTON (NEW ZEALAND).—The Orchestral Society gave the first concert of its twelfth season at the Opera House, on June 18, under the direction of Mr. Robert Parker. Mozart's 'Jupiter' Symphony received an admirable interpretation throughout, that of the *Finale* being especially noteworthy. Other items in an excellent programme were Mendelssohn's 'Ruy Blas' overture, two movements from the same composer's violin concerto (admirably played by Miss Grace Kennedy), Edward German's three dances from Henry VIII., and Schubert's 'Rosamunde' Ballet Music. Miss Phoebe Parsons was the vocalist.—Mr. Maughan Barnett (pianoforte) and Herr Max Hoppe (violin), with the assistance of Mr. A. Hamerton (violin-cello), gave a concert on July 7, when the programme included Rheinberger's Trio in A (Op. 112), Gade's Novelletten (Op. 20), and soli for their respective instruments, by the above-named artists. Miss Amy Murphy was the vocalist.—On July 15, Mr. Maughan Barnett gave a pianoforte recital, the principal items of the programme being Beethoven's 'Sonata pathetic,' a group of pieces by Chopin, including the Polonaise in A flat, Rubinstein's Staccato Study in C, and the second Rhapsodie Hongroise of Liszt.