

Review

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Hall on July 27, when the pleasing though somewhat arduous task of presenting the awards was gracefully fulfilled by the Countess of Kilmorey. The Principal, in making his customary speech, referred in feeling terms to the loss sustained by the Academy and the musical world generally in the decease of Mr. Goring Thomas, and stated that the memorial Concert recently given resulted in a profit of over £1,500. Mr. Threlfall, in proposing a vote of thanks to the Countess of Kilmorey for her presence, made special reference to the indebtedness of the Academy to the Earl of Kilmorey for the active interest he had shown in the Institution.

At Trinity College, London, the Tallis Gold Medal has been awarded to Marian Reynolds, the Gabriel Prize to Albert W. Ketelbey, the Benedict Exhibition to Eleanor M. Shuttleworth, the Reeves Exhibition to Bertha Acworth, and the College Violin Exhibition to Claude S. Fenigstein. At a special Examination for the Queen Victoria Scholarship, Albert W. Ketelbey, the late Queen Victoria Scholar, was re-elected for the term of three years, the adjudicators being the Warden (Professor E. H. Turpin), Professor Bradbury Turner, and Professor James Higgs.

MESSRS. JOHN BRINSMEAD AND SONS are about to rebuild their pianoforte show-rooms in Wigmore Street, and will occupy 104, New Bond Street as temporary premises till the beginning of September next year.

REVIEWS.

Der Endreim in der Musik. Ein Kapitel von der musikalischen Declamation. Von Dr. Wilhelm Langhans. [Leipzig: F. E. C. Leuckart.]

In this very interesting and thoughtfully written brochure, the author deals with a subject which nearly concerns vocal composers generally, and dramatic composers, as well as translators of operatic libretti, in particular. "Thanks to the efforts of a number of eminent vocal masters, more especially of Richard Wagner," Dr. Langhans says in his preface, "the time is happily long since gone by when Voltaire could, with some degree of justice, maintain that 'ce qui est trop sot pour être dit, on le chante'; and every cultured amateur now demands that in vocal music the poem should be in every way worthy of the melody wedded thereto. How far we are, nevertheless, yet removed from this universally desired goal it is the object of the present essay to show."

The author refers, in the first place, to some notable failures on the part of contemporary German translators of operatic libretti, on account, chiefly, of the more or less complete unsuitability of their verses to the musical setting from a *declamatory* point of view. "There is but one right and proper course for the translator to pursue," he maintains in this connection, "which consists in the *utmost regard being had to the intentions of the composer*, and not a whit more to the author of the original book than may be practicable *without detriment to the music*." This is no doubt a perfectly sound maxim, as far as the ordinary run of libretti is concerned. Its application is, however, bound to undergo some degree of modification in those, as yet, rare instances where composer and librettist are united in the same individual; particularly if, as in the supreme instance of Richard Wagner, the librettist happens to be a genuine poet, in whose most truly inspired moments the words and their characteristic *melos* are frequently conceived simultaneously. It was otherwise with that greatest of musicians the world has ever seen, Mozart, whose musical ideas crowded upon his mind in such superabundance that he sometimes but too eagerly seized upon almost the first libretto offered to him, in order to graft upon it some of the melodies which, as he remarks in one of his charming letters to his father, "have already been wandering about in my head for some time." Having to deal with indifferent books, he often treated the verses they contained with equal indifference. That such was actually the case, Dr. Langhans here demonstrates with admirable tact and judgment in quoting examples from the master's operas, especially that of "Don Giovanni," and concluding with a truly masterly analysis, from the declamatory standpoint, of the famous "Serenade" in that

opera, showing how both *rhyme* and *rhythm* of Da Ponte's verses have been entirely ignored by what our author aptly calls the "musical rhyme" (*Musik-reim*) and rhythm adopted by the composer. We regret that space does not permit us to refer at greater length to the author's interesting observations concerning the relations of *rhyme* in word-poetry to musical composition. We must content ourselves with warmly recommending to musicians and amateurs alike the perusal of the essay itself, the last published production of an accomplished and most competent pen, which has since been arrested by the death of him who so ably wielded it.

Seed-Time and Harvest. A Sacred Cantata. By John E. West.

Harvest-Tide. A Cantata for Harvest. By Hugh Blair. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

EACH succeeding year witnesses greater activity in the provision of sacred music suitable for special seasons, and that of harvest is now receiving remarkable attention, as a careful perusal of our advertising columns will show. Of the two Cantatas above-named, the first is the more important in scope. The words consist of selections from Scripture, interspersed with hymns, in which it is suggested the audience or congregation should join, the whole being pervaded by the spirit of humble thanksgiving. Mr. West's score requires soprano and tenor soloists and four-part chorus, and the general style of the music is church-like and dignified, but melodious and never dull or tedious. Simplicity has, of course, been studied, but there is no suggestion of triviality, and while the Cantata is interesting it is within the means of any fairly well-trained church or chapel choir.

Mr. Hugh Blair's work is for tenor and bass soloists, chorus, and organ, or small orchestra, and is of less dimensions than that of Mr. West, occupying only thirty-five pages in vocal score. The libretto, however, is similar, consisting of Biblical texts and hymns, and the composer states that an attempt has been made "to set forth not only the praise we owe to God for the blessings of harvest-time, but also—and this more particularly—to emphasise the spiritual lesson that should be learnt from the observance of this season. For this purpose 'the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares' and references to 'the Resurrection, and Harvest of the World' are employed." In the illustration of these thoughts, three leading motives, or as the composer terms them "attendant themes," are employed, but they are not sufficiently distinctive to need quotation. While never elaborate in detail, the music is modern in feeling, Mr. Blair indulging freely in sudden changes of tonality, though he wisely avoids polyphony alike in the voice parts and the accompaniments. The impression left by a perusal of this virile little work is that the composer might employ his talents in wider directions, but this, of course, must only be taken as a suggestion. At any rate, we are at present of opinion that "Harvest-tide" does not fully indicate the limits of Mr. Blair's ability.

Suite from the Music to Shakespeare's "Hamlet." Composed by G. Henschel. (Op. 50.) Arranged as a Pianoforte Duet by Battison Haynes.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE publication of this music in duet form will no doubt be hailed by many as an opportunity for reviving pleasant memories, but, beyond this, will also most assuredly win for it troops of friends among those who have not been privileged to hear it on an orchestra, either in connection with the play, or as a Suite—the form in which it now appears. There are five movements, entitled respectively "Prelude," "Ophelia," "Interlude and Pastorale," "Ophelia's Death," and "Danish March." The first of these is founded on three themes, typifying—(1), Hamlet's irresolution; (2), his longing for action; and (3), Ophelia. In the second movement the gentle, loving nature of *Ophelia* forms a "poetic basis" on which a structure full of beauty has been reared. The "Interlude" brings before us again the tragic conflict in the mind of *Hamlet*; and the "Pastorale" contrasts with this the placid indifference of Nature to the griefs of humanity. The following movement, practically a short funeral march, is an exquisitely beautiful lament for the "poor wretch" whose "muddy