

Review

Source: *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, Vol. 28, No. 532 (Jun. 1, 1887), pp. 365-366

Published by: [Musical Times Publications Ltd.](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3359663>

Accessed: 09-01-2016 13:46 UTC

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A LITTLE volume on Musical Art and Study, by Mr. H. C. Banister, consisting of three papers recently read respectively before the National Society of Professional Musicians, the North-East London Society of Musicians, and the College of Organists, will be issued immediately by Messrs. George Bell and Sons.

THE last Organ Recital of the season at the Bow and Bromley Institute, was given on Saturday, April 30, by Mr. W. M. Wait (Organist and Choirmaster of St. Andrew, Undershafte, E.C.); solo violin, Mr. H. C. Tonking; vocalists, "The Lothbury Male Voice Choir"; Conductor, Mr. T. B. Evison.

THE Misses Nellie and Kate Chaplin gave their annual Concert at the Athenæum, Camden Road, on the 5th ult. They were assisted by Miss Margaret Hoare, Miss Fanny Moody, Mr. Orlando Harley, Mr. Pelham Roof, and Mr. E. J. Margetson (vocalists); and Miss Mabel Chaplin (cello).

By the death of Mr. Charles Clarke, which took place on the 1st ult., the parish of St. John, Devizes, has lost one of the oldest organists in the Diocese of Salisbury. He had held the above mentioned appointment for upwards of forty years, and was highly esteemed, both as an artist and a genial kind-hearted man.

SIR ARTHUR SULLIVAN'S Cantata "The Golden Legend" will be performed at the Worcester Festival in September; at Norwich, Nottingham, Bristol, Cheltenham, and Bradford during October; at Huddersfield in November; and at Exeter in December.

MISS ANNIE MARRIOTT had the honour of singing before the Queen, at a private performance of Dr. C. Villiers Stanford's "Jubilee Ode," given at Buckingham Palace, on the 11th ult., by command of Her Majesty. The work is for soprano solo and chorus.

WE are informed that H.R.H. Prince Christian has accepted the office of President of the Kensington School of Music, and that H.R.H. Princess Christian, H.R.H. Princess Mary Adelaide, Duchess of Teck, and H.S.H. the Duke of Teck, have become patrons of the Institution.

MR. FRED. G. SHINN, A.C.O., gave an Organ Recital at Brixton Hall, on the 18th ult. The programme, which was miscellaneous, included Fantasia on Vesper Hymn (E. H. Turpin), Grand Chorus in D (Guilmant), and Fantasia in C (Tours).

MR. HENRY CROSS, Baritone of St. Andrew's, Wells Street, and Westminster Abbey, has been awarded the certificate of proficiency in Public Singing at the Royal College of Music, and has also been made an Associate.

MADAME LEMMENS-SHERRINGTON, now a Professor of Singing at the Brussels Conservatoire, has contributed a useful article on "Learning to Sing" to the June number of the *Girls' Own Paper*.

THE new two-manual organ, built by Alfred Monk, London, for Havant Congregational Chapel, was opened on the 1st ult.

REVIEWS.

Richard Wagner jugé en France: par Georges Servières.
[Paris: Librairie illustrée.]

M. SERVIÈRES' work, though laying no claim to originality, and being in its essence rather a book designed for casual reference than for continuous reading, is nevertheless a valuable contribution to Wagnerian literature, and a monument of that particular sort of patient research which is more common in Germans than Frenchmen. In the space of little more than 300 pages, the author has contrived to give a very complete digest of all the criticisms favourable or—as is more frequently the case—inimical, which have been passed upon Wagner in France from the date of his first visit to Paris up to last year, by all sorts and conditions of critics, professional and unprofessional, musical and literary, male and female. And here we may remark that, on the whole, Wagner has certainly secured the suffrages of a remarkable number of distinguished literary men, amongst whom it will suffice to

mention Gérard de Nerval—the first French translator of "Faust."—Théophile Gautier, and amongst eminent writers of the day, Alphonse Daudet, who cannot however, appreciate Wagner's poems. On the other hand, it is only fair to mention that Prosper Mérimée and Edmond About were of a very different way of thinking. Of the regular critics, few come well out of the ordeal. They stand in most cases self-convicted of incompetence, of inconsistency, or of prejudice. Berlioz's attitude towards Wagner in the last years of his life, as revealed by his own letters, was wholly unworthy of him. M. Reyher and M. Saint-Saëns fare best in this record, while some writers, notably the notorious M. Albert Wolff, hardly deserve the trouble which the author has taken in exposing their elephantine buffooneries. But if severe on the ignorant or prejudiced opponents of Wagner, M. Servières is equally hard on the extravagant and eccentric adherents of that master. The vagaries of the *Revue Wagnérienne* are fair game for an impartial critic, and M. Servières, though evidently an enthusiastic admirer of Wagner's music, fully appreciates the irritation aroused by the fantastical absurdities of such exclusive coteries. He quotes, for example, from this review a passage in which the writer announces the discovery of "unconscious Wagnerites" in other arts, amongst whom we find Mr. Whistler included, and gives the two wonderful sonnets in honour of Wagner, which gained the first and second prizes in a competition recently held under the auspices of the paper in question. This impartiality on the part of M. Servières, in which he resembles his friend, M. Adolphe Jullien—to whose admirable study of Wagner the present volume forms a most useful supplement—will doubtless offend the susceptibilities of those touchy folks who regard any fault-finding with their hero in the light of a sacrilege, and are unrestrained in their extravagances by that most salutary check—a sense of humour. A good point in the author's method is that he generally tells us briefly, but comprehensively, what was going on in other non-musical circles at the various epochs of which he treats, a practice which enables the reader to take his bearings far better than he can from a mere date. The early chapters are very interesting, and bring home very pointedly the irksome nature of the work Wagner had to perform, and the mortification and rebuffs to which he was so frequently forced to submit. But M. Servières most judiciously remarks in this connection, "The retrospective indignation which seizes some of his admirers in regard to the injustice of fate towards him during his first visit to Paris, strikes me as somewhat childish," for, as he goes on to prove, there was no reason why the Parisians of the day should treat him better than a *prix de Rome*. Bizet, twenty years later, had to perform equally menial duties. It cannot be denied that some of the hostile criticisms passed on Wagner were exceedingly amusing, and M. Servières never fails to appreciate the point of a joke, even at the expense of his own side. When the "Tannhäuser" Overture was given for the first time in Paris, in 1850, one critic pronounces it to be "the very noisy accompaniment of an absent melody," and when "Tannhäuser" was hissed and whistled down by the Jockey Club eleven years later, Berlioz declared that "to understand the music of Wagner one must be endowed with the gift of *second hearing*." The causes of the failure of "Tannhäuser" in 1861 are very carefully gone into by M. Servières. The displacement of the ballet, and the consequent irritation of the members of the Jockey Club, no doubt, went for something; but the patronage of the Princess Meternich, and the intervention of the Emperor; Wagner's own temper; the indiscretion of his partizans; and the publication of his "Letter on Music," were more serious obstacles in the way of success. Perhaps, he adds, the best explanation of all is that given by M. Lindau, who says, "the true cause of the failure was the transplantation of a German plant on to Gallic soil." *Propos* of the Emperor's patronage of Wagner, M. Servières very happily remarks: "By a strange freak of fate, it was reserved for this revolutionary to be protected, thanks to the caprice of a great lady, by the author of the *Coup d'État* of 1851; for the most complicated melodic genius to be patronised by a sovereign whose whole nature rebelled against music." A strange fact, on which M.

Servières lays great stress, is that whereas Wagner's vulgar and pitiful farce, "Une Capitulation," should have excited such boundless animosity, his notorious *brochure* "German art and German politics," in which ten times severer things are said of the French, passed so entirely unnoticed as not to be made the ground of any hostile demonstration against "Rienzi," which was produced soon after its publication. But then the French and Germans had not been at war, as they were when "Une Capitulation" was written. Not the least interesting part of the book is the preface, which contains a great many shrewd remarks on the present opposition to Wagner. He sums up the motives by which many of his fellow-countrymen are actuated, as the pseudo-patriotic, the commercial, and the motive of anxiety or dread of detection—adroitly drawing a parallel between the composers of to-day and the dramatists who would not listen to Shakespeare as interpreted by Henrietta Smithson. We close our account of M. Servières' excellent book with the following spirited passage:—"If French composers were to succeed in keeping in check the invasion of German music, they would stand alone in hindering that intellectual reciprocity which prevails now-a-days between the races of Europe. Is the merit of our *savants* lessened because they have profited by the chemical or physiological discoveries due to the investigations of English science? Are our painters less admired because the annual *salon* opens its doors to many Italian, Spanish, Swedish, or American artists who live in Paris?"

Choral March; Advance, Britannia! Composed for the Grand Colonial Procession in the Dome Entertainment of the Brighton Grammar School, by C. T. West.

Heather Bells. Two-part Song for ladies' voices. Words and music by Frank J. Sawyer, Mus. Doc., Oxon.

Ye Spotted Snakes. Fairy Song and Lullaby, from Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream." Composed by B. Lütgen.

[Novello, Ewer and Co. Brighton: J. and W. Chester.]

MR. WEST'S Choral March is in every respect excellently suited for its intended purpose. Easy to sing, extremely melodious, and unaffectedly harmonised, we can imagine that it will linger in the memory of the school-boys long after the occasion for which it was written has passed away. "Heather Bells" is a charming little Spring song, with a graceful *arpeggio* accompaniment. So unpretentious and attractive a composition can scarcely fail to find favour with vocalists who can appreciate simple melody and pure part-writing. It is difficult to avoid reminiscences of the many settings of "Ye spotted snakes"; but the composer of the one before us has not only accomplished this task, but has given a remarkably fresh and sympathetic colouring to Shakespeare's beautiful lines. Commencing with a placid and tuneful solo, the Lullaby is written in two parts, to be sung as a duet or chorus, the accompaniment being aided, when it can be procured, by the toy instrument in imitation of the nightingale. The song will, however, be almost equally effective with the trill upon the pianoforte.

The Song of Jubilee. A Thanksgiving Cantata, for solo voices, chorus, orchestra, and organ. By Jacob Bradford, Mus.D., Oxon. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

THE multiplication of musical pieces composed to celebrate the fiftieth year of her Majesty's reign may be accepted as a convincing proof of the acknowledged eloquence of the art to express the popular feeling; and it is gratifying to find amongst the names of those who have employed their talents in the cause so many long identified with music of the highest class. Our reviewing pages have for some time given ample evidence of this fact, and an addition to the list is now made by a Doctor of Music already known as the composer, not only of an oratorio, but of numerous cantatas, anthems, and other important works. The music of the Cantata before us is in every respect sympathetic with the subject it illustrates. Commencing with a soprano recitative, followed (after a short instrumental Introduction) by a Te Deum and Choral, to the tune "Gotha," composed by H.R.H. the late Prince Consort, we have a well written and melodious soprano solo "Grant the Queen a long life," the stately movement of which, in 6-4 rhythm, expresses the words with becoming dignity. In the chorus which succeeds this the National

Anthem is effectively used, the theme being treated in fugue form, with some admirable contrapuntal writing. A brief choral recitative, for tenors and basses, is followed by a duet, for soprano and tenor, with quartet "The Queen shall rejoice," which may also be commended for the easy flow of the vocal parts; and the final chorus and fugue, "All praise and thanks to God," forms a worthy climax to a work which shows the result of good training, and an intimate knowledge of the best school of sacred composition. The Cantata is scored for a full orchestra, and a special organ part is used with the instrumental accompaniments.

Liederkreis. Twelve Songs. Poetry by J. von Eichendorff. With pianoforte accompaniment.

Woman's Love and Life. A Cycle of Songs. Written by A. von Chamisso; for voice and pianoforte. Edited and translated by Natalia Macfarren. Composed by Robert Schumann. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

IN the year 1840 Schumann says, in a letter to a friend, "I am now writing nothing but songs, great and small. I can hardly tell you how delightful it is to write for the voice as compared with instrumental composition, and what a stir and tumult I feel within me when I sit down to it. I have brought forth quite new things in this line." This is the period when the charming vocal pieces contained in these volumes were composed, and all singers should welcome them as in the highest degree reflecting the individuality of their author. In the "Liederkreis" it would be difficult indeed to name any song which deserves to rank above its companions, so earnestly and lovingly has the composer set the many beautiful verses which he has evidently selected as representing his own state of feeling at the time. That we may especially linger over "The Loreley," "The silent one," "Moonlight," "Far from home," "Twilight," "In the wood," and "Night in Spring," is no proof that we do not derive exquisite pleasure from the many other perfect musical pieces comprised in the volume. The Cycle of Songs is indeed a little story, the subject of which is sufficiently indicated by its title. How the various phases of this passionate love-poem are illustrated by the composer need scarcely be enlarged upon, but we may say that a sympathetic pianist as well as a sympathetic vocalist are absolutely essential for the due rendering of these eloquent pieces. Lady Macfarren has shown much poetical and musical feeling in her translation of the words, which certainly have all the effect of being those which originally inspired the composer.

Through murmurous leaves. On the land afar extending. German words by George Scheurlin.

Morning sweet Cuckoos greet. German words by A. von Wenzel.

True life to live. German words by Gries.

Trios for Female Voices. The English translation of the words by Dr. Troutbeck. Composed by G. Bartel.

[Novello, Ewer and Co.]

ALL these Trios are highly favourable specimens of Mr. Bartel's power of writing clearly and melodiously for female voices. No. 1 is a well harmonised and attractive song, with some points of imitation which materially aid its effect; No. 2 is a tranquil and appropriate melody, flowing onward without break; No. 3, with an independent accompaniment, well expresses the words, the temptation to imitate the song of the cuckoo and quail, when these suggestive birds are mentioned, being happily resisted; and No. 4 is a well written and effective song, with an occasional alto solo. All these Trios may be conscientiously recommended to the attention of vocalists in search of novelty in this class of music.

Novello, Ewer and Co.'s Pianoforte Albums. Edited by Berthold Tours. Vol. 7. Compositions by Hermann Goetz. [Novello, Ewer and Co.]

WE are glad to find that the contents of these excellent Pianoforte Albums are not limited to those works which have already been stamped with public approval. The desire to create a taste for compositions but little known, as well as to supply those constantly in demand, should earn the thanks of all who would further the spread of good music; and we cordially welcome, therefore, this