Review

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Hector Berlioz (1803-1869): Sa Vie et ses Œuvres. Par J. G. Prod'homme.

(Paris: Librairie Ch. Delagrave.)

M. Alfred Bruneau, in a brief preface to this volume, refers to certain new documents mentioned in it, also to facts little known or even unknown, so that he regards the book as completing the 'moving Odysee of the Mémoires.' Then although those Mémoires are profoundly interesting, some fancy is mixed with the facts. There seems, for instance, no ground whatever for the story of Habeneck's coolly taking a pinch of snuff at a most critical moment when conducting Berlioz's 'Requiem'; again, Berlioz himself says in one place, after relating an anecdote: 'Ceci est un mensonge et résulte de la tendance qu'ont toujours les artistes à écrire des phrases qu'il croient à effet.' M. Prod'homme presents his readers with a very impartial and at the same time very interesting account of the man and the composer. The writer inspires confidence because, however much he admires his hero, his compositions, and his writings, he is not blind to the fact that Berlioz was not in all points perfect. Throughout the volume we find not only the author's opinions, but many extracts from the works of important writers—Julien, Noufflard, &c.—and from newspapers favourable or otherwise. One long extract is particularly interesting and valuable, viz., on Berlioz as a writer for the orchestra, from H. Lavoix's 'Histoire de l'Instrumentation.' In connection with the performances of 'Les Troyens à Carthage,' at the Théâtre-Lyrique, in addition to serious notices of the work M. Prod'homme gives some humorous specimens. *Le Nain Jaune* spoke of 'Les Troyens! paroles et tapage de M. Berlioz,' also of the composer, who, 'having during fifteen years overthrown musicians, has at last overthrown himself.'

Space prevents us from entering into detail, but we must refer to the useful and complete bibliography of Berlioz's musical and literary works. Of the former the dates of production, names of publishers, and other details are given. Then there is a list of 'Ouvrages à consulter sur Berlioz,' in which not only French, but German and English works are named, as are also musical papers containing articles. Of the latter, the *Athenæum* and *The Musical Times* are mentioned; but the *Monthly Musical Record*, containing various articles by Professor Neicks and other writers, also the *Musical World*, in which Mr. J. S. Shedlock gave a series of articles with illustrations of both parts of Berlioz's 'Les Troyens,' might have been included in the list.

Thy Presence. When parted. Songs for Soprano or Tenor. Composed by G. J. Bennett.

Just before Bedtime. Six songs for children. Words by Elphinstone Thorpe. Music by J. M. Capel.
[Novello & Co., Ltd.]

Cultured vocalists will find two grateful mediums for their skill in Dr. Bennett's settings of Goethe's and Uhland's poems, of which the original German is given as well as English version, the latter being by Miss Elizabeth Wilson. 'Thy Presence' contains an impassioned climax, and could be made effective in the concert room. 'When parted' is cast in a more meditative mould, but its melody is none the less attractive.

In not a few cases songs for children are not childlike, but this cannot be said of the series called 'Just before Bedtime,' a title presumably chosen as a hint concerning the most appropriate time for their performance. Words and music are studiously simple, and as each song relates a little story, and has passages to be sung in choral unison, the attention of little folks is likely to be won and sustained in the singing thereof.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

The art of the musician. By Henry G. Hanchett. Pp. viii. and 327; 6s. 6d. net. (Macmillan.)—*Chopin, and Schumann.* By Ernest J. Oldmeadow. Each 1s. (Bell's 'Miniature Series of Musicians.')—*The Concert-goer: a handbook of the orchestra and orchestral music.* By William H. Daly. Pp. 96. (Edinburgh: Paterson & Sons.)—*Songs without music* (a collection of lyrics suitable for composers). By Florence Gertrude Attenborough. Pp. 68; 1s. (Weekes & Co.)—*Journal of the Folk-Song Society.* No. 6. (Published at 84, Carlisle Mansions, Victoria Street.)—

Memories: an autobiography. By Walter Macfarren. Pp. xiv. and 338; 7s. 6d. net. (The Walter Scott Publishing Company, Ltd.)—*A Method of Teaching Harmony, Based Upon Ear-Training.* Part II. Chromatic Harmony. By Frederick G. Shinn. 2s. 6d. (The Vincent Music Company, Ltd.)—*Author and printer.* By F. Howard Collins. Pp. xi. and 408; 5s. net. (Henry Frowde.) This handbook is 'A guide for authors, editors, correctors of the press, composers, and typists,' to all of whom its carefully compiled pages will prove invaluable.

ROYAL CHORAL SOCIETY.

Handel ruled supreme at the Royal Albert Hall on March 30, the works chosen for this occasion being 'Acis and Galatea' and the 'Ode on St. Cecilia's Day.' The statement that the former had not been sung previously by the Royal Choral Society seemed almost incredible, particularly as the choruses afford special opportunities for effect by a large body of voices. As will be surmised the 'Wretched lovers' and other choral numbers were sung with magnificent precision and also with attention to light and shade, whereby the performance was made memorable. Equal justice was rendered to the 'Ode,' the chorus 'From harmony, from heavenly harmony' in particular drawing forth a superb volume of vocal tone. Madame Sobrino sang charmingly as Galatea, and in the 'Ode' gave a most expressive interpretation of the air 'What passion cannot music raise and quell?' The other solo parts were also admirably interpreted by Messrs. William Green, John Harrison, and Harry Dearth; the last-named specially distinguishing himself in a fine rendering of 'O ruddier than the cherry.' Sir Frederick Bridge conducted with true Handelian enthusiasm.

PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY.

Eastern idiom played an important part at the Philharmonic concert on March 29 at Queen's Hall, for the principal works were Mr. Arthur Hervey's tone-poem 'In the East' and M. Rimsky-Korsakoff's symphony entitled 'Antar.' It was the first performance of the former work in London since its production at the Cardiff Festival of 1904. The favourable impressions made by the music on that occasion were distinctly deepened by a second hearing, and the composition is so picturesque and prompting to the imagination of the listener that it should become familiar in many concert-rooms. The same can hardly be said of M. Korsakoff's symphony, the weaknesses of which became more apparent with further acquaintance. A feature of the evening was the début in London of Señor Pablo Casals, a violoncellist of artistic perception and finished style, who was heard to advantage in M. Saint-Saëns's concerto in A minor. The vocalist was Miss Lillie Wormald.

The concert on April 13 does not call for detailed notice. Dvorák's symphony in D was revived, and Sir Edward Elgar's descriptive overture 'In the South' added to the Philharmonic repertoire. The latter work received an effective interpretation under Dr. Cowen's careful direction, while Mendelssohn's exquisite scherzo in G minor was played with delightful crispness and delicacy. Herr Bronislaw Huberman played with great verve and brilliancy in Tchaikovsky's violin concerto in D, and Miss Antonia Dolores sang the 'Shadow song' from Meyerbeer's 'Dinorah.'

The Directors and Conductor of the Philharmonic Society should sternly repress all encores; by so doing they would earn the gratitude of the great majority of those who attend their concerts.

At the meeting of the Musical Association held at Messrs. Broadwood's, on April 4, an interesting paper was read by Mrs. Newmarch on 'The Development of National Opera in Russia: Rimsky-Korsakov (1844).'

Mr. J. C. B. Tirbutt, Lecturer in music at University College, Reading, read an interesting paper on 'Municipalities and Music' before the Incorporated Society of Musicians (London section) on April 8.