

Review

Source: *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, Vol. 24, No. 483 (May 1, 1883), pp. 276-280

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

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A NEW Cantata, composed for the occasion by Dr. Stainer, will probably be amongst the novelties of the Three Choirs' Festival to be held next autumn at Gloucester. The Cantata will be of a sacred character, the libretto, selected from the Holy Scriptures, treating of the subject of St. Mary Magdalene.

THE Lady Goldsmid Scholarship, for female pianists, at the Royal Academy of Music, was competed for at the Institution on the 23rd ult.: elected, Annie V. Muckle. The examiners were Messrs. H. R. Eyers, F. B. Jewson, Harold Thomas, F. Westlake and G. A. Macfarren (chairman).

A CONCERT was given to the patients of Brompton Hospital on Tuesday evening, March 27, by Mr. Wilhelm Ganz, assisted by Miss Agnes Larkcom, Miss Helen D'Alton, Mr. Edward Levetus, and Mr. Ghilberti (vocalists), and Mr. Poznanski (violin). The efforts of these artists were acknowledged with the warmest applause.

MR. W. G. WOOD was the organist at the Recital at the Bow and Bromley Institute, on Saturday, the 7th ult. Selections from works by Merkel, Wély, Gounod and Weber and three Canons of the performer's own composition were comprised in the programme. Mr. Chaplin Henry was the vocalist.

BERLIOZ' "Faust" was given for the second time this season by the Albert Hall Choral Society, on Wednesday evening, the 11th ult., the principal singers being Miss Anna Williams, Mr. Edward Lloyd, Mr. Santley and Mr. Pyatt. Mr. Barnby conducted as usual.

AN Italian version of Gounod's "Redemption" has been issued by F. Lucca, of Milan, the proprietor of the copyright for Italy. The version of the text has been made by Signor A. Zanardini.

A PUBLIC Dinner will be given at Willis's Rooms, on Thursday, June 21, in aid of the Choir Benevolent Fund. A Festival is also being arranged in aid of the same Society, to take place at Canterbury during July.

HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF PORTUGAL has conferred the Knighthood of the Royal Portuguese Order of our Lady of Conceicao, of Villa Viçosa, on Mr. John Brinsmead, the founder of the firm of John Brinsmead and Sons, of London.

We are glad to learn that Mr. Stedman has fully recovered from his recent severe illness, and returned to town on Tuesday last to resume his duties.

THE second part of Gounod's "Redemption" will be sung at the church of St. Margaret Pattens, Rood Lane, after the evening service on Ascension Day, Thursday, the 3rd inst.

REVIEWS.

Henry VIII. Opéra en quatre actes. Poème de Léonce Détroyat et Armand Silvestre. Musique de Camille Saint-Saëns. Paris: Durand, Schœnewerk et Cie.

THIS important work, the first grand opera of M. Saint-Saëns, and the latest novelty at the Grand Opéra of Paris, was conceived, it is stated, during a tour made by the composer through Spain, in company with the violinist, Paul Viardot. Having discussed the matter with M. Détroyat, at Madrid, M. Saint-Saëns broached it to M. Silvestre on his return to Paris. That author approved, and at once, assisted by Détroyat, set about the libretto. The work appears to have had a singularly fortunate experience in its early stages. M. Vaucorbeil was willing to produce it, musicians of the highest eminence approved the experiment, and all artistic Paris assembled on the 5th of March to note the result. That the verdict was not unanimously applause readers of musical news well know. Nevertheless the opera keeps the stage and seems likely to do so for some time to come. It is impossible for a reviewer, looking only at a pianoforte score, and without the advantage of witnessing a representation, to appraise the exact merits of this work. We can, however, give a tolerably clear idea of its character and claims, and now proceed to the task.

The first act opens in a hall of the royal palace overlooking a public place, and is ushered in by an orchestral movement, *Maestoso*, the theme of which again appears when the *King* throws off his spiritual allegiance to Rome amid the acclamations of the people. Something of a broad and simple old-English character marks the subject in question, as a quotation of the leading phrase suffices to prove:—

No. 1. *Maestoso*.



Very little development or treatment of the melody takes place, and that little is limited to the passage in the sixth bar, which gives rise to a few imitations. The effect of the movement is happy, and the mind is prepared for serious events as, without pausing, the music changes its rhythm, the curtain rises, and the *Duke of Norfolk* converses with *Don Gomez*, the newly arrived Spanish Ambassador. The two gentlemen begin with mutual civilities, and then *Don Gomez* explains that his presence as ambassador is due to the influence of *Queen Catherine*, while his object is to be near the queen of his heart, *Anne Boleyn*. He informs *Norfolk*, further, that *Catherine* knows of and furthers their attachment, and that she holds a letter—a pledge of love—from *Anne* to him. *Norfolk* is glad to hear all this, and wishes *Don Gomez* happiness, but warns him against the dangerous character of *Henry*, who is suspected of wanting *Anne* for himself. Such is the substance of a rather long dialogue between the two personages. The interview, however, cannot be called wearisome, since the composer, by frequently varying his music, sustains interest. Beginning in the plain diatonic style of the Prelude, he passes to a short *recitative parlante*, thence to a graceful *cantabile* for the lover; then to an *Allegro*, in which the orchestra has a theme obviously intended to represent the beauty and brightness of *Anne*, and so on. In all this we discover no set form. The music adapts itself to every dramatic exigency that can be called imperative or even important, yet the effect is not fragmentary. M. Saint-Saëns works out the main sections of the scene at a length which suffices, and he does not perplex the ear by incessant modulations that give an idea of unrest. At the present day this last may be called a peculiarity, very few dramatic composers having the hardihood to continue for half a dozen bars in the same key, or to employ full closes within a few pages distance of each other. It should also be pointed out that, in this scene, the voices are allowed the prominence and distinction rightly their due. The *Boleyn motive* first appears as follows in the pianoforte score, and charms at once by its lightness and grace:—

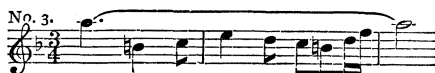
No. 2. *Allegro non troppo*.



This, with the theme of *Don Gomez's cantabile*, is largely used by the orchestra during the remainder of the scene, but there are other significant phrases, the meaning of which does not come out till later. So far the work creates a favourable impression. It is made musically attractive and dramatically significant by legitimate means that never err on the side of complexity, and may even be styled simple.

When the dialogue ends, a noise is heard in the public place below, and some gentlemen of the court enter the hall, bearing the news of *Buckingham's* condemnation to death. This gives occasion for an *ensemble*, in which the gentlemen express their surprise, pity and indignation. M. Saint-Saëns employs a quartet with the chorus in certain parts of this movement, but he adheres to the plain and simple style already shown, and secures variety by using now and then single voices, the effect being as good in a dramatic as in a musical sense. Occasionally the chorus is heard alone, or attended only by one instrument; and it may be said, in a general sense, that the orchestra, while accorded a measure of thematic independence, is never obtrusive. Moreover, the movement, though not in any special "form," is orderly and symmetrical to a degree which satisfies requirement. It may hardly be "intense" enough to please certain tastes, save at the point where the quartet expresses anger against the *King*, and the chorus follows with pity for his victim. Here an effect of contrast is impressive and of the happiest kind. The chorus ending with a succession of tonic and subdominant chords in the key of C, for voices only, those chords are taken up pompously by the orchestra as the *King* enters, and is received by the courtiers, who have just been railing at him behind his back, with "Hail to the magnanimous prince, who punishes crime, and rewards virtue," &c. This done, they file out, bowing low, and leaving the monarch, *Surrey*, *Norfolk* and *Don Gomez* together.

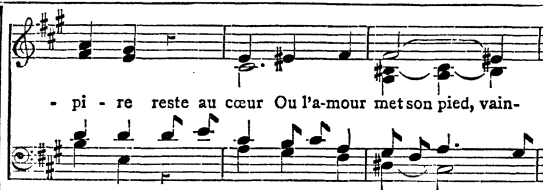
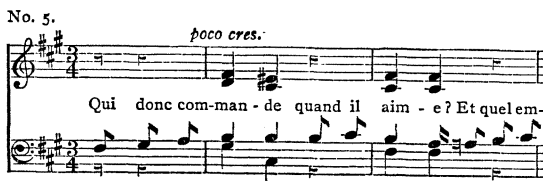
After the *King's* entry a new scene begins, in which *Henry* welcomes the Ambassador to his court, doing so by means of a somewhat extended movement, *grazioso*, in F major. In this address he mentions a rumour that love had drawn the Ambassador to England, promises to befriend his suit, and tells him that, as he is about to present *Catherine* with a new maid of honour before the whole court, an opportunity will arise to thank the Queen for her influence. This information disquiets *Don Gomez*, who suspects that *Anne* is the lady in question, and with his exit the scene ends. The musical interest here is chiefly due to orchestral themes, of which three are prominent throughout—first, the Boleyn *motive* (Ex. 2.); next, a subject heard in the first scene when reference is made by *Norfolk* to *Henry's* unscrupulous character—



and, last, a passage identified with the monarch's courtly grace:—



These are admirably employed as *Henry* utters his greeting, and form an intelligible commentary upon words which in themselves have little more than ceremonial significance. In the next scene the plot thickens: *Henry* talks to *Surrey* about the hostility of the Pope to his divorce from *Catherine*, and professes himself a slave to love, although a King of men. This is done in recitative with occasional interjections of the *motive* of unscrupulousness, and following it comes an air in F sharp minor, "Qui donc commande," made up of a Larghetto leading to an Allegro agitato and ending with a return to the first section. The voice is here supreme throughout, only the simplest forms of accompaniment being adopted. We quote the most salient passage in the Larghetto as a sample of its sober and restrained style:—



&c.

As soon as the air is concluded, the *Queen* enters and the fifth scene begins. *Catherine* is heralded by a representative melody quite typical of her gentle and pious character, and in admirable contrast to the lightsome grace of the *King's* theme. Here it is:—

No. 6. *Moderato*.



She asks for what purpose *Henry* has requested her presence, and learns he is about to offer her a new lady of honour, heaven-sent from the Court of France. *Catherine* knows to whom he refers, but, keeping her own counsel, accepts the gift as coming from her *King* and husband, and, then begs, as a favour, the life of *Buckingham*. *Henry* refuses, and the rest of the number is taken up by a long duet for the royal pair.

The whole of that part of the duet referring to *Anne* and *Buckingham*, though tuneful and interesting, can hardly be called striking and dramatic. But a higher and more forceful note is struck when the disappointed *Queen* charges *Henry* with no longer loving her, and the *King* answers that their marriage is opposed to divine law. Here genuine dramatic vigour is shown, and some new themes sustain the melodic interest. There are, besides, some points of effective contrast, as, for example, when *Henry* drops his stern mood and puts on a smile; the composer emphasising the act by changing from his passionate music to the seductive little theme quoted above as representative of royal graciousness. The duet works up to a good climax, but must suffer in representation by the *King* and *Queen* remaining on the stage and watching the entrance of the court, among whom is *Anne Boleyn* conducted by *Surrey*. The procession, if so it may be called, moves to a pretty Andante grazioso in F major, having the subjoined as its most important phrases:—

No. 7. *Andante grazioso*.

These are employed in conjunction with the Boleyn *motive* and the *motive* of unscrupulousness as *Henry* first expresses his surprise to find *Anne* and *Gomez* recognise each other, and then formally presents the lady to his *Queen* as her attendant. A short *ensemble* for the courtiers and *Catherine* follows, based upon the Andante grazioso; the music of which is also heard as *Anne* does homage to her new mistress, and as *Henry* creates her Marchioness of Pembroke, and the courtiers follow with exclamations of surprise. At this point the dramatists secure a great effect of contrast. The sound of lugubrious music is heard outside the palace, and the *Queen*, with all the court, moves to the windows to look upon the death march of the unfortunate *Buckingham*. They thus leave *Henry* and *Anne* together, and as the monarch begins to press his suit, the notes of a "De profundis" strike solemnly upon the ear; while *Catherine*, looking from the window,

bewails the "spectacle of horror." Surely nothing more sinister as accompaniments of a wooing could be imagined. The substance of the March music is given below:—

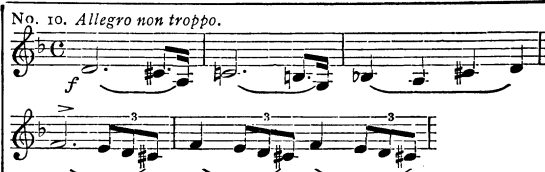


The death hymn calls for no quotation, nothing save plain diatonic harmonies being employed. Under the influence of these mournful sounds *Anne* ceases to hear the *King's* honied words. Terror possesses her, and a horrible vision of a bloody axe, rising before her eyes, extorts cries of fright. This is attended in the orchestra by the last three notes of the March theme given above, which notes may now be called the axe *motive*. *Henry* seeks to comfort his "dove," as he terms her, but the "De profundis" swells louder and louder, while high up in the orchestra the short, sharp axe *motive* cleaves its way. Then a great *ensemble* begins, the chorus, in seven parts, lamenting the fate of *Buckingham*, while the five principals, *Henry*, *Catherine*, *Anne*, *Don Gomez* and *Norfolk*, express their individual emotions. The vocal music is built almost throughout upon the themes of the Death March (the axe *motive* being frequently heard) and, though by no means elaborate, brings the first act to a striking close upon a fine dramatic situation. It thus goes very far indeed to atone for decided want of power—though not of grace and beauty—in the opening scenes.

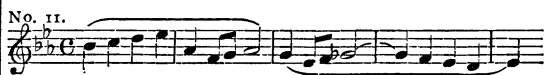
The second act, preluded by an *Andante con moto* and *Moderato*, which anticipate some portions of a duet for *Henry* and *Anne*, takes place in Richmond Park, and opens with a two-part chorus (sopranos and tenors), sung *à propos* to the royal pages, who are amusing themselves with arms. Dramatically this chorus is quite superfluous, though the authors would perhaps urge that something light and pleasant should be inserted to relieve the sombre tint of the story. The number is distinctly French in idea and treatment. It bears its character on the face of the opening bars:—



As the courtiers and pages move away, *Don Gomez* enters, troubled about the prospect of his love, because conscious that *Henry* is a dangerous rival. His soliloquy takes high rank among the numbers in the work. It moves steadily up to a climax of passion, and has the advantage of two themes of varied, intelligible and suggestive character. One of these follows the opening recitative, to express the Ambassador's disquiet:—



The other, heard at the beginning of Act 1, as *Don Gomez* tells *Norfolk* of *Anne's* love for him, now reappears as he marvels at the irony that joined the face of an angel to a treacherous heart:—



This acts as a kind of second subject to an air which approaches very nearly to a recognised classic form.

At the close of the air a new scene begins with the entry of *Anne*, accompanied by court ladies who offer her flowers, singing a pretty two-part chorus, and receiving her thanks in the same strain. The ladies retire, leaving *Anne* and *Don Gomez* to a stormy interview, the Ambassador being full of reproaches, while *Anne* protests her affection. M. Saint-Saëns has not omitted to give his music contrasted character here, nor has he forgotten, while *Anne* speaks, to use the love theme quoted above. The maid of honour has just declared her constancy when *Henry* appears, attended by an orchestral unison passage having the same rhythm as the Death March. He approaches the couple to the Boleyn *motive*, and gaily addresses the Ambassador, who discreetly retires, leaving the stage free for the inevitable duet between *Henry* and *Anne*. This important number begins with an *Allegro molto*, constructed entirely upon two themes, which the orchestra never ceases to employ in some form or other while the *King* urges his love and the maid of honour resists. The first and more important will be recognised as forming part of *Buckingham's* Death March:—



The second runs thus:—



The *Allegro* leads to a short *Moderato*, followed by an *Allegretto*, wherein *Anne* shows signs of yielding. Presently the *Allegro* resumes, and the *King's* characteristic theme is heard combined with the *motive* of unscrupulousness—



when he formally declares his love. *Anne* refusing to become his mistress, *Henry* asks, "Who spoke of that? Be my wife." *Anne* answers, "Vain word! The Queen!" Unabashed, the *King* assures her that *Catherine* will soon be Queen no longer, and as he does so the more salient musical features of the Royal duet in Act I. reappear. The splendid temptation now begins to work; *Henry* becomes more fervid; eventually *Anne* consents, and an *Allegretto* lusinghiero expresses their mutual joy. The two themes of this movement, while contrasted, are melodious. They were the subjects of the *Entr'acte*, and are now heard again under the advantages of recognised significance. But the duet does not end with their measured prettiness. *Henry* once more asks for an assurance that he is accepted, and swears that *Anne* shall become his wife. As he does so the theme from the Death March (Ex. 12) accompanies his words, and follows him as he goes away, leaving *Anne* to pour

out her emotions alone. A more sinister ending to a love-duet could hardly be conceived. *Anne's* air is an outburst of gratified pride and vanity, but fails, we think, in dramatic force, mainly through the employment of a chief theme which is far too weak in character, if, indeed, it have any character at all. But M. Saint-Saëns atones for this in the subsequent scene for *Anne* and *Catherine*. The *Queen* has come to warn her servant against the downward course upon which she has entered, and grave, sweet music attends her, enveloping the stage, one might fancy, in an atmosphere of purity and dignity. Under these conditions *Catherine* reproaches *Anne's* ingratitude, with gentleness at first, but ultimately with spirit. *Anne's* temper soon rebels, and turning upon the *Queen* she exclaims, "Torture me, if you like, but your husband belongs to me." This checks *Catherine*, who, resuming her calmness and dignity, appeals to the justice of Heaven. We have here a scene of marked interest, both musical and dramatic. It is well conceived and wrought out with a skilful hand. At its close the *King* enters, attended by his Court. He frowns upon *Catherine*, who, in answer to *Anne's* "Sire, help me!" reminds him that she is *Queen*. The *King* replies, "Queen till the law has pronounced the contrary." At that moment the *Papal Legate* is announced, and advances to the sound of a stately melody. He brings unfavourable words from Rome, but *Henry* brusquely puts their hearing off till the morrow, and a grand *fête populaire* begins.

The ballet music comprises—first, an Introduction and Entrée des Clans; second, an Idylle Ecossaise; third, La Fête du Houlblon; fourth, Danse de la Gipsy; fifth, Pas des Highlanders; sixth, a Scherzetto; seventh, a Sarabande, Gigue and Finale. Without stopping to comment upon this bright and lively music, with its frequent English and Scottish melodies, we may notice the fact that M. Saint-Saëns has been reproached for bringing Highlanders and their national music to the English court at a time when the two kingdoms were independent. Surely this is hyper-criticism. Royal festivities are as free to choose their colour and character as any other; while it should not be forgotten that *Henry's* sister was the Scottish *Queen*. We cannot join in censure so strained. Upon the finale to the ballet the curtain descends. The scene has been brilliant and joyous, but the skeleton has remained before us all the time—not even hiding in a cupboard.

The third act opens in the palace, as *Surrey* acquaints *Henry* that the *Legate* requests an audience on imperative business. This the royal lips angrily refuse; *Surrey* retires, and the *King* vents his wrath against Rome in a passionate scena of a varied character, but throughout powerfully accompanied. M. Saint-Saëns here shows that he can write finely declamatory phrases for the voice. *Henry* passes to a softer mood as he thinks of *Anne*, to whom he has granted an instant audience, and when the lady enters he salutes her with all the old grace in a charmingly accompanied passage. *Anne* wishes him to reconsider his offer, but only arouses the jealousy of his nature. *Henry* demands if she loves another. She replies, "I love but you," whereupon the *King*, looking her straight in the face, while the distinctive phrase of *Buckingham's* Death March is heard from the orchestra, answers significantly, "A good thing for you." The dialogue of the foregoing scene is frequently accompanied by *motives* previously heard. We do not, however, stop to point them out, as occasions for the use of some can easily be imagined. Let us simply state that the composer sustains the strength with which the act opened. *Norfolk* now enters to announce that the *Legate* insists upon an audience. "Let him enter, then," retorts the angry monarch, the *motive* of unscrupulousness attending his words. The *Legate* appears to the music of his representative theme, and begins, "Sire," but *Henry* cuts him short, sending *Norfolk* to warn *Catherine* that the hour of her trial has come, and graciously dismissing *Anne* as the strains of their love-duet fall upon the ear. Then he turns to the *Legate*: "I listen." The *Cardinal*, again accompanied by his theme—

No. 15.

Maestoso.



proceeds to remonstrate with *Henry*, and warns him of their fate who disobey the behests of Rome. The *King* takes it very coolly, and says that the days of *Frederic Barbarossa* are gone by. He will appeal from the Pope to the people, create a schism, and take the consequences, unless Rome ratifies the expected decree of divorce. Then he flings out of the room, attended by the *motive* of unscrupulousness, leaving the *Legate* to ponder his words. That reverend personage proceeds to do so in an air, "Fatal pride of kings," which brings the scene to an ineffective end, and need not detain us here. The Hall of Judgment is next shown; a long processional movement being played as the royal and distinguished personages engaged in this true *cause célèbre* enter and take their places. Judging from the pianoforte score, this *Maestoso* is not worthy the occasion because lacking breadth and dignity, while the appearance of the leading characters is not marked with sufficient distinctiveness. A short chorus for the judges and spectators, "The cause is grave and solemn," opens the informal proceedings. In this the orchestra has little to do, simple and massive vocal harmonies being justly relied upon for appropriate effect. After this, *Garter* proclaims the Court open, the judges echo his words in four-part chorus, and the *Archbishop of Canterbury*, responded to by all present, offers a prayer for Divine guidance, which, beginning in the simplest fashion presently develops into an elaborate and imposing *ensemble*. There are other movements of the kind in this act, as we shall see, and all tend to prove that M. Saint-Saëns can handle masses with effect. He does not fritter away his strength in efforts to make each part individual, to the loss of breadth and power, but takes care that the prevailing sentiment shall have predominant musical expression. At the close of the prayer, *Henry* and *Catherine* are summoned into Court, both answering as a snatch of the processional theme is played. The *King* then lays his case before the judges in a solo full of dignity; and *Catherine*, in turn, makes her defence, or rather, as in *Shakespeare*, offers a final appeal to her merciless lord. The composer should here have put forth all his powers, but we must confess that the music, as it lies before us, is a disappointment. It is not without pathos, but it fails to express the dramatic significance of the situation, and lacks the power that, in the words of our great poet, raises the *Queen* to the dignity of a true heroine, making her more than Royal. It would seem as though M. Saint-Saëns had no great confidence in his own strength at this juncture, for he has introduced the chorus, who break in occasionally with words of pity, and so divert attention. There are, however, in the concerted music some fine and striking passages. At the close, *Henry* exclaims, "That is enough," the *Queen* cries "I am lost!" and *Garter* declares the case heard, unless a champion chooses to intervene on behalf of *Catherine*. This brings forward her countryman, *Don Gomez*, who protests against the entire proceedings, amid the murmurs of the crowd, uttered *à bouche fermée*. *Henry* proudly answers that he and his people are not to be frightened, and dashes into an animated theme—

No. 16.



which the by-standers take up, and make the ground-work of a loyal and patriotic chorus. Presently *Cranmer* pronounces "nul et contraire aux lois l'hymen à nous soumis," doing so to the alternation of the common chords of C sharp major and G major—a sufficient proof of the composer's freedom. *Catherine* at once pours forth her grief and anger in a passionate solo, the music of which is full of dramatic energy and constitutes one of the most powerful pages in the work. At its close the *Queen* leaves the Hall, the *motive* of unscrupulousness ringing out as she does so. But the proceedings are not yet over. The *Legate* appears on the scene, carrying a Papal Bull, while the orchestra ingeniously combines his *motive* with the

theme of the processional music. His Eminence wastes no time, but in the Holy Father's name ratifies *Henry's* first marriage and annuls all contrary decisions. The lion is now bearded in his den, and we do not wait long for his roar. "My subjects shall give you answer," retorts *Henry*; the doors are thrown open and a crowd rushes in, of whom the *King* demands, "Will you receive your laws from a foreigner?" Question follows question in the same sense, and to all the reply is "Never." Then *Henry* proclaims himself head of the English Church, and the pledged husband of *Anne Boleyn*. The rest is an *ensemble* of unusual breadth and sonority, having as its chief theme that which preluded the entire Opera (Ex. 1). M. Saint-Saëns has here crowned the edifice of his concerted music and may be congratulated upon having given a worthy ending to a long and trying act.

The last act opens in the apartments of *Queen Anne*, and is heralded by a movement of sinister import, phrases appearing the significance of which we know full well, among them those of the Death March. All the same the stage presents a pleasant picture; *Anne* watching from her chair a dance in the palace gardens to the music of a charming *Tempo di minuetto*. As the dance goes on, *Surrey* and *Norfolk* converse apart on the *King's* evil mood, and suspects that he doubts the *Queen*, the scene presently ending with the arrival of *Don Gomez*—a bird of evil omen. *Don Gomez* salutes *Anne* to the pretty strain of the *Boleyn motive*; explains that he is the bearer of a special message from *Catherine* to *Henry*, and requests to be left alone with the *Queen*. The two lords and the dancers thereupon retire, accompanied by the Death March theme. We next learn from a brief and powerfully written dialogue that *Catherine* still holds the letter which resulted in *Don Gomez's* appointment, and reveals the relations between him and *Anne*. The Death *motive* throws its gloomy shadow over the words, and *Anne* is in a state of terror when the *King* enters to another snatch of the fatal march, brusquely dismissing *Anne*, and, turning upon the Ambassador, says in effect, "Leave the country; I have only allowed you to remain so long because I wished to penetrate a mystery." *Don Gomez* answers in turn that only duty to *Catherine* had kept him in England, and he then delivers to *Henry* her dying words of love and blessing. These simply lead the *King* to hurry a project he had formed, and putting on his gracious mood—the Royal theme is heard here—he invites *Don Gomez* to return with him to Kimbolton Castle, where *Catherine* lies. We are next shown the interior of that place, and observe the ex-Queen as she hears a chorus of people singing the praises of their *King* to the theme of the last *ensemble* (Ex. 1). A long soliloquy follows, in which *Catherine* dwells upon the charms of her native Spain and the harsh fate that has pursued her under the grey skies of England. Musically, this is without "form" and much broken up by changes of rhythm and time. We doubt, therefore, whether in performance the effect be quite satisfactory, and are disposed to think that M. Saint-Saëns has not here made amends for previous shortcomings in *Catherine's* music. The dying lady next proceeds to distribute keepsakes among her attendants, and, taking up a "Book of Hours"—as she does so, the old love theme is heard—places therein *Anne's* fatal letter, and destines it for *Don Gomez*. At that moment a visitor is announced, and *Anne Boleyn* enters. A scene of recrimination on the one side and meek submission on the other follows, *Anne's* purpose being to get possession of the letter. She pleads hard to obtain it, but *Catherine* refuses, and the situation is at its height when the *King* suddenly enters with *Don Gomez*. M. Saint-Saëns's music to this dialogue is animated and expressive. The *leit-motiven* are occasionally introduced with effects, and the rules of climax are well observed. But the greatest climax is to come. *Henry*, after an ironical salute to *Anne*, addresses to *Catherine* words of sorrow for having put her away in favour of an infamous creature whose heart is all treason. "You," he continues, "have the proof in your own hands." The stroke is a bold one, but fails. The gentle *Catherine* shrinks from convicting her rival. *Henry* then tries to work upon her jealousy by asking *Anne's* pardon for his suspicions, addressing her—while the joyous *fête* music outside recommences—in glowing strains full of beauty and charm. All this, and what

follows, constitutes the famous quartet, compared by some critics, for dramatic expression, with that in the last act of "*Rigoletto*." There will not be an unanimous opinion to the same effect, but the number is a good one, and its music gains by a situation of the utmost intensity and suspense, as well as through the fine contrast of a joyous chorus without. At its close *Catherine* makes a last effort on the side of mercy, throws the compromising letter into the fire, and falls back dead—"Dead with her secret!" *Henry* ruefully exclaims. The work is now over, and the curtain descends as *Henry*, turning to *Anne*, while the sinister rhythm of the Death March is heard, warns her that the axe awaits those who deceive him.

It would be manifestly unfair to pronounce a verdict upon the entire Opera without witnessing a representation, but we have said more than enough to show that "*Henry VIII.*" though of unequal merit, is a thing of mark. It points out M. Saint-Saëns as one from whom important contributions to lyric drama may be expected, and stamps him as a composer who knows how to reflect the musical spirit of his age without discarding the traditions which have come down clothed with all the authority of a splendid past.

FOREIGN NOTES.

The first performance in Berlin of "*The Redemption*," which had been postponed for several weeks, took place at the Sing-Akademie on the 11th ult., under the conductorship of Herr Alexis Holländer, who has made his name famous in the German metropolis by performing with his St. Cecilia Choral Society great works which have never before been heard in that city. His selection for this year of Gounod's sacred masterpiece was hailed on all sides with enthusiasm, and the performance was looked forward to with the keenest interest. According to the criticisms in the Berlin papers, the execution of the work was excellent, and left nothing to be desired. Chorus and orchestra were equally good, and the solos were excellently rendered by Mesdames Holländer and Müller-Swiatkowsky and Herren Stolzenberg and Hildach.

Two new works on Richard Wagner will shortly be published. One is by Francesco Florimo, of Naples, the great friend of Rossini and Bellini, and it will be interesting to see what he has to say about the great champion of Teutonic musical art. The second, by Henry Perl, will be made additionally attractive by contributions from Dr. Keppler, Wagner's medical adviser, who will no doubt give details concerning the illness and death of the master.

The first performance of the "*Nibelungen Ring*" in Italy will be given at Venice by Herr Angelo Neumann's company. If successful here, the enterprising *impresario* intends giving the work at Bologna, Milan, and other important Italian cities.

The Emperor of Austria's birthday will be celebrated in Vienna by the first performance in that city of Wagner's "*Tristan und Isolde*."

A committee has been formed in Leipzig for erecting a monument to Richard Wagner, who was a native of that town.

The sixtieth Musical Festival of the Lower Rhine will take place at Cologne, at Whitsuntide. As will be seen by the following list of works the programme on this occasion will be a particularly attractive one: First day, Haydn's "*Creation*" and Beethoven's "*Eroica*" Symphony. Second day, Historical Concert, when works ranging from Bach to the most modern compositions of Brahms and Bruch will form the programme. Herr Brahms will play on this occasion his Second Pianoforte Concerto. The third day will be devoted entirely to solo pieces, the most prominent amongst the artists engaged for this day being Senor Sarasate. The orchestra will consist of 120 performers, and the choir will number 600 voices. The Festival will be conducted by the veteran composer Dr. Ferdinand von Hiller.

The German-Tonkünstler-Verein will meet this year at Leipzig. The preliminary announcement which has been published gives the following information as to the performances: The meeting will begin on May 3, with a morning Concert, to be given in church, by the celebrated Riedel Gesang-verein. The following evening an instrumental