

National Training School for Music

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of evil; and the ensuing Air, "Nought against the power He wieldeth," symbolises man's helplessness against ill, if he be unassisted by heavenly support.

Nos. 58 and 60 pursue the Gospel story as to how the wise men made their offerings, and, in obedience to a preternatural warning, departed without returning to the Jewish King. They are divided by the Choral, "Beside Thy cradle," which brings the act of worship and sacrifice home to us, who are reminded of the first oblations to the infant Deity. The tenor for a second time leaves the part of the Evangelist, and, in an accompanied Recitative, shows the unconcern we should feel at the departure of external riches, so long as we retain the priceless treasure of divine love. This leads to one of those pieces which are prominent amid the constant beauty of the whole, the Air in B minor for the same voice, "Ye foes of man," which, with deep feeling but entire sincerity, defies all might against one who is guarded by the shield of faith. A curious point of harmony marks the chief theme of this piece, the theme which begins it and is many times repeated in its course.

There is a succession of 6ths— $\begin{matrix} B & D & \sharp C & \sharp A \\ D & \sharp F & E & C \end{matrix}$ —which naturally enough fits over a B bass; but then it is given again, over G in the bass, in spite of the sharp F, when it is followed by D bass, bearing a first inversion, and the effect is as good as the progression is rare. In the beginning of Mendelssohn's Octet for string instruments is a like retention of the dominant note over a chord of the submediant, with a like leap from the bass note; and it is interesting to trace this prominently beautiful thought to its possible prototype.

No. 63 is somewhat like in structure to the last but one piece in the Matthew Passion. It is a Recitative, so styled, for the four solo voices; which, entering successively with the same phrase, are combined in constantly fuller and fuller harmony. The music does some sort of violence to its definition, seeing that it is not possible, nor, indeed, desirable of performance, otherwise than in measured time; yet it justifies the title, Recitative, in so much as it is not rhythmical, and declaims its four brief sentences, rather than sings them to a distinct melody. It is an introduction to the Choral that closes the entire work, which has the same melody as No. 5 in this oratorio—the melody that has now become familiar to English ears, from its several times use in the Matthew Passion. The tune is here employed as a song of triumph, to which end it is embroidered with interludes and counterpoint, of exulting brightness, including the flourish of trumpets and drums, and passages that best bring out the tone of all the other instruments; and it peals from amid this din of joy, as would thunder peal through the turmoil of the elements, were thunder the voice of gladness instead of destruction. To compare its settings as "Now, vengeance," with that as "How shall I fitly," is eminently interesting; but to extend the comparison to the five settings in that other work of Bach, and especially to regard the present grand outburst of joy with the last of those five, "If I should e'er forsake Thee," that most pathetic of all musical expressions of grief, displays perhaps the versatility of the tune, and certainly the mighty power of the master.

These remarks are upon Bach's beautiful work, not upon any particular edition, and the quotation of titles from that published by Novello, Ewer and Co. has been for convenience of reference. A separate essay might discuss the fidelity to the music and the fidelity to the original text of translations, therein

and elsewhere presented, and might treat of the manner in which the master's works generally have been placed, in respect of adapted words, before the English public—it is a subject that demands serious consideration, and far larger space than can here be spared. The Christmas Oratorio is of a nature, speaking of the music, to take quicker and firmer hold of popular attention than could the Passion, since it not only contains the joyous element which is entirely absent in the other, but also possesses far greater variety and contrast. A portion of it was publicly performed in 1868 at a concert of the Royal Academy of Music under the direction of Mr. W. G. Cusins, and a portion also at one of the Concerts of Ancient and Modern Music at another period, under Herr Schachner's direction. It was first offered to a London audience in a shape approaching completeness, at a Concert of Mr. Barnby's Choir, which he conducted, on the 15th of December last, when its reception warranted the above surmise, and gave fair ground to expect that it may become here a great and permanent favourite. The world must be the better and the wiser for familiarity with this noble music, and the double opportunity to hear it and to read it is most propitious to a true and wide knowledge of its beauty.

NATIONAL TRAINING SCHOOL FOR MUSIC.

By JOSEPH BENNETT.

MUSICAL people may, and do, differ about a great many things, but they must all agree that, up to the present, very inadequate provision has been made in England for musical education. The Royal Academy of Music, and a few institutions carried on by private enterprise, have done something to meet the artistic wants of the age, but they have obviously and lamentably failed to do enough. In saying this we intend no censure upon any of the persons immediately concerned; though, if put to it, we should be very far from admitting that the Royal Academy has, at all times, done the best possible. While withholding unqualified approbation, however, it must be granted that the Tenterden Street Institution has struggled against serious obstacles. For years it languished under the "cold shade" of aristocratic protection, to the enjoyment of which the public left it; and when that protection was no longer available, the task of exciting general sympathy in its favour was found a hard one. The professors stuck to their work nobly, making sacrifices which never should have been required of them, and within the last few years good results have appeared, with a promise of others still better by-and-bye. But the Royal Academy, as now constituted, can never be adequate to the task of national musical education. Its means are too small, and its prestige too insignificant for a mission so great. But necessity is absolute. The task must be undertaken and accomplished, if England means to keep even a respectable place among musical nations. So thought the Society of Arts eight years ago, when it was first resolved to found a National Training School for Music, and so think now a great many people who are able and willing to help on the work. But it may be asked—Why did the Society of Arts not devote its energies to the enlargement and complete equipment of the Institution already existing? The question is a very proper one, and much more obvious than the answer to it can be. Here is an Academy half a century old, established by Royal Charter, in full work to the extent of its means, and

possessing a staff of eminent teachers, with the foremost English musician of the day at their head. Surely common sense, if not common decency, must have suggested that, before starting a rival enterprise, efforts should be made in favour of the Royal Academy. But, as far as we yet know, the Society of Arts paid no heed to these suggestions. It had a scheme of its own, and would probably have never given a thought to Tenterden Street but for His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, who, as was made known in his speech at the Albert Hall on the 18th ult., advised that something should be done to connect the proposed new institution with the old. When a Royal Duke advises, and offers to carry out his advice in person, refusal is not to be thought of; and hence a prospect arose, for the first time, of that union which is strength. The story of the negotiations between His Royal Highness and the authorities of the Academy has yet to be told in fulness sufficient to explain why they came to nothing. We heard from the Duke of Edinburgh, in the speech already referred to, that the fundamental principles of the two institutions were found wholly incompatible. This needs explanation, because the fundamental principles of the new school are the choice of pupils by competition, and free education—principles already acknowledged and acted upon at the Royal Academy, as far as its limited means will allow. But, with our present light, it is of no use to speculate upon the causes leading to the failure of the Duke of Edinburgh's well-meant scheme; and, while waiting for more light, we have simply to express regret that strength which might be employed in mutual assistance should be spent in mere rivalry.

Apart from the question referred to above, the prospect of a new Training School for Music is one that everybody will welcome, especially as in the present case there are features of peculiar value. It has often been said that, while the other Arts receive abundant patronage from public bodies, and high-placed individuals, Music, the most universal and beneficent of all, is treated with neglect. The charge once had truth in it, beyond question; but the proceedings at the Royal Albert Hall, on December 18, proved that there is truth in it no longer. When Royalty, Ministers of State, and representatives of the aristocracy of rank, wealth, and intellect come forward to do practical work for Music, we see the best possible evidence that a change has taken place. Here let us be just to the Society of Arts. The Council, and guiding spirits of that Society, may have peculiar views of how the work of musical education should be carried on—views from which many persons may dissent—but, at any rate, they have given admirable proof of a desire that education should be imparted somehow. These gentlemen have nothing to gain from the success of their endeavours, save that noblest of all gain—a consciousness of having done a good thing. They stand quite apart from the charge of interested motives; and the fact deserves remembrance not less than the other fact that, being disinterested, they have laboured with uncommon zeal. It should be borne in mind, also, that the School now founded on the basis of voluntary subscriptions, is but a single step towards the Society's ultimate object—a school supported and controlled by the State. Considering how reluctantly the Government doles out an annual £500 to the Royal Academy of Music, this object may seem a hopeless one; but who can tell what a change will take place in five years? Events march quickly, and public opinion is formed rapidly,

in these days, so that we shall not be surprised to find Government, at the end of the term just named, gladly taking over the School, and making it an adjunct to the general scheme of national education. In England, Government follows, it does not lead; and the Society of Arts is well advised to show the way.

With regard to the constitution of the School much might be said, but we will only draw attention to one feature of very special value—the establishment of free scholarships in favour of particular towns and counties, &c. This will serve the purpose for which the French Conservatoire has branch establishments in various parts of the country;—that is, it will find out and bring to light musical talent wherever that precious gift is bestowed. In reference to music, more than to any other art, it may be said that “full many a flower is born to blush unseen.” Talent is not rare, but when there are no opportunities for its cultivation, it runs to waste, and had better never have existed. The plan of the new School will supply those opportunities. Each county, and many smaller divisions than counties, will have their representative student at Kensington, and every youthful musician will be encouraged to compete for the honour, no matter how poor his means. It is impossible not to anticipate great results from the working of this system. At any rate it will test the wealth of England in musical ability, and reveal the position we hold in that respect as compared with other nations. One feature in the scheme is conspicuous by its absence from the “Statement” lately read in the Royal Albert Hall. Nothing whatever was said with regard to those who will be charged with the practical working of the School, and we cannot but think the omission a grave one. It may be all very well to tell us of what distinguished persons the governing body will consist, but rank and position do not excite confidence when the work in hand is of so technical a nature. The public, whose support is asked, know that such a Committee as that announced have nothing but the best intentions to prevent their going altogether wrong. What is needed, therefore, is the guarantee of some distinguished musical names. Who is to be the Principal of the new School? what are the number and character of its Professors? and what the distinctive features of its teaching? When these questions are answered the public will have information, without which any action on their part means a leap in the dark. Let us hope that present doubts will soon be set at rest in such a manner that all lovers of music may, with heart and soul, do their best to make the new Training School for Music a blessing to the nation.

THE official reply to the Memorial addressed to the Education Department by the Council of the Tonic Sol-Fa College, which has just been forwarded to us, is too long for insertion; but we may say that the document is a fair defence of the line of conduct pursued by Mr. Hullah during his late examination of the Training Schools. Those, however, who merely desire that the best system of teaching vocal music shall prevail, will be sorry to find that the question has almost settled down into a controversy between Mr. Curwen, backed by the members of the Tonic Sol-Fa College, and Mr. Hullah, backed by the Lords of the Committee of Council on Education. It is just possible that the truth may be with neither of the combatants, and that partisans therefore on both sides may be blinded by their zeal, and thus rendered incapable of calmly considering the ques-