

Review

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A VERY successful Concert was given on the 12th ult., in connection with St. Stephen's Church, Putney. The artists were amateurs, with the exception of Mr. Joseph Heald, who was highly successful in all his songs. Mr. E. M. Flavell accompanied in a careful manner. The Toy Symphony was well played, and encored.

ON Tuesday the 13th ult., an Organ Recital, interspersed with vocal music, was given at Stepney Meeting House by Mr. J. Douglas Macey, Organist of Hampstead Congregational Church. Several violin solos were ably rendered by Signor Luigi Meo, and a duet for violin and organ (Henderson), first time of performance, was well received.

ON Friday evening, the 24th ult., after the usual weekly rehearsal of the choir at St. John the Evangelist, Waterloo Road, the Vicar, on behalf of the choir and congregation, presented Mr. Henry J. B. Dart, Organist and Choirmaster to the Church, with a handsome silver card-tray suitably inscribed, on the occasion of his wedding.

THE Penzance Choral Society proposes commemorating the bi-centenary of Handel by giving a grand Festival performance on Easter Monday, April 6. Three of the great composer's works have been selected—viz., "Utrecht Jubilate," "Zadok the Priest," and the "Ode on Cecilia's Day."

THE Brothers Holden, the young violinists who met with so favourable a reception some time since at St. James's Hall, appeared at the City Temple Concerts, on the 8th ult., with unqualified success. They were well supported by Madame Mass as accompanist.

UNDER the conductorship of Mr. J. H. Maunder, the second Smoking Concert of the season in connection with the Civil Service Vocal Union was given at the Freemasons' Tavern, Great Queen Street, on Thursday evening, the 15th ult.

THE Kyrle Choir gave a performance of "The Creation" in St. Barnabas Church, Edgware Road, on the 21st ult. The soloists were Miss Alice Fripp, Mr. Harry Yates, and Mr. James Blackney. Mr. Malcolm Lawson conducted, and Mr. E. H. Turpin accompanied on the organ.

MR. PRITCHARD gave a successful Concert at the Belmont Institution, Battersea, on the 14th ult., the artists being Miss Emily Pritchard, Madame Shelley, Messrs. W. Webb, Ernest A. Williams, and A. G. Pritchard, vocalists; and W. Abbott, violin.

MR. GEORGE ADCOCK announces a Handel Bi-centenary Festival in Baxter Gate Chapel, Loughborough, on the 23rd inst., the principal vocalists engaged being Madame Lita Jarratt, Miss Fanny Lynn, Mr. A. Castings, and Mr. E. Jackson. There will be an efficient band and chorus.

AT SS. Peter and Paul's Catholic Church, Clerkenwell, on Christmas Day, the choir sang Weber's Mass in G, Novello's "Adeste Fideles," and Handel's "Hallelujah," accompanied by full orchestra. Signor Santo Arrigoni conducted, and Mr. B. B. Barrett presided at the organ.

IN our notice of Madame Sainton-Dolby's Concert last month the name of the young violinist who created so favourable an impression should have been Miss Winifred Robinson.

REVIEWS.

Autobiography of Hector Berlioz. Translated by Rachel (Scott Russell) Holmes and Eleanor Holmes. In two volumes. [Macmillan and Co.]

As a rule the lives of musicians are not of general interest, but these Memoirs will be found unusually pleasant reading, even by people who care little about music, or understand little about the technicalities of art. When Berlioz was nearly twenty years old, he left his home in the department of the Isère, and went to Paris. He was to follow his father's profession, that of a doctor. Of a morning he went to the lectures of Thénard and Gay-Lussac, or to the dissecting-room; or an evening to the opera. But he soon heard of the musical library of the Conservatoire, and he says: "Once I entered that sanctuary I never quitted it. It was the death-blow to my medical career,

and the dissecting-room was finally abandoned." One night, after hearing "Iphigénie en Tauride," he vowed that, come what might, he would be a musician. Both his parents were opposed to his wish. A hot and angry correspondence between his father and himself culminated in a perfect fury of passion, and his mother cursed him. For seven or eight years he led a precarious life in Paris. He had a few pupils at a franc a lesson, he became chorusinger at a second-rate theatre, lived "in a cheap little room on the fifth storey," and frequently dined off dry bread and prunes. But all the time he was working hard at music, and at length, after several failures, in 1830 he won the first prize at the Conservatoire. This secured to him a yearly pension of 3,000 francs for five years. As laureate he had to go to the Academy at Rome. He made excursions into the Abruzzi Mountains, to Naples, Florence, and other places, idled away his time—for the Director, Horace Vernet, exercised no sort of control over the students' work—and in his Memoirs confesses that he wrote but little music. In 1832 he returned to Paris, and produced his *Symphonie Fantastique* and "Lelio." With this work or works is associated what Berlioz calls "the grand drama of my life." Before going to Italy he had seen Henrietta Smithson as *Ophelia* in "Hamlet," and he resolved to woo and win her. Berlioz had an impressionable heart; already, at the age of twelve, he had fallen in love, desperately and hopelessly, with a certain fair Estelle. Hopelessly indeed, for the young lady married another; and desperately, for when, nearly fifty years later, they met again, the lady a widow and Berlioz doubly a widower, a long life of bitter trials and disappointments had not cooled the ardour of his passion. When Berlioz married Miss Smithson, he seemed about to enter upon a life of happiness. He had not forgotten the fair Estelle, but he really loved his Henrietta. The marriage was an unfortunate one; there must have been faults on both sides. "He who so tormented thee and so suffered through thee" are the mournful words which escaped his lips when he followed his poor dead wife to her resting place—not her last, for eight years afterwards Berlioz tells us of the "dark, gloomy morning" when, owing to the abolishment of the smaller Montmartre cemetery her remains had to be removed, and he had to be present at the disinterment. We have dwelt on this sad story of love and misery because it certainly affected Berlioz's career as an artist. He was of a passionate, ardent disposition. Gluck's scores first fascinated him; then the delicious freshness and wild subtle fragrance of Weber's music intoxicated him, and the Symphonies of Beethoven sent a shock through his nervous system. He became enthusiastic, ambitious; he "exhaled music through every pore" and composed with a quick and burning pen; and when, in addition to the influences of these mighty masters, love filled his heart, and the adored one revealed to him the genius of Shakespeare, and thus opened to him a universe of poetry, it seemed as if the fates were guiding him on to happiness and fame. But his mother's curse clave to him; his home became desolate; he was unsuccessful—his "Benvenuto Cellini" was "hissed with admirable energy and unanimity," his splendid work "Faust" was a failure, and "Les Troyens" was only a *succès d'estime*. His genius flashed out at times; he wrote "Harold," his Requiem, his Te Deum, and a few other works; but the springs of his life were poisoned when he discovered love's dream was an illusion: he gradually became more sad and more morose, and the terrible words near the close of his autobiography show the state of his mind five years before his death:—

"I am in my sixty-first year; I have neither hopes, nor illusions, nor great thoughts left. . . . My contempt for the folly and meanness of men, my hatred of their detestable ferocity, are at their height, and I say hourly, 'When death wills! Why does it delay?'"

But if the life of Berlioz was a sorrowful one, his autobiography is not all full of sighs and tears. Though at times serious, at times melancholy, it is yet full of humour and wit, to say nothing of the graphic descriptions of Italian scenery and the interesting letters from Germany and Russia. We can safely leave our readers to find out and enjoy the many pithy sayings, satirical remarks and lively anecdotes in these two volumes; but we would say

a word or two about Berlioz's estimate of himself and of his music. He was a vain man, and he knew it; he was a bad-tempered man, and that he fully acknowledges. At a rehearsal, even before anything had occurred to rouse his ill-temper, he says, "I am conscious of a sort of anticipative anger tightening my throat." He was an imprudent man, and of this he also was well aware; he did not always know when to keep silent, and thus made enemies. He showed righteous anger when he found Fétis tampering with the scores of Beethoven's symphonies, but he forgot that "grievous words stir up anger" when he attacked the famous actor in his "Lelio." What was he as a musical critic? Let him speak for himself. When he resigned his post on the *Débats* he expressed himself as follows: "No more *feuilletons* to write, no more common-places to excuse, no more mediocrities to praise, no more indignation to suppress; no more lies, no more comedies, no more mean compromises—I am free." And who could better describe Berlioz's music than he himself has done? "The prevailing characteristics of my music are passionate expression, intense ardour, rhythmical animation and unexpected effects." His music, indeed, was but a reflection of the man himself. We may congratulate the translators generally on the way in which they have accomplished their difficult task. To reproduce the pathos, the wit, the sarcasm, and the fine essence of Berlioz's writing, without considerable loss, was, of course, impossible; but, taking all the difficulties into consideration, there is much to praise in the English version. Here and there, however, we come across passages which betray carelessness, or even worse. "During the dark ages" is not a satisfactory rendering of "époque de transition crépusculaire"; "wanton insult" is too strong an expression for "petite incartade"; "Maintenant, y sommes-nous" does not mean "Now then, where are we"; nor does "à su rendre fort belle une des principales situations" mean "has done full justice to the principal situations." Then the technical expressions are not always exact. Here is one example: Berlioz at a rehearsal points out to a player that he has an E flat instead of an F trumpet. "Ah," says the latter, "Pardon, je n'avais pas bien lu l'indication." To translate this by "I had not noticed the signature," is incorrect. Trumpet parts are written in the key of C; and the particular crook to be used is noted at the commencement of the piece—e.g., "Trombe in E"; that is the *indication*. On p. 268 (Vol. I.) a chord is named; the highest note should be B flat, not A flat. On p. 76 (Vol. I.) Berlioz relates a conversation which he overheard. One of the speakers says, "Good God, sir, be calm!" The French is simply "Mon Dieu!" It is wrong to give so strong an expression. The Frenchman's "Mon Dieu!" is, as all the world knows, nothing more than "Dear me!" "Good gracious!" or even "Good heavens!" as we find it properly translated on p. 308 of the same volume. There are a great many foot-notes. Some of these are the author's, some the translators'; but it is not always easy to distinguish between the two. On p. 3 (Vol. II.) the translators have a note of Berlioz about Spontini adding wind instruments to one of Gluck's scores. The translators observe, "Neither Spontini nor Berlioz is likely to last long enough for that; but it is quite possible that some wretch may lay hands on Beethoven. Indeed, it has surely been done already somewhere in Germany." Yes, and they might have added, in England. The foot-note, Vol. II., p. 43, is decidedly unfair. Berlioz does *not* say that Hummel wrote "many beautiful septets." The translators, too, have left out part of the sentence.

The Great Musicians. Edited by Francis-Hueffer.

Schumann. By J. A. Fuller-Maitland.

[Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington.]

After telling us in the preface to this work that those who expect to find in it a complete and exhaustive life of Robert Schumann will of necessity be disappointed, Mr. Maitland continues thus: "Among the biographies of Schumann, Wasielewski's stands first; with regard to all the facts of the composer's life, it is absolutely reliable, and is also valuable as being founded in great part on personal recollection." He then speaks of the life of the composer by August Reissmann (acknowledging that his complete catalogue of Schumann's works in chronological

order is that upon which the one in the work before us is founded); of the interesting article contributed to Grove's "Dictionary of Music and Musicians," by Dr. Philipp Spitta, since republished in its original German; of the excellent paper on Schumann in Mr. Hueffer's "Music of the Future," and of the collection of sketches relating to the master called "Die Davidsbündler," by F. Gustav Jansen, recently published by Breitkopf and Härtel, Leipzig. A careful perusal of Mr. Maitland's book convinces us that the author's own estimate of it is perfectly just; but then, as he admits that the time for writing a perfect biography of Schumann had not yet come, "while so many of the composer's most intimate friends and relations are still living"; that the "bulk of his book cannot boast of much originality, since it is mainly based on the work of others," and that in fact all has been written upon Schumann which, under the circumstances, can be reasonably expected, the question is forced upon us why this book is really wanted. Certainly we have long criticisms upon Schumann's works; but these are scarcely what we expect in the biography of a composer; and although many of the observations are extremely acute, those who anticipate reading something respecting this artist which cannot be found in preceding books will, as the author frankly confesses, be "disappointed." One merit let us freely acknowledge: throughout Mr. Maitland's work he shows that he thoroughly appreciates the bright side of the composer's character, whilst he conceals none of his defects. "In all Schumann's writings," he says, "nothing is more remarkable than his absolute freedom from jealousy, which in his position in relation to Mendelssohn might have been so easily stirred up in a less generous nature." All acquainted with the searching criticisms of this master must fully agree with this observation; and that his admiration of Mendelssohn was sincere may be proved by the fact of his having openly rebuked a musician who spoke slightly of the composer in his presence, going so far even as to seize him by the shoulders, and then to rush petulantly from the room. We should have been glad if the chapter on "Schumann and his Critics" had been omitted from the book; for no good cause can be served by raking up notices which are now forgotten. It is true that Mr. Maitland does not name the authors of the criticisms from which he quotes, but he sufficiently indicates them to leave little doubt of their identity, and personalities in art works are always out of place.

Saint Mary. An Oratorio. Composed by Frank J. Sawyer, Mus. Doc., Oxon. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE composer of this work does not state whether it was composed for any special purpose, or merely as a labour of love in one of the highest fields of musical art. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, we may assume the latter to have been the case. Further, Dr. Sawyer may claim the credit due to the compiler of the libretto, as no other name is mentioned on the title-page. The book is an arrangement of excerpts from Holy Writ, and from several poets of the highest class, including Longfellow, Keble, Pope, Milman, and Heber. The passages are dovetailed together with much skill, the whole being divided into seven scenes, entitled, respectively, the Annunciation, At St. Elizabeth's Home, the Nativity, the Flight into Egypt, the Wedding in Cana, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection. The infinite variety in metre and style of the various poetic extracts might be considered hurtful in the sense of rendering the work patchy and wanting in unity of design; but, on the whole, the advantages to the composer outweigh any objections that may be urged against the adoption of a plan of this kind. Opportunities for effective contrast are afforded; and, after all, it is unnecessary that the libretto of an oratorio should be strictly connected or wholly dramatic. Of the music of "St. Mary" it would be unsafe to speak in more than general terms. The perusal of a vocal score may enable one to grasp the salient characteristics of a composer's style, but only in performance can the absolute merit of the music be definitely judged. Dr. Sawyer is evidently an accomplished musician, and one who has made himself familiar with the works of the best modern composers. There is no harking back to the manner and phraseology of a past age, but rather