

Review

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varied harmony. Afterwards a brief contrasted episode presents itself, the solo again leading, echoed by the chorus. Its character may be judged from the first phrase:—



The whole of the chief theme next returns, with further change of treatment, and the episode likewise reappears, with an extension which forms a coda to the whole. Doubtless the greater simplicity of this number, when compared with most of the others, makes it welcome as a relief. At the same time, it is not throughout marked by spontaneity, the composer choosing to indulge a fondness for elaboration that does not in every instance appear to have a *raison d'être*. An examination of the full score might, however, reveal designs concealed in the pianoforte transcription.

No. 7. Chorus, "Virgo, virginum præclara."

It is evident at the beginning of this chorus that beauty and tender grace without affectation or laboured effort are to be its characteristics:—



From the mingled simplicity and elegance here shown the number scarcely ever departs, and it is therefore needless to multiply either remarks or quotations. Enough that the whole work contains nothing better adapted to become popular for reasons which all, musicians and non-musicians, can appreciate.

No. 8. Duet, "Fac ut portem."

Another instance of the careful economy with which Dvorák makes the most of his thematic material comes before us. The main idea of the Duet (soprano and tenor) lies, so to speak, in a nutshell, and here it is:—



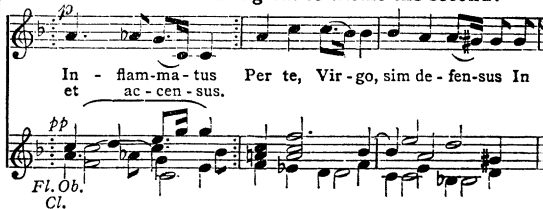
With this the composer works throughout the whole of the duet, voice answering voice with the quoted phrase or others closely related, while, if the theme drops from the vocal parts it appears at once in the orchestra. Let no one suppose that hereby poverty is indicated. Such treatment, when successful, points to wealth—to the abundance of resource that enables a thought to be presented in many forms, as one and the same diamond reflects many rays of different colours.

No. 9. Solo, "Inflammatum et accensus."

This is a remarkable and very masterly number. It contains two distinct and contrasted themes, one inspired by a sense of majesty, the other pleading and pathetic. A brief quotation in each case will convey what we mean better than many words. The voice begins thus, after the usual introductory bars:—



From this the transition is great to theme the second:—



Without occupying undue space it is impossible to convey a just idea of the many beauties contained in this impressive solo, and it must suffice to leave the foregoing illustrations as partly showing the nature of its materials. Particularly beautiful is the development of the second subject. Its refinement and tenderness are beyond praise.

No. 10. Quartet and Chorus, "Quando corpus."

Dvorák not only follows the example set by Beethoven in his First Mass, by Rossini in his "Stabat," and by Mozart's "Requiem"—to mention no others—but he improves upon it; that is to say, he forms the bulk of his final number out of the materials which served for the first. Thus the "Quando corpus" leads off with the dominant pedal that ushered in the "Stabat Mater," and its matter is obviously suggested by, where it does not exactly reproduce, the music of that number. So with the elaborate *ensemble* for soli and chorus on the word "Amen." Here the "Stabat" motive is prominent throughout a contrapuntal movement from which it would serve no useful purpose to make such quotations as alone could be given. Enough that harmonic masses and counterpoint help to form a magnificent climax of varied grandeur and consistent impressiveness.

To sum up—this "Stabat Mater" is a notable work, and approaches as near to greatness as possible, if it be not actually destined to rank among world-renowned masterpieces. It is fresh and new, while in harmony with the established canons of art; and, though apparently laboured and over-developed in places, speaks with the force and directness of genius.

Solemn Mass in E flat. By T. R. Buckton.

Mass (St. Joseph). By J. Short.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

WHILE music is steadily winning its way as an aid to devotion in the various dissenting communities, it cannot be said that the musical representatives of the Roman Catholic faith in this country have recently displayed much activity in their own special sphere. The two Masses named above claim attention, chiefly because so few examples of a similar kind from the pens of English composers have lately come under our notice. Mr. Buckton is organist and choirmaster of St. Augustine's, Manchester, and it appears from a letter written by Canon Wilding, of that church, that the Mass in E flat has been performed frequently during the last few years, and that he considers "the style of it to be good and quite church-like." After such a testimonial it seems invidious to raise objections; but from a strictly musicianly point of view, Mr. Buckton's Mass can scarcely be spoken of in terms of praise. In manner it belongs to the weakest Italian school, but as difference of opinion may rightly prevail as to what are the true characteristics of church music, it would be unfair to condemn the work on that score. When, however, we find theoretical errors of the most atrocious kind scattered up and down the pages of the score, it behoves us to express regret that the composer should have rushed into print without submitting his work to the revision of some competent musician, who would have informed him, among other things, that consecutive fifths and octaves are forbidden.

Mr. Short's Mass is far more commendable. In manner it is more solid, the resources of counterpoint being employed to a moderate extent, while the writing throughout is musicianly and fairly expressive. The composer is probably familiar with the best examples of Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, and Cherubini, and his music reflects the style of these great exemplars, allowing for an intentional conciseness, the Mass being written for ordinary church use.