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Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE MUSICAL TIMES.'

SIR,—I have read with great interest the article on Samuel Wesley which appeared in the February issue of *THE MUSICAL TIMES*. I find that the poetry therein given appeared for the first time in Dr. Adam Clarke's memoirs of the Wesley family. In the sixth verse Dr. Clarke gives the name 'Stokes' as 'Holks,' and the first two lines of the last verse are :

Still will I fret, and fume, and rage
And keener wax, and keener.

As to the poetical remonstrance to the Bristol Corporation by the eight-year-old Samuel Wesley, Dr. Adam Clarke says : 'To shew that he possessed a poetic genius at a very early period, I shall present the reader with a copy of verses, which have never appeared in print, occasioned by his brother, Charles Wesley, being chosen to play a solo on a violin, before the Corporation of Bristol, and some business calling him from Bristol about the same time, Samuel Wesley was chosen in his room ; but, in the meantime, Charles Wesley returned, and Samuel was set aside.'

As to the possibility of Charles being advertised in mistake for Samuel, I see the date of the oratorio performance was March, 1774. As Dr. Clarke gives 1775 as the date of the verses, is it not possible that they did not refer to the oratorio performance of 1774?

It will be noticed Dr. Clarke states that Charles was to play a violin. Perhaps you could throw some light on these few discrepancies.—Yours &c.,

WM. LONGLEY HOLGATE.

38, Wellington Road, Oldham.

February, 13, 1907.

Obituary.

The following deaths are recorded with regret :

On January 30, at Stoke Newington, WILLIAM DAVIES, aged forty-seven. As a boy, passionately fond of music, he worked for seven years in a Welsh colliery ; and when he came to man's estate he held successively the following appointments as a tenor singer : Bangor Cathedral, Magdalen College, Oxford, and St. Paul's Cathedral. At the time of his death, Mr. Davies was a professor of singing at the Guildhall School of Music.

On February 3, at his residence, 19, Hyde Park Terrace, after a short illness, THOMAS THRELFALL, M.A., aged sixty-four. A cultured lover of music, Mr. Threlfall was well known and held in the highest esteem as the chairman of the Committee of Management of the Royal Academy of Music, a post he efficiently held for nearly twenty years, his membership of the Committee having begun in 1886. He was also chairman of the Associated Board of the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music. As one who never failed to further the interests of musicians and to promote the study of music, Mr. Threlfall will be greatly missed, especially by Sir Alexander Mackenzie and his colleagues at the Royal Academy of Music.

On February 14, at Osborne House, St. Mary's Terrace, Paddington, VERNON BLACKBURN, aged forty, for the past fourteen years musical critic to *The Pall Mall Gazette*. As a clever writer on music and musicians, Mr. Blackburn had a high reputation. Like himself, his style was imaginative and literary to a degree ; moreover, he was an enthusiast, especially when he spoke of or wrote about those composers—Mozart and Elgar in particular—whose works specially appealed to him. Mr. Blackburn contributed the volume on Mendelssohn to Messrs. Bell's series of musical monographs, and at one time he was engaged upon an exhaustive biography of Sir Arthur Sullivan, of whom he was a warm admirer.

THE CONCERTS OF ANTIENT MUSIC.

A paper was read at the Musical Association on February 19, by Mr. James E. Matthew, on the 'Concerts of Antient Music.' The lecturer pointed out that although domestic music flourished during the Madrigalian period, public concerts had no existence. It was not till after the Restoration that their introduction was attempted. They were chiefly held in taverns to an accompaniment of ale and tobacco. In the Hon. Roger North's 'Memoirs of Musick' was to be found an account of these early efforts, the most serious of which was the Academy of Antient Music, founded in 1710, a Society composed partly of amateur and partly professional musicians. In spite of internal jealousies, this Society existed till 1789. It must not be confounded with the more important institution, the Concert of Antient Music, founded by a body of noblemen and gentlemen in 1776, which formed the subject of Mr. Matthew's discourse. Its object was to give the best music in the best possible manner. The executants were all professional, and the difficulty of getting together an adequate chorus in London was overcome by bringing up a number of lady singers from Lancashire, who were boarded in London for the whole series of twelve concerts. The Society was strictly aristocratic ; no one could join unless properly introduced by a member, and the undertaking was carried on at a great expense, the average cost of a concert amounting to £370, although the terms of principal artists were on a much lower scale than at the present day. Throughout, the expenditure was magnificent : for instance, one of the ladies from Lancashire, Miss Deborah Travis, showing much promise, was virtually adopted by the Society and educated both musically and generally.

The earliest meetings were held at the Tottenham Rooms, on the site of the Scala Theatre. A move was then made to the Haymarket Theatre, and in 1804 to the Hanover Square Rooms, of which the Society became the lessees. All the best singers, both native and foreign, were engaged. A certain number of gentlemen were the directors, each of whom in turn took charge of an evening, selecting the programme, which was largely composed of the works of Handel, a rule existing that no work composed within twenty years should be admitted. Another duty on his evening was to entertain his fellow-directors and the conductor at dinner.

The subscription for the twelve concerts was eight guineas, and the tickets were strictly untransferable ; it was only when the fortunes of the Society began to decline that this absurd rule was so far modified as to allow the transfer between mother and daughter, or between sisters, and the same between fathers, sons and brothers. With these old-world restrictions, and the great change in social habits, it is not wonderful that the fortunes of the Society drooped. The number of concerts and the amount of subscriptions were reduced, members were even allowed to buy single tickets at a guinea, but it was too late to avert misfortune and the Society expired in 1848.

Mr. Matthew, who had been fortunate enough to get together a large number of interesting documents bearing on the history of the Society, was able to give many details of its proceedings, which belonged to an age differing greatly from our own. He concluded by saying that, although the Antient Concerts had outlived their time, they were deserving of our grateful recollection for much good work carried on.

The chair was taken by Dr. Cummings, who was able to add several interesting details from his own collection.

GERMAN OPERA SEASON.

The season of German Opera at Covent Garden, originally announced to continue for four weeks, proved so successful that an extension of a fortnight to February 23 was announced, but owing to the illness of Mr. Van Dyck the doors were abruptly closed on February 16.

The promised revival of Beethoven's 'Fidelio' took place on January 31, when Madame Leffler Burckhardt, famed on the Continent for her embodiment of the devoted and heroic wife, was specially engaged and proved a very capable exponent, albeit somewhat lacking in subtlety. Madame Minnie Nast sang daintily as the coquettish Marcelline, but