

Review

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Obituary.

SIR HERBERT STANLEY OAKELEY.

The death took place at Eastbourne on October 26 of Sir Herbert Stanley Oakeley, formerly Professor of Music in the University of Edinburgh. The second son of Sir Herbert Oakeley, the third baronet, he was born at Ealing, July 20, 1830, and received his education at Rugby and Christ Church, Oxford. He studied harmony under Stephen Elvey, and the organ with Johann Schneider at Dresden. Much surprise was expressed when, in 1865, Herbert Oakeley, an amateur musician, obtained the post of Reid Professor of Music in the University of Edinburgh. Among various criticisms passed upon the appointment, that which appeared in the *Revue et Gazette Musicale* was one of the most characteristic: 'The vacant chair of music at the University of Edinburgh has been given to Mr. Herbert S. Oakeley, doubtless better known in Scotland than elsewhere.' At the inauguration of the Scottish National Memorial at Edinburgh to the late Prince Consort, in 1876, the Professor was knighted by Queen Victoria at Holyrood; he subsequently received the curious appointment of Composer to the Queen in Scotland. Sir Herbert Oakeley, who did much for the promotion of high-class music in Edinburgh, was a somewhat prolific composer, but he is best known by two excellent hymn-tunes (settings of 'Saviour, blessed Saviour' and 'Sun of my soul, Thou Saviour dear') which have found their way into most hymnals, and by a quadruple chant. He received many distinctions, and in 1891 resigned his Chair at Edinburgh, to the occupancy of which he was succeeded by Professor Niecks. We make further reference to Sir Herbert Oakeley's election to his Professorship on page 792.

MR. SAMSON FOX.

We regret to record the somewhat sudden death of Mr. Samson Fox, which took place at Walsall on October 24, the result of blood poisoning following an operation. He had only recently returned from a tour with his family through Canada and the United States. We cannot do better than reprint the notice of his career which appeared in *The Times*, at the same time calling special attention to his munificent gift of £46,000 to the Royal College of Music, whereby the present commodious buildings were erected:—

'Mr. Samson Fox was a self-made man. John Thomas North and Alfred Cooke were his companions in his youth, and the trio rose from the position of poor lads to that of rich men. The son of a Yorkshire weaver, he discarded weaving at 10s. a week and became a mechanic, being apprenticed to Messrs. Smith, Beacock, and Tannett at the Royal Foundry in Water Lane, Leeds. He superintended the machinery sheds of the firm at the exhibition in London in 1862. When still a young man, under 30, Mr. Fox joined his brother and another partner in the business of Fox, Brother, and Refitt, at the Silver Cross Works, Leeds, the business being that of making special tools. In 1874, having previously embarked on the manufacture of iron, he started the business of the Leeds Forge Company, making boiler plates, and this business developed into the present great concern in Armley Road, Leeds. He was a man of many inventions, and the corrugated flue was one of them. He also invented the machinery by which the flues for machine and stationary boiler purposes can be most effectually corrugated. Pressed steel frames and plates associated with railway rolling-stock also received his attention, and he took out in all some 150 patents relating to metallurgical and mechanical engineering processes; and in most of these he was more successful than in his venture on water gas, in connection with which his name was associated. Ardently devoted to music, he, at the age of 50, offered £30,000 to the then Prince of Wales for erecting the buildings of the new Royal College of Music at Kensington Gore. This handsome gift was made up to £46,000, of which £1,000 was for the adornment of the vestibule. Mr. Fox served both Leeds and Harrogate in municipal life, and was mayor of Harrogate three years in succession, 1889-91. He represented Harrogate on the West Riding County Council.'

Reviews.

Luigi Torchi—*L'Arte Musicale in Italia. (XIV° Secolo a XVIII.)* Volume Quarto. Composizioni a più voci. Secolo XVII.

[G. Ricordi and Co.]

The great enterprise on which Signor Torchi has been engaged for some years—the publication of a series of works showing the gradual development of Italian music—is making steady progress. Of the three volumes previously issued, the first and second dealt with the rise of polyphonic vocal music, sacred and secular, while the third was devoted to the works of the early composers for the organ and harpsichord. The volume now before us is in reality a sequel to the second, which contained specimens by the chief composers of the 16th century; this fourth volume is allotted to those of the 17th century.

In his preface Signor Torchi says that the object of the volume is to show the development of the madrigal by Gesualdo, the Prince of Venosa, Marco da Gagliano, and Claudio Monteverde, of all of whom specimens are given. The editor, in the preface to the first volume of the series, tells his readers 'Both in the music and in the text I have scrupulously left in their original state both the form and the substance of the compositions. The scores have been compiled by me precisely from the materials I have found, not modifying nor altering anything. In some places in which it would have been easy to introduce improvements in the notation, I have abstained from it.'

While fully recognising the spirit of reverence for the original which has led Signor Torchi to this decision, we cannot but regret it on practical grounds. Two clefs now entirely obsolete—the mezzo-soprano and the baritone—were in common use in the 16th and 17th centuries; the bass part of many of the madrigals is written either in the baritone or the tenor clef; in others we find four different C clefs for the different voices, and these are by no means always put in the order of their pitch. As an example of the results arrived at, we give an extreme case—a short passage from a psalm for eight voices by Matteo Asola, published in 1599; it will be found on p. 377 of Vol. II. of this collection:—

We suggest to the Royal College of Organists that they should give this passage as a test at their next examination in score playing! The harmony is in reality very simple; but can anything more confusing to read be imagined? We wish that the editor had followed the example set by the late Dr. Chrysander in his edition of Palestrina, and substituted for these irregular and obsolete

notations the clefs now used—including, of course, the soprano, alto and tenor C clefs—and printing at the beginning of each number the clef of the original. Even a five-part score, when two of the clefs are the mezzo-soprano and the baritone (as in several numbers in the present volume), is needlessly difficult even for experienced score-readers.

The madrigals of Prince Gesualdo are of great musical interest, and in places very remarkable for the boldness of their modulation. In this respect the five-part 'Dolcissima mia vita' is perhaps the most striking. We quote a short passage, using the modern clefs, and showing at the beginning the original notation, after Dr. Chrysander's method above spoken of:—

The key of the piece is G minor, and at the seventh bar, where our extract begins, the composer has already modulated to A minor! But the abrupt plunge into B minor which follows must, by its daring, have astonished musicians three hundred years ago. Our quotation illustrates also another very common feature of this old music—the unequal length of the bars. Though the normal length here is four minims, the fourth bar of this passage contains six, and the fifth bar only two; in the latter part of the madrigal four minims in the bar, and two are used indifferently, without any change of time-signature. Not less remarkable than the above passage is the close of the madrigal; an extremely chromatic progression on the words 'O morire.'

Of the specimens by Marco da Gagliano, the Bacchanalian Madrigal 'Euòè Padre Lio' is remarkable for its form. It is for five voices, and commences with a *tutti* in 3-2 time, in plain chords, and with hardly an attempt at contrapuntal writing. Then follow three short duets in common time, the first for tenor and bass, the second for alto and tenor, and the third for two trebles. These duets all abound in passages of more or less strict imitation, and after each of them the *tutti* is repeated. It will be seen that we have here the old Rondo form with three episodes. Another madrigal by Gagliano, 'Su l'Affricane arene,' is a very fine example of pure eight-part harmony for a double choir.

Claudio Monteverdi (*sic*)—Signor Torchi does not give us his authority for altering the usual spelling of the name—is well known as the first composer that made use of the chord of the dominant seventh without preparation. The specimens here given of his work show more feeling for modern tonality than is to be seen in the music

of his predecessors. In the madrigal 'Cruda Amarilli' will be seen at bar thirteen a very fine example of an unprepared dominant ninth leaping to a dominant seventh, also unprepared. A most interesting piece by Monteverde is a sonata for orchestra on a plain-song 'Sancta Maria.' The orchestra consists of two violins, viola, bass, two cornetti, and three trombones. The style of the music is polyphonic, and considerable contrast of tone-colour is obtained by the alternation and combination of the different groups of instruments.

It is a curious thing that about the same time when Peri and Caccini were making the first experiments in operatic music, many of their contemporaries endeavoured to utilize the polyphonic form of the madrigal as the medium for dramatic expression. This they did by setting to music dramatic poems in madrigal form. The result, from its very nature, cannot be other than unsatisfactory. Three entire specimens of this form of composition are given in this volume: 'I Fidi Amanti,' a pastorale by Gaspare Torrelli; 'L'Amfiparnaso,' a musical comedy by Orazio Vecchi; and 'La Pazzia Senile,' a comic intermezzo or buffoonery, by Adriano Banchieri. It is very curious to find dialogues, solos, choruses, all set in madrigal form. It is unfortunately not in our power to speak of these works in detail, because the words are mostly written in Italian dialects, sometimes with an admixture of Spanish, and we confess our inability to understand much of them. This much can be said, that there is considerable variety of expression in the music. So far as we can judge, Vecchi's work seems the finest. Signor Torchi in his preface is enthusiastic over it, and even compares parts of it, for real comic power, with 'Die Meistersinger.' How far this verdict is correct, we must leave others to judge. We wish Signor Torchi all success in the continuation of his arduous task.

Five Part-Songs for Men's Voices (T.T.B.B.). The words from the Greek Anthology, in English, by Alma Strettell, Richard Garnett, Edmund Gosse, W. M. Hardinge, and Andrew Lang. Composed by Edward Elgar (Op. 45).

[Novello and Company, Limited.]

These five short part-songs (the longest is only 37 bars) are highly characteristic of their composer. There is a certain vein of mysticism (which has been cynically defined as something nobody quite understands) running through the words, which is admirably reflected in the highly original and beautiful music to which they are set. 'Yea, cast me from heights of the mountains' with its vivid contrasts of *ff* and *pppp*, striking rhythmic effects, and grim sternness of expression is an impressive introduction. 'Whether I find thee' is light and tender, and 'After many a dusty mile' is similarly dainty in rhythm, and has besides a charming note of naïve cheerfulness. 'It's oh! to be a wild wind' is a quaint short piece—it consists of only nine bars once repeated—very simple and expressive.

'Feasting I watch,' is one of the most important and the longest of the set. The words (by Dr. Richard Garnett, from the Greek of Marcus Argentarius) read:—

Feasting I watch with westward-looking eye
The flashing constellations' pageantry.
Solemn and splendid; then anon I wreath
My hair, and warbling to my harp I breathe
My full heart forth, and know the heavens look down
Pleased, for they also have their Lyre and Crown.

These soulful lines afford ample scope for broad, glowing effects—effects which, it is hardly necessary to say, the composer finely realizes in his music. The climax, *molto allargando*, is splendid.

All the five part-songs are intended for unaccompanied singing, and the top part is a real tenor part, A being the highest note. Although the whole set would bear consecutive performance they are not necessarily connected pieces. It is safe to predict that men's-voice choirs in English-speaking countries—and in Germany, for a German translation is provided—will heartily welcome these notable additions to this branch of musical literature.