

The Curiosities of Criticism

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practice solely of male-voice music. This Union was established in 1872, is governed by a strict code of rules and an annually elected committee, and possesses a library of some 150 pieces (constantly increasing), consisting of glees, ancient and modern, madrigals, part-songs, and choruses, sacred and secular, all of which are sung unaccompanied.

During its existence several honours have been won, and over 200 appearances have been made by this Union in London and other large towns, which you will admit is fair work.

In addition to the Vocalists' Union there are several quartet parties, viz.—the "Orpheus" (sixteen years old), "Liver," &c., and Mr. Cantor has also a double quartet party, though of very recent existence.

I will also add that, in 1873, I think, Liverpool sent up a representative choir of eighty male voices to the Crystal Palace which brought away the first prize of £50 against all comers. I think your readers will agree with me that the art is not so much neglected as Mr. Cantor would make them believe—at least, as far as Liverpool is concerned.

I am, your obedient servant,

HUGH SHIMMIN, Hon. Sec.

Liverpool, January 19, 1882.

#### AN ORGANIST'S GRIEVANCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—There can scarcely be but one reply, as it appears to me, to the question put by a "London Organist," in his now somewhat altered position. The entire control of the music reverts naturally into the hands of the newly appointed choirmaster, otherwise the appointment of such an agent is simply meaningless; and the organist should now perform his special function subject to the direction of the choirmaster, in the same manner as the members of the choir are expected to do.

I am connected with a church where the two posts referred to have lately been divided by the appointment of a choirmaster, and, so far, with the most satisfactory results, both as regards the music and the *esprit de corps* of the choir.

I may also add that the many years' experience I have had of choir work, &c., leads me to entertain an opinion exactly the reverse of that expressed by a "London Organist" at the close of his letter; and I apprehend that the explanation of the two posts being generally combined is mostly to be traced to one of finance. CHAIR.

#### THE CURIOSITIES OF CRITICISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—I send you the inclosed criticism on a concert which I have found in a local paper, thinking it might perhaps, be worthy of a place in your "Curiosities of Criticism": "... Mention should be made of one of the most attractive instrumental pieces on the programme, 'Little May,' composed by the conductor himself. In this piece several parts were attractive for their resemblance to snatches from the standard works of some of the greatest composers; at one period the stringed instruments give a low murmur of cadence, and anon the whole force of the band unites to give power to the finale, which is full of vigour, exploding in a crash of an instrumental tempest. ..."

As this might interest many of your readers, I hope you will allow it a little space in your correspondence.

I am, sir, yours truly,

FRANCIS W. GALPIN.

Trinity College, Cambridge, Jan. 20, 1882.

#### SCARCITY OF ALTO VOICES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—In the article on "Male-Voice Choirs" inserted in THE MUSICAL TIMES for January, a remark is made as to the unhappy scarcity of altos.

Undoubtedly such is the truth, but I think a remedy might be found by endeavouring to offer more encouragement towards cultivating this voice. Although stronger

than the contralto voice, the latter is always chosen in our choral societies before an alto, in rendering an occasional quartet.

Alto vocalists are never heard at ballad concerts, simply because there are no songs specially written for them. Let some of our song-writers try the experiment of composing for them, and watch the result. An alto's scope is so limited that many, for the sake of appearing at concerts as soloists, sing in their lower (generally baritone) voice, thus invariably deteriorating, and often killing, their falsetto register.

Singing-masters, too, might study the production of the alto voice a little more, for as a rule they know nothing about it. With a little attention to the matter, I have no doubt but that the number of good alto singers might be largely increased.—I am, yours, &c.,

January 3, 1882.

AN ALTO.

#### THE FIRST DULCIANA.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MUSICAL TIMES."

SIR,—Allow me to thank Mr. Hopkins for his letter on this subject.

Mr. Edwards and I have since carefully examined the stop, when I found, to my surprise, that, whereas all the flute-pipes have their names marked on them in German characters, the dulciana is *not so marked*.

I consider this a proof that Mr. Hopkins is right in his conjecture, and that our dulciana is a later addition to our organ.—Yours faithfully,

EDWIN J. CROW.

Ripon, December 21, 1881.

#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

\*\* Notices of concerts, and other information supplied by our friends in the country, must be forwarded as early as possible after the occurrence; otherwise they cannot be inserted. Our correspondents must specifically denote the date of each concert, for without such date no notice can be taken of the performance.

Our correspondents will oblige by writing all names as clearly as possible, as we cannot be responsible for any mistakes that may occur.

Correspondents are informed that their names and addresses must accompany all communications.

We cannot undertake to return offered contributions; the authors, therefore, will do well to retain copies.

Notice is sent to all Subscribers whose payment (in advance) is exhausted. The paper will be discontinued where the Subscription is not renewed. We again remind those who are disappointed in obtaining back numbers that, although the music is always kept in stock, only a sufficient quantity of the rest of the paper is printed to supply the current sale.

ABSCHEID.—We cannot in this journal recommend any particular "system." You must take your own choice. To "X. Y. Z.'s" communication the same answer will apply.

STUDENT.—You should apply to the Professor of Music at the University, who will afford you all necessary information.

#### BRIEF SUMMARY OF COUNTRY NEWS.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for any opinions expressed in this Summary, as all the notices are either collated from the local papers or supplied to us by correspondents.

ABERDEEN.—The Choral Union gave an excellent performance of *The Messiah* on the 4th ult. The solo vocalists were Miss Annie Marriott, Miss Hope Glenn, Mr. Joseph Maas, and Mr. Burdon. Mr. A. F. Rae led the band, Mr. John Kirby conducted, and Mr. W. Morrison presided at the organ.

ABINGDON.—The Musical Association gave *The Messiah* on December 21, assisted by an excellent band. The principal vocalists were Miss Marianne Fenna, Miss Jeanie Rosse, Mr. Hodgson, and Mr. Bonell. The solos were well rendered, and the choruses sung with spirit and decision. Mr. Frederick K. Couldrey conducted.

ALTON.—The members of the Choral Society gave their first Concert for the season, at the Assembly Rooms, on the 12th ult. The first part consisted of a selection from *Judas Maccabæus*, and the second was miscellaneous. The soloists were Miss Jessie Jones, Mr. Redfern Hollins, and Mr. Pennel Cross, vocalists; and Mr. Edmund Woolhouse, violoncello—all of whom were highly satisfactory. The choir, which numbered about seventy voices, sang admirably. The accompaniments in *Judas* were played on the pianoforte by Mr. L. Reeves, and on the harmonium, by Mr. H. Shepherd, supplemented by a local orchestra, led by Mr. C. G. Halliday. Miss Ella Smith accompanied the songs, &c., in the second part, and Mr. H. Piggott conducted.

ARMAGH.—Mr. W. G. Wood and Mr. Albert McGuckin gave a very successful Concert, on the 9th ult., assisted by Miss Mary Russell, Mr. G. F. Townley, vocalists; Mr. C. Wood, violoncello; and Dr. Marks, pianoforte. Mr. W. G. Wood gave an excellent rendering of the "Moonlight" Sonata, Mendelssohn's Prelude and Fugue in E minor, and also of some compositions of his own. The singing of Mr. McGuckin, Miss Mary Russell, and Mr. G. F. Townley was much appreciated. Dr. Marks was an able accompanist.