

Madrigals

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presumption; and, while taking care to effectually dispose of the grounds of her complaint, proceeded in a satirical vein to show that he is not to be looked upon as a fit butt for the shafts of anonymous scribblers. Where is the "breaking of the butterfly on the wheel" in this?

In all that relates in your article to the repetition of new works, I heartily concur. To repeat a new musical composition at a near date after its first performance is, I hold, for the reasons you have given, very desirable. Why it is that conductors generally are guided by a contrary practice, is not easy to understand. It would have been thought that the favourable reception of a new symphony would have insured its speedy repetition by one or other of our concert-giving societies, if not by that which originally presented it. But is this the case? Do we not all know that the exact opposite is the rule? Cannot every observant concert-goer name several works which, in spite of having afforded the liveliest satisfaction on their first appearance, have been for no palpable reason shelved for an indefinite period? Let me give a few instances: Five years ago Mr. F. H. Cowen produced his own "Scandinavian" Symphony. How many persons—*unless they have been abroad to do so*—have heard it since? *Ab hoc uno desce omnes.* Goetz's Symphony in F, Dvorák's in D, Cowen's "Welsh" (the Symphony which gave rise to this discussion); Raff's "Im Walde," not to mention others, have each a like history. Heard once to be admired and applauded, they have for some inscrutable reason—or the want of it, somewhere—been put aside and forgotten by our conductors. True, some of these have recently figured at the Promenade Concerts. But the Promenade Concerts are scarcely taken seriously by musicians, and conductors cannot therefore excuse their own remissness by referring us to them. Nevertheless, some of us would have fared but meagrely had it not been for the classical nights at Covent Garden.

It was hardly a happy thought to quote the course pursued at the Richter Concerts in support of the question under consideration. Here repetitions have been so much the custom that the bulk of the compositions performed are in imminent danger of becoming hackneyed. It is not merely that the principal items of the programmes have been, and to a large extent still are, confined to the compositions of two or three writers. That would be bad enough, were their works ever so numerous. But in this case the principle of selection has actually necessitated ringing the changes on some two or three dozen only. This number may be reduced to still more ridiculous proportions if it is remembered that many of the Wagner pieces are merely "excerpts" and "arrangements" having, strictly speaking, no right in the concert-room at all. No doubt propagandist arguments may be put forward for repeating the latter, but these, I submit, do not apply to Beethoven. To repeat the Choral Symphony frequently is undoubtedly very well, for until the advent of Herr Richter it was a *rara avis* at London concerts. But this cannot be said of Beethoven's Symphonies in C minor and A major. There are probably no two works of their class more familiar. Therefore, I ask, is there any adequate cause why these should be so constantly given, seeing that this involves the exclusion of other worthy examples of the symphony—aye, even of their famous fellows.

In conclusion, I would urge that it is distinctly to the advantage of the concert-giver to offer to the concert-goer more than a single opportunity of hearing any new work of importance. At the same time, I cannot too strongly protest against any system of framing programmes which gives colour to the mischievously narrow idea that, because we have found the compositions of Beethoven and Wagner good and to our liking, those of the other masters of musical art are of little or no account. Who will say that there is not now-a-days a tendency to take some such restricted view?—I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

L. L. N. C. RUMSEY.

London, N.W., January 20, 1886.

#### MADRIGALS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—I have often wondered why in an age of musical enterprise like this, when so many cheap editions are being

issued of the best musical classics, so little has been done for madrigals. Of the three great madrigalian schools—Italian, Flemish, and English—we possess only a very few specimens of the first two, while even of our native school we can boast but some thirty or forty! It seems to me this is a time when we may with advantage make ourselves acquainted with more of the masterpieces of such men as Luca Marenzio, Wilbye, Arkadelt, Vecchi, Bateson, Weelkes, and many others. Marenzio alone composed a vast number of beautiful madrigals, scarcely a dozen of which are to be had in a cheap form (mostly published by Novello). Out of 286 of his, of which I possess the titles, nearly sixty are adapted to English words already—some in the old collections published by Yonge and Watson almost 300 years ago, others from Professor Taylor's "Vocal Schools of Italy" and from Mr. Oliphant's Collection—and many of these would be a welcome addition to our present store, as "Farewell, cruel and unkind" and "Fair Shepherd's Queen" (both S.A.T.B.), and "Queen of the World" (S.S.A.T.T.B.); also Vecchi's exquisite conception, "The white delightful Swan" (S.S.A.T.B.), Gastoldi's "Soon as the silver moonbeams" (S.S.A.T.B.), and Sponstone's "The joyous Birds" (S.A.T.B.). As regards Constanzo Festa, it is simply wonderful that a people who so enthusiastically admire "Down in a flow'ry vale" should not seek to make acquaintance with more of his productions. I may state that Dr. Burney, the historian, admired Festa so much that he took the trouble of transcribing *an entire book* of them, which is now to be seen in the British Museum. We are *rather* better supplied with the madrigals of our own composers; but even *there* I can mention a number of gems not yet accessible in a cheap form. Wilbye's "Down in a valley as Alexis trips," and its sequel, "Die, hapless man," and "Why dost thou shoot?"; Weelkes' "When Thoralis delights to walk," "Lady, the birds right fairly," "We shepherds sing," and "Ha! ha! ha! this world doth pass"; Bateson's "Sister, awake!" "Have I found her?" and "Who prostrate lie"; Dowland's "Go, crystal tears"; Morley's "Lo! where with flow'ry head"; Ward's "Upon a bank"; and Pilkington's "Now peep, bo-peep"; also, coming to later times, "Wesley's fine madrigal," "O, syng unto my roundelaie," and several of the late Sir John L. Rogers' beautiful pieces. I need not say it would be easy to add many more to the small list given above, which is merely a suggestion of what *might* be done. Hoping that ere long that suggestion may be acted upon, I remain, yours, &c.,

D. BAPTIE.

#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

\* \* Notices of concerts, and other information supplied by our friends in the country, must be forwarded as early as possible after the occurrence; otherwise they cannot be inserted. Our correspondents must specifically denote the date of each concert, for without such date no notice can be taken of the performance.

Our correspondents will oblige by writing all names as clearly as possible, as we cannot be responsible for any mistakes that may occur.

Correspondents are informed that their names and addresses must accompany all communications.

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#### BRIEF SUMMARY OF COUNTRY NEWS.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for any opinions expressed in this Summary, as all the notices are either collated from the local papers or supplied to us by correspondents.

ABERFELDY, N.B.—On Christmas Day an Organ Recital was given in St. David's Episcopal Church, Ween, by Mr. Jesse Timson, Organist and Choirmaster to Sir Robert Menzies, Bart. The programme included Hallelujah Choruses (Handel and Beethoven), Festive March (Smart), Andante in E minor (Bastide), &c. The choir sang a number of carols effectively, and the services throughout the day were well rendered. —A Concert was given by the members of the Choral Union on the 15th ult., the programme consisting of selections from the Oratorios of Handel, Beethoven, and Mendelssohn, and part-songs, which were well rendered. Mr. Dan Wylie, of Perth, was an efficient accompanist, and Mr. Jesse Timson conducted.

ALFORD.—The Choral Society gave a performance of *The Rose Maiden* on the 18th ult. The work was ably rendered, under the con-