

Review

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efficient amateurs, and has only to be played with taste as well as fluency in order to secure applause. Taking the three works together, we are bound to say that they are a credit not only to Mr. Mackenzie, but to native art, and the multiplication of their kind will be of good augury for the future.

Boadicea, Queen of the Iceni. A Cantata. The words written by Miss G. E. Troutbeck. The music composed by J. Frederick Bridge, Mus. Doc., Oxon.
[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

MISS TROUTBECK has exercised much sound judgment in arranging the materials selected for the Cantata before us, for although the story of the heroic Queen Boadicea is one appealing powerfully to the patriotic feelings of the inhabitants of Great Britain, a libretto formed upon the concluding scenes of her career might have been both tedious and dull. These defects have, however, been happily avoided by the skill of the authoress; for not only does the narrative interest the listeners, but the verses flow so smoothly as materially to lighten the task of the composer. In setting this Cantata Dr. Bridge has studiously avoided that display of learning which too often obstructs the development of a latent creative faculty in the young composer, and treated each scene with a dramatic power which, especially in the choral movements, contributed much to the success of the work on its recent performance by the Highbury Philharmonic Society. The overture, introducing themes afterwards heard in the Cantata, is a carefully considered movement, good contrasts being gained by the alternations of tonic major and minor. Unquestionably the great strength of the work lies in the choruses, some of which are written with a masterly hand. We may especially mention No. 4, "Behind the clouds," the bright effect of the choral movement commencing "Yet fear not, morn will soon arise," after the bass solo, being a point of much interest. The choral march too, the chorus of Roman soldiers after the battle, and the dirge in F minor, ending effectively in the tonic major, are movements which cannot fail to produce a marked effect upon the hearers, the "dirge," indeed, being most artistically treated throughout. From the solos we may select for warm praise the recitative and air for Boadicea, "O, fathers, hear your hapless children cry," the words of which are most happily expressed, and the tenor solo, "Hear how these Britons blindly shout for war," the charming melody after the recitative being certainly one of the most tuneful movements in the work. The Scene during the battle, too, including the Prayer allotted to the bass, must be cited as a thoughtful and truly expressive number, the voice part being accompanied with some extremely beautiful and sympathetic harmonies. On the whole, we may say that Dr. Bridge has effectually earned the good opinion of his brother artists as well as the public by the endeavour to show that an organist can write out of the groove in which he of necessity must move. He has evidently dramatic power as well as profound musical knowledge; he writes with the deepest sympathy for the words he is setting, and reserves his scholastic learning until it is required. "Boadicea" proves unmistakably that its composer has no intention of ending where he has begun. Throughout the Cantata we feel that the talent there revealed must grow and ripen, and need scarcely say that the many admirers this young artist has so worthily won will anxiously await the announcement of another work from his pen.

Hear my Prayer (Hör' mein Bitten). Hymn for Soprano Solo and Chorus. Composed by Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy. Full Score. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

"I SEND you the sacred solo," wrote Mendelssohn to Mr. Bartholomew, "which you wanted me to write for your concerts at Crosby Hall, and beg you will keep the manuscript as a token of my sincere gratitude and respect. You have been so often so kind to me that I am almost ashamed of the trifle I offer in return; however, I have nothing better, and so you must 'take the will for the deed.'" The "trifle" which Mendelssohn expresses himself "almost ashamed of offering" was the beautiful Hymn "Hear my prayer." Because this composition was written with merely an organ accompaniment, many persons have

imagined that the composer did not afterwards score it himself; and we are therefore happy to dispel this delusion, although we cannot but think that the internal evidence of the score would carry conviction of its authorship to the minds of all acquainted with the composer's instrumentation. A foot-note on the first page of this edition informs us that the work, "originally written for voices with organ accompaniment only, was scored by the composer at the request of Mr. Joseph Robinson, of Dublin; and is now printed from a copy made from the autograph by Dr. Chipp, of Ely, in 1852," so that all doubt on the matter is at once set at rest. The full score is now printed for the first time; and, popular as the Hymn has become, it is earnestly to be hoped that the publication of the authentic instrumentation of its composer, in this compact and cheap form, will still more extend a knowledge of so deeply religious and lovely a composition.

Maria Stuart. Eine Symphonische Dichtung für grosser Orchester. Von Jean Louis Nicodé. (Op. 4.) [Breitkopf and Härtel.]

THIS is an ambitious work by a composer who is apparently young, and who certainly has his name to make. The author gives us no clue to the application of the various episodes in his symphonic poem, but leaves us free to interpret them as we please. For those who do not care about a task necessarily so vague, it will suffice that calm and storm succeed each other with frequency—tender passages suggesting the gentler scenes in the life of the heroine, and impetuosity and turmoil directing the mind to rougher experiences and a tragic fate. We do not endorse all that Herr (or Monsieur) Nicodé has here written, but unquestionably the work is one of promise. It shows a vigorous hand and a poetic fancy, with some power of melody and a facile use of orchestral resources. The form is that of an extended principal movement ushered in by short episodes, one of which reappears as a Coda, and thus gives continuity and roundness to the whole. The principal movement is exceedingly bold, and made striking by admirable contrast. It contains really extended and touching melodies, in conjunction with a good deal that is mere musical passion—"sound and fury." We confess a desire to hear this work performed, as an act of justice alike to itself and its composer, who, measured by the example before us, deserves the notice he has not yet obtained in England.

FOREIGN NOTES.

THE Royal Opera-house at Berlin closed its doors on the 23rd of June last for the usual summer vacation, after the performance on the previous evening of Meyerbeer's "Roberto il Diavolo." In the course of the operatic year just terminated, two hundred and thirty-six performances have taken place at the establishment in question, comprising a *répertoire* of fifty operatic works, and including thirty-six representations of the operas of Richard Wagner, eighteen of those of Mozart, and only nine of Beethoven's one opera; Bizet's "Carmen," one of the few novelties introduced during the season, met with twelve repetitions. At the Leipzig Stadt-Theater Gluck's "Orpheus" was revived on the 4th of last month, receiving, it is said, an admirable interpretation. At the Carola-Theater of the same classic town of music a festive performance was given on the 1st ult., in honour of the visit of the King of Saxony, consisting of three operettas, interesting chiefly from an historical point of view. These were "La serva Padrona," by Pergolesi, Gluck's "Der betrogene Kadi," and Mozart's "Schauspieldirektor." Successful representations of Weber's *chef-d'œuvre*, "Euryanthe," have recently been given at the Dresden Hof-Theater.

What are styled "model performances" of dramas, both lyrical and otherwise, are just now being given at the Royal Theatre of Munich, embracing in the former category works by Gluck, Mozart, Beethoven, and Wagner. Many of the leading artists of Germany have been engaged to take part in the enterprise, which enjoys the immediate patronage of the King of Bavaria.

Richard Wagner, who is at present residing at Naples, is said to be actively engaged upon the instrumentation of his "Parsifal," which he hopes to complete by the end of