Review

Source: *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, Vol. 16, No. 370 (Dec. 1, 1873), p. 323

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

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3354437>

Accessed: 04-11-2015 18:01 UTC

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 and Singing Class Circular*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

to leave us to imagine that Bülow-worship is rapidly becoming a mere fashion. The whole of the pieces selected were, as usual, recited entirely from memory; a practice which, perhaps, has the effect of making musicians feel even more nervous than those listeners who are unaware of the excessive difficulty of this self-imposed task.

THE Brixton Choral Society performed Mr. Sullivan's Oratorio "The Light of the World," for the first time since its production at the last Birmingham Festival, on the 24th ult., with much success. The principal vocalists were Madame Florence Lancia, Madame Poole, Mr. W. H. Cummings, Mr. J. R. Alsop, and Mr. R. Stroud. Mr. Sidney Naylor presided at the pianoforte, and Mr. Byrom at the organ. Mr. Sullivan was called for and enthusiastically applauded at the conclusion of the first and second parts. The work was ably conducted by Mr. William Lemare.

REVIEWS.

NOVELLO, EWER AND CO.

The Cathedral Psalter: containing the Psalms of David, together with the Canticles and Hymns of the Church, and other Hymns for Special Occasions, pointed for chanting by S. Flood Jones, M.A., Precentor of Westminster; J. Troutbeck, M.A., Minor Canon of Westminster; James Turle, Organist of Westminster; J. Stainer, M.A., Mus. Doc., Organist of St. Paul's; and Joseph Barnby. Approved by the Dean of Westminster and the Dean of St. Paul's.

WE are glad to read on the title-page of this Psalter that it is approved by the Deans of Westminster and St. Paul's, for their joint approval shows that it is the result of a combined effort to secure for those two great churches uniformity of "pointing," a matter of greater moment than it has hitherto been considered, at least in London. We say at least in London, for in other parts of England successful endeavours have been made to bring about uniformity in this matter among the parishes of a Rural-deanery for example, or an Archdeaconry, if no Diocese has as yet been gathered whole into the net. As to the origin of such movements, we cannot recall an instance in which the Cathedral of the Diocese has neglected to take its proper place in endeavouring to promote them. We may mention York, Manchester, Chester, and Lincoln as cases in point; the most remarkable success attending such efforts being, perhaps, in the case of York, its authorized Psalter, whatever be its merits, having obtained a circulation far beyond the limits of the Diocese from which it sprang. But in London, hitherto, no such endeavour has been made. We trust we shall not offend too much against the maxim to let bygones be bygones, if we remark that from indifference, or what not, the mode of pointing which reserves to itself the style and title of "The Cathedral Traditional" has survived in London long after its death and burial in most of those remote country places which the enlightened metropolis sometimes affects to despise. The Traditional mode is sublime in its disregard of those aids to precision and uniformity which constitute pointing. There is indeed a principle upon which it is supposed to proceed, but in the application of the principle each member of the choir is left to his own memory or discretion, and our own ears have frequently proved to us how widely traditions may differ, and with what pertinacity differing traditions may be simultaneously adhered to. The book that lies before us gives evidence of a change for the better, which will affect not only Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's, but through them the churches of the Diocese of London. It is a matter of importance, as we have already said, to the two great Churches immediately concerned, to secure uniformity of pointing, if for no higher reason, for the sake of orderly and intelligible chanting, not only in their own daily services, but also on those special occasions, which we believe are likely to increase rather than to diminish in frequency, when their choirs will form a united body. And we think we do not rashly forecast the future when we

predict that uniformity between St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey will be felt throughout London, and that meetings of parish choirs, such as that which recently took place at St. Paul's, now so often hindered and spoilt by a painfully evident want of agreement in the mode of chanting, will be promoted, and possibly even suggested, by the very existence of a book such as this. And now we turn to the work itself, the publication of which has drawn forth the foregoing remarks. The names of the Editors are a guarantee for conscientious and intelligent work, for, as we need not remind our readers, they are all more or less distinguished, some of them remarkably, in connection with Church music, and with this branch of it in particular. We are pleased to find that they have avoided the chief snare into which most of those who have undertaken the task of pointing the Psalms have fallen—that of pointing every verse in a mechanical way, after a cut and dried pattern. They have worked on principle, nevertheless, for a study of their work shows that they have endeavoured to preserve, as far as possible, the proper accent and emphasis of the words. We say as far as possible, for no one who knows anything of the difficulty and delicacy of the work of pointing can fail to acknowledge that in many cases a choice of evils is all that is left. The Editors have evidently remembered that their business was to place before the choir and congregation a help towards singing the Psalms, in English, in an intelligent manner, with as much freedom as is compatible with the restraint of the form of the Anglican chant. We can see that there has been care to weigh and compare parallel verses, and to try to form a correct judgment in cases of doubt. Not that their conclusions will always be unanimously accepted, even by those whose fancies or prejudices do not prevent their accepting the principles of this book as sound. There are, of course, allowable differences of opinion as to the setting of words to music (for the task is nothing less than this), even within the limits of the principle we have indicated, but we suspect that a well-considered reason could be given for the pointing of each verse. We observe that by the use of an accent (somewhat too small, we venture to think) the Editors reproduce the imaginary initial bar immediately before the mediation and cadence of the chant, which is the special feature of the pointing of the late Dr. Stephen Elvey. This principle we have always considered to be sound, and after a pretty wide examination of existing Psalters we have come to the conclusion that Dr. Elvey has a claim to be regarded as the father of the improved pointing which now prevails among us, and that the Church of England owes him a debt of gratitude which is scarcely sufficiently acknowledged. We can cordially recommend this book, and even in the few instances in which we differ from its conclusions, we feel that there is much to be said on both sides. We wish it had the imprimatur of the Bishop of London, as well as that of Deans Stanley and Church, for no doubt his sanction would go far towards commending it to the clergy of his Diocese.

The Crusaders. A Sacred Cantata, by Henry Hiles, Mus. Doc., Oxon.

THE antecedents of this accomplished musician teach us to expect matter of interest in a work from his hand of the extent of the present. The groundwork of his labour has been written and selected by Marian Millar, and the poem shows well for her skill and judgment. The first piece is a Chorus of Pilgrims, toil-worn in their march across the desert, hoping for refreshment from the waters of the oasis, but reaching the place of their yearning to find the springs dried up, and yet persevering in their pious journey. There is pleasing sweetness in the music of this number, and it is agreeable to sing; it wants, however, definite melody, and still more fails in contrast, while a redundancy of modulation distracts the hearer's attention, and conveys little expression. No. 2 is a Recitative for Godfrey, we presume of Boulogne, who is represented by a tenor; it rebukes the faint-heartedness of them who are sinking in the great cause, and points to the coming Templars, who have undertaken the duty of enfranchising the Holy Sepulchre and smoothing the way for the devotees who would approach