

Review

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At the Festival of the London Church Choir Association, which takes place at St. Paul's Cathedral in the autumn, a new Service (Magnificat and Nunc dimittis), written for the occasion by Mr. C. E. Miller, Organist of Lambeth Parish Church, is to be sung. Dr. Stainer has promised to compose an anthem for the Festival.

ORGAN Recitals have been given during the past two weeks at the International Fisheries Exhibition, South Kensington, by Mr. G. Augustus Holmes. The programmes have included compositions by Mendelssohn, Handel, and other masters, and a new March by Mr. Holmes.

THE organ in St. Paul's Cathedral is about to be cleaned, an operation which will necessitate its silence for several weeks, during which period use will be made of the small chancel organ, placed for the purpose immediately west of the choir stalls on the northern side.

THE Epping Forest Choral Association held a festival in St. Alban's Abbey, or rather Cathedral, on Saturday, the 9th ult. The voices, which numbered about 400, were reinforced by a few wind instruments, and conducted by Mr. Walter Latter.

At a recent meeting held in the Washington Hotel, Glasgow, it was resolved to take steps for establishing a Glasgow branch of the Tonic Sol-fa College, and a committee was formed for the purpose of furthering this object.

HIS Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury has accepted the office of President of the College of Organists, a position held by his predecessors in the Primacy from the foundation of the institution.

THE London Gregorian Choral Association held a Festival at St. Alban's, Holborn, on the evening of St. Barnabas' Day, the 11th ult., Mr. C. Warwick Jordan presiding at the organ.

THE Dominican Church at Haverstock Hill was opened last month, on which occasion Gounod's "Messe du Sacré Cœur" was sung. Mr. Bowen presided at the organ, built by Messrs. Willis and Sons.

DR. F. E. GLADSTONE'S sacred Cantata "Philippi" will be performed at Newcastle, on the 25th inst., by Mr. Ions's Choir, consisting of between 300 and 400 voices. The composer has been invited to conduct.

A SUM of £1,000 was realised for the Royal College of Music by the Morning Performance at the Lyceum Theatre, on the 14th ult.

WE are requested to announce that Mr. J. E. Fimister, Organist and Precentor of St. Peter's Church, Walton-on-the-Hill, Epsom, has resigned on account of ill-health.

THE Silver Medal of the Society of Arts has been awarded by the Council to Mr. A. J. Hipkins for his lecture on the history of the pianoforte, read on the 7th of March.

REVIEWS.

Lakmé, Opéra en trois Actes. Poème de MM. Edmond Gondinet et Philippe Gille. Musique de Léo Delibes.
[Paris: Heugel et Cie.]

THIS work was produced at the Opéra-Comique in April last, and is playing now, concurrently with M. Saint-Saëns's "Henry VIII." at the Grand-Opéra. The two things run together, we are bound to add, with a difference. For all the fine music it contains, "Henry VIII." drags languidly through the season. On the stage it is not interesting, and when people go to the great house, they do so to look at the ballet and admire the scenic effects rather than for a higher purpose. "Lakmé," on the other hand, shows real vitality. It is sought after for its own sake as congenial to public taste, and has certainly raised the status of the composer in French eyes. We may add here the names of the artists by whom the work was first interpreted: Mdlle. Van Zandt played *Lakmé*; Mdlle. Frandin, *Mallika*; Mdlle. Rémy, *Ellen*; Mdlle. Molé, *Rose*; Mdlle. Pierron, *Mistress Benson*; M. Talazac, *Gerald*; M. Cobales, *Nilakantha*; M. Barré, *Frederic*; and

M. Chennevière, *Hadji*. All these proved from the first equal to their task, while the talk of the town has run upon little Miss Van Zandt's impersonation of the Indian maiden.

By the way, "Lakmé" is an orthographical error, there being no such word in Hindoo nomenclature, which, however, contains one very like it, and one so commonly used that in any group of Indian girls a large proportion would answer thereto. But we may truly ask here, "What's in a name?" Besides, our French neighbours have a genius for misquotation in this respect.

The least-informed reader knows that an opéra-comique contains more or less of spoken dialogue, which serves to expose the motives of the plot, as the lyrics set to music serve for the expression of feeling. Not having a copy of the drama before us, we cannot give the scenes in detail, nor is it possible to convey an idea of the composer's orchestral effects from a pianoforte score containing very few indications of the means employed. These disadvantages should be borne in mind throughout the following remarks.

The Prelude may be passed over lightly. It has the dramatic significance which arises from the anticipation of themes prominent in the body of the work, but its musical interest is very small. What has become of the operatic overture? And is our abandonment of the practice which has given us so many orchestral masterpieces a sign of progress? If so, we are, for once, sorry to have advanced. The epoch of "Fidelio," "Der Freyschütz," and "Oberon" was, in this respect, good enough for us.

The action opens at daybreak in the garden of an Indian temple, where *Nilakantha* is priest, and *Lakmé*, his daughter, the chief of the sacred maidens. A crowd of people enter and sing a quasi-religious chorus in unison, the composer here showing an early resolve to use as much "local colour" as possible, while the priest, giving the people his blessing, improves the occasion by railing at "nos vainqueurs," upon whom he invokes the vengeance of Brahma. He is at the climax of his tirade, when the voice of *Lakmé*, accompanied by harps, is heard from behind the scenes. The people prostrate themselves, murmuring an occasional response as the maiden goes on with her morning supplication. That the strain she sings is wild and fantastic may be gathered from the subjoined example:—

No. 1.



In this character, which perhaps would be very strange to Indian ears, lies the interest of the piece, and we are not going to call it in question, since faith is easy. The crowd, devotions performed, now go away repeating their chorus, and the scene ends. A short dialogue follows for father and daughter, in which the priest takes temporary leave of *Lakmé*, and confides her to her attendants, *Mallika* and *Hadji*. The music here has a graceful figure of accompaniment, but is otherwise not remarkable. Left together, *Lakmé* and *Mallika* contemplate the beauty of the river and gardens, and sing a very sentimental duet before getting into a boat and floating down the stream. The duet is quite French in character—extremely light and exceedingly pretty. Its rhythm (6-8) is flowing and well sustained; the phrases are vocal, and the accompaniment no more than sufficient to sustain the voices and fill in the harmonies. It ends well, moreover; snatches of the theme being heard faintly and more faintly, as the stream bears the singers away. The whole piece is a grand success in its unaffected and graceful manner. A party of "nos vainqueurs" now enter. They are *Ellen*, *Rose*, *Mistress Benson*, and two young officers, *Gerald* and *Frederic*, the last-named of whom is rallied about some mysterious native maiden. The quintet carries on, *à la Française*, a good deal of discussion anent the comparative qualities of Indian and English women; but we need not stop to inquire into that, nor indeed to analyse the music, which is trivial. Presently we find *Gerald* alone in the garden, his purpose for some reason or other being to take a sketch

Passing over an *entr'acte* the substance of which recurs later, we see the curtain rise upon a busy market-place in a Hindoo city. Soon, also, we hear the inevitable market chorus—a bustling piece, in which the composer lays on what he conceives to be local colour with liberal hand. *Mistress Bentson* appears mixed up with the throng, and a good deal of action ensues of a more or less humorous sort. All this is outside the current of the story, together with the *fête* which follows. Here, of course, the ballet comes in, and we soon discover that M. Délices can write characteristic dance-music with the facility expected when the composer is French. Of the three principal numbers the best, perhaps, is that called “Persian,” a very ingenious and original Andante, in which the horn and oboe are alternately used as solo instruments. The dancers having gone away, attention is called to *Nilakantha* and *Lakmé* in the disguise of mendicants. The priest is hunting the intruder upon his sacred domain, and now addresses his daughter in an Andante air, essentially modern French in the character of its vocal theme and the sensuous richness of its accompaniment. He dwells upon his daughter’s sadness, and promises that she shall soon smile again, using strains admirably adapted to express the depth of his paternal love and the strength of his religious zeal. When noting this, however, we cannot overlook the fact that something a little more original might easily have been conceived. *Nilakantha* now reveals the plot he has designed to catch the intruder. *Lakmé* shall sing while he watches for some sign of recognition between herself and the young Englishmen who may come near to listen. *Lakmé* thereupon executes a fantastic cadenza; a crowd gathers, and *Nilakantha* announces the sacred legend of the Daughter of Parius. This is a somewhat lengthy scena, consisting of a number of fragmentary themes and a more developed Allegro, into which a bell subject pleasantly enters. The whole is in the showiest style of opéra-comique, and, indeed, has no other purpose than the display of “first-lady” gifts and graces. Music-

The second *entr'acte* embodies several now familiar themes, but especially that of the Andante from the duet wherein *Lakmé* describes the forest concealment to which she invites her lover. We are thus prepared for the place itself, as shown when the curtain rises. It is a bamboo hut in the depth of the wood, half hidden by foliage and flowers. There *Gerald* lies wounded, looked after by *Lakmé* and her faithful *Hadji*. At present he is asleep, lulled by the girl's voice as she sings a quaint love-song, "Sous le ciel tout étoilé." This piece acquires interest from the very distinctiveness of its character, though sometimes "local colour" is laid on recklessly. The melody, for example, begins in the dominant of the key (C minor), and is accompanied simply by a double pedal on the tonic. However, the simplicity of the music and its appropriateness to the singer and the situation give a certain charm, which easily meets with recognition. *Gerald* now awakes and endeavours to recall what has taken place. This is a

good opportunity for the composer, who attends upon the recitative with passages from the music of the preceding act. *Gerald* then sings a Cantilene, "Ah! viens dans la forêt profonde"—a bit of truly French sentiment, that is to say, more affected than earnest—after which comes a pretty incident. As *Lakmé* speaks of converting *Gerald* to a belief in her gods, and of their living happily ever after, a chorus of female and tenor voices is heard from behind, the sopranos and first tenors singing a simple, characteristic melody in octaves, while the contraltos and second tenors, also in octaves, sustain a tonic pedal. The effect, though far from new, is good. *Lakmé* forthwith explains that the voices are those of happy lovers, who go to drink together of a sacred spring, in token of their union. The chorus re-enters, now combined with quasi-recitative for *Gerald* and *Lakmé*, who, at its close, go away for a while. All this is charming and idyllic enough for the most "gushing" taste. Those ridiculous English people now reappear, *Miss Ellen*, *Miss Rose*, and *Frederic* singing a trio, over which we pass to pick up again the thread of the story. *Lakmé* has returned to her lover. The flame of love burns brightly, and after an impassioned dialogue *Gerald* is about to drink of the cup which shall bind him to *Lakmé*, when he hears the roll of a drum, followed by the English martial air, and a chorus of marching soldiers. The voice of duty calls, and the soldier puts the cup from him, seeing which, *Lakmé*, in despair, eats a poisonous datura flower, following up this deed with a tender song, "Tu m'as donné le plus doux rêve." She then again presses the cup upon *Gerald*, who drinks, both joining presently in a duet which is really touching, pathetic music aiding the effect of a pathetic situation. At its close *Lakmé* tells her lover that she is about to die, the duet thereupon resuming in more impassioned style. Now comes the *finale*. *Nilakantha* and his Hindoos surprise the lovers and threaten *Gerald* with death; *Lakmé* informs them what has happened, offers herself as an expiatory sacrifice to the gods, and dies singing a fragment of the duet "Tu m'as donné." The curtain then falls, as priest and people exclaim, "She has entered into the glory of the heavens." Obviously this last act is the best. The feeling of the music may not be very profound, but it is true and touching, and aids the strong human interest of the situation to produce a real effect.

The Opera as a whole can hardly be called a powerful work. It is too conventionally French, and too flimsy in character for the serious nature of the story. But a certain sentimental interest arises from it in volume more than sufficient to explain the success achieved in Paris. We shall probably see "*Lakmé*" performed in London in an Italian dress; because, with a good *prima donna*, the result is almost assured. Then it will be possible to discuss M. Délibes's orchestration, and that general effect of representation that cannot be discerned by ever so much looking at a pianoforte score.

Musique et Musiciens au XVIIe. Siècle. Correspondance et Oeuvre Musicales de Constantin Huygens. Publiées par W. J. A. Jonckbloet et J. P. N. Land.

[Leyde: E. J. Brill. 1882.]

THE Society for the History of Dutch Music (Vereeniging voor Noord-Nederlandsch Muziekgeschiedenis) has now been quietly carrying on for a number of years the valuable work of making known the stores of music which that nation produced in the great epoch of its history, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The importance of the Low Countries as contributing to the development of vocal music, and especially of the madrigal, has long been known; although the names of Adriano (Willart), Orlando de Lasso (de Lattre), &c., have suffered the conventional Italian modification. Recently, too, thanks to the publications of the Dutch Society, Sweelinck, hitherto little more than a name, has been brought into due prominence, and recognised as one of the founders, if not the founder, of the North German school of organists. The language, however, in which the publications are printed has doubtless proved a barrier to their extensive circulation. Even among Germans the Society appears to have but five subscribers. It is therefore a matter of congratulation that the beautiful volume before us is written in French; so that musicians will have no excuse for remaining ignorant of its exception-

ally interesting contents. The book is a small quarto, printed in a manner worthy of the great Leyden printer, the successor of the Elzevirs; as to its scholarly character it is only necessary to allude to the fact that the editors are professors in the University of Leyden, the one distinguished as a master of Dutch literature, the other as an accomplished musician and musical antiquary.

The work is divided into two parts; the first containing so much of Huygens' unpublished correspondence as relates to music, the second being a reprint in modern notation of his extremely rare volume of songs, the "*Pathodia Sacra et Profana Occupati*," originally published at Paris in 1647. Written, as these were, for the lute, it was a task of no little difficulty to reproduce them in such a manner as to be capable of performance now-a-days. We think that Professor Land has successfully overcome the difficulty, although, perhaps, some may regret that he has not felt himself at liberty to fill in the harmonies of the bass. The songs themselves are mostly composed to verses from the Psalter, and in style are remarkable for the absence of commonplace. If but few can be said to deserve a pre-eminent rank among the productions in the same field of the seventeenth century, at the same time almost all are relieved from monotony by the boldness of the harmonies, and by the variety of the rhythms; and some are decidedly striking.

The general reader will probably turn with most pleasure to the introduction, which occupies more than three-quarters of the letter-press portion of the volume, and commences with a short memoir of the composer. Constantin Huygens, or Huyghens, was a brother of the famous natural philosopher, and belonged to a family of great note in the political history of the United Provinces. His long life (1596—1687) almost covers the golden age of Dutch literature and art—the age of Vondel and Rembrandt and Frans Hals; but Huygens was only a *littérateur* and musician in his leisure moments; his professional occupation was that of member of the Council of the successive Princes of Orange. And yet he found time to write and compose a great deal. He lost no opportunity of introducing his favourite subject in letters even of the most business-like character; and the circle of his correspondents includes nearly every French or Dutch musician of name, amateurs as well as professional musicians, and not a few in England and Germany. These correspondents, and indeed every person mentioned in the letters, who can by any stretch of imagination be brought into connection with music, are enumerated and described with all necessary detail in the second section of the introduction, where their own letters to Huygens are also printed, like his, from unpublished sources. This dictionary is by itself an invaluable store-house of information for the musical history of the time. The English reader will find matter of interest under the heads of Biondi, Jermyn, Killigrew (Killigrew), Ogle, Smith, Stefkens and Warwick. James I. is described as "naturally little addicted to music"; but Charles II., on the contrary, seems in some respects to have been a man after Huygens's own heart, not only on account of the musical library he collected at the Hague, but also as an aristocratic amateur like himself. As a supplement to the dictionary, we next have an excellent sketch of the state of music in Holland during the seventeenth century, with special reference to Huygens. It is a chapter in the history of music which has yet to be written with the completeness it merits. The outline in the present volume offers many suggestions and hints which will do good service in this direction; and the remarks about the downfall of Dutch national music, as coincident with the collapse of trained church singing, are both just as criticism and significant as a warning.

It would take us beyond the limits of a review if we were to venture into a detailed examination of this book. As we have pointed out, its great value lies in the fact that it is based almost entirely upon unpublished or inaccessible sources. The materials are placed before us in the most orderly manner, and they are enriched with copious notes, these too being in many instances drawn from authorities which we might seek in vain in England. It is indeed superfluous to do more than heartily recommend the work to students of musical history.