Review

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principal vocalists were the Misses A'Bear, Tapp, Earchy, O'Bray, Collins, Messrs. Irons, Cooke, and Mott. Mr. J. Fimister, organist of St. Michael's Church, accompanied throughout the evening.

ON the 24th ult. a Concert was given at the Town Hall, Stratford, in aid of the Building Fund of the West Ham Infants' School. The vocalists were Madame Ernst and Mr. Stedman. Mr. H. J. Stark was much applauded for his admirable pianoforte-playing. There was an orchestra, under the direction of Mr. T. C. Hatton, and the accompaniments were played by Dr. Hinton and Mr. H. J. Stark.

ON Tuesday evening, the 8th ult., Haydn's Oratorio, "The Creation," was performed at the Trinity Presbyterian Church, Kentish Town, with great success. The principal singers were Miss Cattermole, Miss Wrenn, Mr. Monk, and Mr. Bridge; Miss Minnie Paul presided at the grand piano. The solos and concerted pieces were excellently rendered, and the chorus was both numerous and efficient. Mr. E. Cypson conducted with his usual care.

WE regret to learn that Mdle. Titiens is seriously ill. She has undergone a painful operation, and is now lying in a precarious state. It need scarcely be said that the whole musical public will earnestly pray for the speedy recovery of an artist who has for so many years not only been a leading attraction on our operatic stage, but an indispensable requisite at all the principal musical performances in this country.

THE annual performance of the "Messiah," in aid of the funds of the Royal Society of Musicians, took place on the 4th ult. at St. James's Hall, under the conductorship of Mr. W. G. Cusins. The principal vocalists were Mrs. Osgood, Miss Bolingbroke, Madame Patey; Messrs. Cummings, Guy, Wadmore, and Lewis Thomas. There was an excellent choir, and an efficient band led by Mr. Willy.

ORGAN Recitals by Mr. W. T. Best on the great organ at the house of Mr. Holmes, Primrose Hill, have taken place weekly during the past month. Varied programmes have been selected, much to the satisfaction of those who take pleasure in this branch of the art, and who enjoy but few such opportunities of gratifying their taste.

HANDEL's Oratorio "Esther" was performed by the Brixton Choral Society, under the direction of Mr. W. Lemare, on the 14th ult. The vocalists announced were Miss Kate Thomas, Mdle. Helene Arnini, Messrs. J. Merrington, J. R. Jekyll, and J. Hutchinson; Mr. J. G. Boardman presiding at the organ.

WE have received from Mr. E. S. Palmer, of 30, Duke Street, St. James's, an etching of Herr Wagner by Leon Richeton. The characteristic features are well brought out, and the portrait will doubtless be appreciated by the many admirers of the master.

THE gross proceeds of the concert given on Easter Monday at the Albert Hall by Messrs. Nurdin and Peacock, in aid of the funds of the Cheesemongers' Benevolent Institution, amounted to £1,115 11s., which sum has been handed to Mr. John Corderoy, the treasurer.

WE understand that H.R.H. the Prince of Wales has been pleased to give his name as patron to the Choir Benevolent Fund.

A SERIES of Promenade Concerts, under the conductorship of M. Rivière, was commenced at the Queen's Theatre on the 19th ult.

REVIEWS.

Cinq-Mars. Opera en quatre actes. Poème de Paul Poirson et Louis Gallet. Musique de Charles Gounod. [Schott and Co.]

M. GOUNOD has shown himself more willing to oblige his friend M. Carvalho than solicitous for his own reputation. On the accession of the manager to the throne of

the Opéra-Comique, the composer agreed to write for him an opera under conditions hardly allowing the best results. There was a real or fancied need for haste, and in six and twenty days after receiving the libretto M. Gounod had his score ready. We can admire the pluck and perseverance which alone made this result possible, and must look with satisfaction upon the fertility of ideas and fluency of expression to which the new opera bears witness. But whether a composer is justified in working under such conditions presents itself as a distinct question, the answer to which must be largely determined by the result of his labours. We do not censure Handel for writing the "Messiah" in three weeks, but were that oratorio a failure we should say of its author "Served him right." In like manner, whatever falling-off there may be in "Cinq-Mars" from the standard of M. Gounod's former works presents so much reason for blame as regards his submission to the circumstances imposed upon him.

The authors of the libretto were bold in undertaking to construct a book out of Alfred de Vigny's Romance. To make a drama from a novel is one of the most difficult of literary tasks; but to make a *lyric* drama with such materials is almost hopeless, because of the narrow limits entailed by musical exigencies. This, however, MM. Poirson and Gallet have done as successfully as could be expected, and their book may satisfy the French public, who know De Vigny's Romance well and are able to supply from recollection of its characters and incidents everything that the librettists were compelled to omit. But the case is different outside France and among those who do not keep themselves *au courant* with Gallic fiction. Our English public, for example, would have some difficulty in comprehending the operatic story. But it may be said that operatic stories are seldom comprehended. That is true, no doubt, and worth taking into account when estimating the chances of "Cinq-Mars;" but, on the other hand, the architect who, building a blind man's house, neglected symmetry and proportion, could scarcely plead the affliction of his employer in excuse.

The opera opens with a brief introduction beginning Adagio and containing a March (Andante) of solemn expression, destined to reappear at the crisis of the tragedy. Here is its leading phrase:—

The curtain then rises upon the chateau of the mother of Cinq-Mars, who has been summoned to Court by the all-powerful Cardinal, and we hear the assembled guests debating whether he should cultivate the favour of King or Minister. In this chorus (for tenors and basses) we recognise M. Gounod's happiest style. Among the visitors at the chateau is De Thou, the most intimate friend of Cinq-Mars, who is questioned by him as to his evident preoccupation of mind, and charged with being the lover of Princess Marie de Gonzague, also a guest then present. Cinq-Mars admits the soft impeachment, and laments the fate that tears him from his idol. Going on to wonder what destiny awaits him, he opens a book at random to divine it from the first lines which meet his eye. Then the friends eagerly read, in alternate phrases, the following:—"The high priest said to them, 'Sacrifice to the gods,' and the people, regarding them in silence, saw upon their faces already a celestial radiance. Calmly the two martyrs held each other's hand. The youngest then said, 'I fear to see thy blood. Let me die first, O my brother.' 'It is right, O Gervais, that I come after thee, for I have greater strength to see thee suffer.' They were soon struck with the same sword, and their blood mingled in the same grave." Undaunted by this sinister passage, the friends exclaim, "To live or die, what matters! God will strengthen us against fate. So be it." At that moment Father Joseph, the Cardinal's emissary, enters, and his echoing "So be it" ends the scene. There is a great deal to admire in the duet of the friends, especially where the reading occurs, the monotone

of the voice gradually rising as the climax approaches, accompanied by a lugubrious figure:—

More and more intense becomes the passion till, at the reference to the blood of the martyrs, the subjoined phrase strikes the ear:—

and should be remembered as one of the *leit-motives* of the opera. Father Joseph has come to inform Marie that she is to marry the King of Poland, and an *ensemble* expresses the varied emotions with which the news is received. Passing this as containing nothing notable, and observing that at its close Cinq-Mars obtains from Marie the promise of a secret interview before they part, we come next to a chorus, "Allez par la nuit claire," of a simple unpretending character, and, after it, to the scene of the interview. Marie is the first to appear, wondering at the "audacious words" she has obeyed, and then breaking into an impassioned strain:—"O silent and resplendent night, fill my heart with thy peace and sweetness." Here M. Gounod is at his best. The music is not unsuggestive of that in which Marguerite ("Faust") at the window pours out her love-sick soul, and therefore its beauty at once finds acknowledgment. But, indeed, we know few things outside the love music of Wagner more sensuously exciting or more fascinating alike to ear and mind. Cinq-Mars now enters, declares his affection, and appeals for a favourable answer to the remembrance of the past. Here we come upon another representative theme:—

Faut-il donc oublier les beaux jours envolés Faut-il &c.

while the whole passage is remarkable for its acute expression. Marie, echoing the strain, bids Cinq-Mars be strong, for he is loved in return, and the act closes with a passionate though brief farewell.

The second act takes us to the Court of Louis XIII., and opens with a scene for Marion Delorme and the nobles, who sing her praises only to hear from the lady in return that the Cardinal contemplates exiling both her and her companion Ninon l'Enclos. One of the courtiers, Fontailles, thereupon expresses his idea of the condition of Paris without such fair attractions, doing so in a characteristic *chanson* with chorus, "On ne verra plus dans Paris." Taking advantage of their chagrin, Marion suggests revolt against the Cardinal, and invites her friends to a *fête* at which the project can be discussed. Passing over a short but brilliant March played while the king traverses the scene, we next find the courtiers congratulating Cinq-Mars upon his appointment as Grand Écuyer; but our hero is happier than they know of, Louis having consented to his marriage with Marie, not suspecting the designs of his all-powerful Minister. The courtiers' chorus, "Ah! Monsieur le Grand Écuyer," is one of the best things in the work, being full of spirit, point, and humour. As they depart, Marie enters, and in the course of their interview Cinq-Mars sings a Cavatina, "Quand vous m'avez dit un jour," declaring his resolve to overcome every obstacle, "si ce n'est la mort," that may hinder their union. This song is not remarkable, being, indeed, of a commonplace order. As it closes, Father Joseph appears, like an embodied spirit of evil. Again he delivers an unwelcome message with many expressions of regret. The Cardinal bids Cinq-Mars resign his pretensions to the lady's hand, albeit the King had given them royal sanction. Marie at once bursts into a passionate invective against Louis; her theme being accompanied by an energetic "figure" for the orchestra:—

At its close Cinq-Mars asks by what right the Cardinal so decrees, and declares he will not obey. The priest warns him that anger is a bad counsellor; but Cinq-Mars persists, and the scene ends with an energetic and exciting *ensemble*, the lovers declaring mutual constancy, while Father Joseph bids them look for a fatal *dénouement*. The next scene is laid at the house of Marion Delorme what time a *fête à la Watteau* takes place, and is introduced by an orchestral movement quite in the "powder and pigtail" style, one such as Rameau might have written. A dialogue for the hostess and Fontailles ensues, chiefly notable on account of a pretty accompanying theme for the strings. Following this comes the masque of "Clélie," with which Marion entertains her guests, and throughout which M. Gounod affects the style of the Watteau period. First we have a chorus and air, "Belle dont le sourire;" next a *divertissement* consisting of a Shepherds' Dance, a pantomime with chorus, "Aminthe est sauvage," several ballet movements of a fanciful character, a sonnet, "De vos traits mon âme est navrée," and an air and chorus, "Parmi les fougères." The music of all this we do not hesitate to call charming in its quaintness and old-world grace. M. Gounod has very happily caught the spirit as well as the form of his model, while the effect produced is heightened by contrast with modern surroundings. Moreover, the idea of the masque deserves approving recognition. It affords a relief to the prevailing gloom of the work, and relaxes the tension at which elsewhere mind and feeling are alike kept. The masque ended, very serious business begins. The courtiers disaffected to the Cardinal await the coming of Cinq-Mars, who presently arrives and delivers a spirited harangue, the burden of which is "The King reigns no longer. The Cardinal is master. It is time that king and country were avenged." All echo the cry in a short but energetic chorus, "Oui, le sang répandu nous demande vengeance;" after which Cinq-Mars proceeds to give details of his scheme, and the chorus is repeated with even more emphasis. As it ends, De Thou appears on the scene, and Cinq-Mars warns him to retire, but without avail. He will stand by his friend, while indignantly protesting against the alliance with Spain which forms part of the conspirators' project. In strong terms he begs Cinq-Mars not to be guilty of treason against his country, but the other conspirators demand the treaty, and the instant carrying out of their plot. Cinq-Mars consenting, the act closes with a repetition of the chorus "Oui, le sang répandu." Upon this part of the work M. Gounod has lavished all his care, not without good results, if, as we think, he has fallen short of the best. The music is always energetic and expressive, but it lacks individuality and never rises to the height of an inspiration. Luckily the dramatic interest is great, and the attention it claims diverts notice from shortcomings which otherwise could not be overlooked.

The third act opens with an orchestral introduction and chorus, "Le fanfare éveillée," which, being of a conventional hunting type, may pass without comment. Following it comes the trio of betrothal. The lovers determine, before separating, to consecrate themselves to each other, and Marie, guarded by De Thou, is brought to the appointed chapel, where she is joined by Cinq-Mars and those concerned with him in the dangerous enterprise upon which he has embarked. Beyond question the trio (for Marie, Cinq-Mars, and De Thou) ranks among the gems of the work. The true Gounod love-theme is here—

—with which is contrasted the solemn blessing of De Thou, given just when, with sinister purport, the phrase already quoted in connection with the martyrs reappears. Like most of the numbers the trio is not expanded, and when it ends we instinctively wish that M. Gounod had made more use of such materials. The betrothal takes place to

the music of the almost funeral march forming part of the introduction (No. 1), and as all retire from the scene to enter upon the revolt we hear once more the passionate theme of the trio. These proceedings have had an unsuspected witness in Father Joseph, who now comes forward, and in an air, "Dans un trame invisible," gloats over the fate that awaits Cinq-Mars. The music of the song is full of character and, properly executed, must make its mark. At the close Marie enters, to be accosted by the priest, who warns her against Cinq-Mars, whom he accuses of interested motives. Marie indignantly protests, but Father Joseph goes on to reveal the project upon which Cinq-Mars has entered, and to say that nothing short of her renunciation of his love can save the rebel from death. Marie remains firm, and the scene ends, after a passionate *ensemble*, with a suggestion of the now familiar, though always sinister, March. At this moment hunting music is heard behind the scenes, and presently the king enters to the strains which accompanied his first appearance. Louis begs a favourable answer for the envoy of the Polish ruler. Once more the dramatic situation becomes intense. Marie knows not what to do. Her own love, the muttered behests of the priest, and the wish of the king distract her, till Louis solemnly commands the ambassador to salute her as his queen. Then the joyous hunting chorus breaks forth again and ends the act.

We now approach the catastrophe. When the curtain rises for the last time it does so on the prison of Cinq-Mars and De Thou, who are under sentence of death. Cinq-Mars dwells upon his love, while his friend bids him think of heaven. But this he cannot do. The orchestra reminds us that he goes back to the scene of the first interview with Marie, and then he gives expression to his feelings in a Cavatina, "O chère et vivante image," the music of which, written in M. Gounod's most passionate style, ought to become popular both among professional and amateur tenors. The melody is most touching and expressive, while its accompaniment overflows with rich effects. Marie now appears, and the intense feeling of the Cavatina is carried on into a Duet, "A ta voix le ciel s'est ouvert." For the latter, however, we care much less than for the former. It has merit, but lacks the nobility of character demanded by the situation. Marie brings tidings of a project for the deliverance of the friends, which is to be attempted on the morrow, and at once Cinq-Mars becomes radiant with hope, exclaiming as the Princess retires, "My heart overflows with infinite joy." But the morrow never comes. Steps are heard without, and, as the gloomy March once more strikes the ear, the friends are summoned to meet their doom. Then they recall the reading of the extract, and repeat "They were soon struck with the same sword and their blood mingled in the same grave." Before passing out to the block, they offer a united prayer, "Seigneur, soutiens notre âme," the music of which is as simple and devotional as, under such circumstances, it ought to be. That done the March is again heard, and the curtain slowly falls as the prisoners are led away.

We need add but little to these details in the way of general remarks. "Cinq-Mars" is not one of M. Gounod's best operas, but it contains much music of high interest on the score either of absolute beauty or dramatic truth. The whole work therefore deserves attention, and we sincerely hope that some spirited *entrepreneur* will give English amateurs the opportunity of judging its merits.

God is our Hope and Strength. (Psalm xli.) Set to music for Soli, Chorus, Orchestra, and Organ, by C. Villiers Stanford. (Op. 8.) [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE composer of this Psalm is one of those young musicians who, either because they fancy themselves to be, or actually are, the possessors of great powers, attempt proportionate feats. We do not know all the seven works which precede it, but we are fully aware that Mr. Stanford has set himself a lofty ideal, and wastes none of his ability upon mere "pot-boilers." He is an earnest follower of the art, not, Judas-like, for the material good to be got out of it, but because being naturally an artist he cannot well help himself. We say this with boldness, since it is the only inference derivable from the fact that the young Cam-

bridge graduate works perseveringly at the creation of music which, while it may bring him future fame, can do little in the way of present profit. Here then we start upon good terms with our composer. Youthful enthusiasm in a noble cause is always pleasant to look upon, and even when it becomes the parent of rashness, and entails all the penalties of zeal in excess of knowledge, we regard it with kindly interest and wish it well.

Not without concern do we open the pages of this Psalm, for we have asked ourselves, Will it ostentatiously proclaim its independence of Mendelssohn, or reflect that master's style and spirit? One or the other seemed inevitable, it being difficult to imagine any one sitting down to write such a work without Mendelssohn before him, either as something to be avoided or copied. The author of "As the hart pants" takes up the whole field of psalmody in its most expanded and important form, so that to ignore him when labouring in the same department is as difficult as to be heedless of Sebastian Bach in the region of organ fugues. But Mr. Stanford has avoided Scylla without falling into Charybdis. True, his work gives some indication that he has studied Mendelssohn; but generally speaking we recognise in it a successful avoidance of mere copying—the slavish reproduction of another man's mode of thought and language. This is in itself justification enough for the production of the Psalm. Mr. Stanford has divided his work into five numbers, certain of which are so subdivided that changes of key, rhythm, or *tempo* occur with more than usual frequency. But, on the other hand, unity is secured by the now familiar device of employing leading *motives*, which, occurring again and again at proper times and under fitting conditions, give the entire musical structure the compactness and consistency of a logical argument. The chief of these *motives*—

No. 1.

—is announced by the brass at the very outset, after the pattern set by Mendelssohn in his "Lobgesang," and by Schumann in his First Symphony. Here we have the central thought of the entire orchestral introduction (fifty-three bars), and also the theme of the opening chorus in fugue style: "God is our Hope and Strength." With reference to the contrapuntal writing in this number and elsewhere throughout the Psalm, we would suggest to Mr. Stanford the desirability of either avoiding mere counterpoint altogether in favour of the art which is descriptive rather than scholastic, or of giving counterpoint such a development and character as make it interesting *per se*. Fugues that are not fugues, and passages of imitation succeeding each other without design, have but small attraction and should be sparingly used; whereas counterpoint modelled on acknowledged forms and fully carried out *secundum artem*, while not incompatible with effects higher than those arising from technical skill, as many illustrious examples prove, exercise a power of which the musician may legitimately avail himself. In this particular instance we think Mr. Stanford would have gained by the introduction of a regular fugue—admitting the need of contrapuntal writing at all—employing the *ensemble* on the words, "Therefore will we not fear" as an impressive climax. The *ensemble*, by the way, shows that its composer can handle masses with considerable effect gained by natural means. We may refer above all to the closing bars, in which, after much *sturm und drang*, the episode leads impressively to a resumption of the original theme and its contrapuntal treatment, which are this time presented with some considerable variations. No. 2, following No. 1 without a break, is a quartett *andante con moto*, in G major, having as its distinctive orchestral feature a series of flowing passages for strings, no doubt suggested by the words: "The rivers of the flood thereof shall make glad the city of God." The accompaniment throughout is picturesque and suggestive, and contributes equally with the voices to a happy result. In the vocal parts themselves there is not much to call for particular remark. They are