Review

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it will be sufficient, we think, to quote No. 10—"Choral Members must be able to read at sight, and have a fair knowledge of music; and attend on Tuesday after Rehearsal to be tried previous to their admission."

THE following, from an American advertisement of a series of "Characteristic musical stories," is an attempt to describe *Pompon (the Chamberlain)*. "The first two measures contain the motive. The character to be portrayed is a plausible, crafty, uncertain one; so if the student well versed in sequent forms and harmonies intuitively reaches ahead by the customary avenues, he need not be surprised to find the crafty old chamberlain has doubled on him and dodged over and around harmonies in quite an unexpected manner." The observations upon No. 13—*Blumose (the Steward)*—are curt but expressive—"Drunk all the way through." Who shall say that this music has no "poetic basis?"

COVENT GARDEN THEATRE.

ON Saturday the 8th ult., a series of Promenade Concerts, under the direction of M. Hervé, was inaugurated at this establishment with every prospect of a success which must be infinitely more gratifying to the proprietors than to the lovers of art. M. Hervé's Symphony, "The Ashantee War," appeals not to the criticism of a musical journal, and we leave it therefore to the tender mercy of those for whom it was manufactured. The violinist, M. Wieniawski, created a decided effect by his performance of Bach's Prelude to his violin Sonata in E major, but the patchwork nature of the concert may be imagined when we state that for the encore of this piece, he substituted a *Caprice* on "Willie, we have missed you." Another feature in the programme was the trombone playing of Mr. J. Harvey, which created genuine and deserved applause. Madlle. Benati, Madlle. Bianchi, Mr. Pearson, Mr. Carlton, and Mr. Lewis Thomas have been the principal vocalists. The fact of the *Allegretto* from Beethoven's Symphony in F (No. 8) and the Overtures to "Guillaume Tell" and "Masaniello" being taken out of the bills after the first evening will sufficiently indicate the taste of the new Conductor. We may say, however, that "Classical nights" are included in the programme of the season.

THE opening of the magnificent new Guildhall at Plymouth, by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, which took place on the 13th ult., was followed by a Musical Festival, which reflected the utmost credit upon Mr. F. N. Löhr and the members of the Plymouth Vocal Association under his direction, upon whom the success of the undertaking mainly depended. On the first day, Mendelssohn's "Elijah" was selected for performance, the principal parts being sustained by Mdle. Corani, Mdle. Mathilde Enequist, Miss Julia Elton, Miss Helen D'Alton, Mr. E. Lloyd, Mr. Kerr Gedge, Mr. W. Drayton and Signor Agnesi. Mdle. Enequist in the trying air, "Hear ye Israel," was highly effective, Mdle. Corani created a decided impression by her singing in the duet of the *Widow* with *Elijah*, Miss D'Alton was successful in the air, "Woe unto him," and Miss Julia Elton's rendering of "O rest in the Lord" was so excellent as to cause an evident desire on the part of the audience to hear it once more. Mr. Lloyd's two tenor solos were delivered with true musical expression, and the part of the Prophet was sung by Signor Agnesi with such a reverential feeling for the excessive beauty of the music as to convince us that he will take a foremost rank as an Oratorio singer. The choruses were given with much precision, and with such judicious alternations of light and shade as to evidence the care with which the work had been prepared. His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales was present during a portion of the concert, and expressed himself much pleased with the performance. At the

miscellaneous concert in the evening, a Festal March, composed for the occasion by the hon. conductor, Mr. F. N. Löhr, and dedicated, by permission, to the Prince of Wales, was played with marked success, and repeated, by general desire. All the solo vocalists engaged in the performance of "Elijah" in the morning, contributed songs of a highly popular character, and the encores were numerous. On the next evening Haydn's "Creation" was given, with Mdle. Enequist, Mr. Kerr Gedge, Mr. Drayton and Signor Agnesi as the principal singers. The Oratorio was excellently rendered throughout, the Choir again displaying the effect of systematic training and careful conductorship. At the Mechanics' Institution, before the rehearsal for the Oratorios, a presentation, in the form of a silver epergne, accompanied by an illuminated address, was made by the members of the Plymouth Vocal Association to their indefatigable conductor Mr. F. N. Löhr. The presentation was entrusted to Mr. J. Brooking Rowe, and Mr. Löhr, in acknowledging the gift, spoke most feelingly of his connection with the Association, and expressed a hope that for many years to come they should work as harmoniously together as they had hitherto done. The epergne bears the following inscription: "Presented by the Members of the Plymouth Vocal Association to their conductor, F. N. Löhr, Esqre., on the occasion of the musical festival in connection with the opening of the new Guildhall, by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, August 13th, 1874."

DR. PRIESTLEY, the celebrated chemist and dissenting minister, to whose memory a statue has just been erected in Birmingham, makes some sapient reflections on music in his autobiography. He says: "Being boarded with Mr. Eddowes, a very sociable and sensible man, and at the same time the person of the greatest property in the congregation, and who was fond of music, I was induced to learn to play a little on the English flute, as the easiest instrument: and though I was never a proficient in it, my playing contributed more or less to my amusement many years of my life. I would recommend the knowledge and practice of music to all studious persons; and it will be better for them if, like myself, they should have no very fine ear or exquisite taste, as by this means they will be more easily pleased, and be less apt to be offended when the performances they hear are but indifferent."

THE Second Quarterly Musical Service, on behalf of the Choir Fund, was held in St. Mary's, Haggerston, on Wednesday the 29th July, when a Selection from "Judas Maccabæus" was efficiently rendered by the St. Mary's Choir. Mr. W. R. Coventry presided at the organ with his usual ability, and played a variety of solos in a manner well calculated to display the capabilities of Father Smith's fine instrument.

THE St. George's Glee Union gave its usual monthly concert on the 7th ult., when A. Sullivan's Cantata, entitled "On Shore and Sea" was performed with great success. The solo parts were efficiently sustained by Miss Janet King and Mr. Jekyll. The Duet "Here on thy heart" and the Chorus "Sink and scatter" being especially well received. The second part was miscellaneous, the most notable features being the excellent singing of Mr. G. T. Carter, the fine rendering of Mendelssohn's "Nightingale" by the Choir, and Thalberg's "Masaniello," admirably played by Miss Julie Augarde. Mr. Garside conducted with his usual care.

REVIEWS.

NOVELLO, EWER AND CO.

Ernani. A Tragic Opera, in Four Acts. Composed by Giuseppe Verdi. Edited by Berthold Tours, and translated into English by Natalia Macfarren.

No less than twenty-three of the most popular Operas having appeared in this octavo edition, and others being in preparation, there can be no question that the public has already sufficiently appreciated the soundness of the idea which originally prompted their publication—that of pro-

viding as reliable a hand-book of standard Operas as had already been issued, by the same publishers, of standard Oratorios. No doubt the care with which the music has invariably been printed, and the excellence of the English translation, have had much to do with the success of the experiment; but any change from the bald (and yet expensive) so called translations of the Italian text with which opera-goers have been for so many years supplied must be for the better; and even supposing, therefore, that the intrinsic worth of these editions, in a musical point of view, may be lost upon the general reader, when the choice lies between the new and the old versions, few persons will be found to prefer the latter. The dramatic situations in "Ernani," and the effectiveness of much of the music, will always make it a favourite with vocalists; and there can be little doubt, therefore, that a season will rarely be allowed to pass over without its being frequently given. The indications of the score in the edition before us give an excellent idea of the instrumentation of the most important portions of the Opera; the translation is exceedingly good, and it is needless to say that in every respect the work is issued with all the completeness which has distinguished its predecessors.

Supplication and Praise. A Sacred Cantata. The words selected from the Holy Scriptures. Composed by Robert Sloman, Mus. Doc., Oxon.

THE faculty of making—if not of composing—sacred music appears so rapidly developing itself in this country, that we are beginning to dread the arrival of a time when an accredited musician—especially if he be a "Mus Bac." or "Mus. Doc."—will be looked on with contempt unless he has written and produced an Oratorio, or at least a Sacred Cantata or two. No doubt this plethora of religious works has in a great measure been caused by the growth of Choral Societies throughout the kingdom; for as every choir must have a Conductor, it is exceedingly unlikely that a person placed in so powerful a position will rest satisfied until he conducts his own music; and thus we find that a composition which might have remained for years upon the publishers' shelves almost unnoticed only a short time ago, will now be executed by a choral body, assisted by a competent band, and applauded with a vehemence which—although it deceives no one but the composer—has at least the effect of temporarily withdrawing the attention both of executants and audience from the study of the great works in art. Were the majority of these compositions worthless, it would be the duty of all who dare to speak the truth at once to condemn them; but this is not the case; on the contrary, very many of them are really excellent specimens of accomplished workmanship—the productions indeed of men who have earned for themselves a firm place in the profession, and fully proved by former writings that they possess the power of expressing themselves in clear and forcible musical language. This it is which makes it difficult to review a Cantata like the one before us strictly according to the magnitude of its claims, without seeming to think worse of it than we really do. Dr. Sloman has evidently approached his task with a due reverence for the subject; and throughout his composition we have some really admirable examples of choral writing. His double choruses are bold and effective—especially No. 11, "Magnify the Lord," which has several fine points—most of the solos are sympathetically written for the singers, and there is a good Trio for three female voices—of course, according to the "Lift thine eyes" model, without accompaniment—which, if well sung, would we doubt not ensure the usual encore. The opening chorus, "Bow down Thine ear," we like as well as any in the work, the treatment of the words, "I am poor and in misery" being particularly happy. The Cantata has already been given at the Albert Hall; but we cannot think that performing the instrumental portions of Mendelssohn's "Hymn of Praise" before it was a judicious step.

The Office of Holy Communion, set to original music by William Henry Monk.

HE is a daring man who, in these days of similitude, will profess his music to be "original," and it might have

been more graceful in the accomplished and experienced author, to leave us, namely, the world at large, to find out the unlikeness of his work to others, than to have declared it. Taking it at his own showing, however, the Service is, with the exception of one appropriation of the opening phrase of "O, rest in the Lord," as much his own as is any good musical work the property of him that produces it; and it has ample merit to supersede all question, beyond this one, of its intrinsic interest and aptitude for its purpose, which we are about to answer in the affirmative. There are four settings of the Kyrie, besides that for the Tenth Commandment, which are all pleasantly melodious. There is a point in the music for the last time, which many musicians may count as trifling, but which demands notice, as bearing on a principle that may have more important application elsewhere. This is the succession of consecutive 7ths, $\begin{smallmatrix} G & F \\ A & G \end{smallmatrix}$ over the bass D G, which may have arisen from a false view of the source of the prior chord, but has an unquestionably ill effect. The Credo is written with a free hand, and with a capital aim at declamation. Occasional passages in harmony admirably relieve the more prevalent employment of eighths and unisons for the voices. It is a little surprising to find one with such long and constant habit of voices, as makes Mr. W. H. Monk famous, writing for tenors down to G on the first bass line; but so he does, for the end of the Passion sentence. The treatment is unusual, but eminently thoughtful, of the sentence beginning "And He shall come again," which opens but moderately loud, and fades into a whisper at "to judge both the quick and the dead," as implying awe in the belief in the tremendous moment, rather than jubilation "in the glory" of the second Advent. The *Sursum Corda* is set emphatically, because concisely, the priest having here, as in some other numbers, an ancient Church phrase for the Intonation. The *Sanctus* is well conceived, beginning most softly, to represent the lowliest reverence, and breaking forth in loudest acclaim in the repetition of the first words, as if in emulation of the hosts of heaven. Extra to the Office in the Prayer Book, the *Benedictus* follows, of which, the merit of the music is our composer's justification; let who will, justify the interpolation of the words. Another insertion in the English Communion Service is the *Agnus Dei*, the appropriation of which, in this place, from a Prayer Book of Edward VI., is for others to discuss; we like the music greatly, and esteem it the best portion of Mr. Monk's interesting work. The *Gloria* is the concluding number. One passage in this is reprehensible, namely, on the words "O Lord God," in page 12, score 2, bars 3 and 4, where there is false relation between the A for the soprano and the A flat for the bass, and, still more vexatious, a progression of 4ths between bass and tenor. How curious is it that musicians, who would shrink from a consecution of 5ths as from anything that was vilest, scruple not to write far uglier progressions as if they believe they do so with impunity! We wonder, considering how words are repeated, at the curttness with which, "For Thou only," &c., is set; it is, we think, out of proportion to the relative importance of the text, and it gives abruptness to the conclusion. The candour of our objections will, we hope, attest the sincerity of our admiration, which has been freely expressed; the work will be of real value in many choirs.

"I looked, and behold a door was opened in Heaven." Verse Anthem for All Saints' Day. Composed by S. Parkman Tuckerman, Mus. Doc., Cantuar.

IT is a matter as much of pleasure as of surprise to discover a composer of such merit as is evinced in the works that we have now to notice, whose name is as yet unfamiliar to the world; and we admire as much the reticence, which has enabled him to hold back the manifestation of his musicianship until he could put forth such a collection of works as should at once command respect, no less than we acknowledge the good qualities whereby these works are signalized. So much may be said of each, that in justice they must be noticed singly; but we offer these preliminary words to introduce Dr. Tuckerman