

is in fact precisely what an overture should be. The first act opens with one of the best things in it—a duet for *Kate* and *Constance*, “Oh summer morning,” full of sparkling melody, and exquisitely written for the voices. *Kate’s* cavatina, “What is this love,” though vocal and musicianlike in treatment, seems to want the repose which the words demand. In the village sports, there are some excellent choral effects; and passing over *Tony Lumpkin’s* song, “The cunning old fox,” we have a very clever trio with chorus, “Thank you, sir, for your advice,” for *Marlow*, *Hastings*, and *Tony*, leading to a well-constructed concerted piece, in which *Tony* is exulting at the idea of the joke he has played upon the travellers. In the next scene the old-fashioned air for the *Squire*, “Once again my father’s hall,” created quite a sensation; and was *encored* most enthusiastically. The trio, in which the *Squire* details to *Marlow* and *Hastings* the military achievements of the Duke of Marlborough, contains some very excellent writing; and the bold martial subject, interrupted by the angry protestations of *Marlow* and his friend, tells out most admirably. The duet, “Oh, it is sweet when lovers meet,” for *Constance* and *Hastings*, is just the lover-like out pouring that we must expect under such circumstances; but the scene which follows, in which *Marlow’s* bashfulness prevents his holding any connected conversation with *Kate*, is full of effect, and worked up with infinite skill. The second act contains the best music in the opera. *Constance’s* opening ballad, “Why sadly sighs the evening gale?”—most exquisitely harmonised—a sparkling song for *Kate*, “Am I not a pretty barmaid?” with a catching melody destined to be lisped out by many a pretty drawing-room barmaid—and the four-part song, “The cuckoo sings in the poplar tree,” one of the most catching pieces of quaint old English music with which we are acquainted—follow each other in rapid succession; and the *finale* to the act is most vigorously worked out, and unquestionably stands forth prominently as the most artistic writing in the whole work.

In the third act we have an effective bustling trio, in which *Tony* attempts to read the letter; but the best piece is the quintett, “Traitor to friendship’s sacred ties,” which is not only beautiful in itself, but happily conceived in a dramatic point of view, the *Squire* calling to his daughter from within the house, and thus mixing in the general effect with the singers on the stage. After a duet between *Marlow* and *Kate*, “To win a proud and wealthy bride,” we come to a well-written *finale*, in which some of the themes of the opera are cleverly introduced; the soprano has a brilliant bravura passage, and the chorus concludes the opera with the melody of the barmaid’s song. The acting and singing was excellent throughout. Miss Louisa Pyne never was in better voice; and her vocalization was absolutely faultless. Both as *Miss Hardcastle* and as the assumed barmaid she looked extremely well; and her acting in the scenes with *Marlow* would have been accepted with the utmost favour even in Goldsmith’s comedy itself. The same may be said of Mr. Harrison, who in *Marlow* had a part admirably suited to him. Mr. Weiss as the *Squire*—who although somewhat out of his element as the old English gentleman, was painstaking and sang well—and Mr. Perren as *Hastings*, were also entitled to the highest praise. Mr. H. Corri in the part of *Tony Lumpkin* somewhat overacted the character—as, in fact, he generally does—but it was a difficult task to be compelled to provoke comparisons with so many low comedians who have identified themselves with the part; and in the concerted music he was invaluable. In the small part of *Constance Neville*, Miss Anna Hiles proved herself a valuable member of an operatic company, displaying a good *mezzo-soprano* voice, and a careful style of singing. The opera was extremely well placed upon the stage; and, indeed, so perfect a first night has seldom been heard. Mr. Macfarren was summoned before the curtain at the conclusion of each act, and the success of the opera was most genuine and unequivocal.

SACRED HARMONIC SOCIETY.

ON Friday, the 5th ult., a great Choral Meeting of the Sixteen-hundred Members of the London Division of the Handel Festival Choir took place, the vocalists occupying the entire orchestra and body of the hall; and although this was strictly a rehearsal, and hardly perhaps, therefore, open to criticism, we cannot refrain from expressing our opinion that the training of this choir by Mr. Costa is a triumph in the progress of music in England that must eventually effect the greatest results. Their performance of Mendelssohn’s difficult psalm, “When Israel out of Egypt came,” written for an eight-part chorus, was beyond all praise. Not only was each part admirably sustained, but the points were taken up with a precision only attainable by those who are earnest in their work, and who submit their entire will to the unlimited control of a conductor so unerring and vigilant as Mr. Costa. We trust that the rehearsal of this fine, but unaccountably neglected, composition is preliminary to its public performance with full orchestra, during the coming season. In anticipation, we presume, of the approaching Shakespeare Jubilee, the choir also sang many of the compositions written to his words, amongst which the madrigal, “As it fell upon a day,” by Lord Mornington; Purcell’s chorus, “Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell;” Macfarren’s excellent choral song, “Orpheus, with his lute,” and Stevens’s well-known glee, “Ye spotted snakes,” were especially noticeable, as specimens of the manner in which a large body of vocalists can be brought under entire subjection.

The performance of Mendelssohn’s *Lobgesang* given by the Society on Friday, January 29th, too late for notice in our last number, was repeated on Monday, the 8th ult., and attracted one of the largest audiences ever assembled in Exeter Hall. We have always entertained the firmest conviction that this magnificent composition required only to be placed frequently before the public to achieve the same popularity as “Elijah;” and now that it has been taken in hand by the Sacred Harmonic Society, aided by the indefatigable exertions of its conductor, Mr. Costa, there can be little doubt that it will become one of the most attractive works of the many which this Society has rescued from comparative neglect. We do not believe that so fine a performance of the Cantata has before been heard in this country. We need scarcely say that Mr. Sims Reeves fully supported the fame he has justly acquired as a singer of sacred music, in the somewhat arduous tenor part, especially in the fine piece of declamation, “Watchman, will the night soon pass?” which was delivered with the eloquence of a true artist. Madame Lemmens-Sherrington sang the air, “Praise thou the Lord,” with much effect; although we could scarcely feel that the purity of Mendelssohn’s music seemed to accord with the somewhat exaggerated style which may pass current in the brilliant and showy music of the concert-room. With Madame Sherrington’s natural endowments, however, we have little doubt that—if she be really in earnest—she may make a name in the sacred, as she has hitherto done in the operatic style; and if so, we are convinced that her fine voice will always ensure her a ready welcome. We must not omit to mention the very promising first appearance of Mrs. Sidney Smith, who in the duet with chorus, “I waited for the Lord,” with Madame Sherrington, completely won the sympathies of the audience by her pure and unaffected vocalization. After the *Lobgesang*, came Rossini’s glowing *Stabat Mater*, curiously contrasting with the earnestly religious feeling of Mendelssohn’s Cantata. Not the less, however, was it welcomed by the audience; and deservedly so, for its delicious melodies, and power of holding the hearers within its fascination to the final chorus. On this evening, Mr. Sims Reeves sang the beautiful tenor air, “Cujus animam,” (sung by Mr. Montem Smith at the previous performance); and Mr. Santley gave the “Pro peccatis” so admirably, as to call forth an *encore*, which he was compelled to respond to. The other vocalists were Madame Lemmens-

Sherrington and Madame Laura Baxter, who created quite an effect in the duet, "Quis est homo," the soprano part suiting the voice and style of Madame Sherrington to perfection, and Madame Laura Baxter displaying not only a good *contralto* voice, but a true feeling for this class of music. In every respect this was a most excellent concert.

Handel's *Israel in Egypt* was the oratorio on Friday, the 19th ult., the principal singers being Madame Rüdersdoff, Miss Banks, Madame Sinton-Dolby, Messrs. Cummings, Santley and Patey. The choruses were marvellously sung throughout; and those who know the difficulties of this work will fully appreciate the efforts of all concerned in its performance.

MR. HENRY LESLIE'S CHOIR.

THE second Subscription Concert for the season of this excellent Choir took place at St. James's Hall on the 4th ult. Mendelssohn's Military Overture (chiefly known here by his own four-handed pianoforte arrangement) was on this occasion played by the band of the Scots Fusilier Guards, though scarcely so well in tune, especially in the slow movement, as we could have desired. The most interesting features of the concert were Mendelssohn's Cantata, "O sons of Art," written for male voices, with accompaniment of wind instruments, and Samuel Wesley's unaccompanied Motett, for double choir, "In exitu Israel." The want of effect in Mendelssohn's cantata was in no respect traceable either to the singing or to the composition. Carefully as it had been studied under the able guidance of Mr. Leslie, and zealously as every member of the choir laboured to work out the intention of the composer, it was an utter impossibility for a small vocal body trained to give the minute effects of light and shade in the madrigals and part-music to which they have been accustomed, to sing with the power intended by Mendelssohn, who expressly designed that the brilliant wind-instrument accompaniment should aid, and not destroy, the effect of the voices. Enough, however, was shown of the excessive beauty of the composition to justify its being taken in hand by a choir of larger pretension; and Mr. Leslie deserves every praise for calling public attention to its merits. Wesley's Motett is written in the genuine fine old school of sacred music; and is worthy to be ranked with the noblest specimens of its class. It was excellently sung throughout, and created a marked sensation with the audience. Henry Leslie's Advent Anthem, "Blow ye the trumpet," was also given with great effect; and an enthusiastic *encore* was awarded to Pearsall's well written and beautiful madrigal, for six voices, "Light of my soul," which was sung with all the gradations of tone absolutely essential in these compositions, and for which this choir is so justly celebrated. A word of praise must be given to Miss Westbrook and Miss Whytock for their chaste and artistic rendering of the duet "Quis est homo," from Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, a performance so appreciated by the audience as to elicit an universal *encore*. We were glad also to find that Weelkes's madrigal, "As Vesta was descending"—one of the purest specimens of the English school at the commencement of the seventeenth century—was re-demanded without a dissentient voice. Such music as this never dies; and with its quaint harmonies and melodic phrases so recalls the date of its birth, that we seem to be actually living in the time when the art was first asserting its right to a place in popular favour. Mr. E. Dannreuther, who has already won a name at the Crystal Palace Concerts, performed Beethoven's "Moonlight" sonata with the precision of an experienced pianist, but with none of that impulse of genius without which so poetical a composition falls coldly and lifelessly on the ear. We could name many English players waiting for a hearing, whose performance would give equal, if not greater, satisfaction to their hearers. The Hall was extremely well attended, and the audience most attentive throughout the entire concert.

MONDAY POPULAR CONCERTS.

THE concert on the 1st ult. was exceedingly interesting, on account of the programme being exclusively devoted to the works of Mozart, a feature so acceptable to the lovers of genuine music, that it scarcely needed the announcement that the idea grew from the fact of Mozart's having been born some day in the preceding week, 108 years ago. Madame Arabella Goddard was the pianist of the evening; and most delicately indeed did she render the beautiful sonata in B flat, for pianoforte alone; a work which cannot be too deeply studied by those who are still prone to believe that mere manual dexterity will enable them to expound the compositions of the great masters. Here, indeed, no wonderful mechanical difficulties present themselves; but in their place we have an uninterrupted flow of the purest melody, combined with passages exacting a power of phrasing of the very highest order, and a fluency of execution which none but the most accomplished player can command. Madame Goddard also took part in the sonata in A major, for pianoforte and violin, with M. Vieuxtemps, and in the well known quartett in G minor, for pianoforte and strings. The quintett in A major, for clarinet and strings, in which Mr. Lazarus, as usual, delighted every hearer by his masterly performance, and the purity of his tone, was also one of the features of the evening. The programme of the following concert was selected entirely from the works of Mendelssohn, the anniversary of his birth-day, like that of Mozart, occurring near enough to the concert to justify the directors in the act. That no such justification was necessary must have been amply proved by the unqualified delight of the audience during the entire evening. Mr. Charles Hallé played the pianoforte *caprice* in E major, and joined MM. Vieuxtemps and Paque in the trio in C minor, for pianoforte, violin, and violoncello. Mendelssohn's early composition, the quartett in E flat, Op. 12, for two violins, viola, and violoncello, placed judiciously first in the programme, formed an excellent prelude to the masterly works which followed; and indeed the growth of his genius was so well shown—commencing in his 19th year, when this quartett was written—that the concert became additionally interesting as to a certain extent tracing his career.

The next concert, devoted to various composers, should be noticed for the sake of Mozart's Sestet in B flat, for stringed quartett and two horns, which was performed for the first time by M. Vieuxtemps, L. Ries, H. Webb, and Paque, Messrs. C. Harper and Standen. This elaborate composition requires more than one hearing, but its beauties, like all Mozart's works, charm at first. The Adagio, in which the horns are silent, is a delicious stream of melody. The Sestet was repeated at the following concert.

THE concert of the Musical Society, on the 28th January, should not be passed over, if only on account of the artistic performance of Mozart's pianoforte concerto in D minor, by Miss Agnes Zimmermann. Educated entirely in the Royal Academy of Music, she adds one more to the many players of a sound classical school who have shed a lustre upon that institution; and the applause with which she was deservedly greeted will, we trust, encourage her to persevere in a career which has had so hopeful a commencement.

WE think it right that the public should be informed upon a point of historical musical interest, especially as the error which had spread so widely before the publication of Lady Wallace's translation of "Mendelssohn's Letters," is likely to be perpetuated by the book itself. In a note at the bottom of page 133, in the second volume, it is stated that *St. Paul* was performed for the first time in England, at the Birmingham Festival. The facts are these. The first performance of the oratorio in this country took place on Friday morning, 7th October, 1836, at the Musical Festival at St. Peter's Church, Liverpool;