

thoroughly sound, teachers the most eminent in their several departments being engaged, and every facility being afforded to the pupils of attending the concerts of the orchestra, the rehearsals, and the Organ Concerts. An important portion of the instruction, too, is the "College Choir," where singers are carefully trained for chorus-singing; the course of study, however, also including general musical education. "We invite to this choir," says the musical director in his address, "only those who are in earnest, and who will meet our effort to teach with corresponding effort to learn, who will attend the appointed hours for study and the concerts. A private student in the college who loses a lesson is the chief sufferer; but the neglect of a member of the choir injures that symmetry which is made by the perfect balance of the parts." These words cannot be too much impressed upon all who desire to attain eminence in the art they have chosen.

AMONGST the number of songs forwarded to us for review we scarcely remember one in which any indication was given what voice it was originally written for, or indeed whether it was intended for a female or a male vocalist. It might reasonably be imagined that the nature of the words would, in many cases, sufficiently show whether they were to be sung by a lady or a gentleman; but considering that we now hear singers of the gentler sex warbling the most impassioned serenades, it is evident that we are not to be in the slightest degree guided by the character of the composition. It is true that catalogues of vocal works often inform us of the compass of each song named; but this is a matter entirely of pitch, and leaves us as much as ever in the dark as to the quality of voice intended. If it be urged as a reason for this important omission that a song will sell more extensively when the voice it is composed for is not mentioned, why should we not have pieces published merely called "Instrumental Solos," on the supposition that they are equally available for a violin, flute, clarinet, or indeed any instrument which can produce the notes, and upon which the passages can be executed? Surely what is known as *timbre* must have something to do with the effect of an instrumental composition; and is this to be entirely ignored in one written for the voice? Would Beethoven's "Adelaide" or Mozart's "Qui sdegno" satisfy their composers if the former were transposed for a bass or the latter for a tenor; and, if not, must we not look upon it as a sign of decadence in vocal music that the same song is published in all sorts of keys to suit any amateur vocalist who may please to sing it? Surely a composer must know best what he means; and, even if his intentions should be disregarded, at least every musician would desire that they should be placed upon record.

It is usually considered that England is slow in recognising the musical works of foreign artists; but two instances have lately occurred which seem to prove that, even admitting the partial truth of this reproach, we are by no means singular in our tardiness. In Paris, it appears, attempts have recently been made to introduce some of the operatic works of Wagner, which have not by any means been received with warm tokens of encouragement; but a selection of his music performed on the composer's birthday was met by an organised opposition, and a disgraceful scene ensued, the noise of which rose far above the Wagnerian strains. It is probable that this hot-headed crusade against German importations may cool down in the course of time; but meanwhile those who wish to form a dispassionate judgment upon the music are prevented from hearing it, and

art thus suffers from the prejudices of the few. The other case, although widely different in the result, is the fact of the first performance in Italy of Handel's Oratorio "Israel in Egypt." Considering the popularity of Handel, it seems almost incredible that the Maestro Mustafà, Director of the Società Musicale Romana, should be the first to introduce both "Israel in Egypt" and "The Messiah" into Rome, and that the local papers should now express the belief that the performance of the works of this master will "mark an epoch in the musical history of the country." Surely the grandeur of Handel's writings should have been known to the principal artists of musical Italy years ago; and we should have thought that the performance of some of his works might safely have been tried before now. As we have said, England can scarcely be considered so very conservative, when we find France driving Wagner out of the country and Italy only just becoming acquainted with Handel.

OUR operatic managers have been surprisingly reluctant to see that the altered circumstances of the times render advisable a great change in their policy. This remark specially applies to Mr. Mapleson, because, since there must be yet awhile an aristocratic house, Mr. Gye has some excuse for persevering along the old lines. At length, however, there is reason to believe that Mr. Mapleson will establish a democratic opera, like that he is now "running" as a sequel to the ordinary season. Observation at home, and experience in America, have proved to the reluctant managerial mind what should be done, and shown how to do it. Hence we may look for radical changes at Her Majesty's Theatre next year, and it is not difficult to forecast them. We shall expect the emancipation of the house from the coddling system of subscription—at least, to an extent sufficient for freedom from the bondage of leading strings pulled by ticket offices. We shall expect, further, a sweeping change in the interior; and especially a large abolition of private boxes, which are rarely let, and have, as a rule, to be filled with "dead heads." And we anticipate a thorough reform in the absurd dress regulations which bar the doors against every gentleman who is not attired like a waiter. Let Mr. Mapleson do these things, throw open his theatre at moderate prices, provide a good *ensemble*, and show fair enterprise with regard to providing new attractions, and success, we are sure, will follow. No doubt, Mr. Gye would look down on his present rival from the height of a fashionable caterer, but Mr. Mapleson, with a house full of people and a satisfied treasurer, could endure the gaze.

HENRY SMART.

SINCERELY do we regret that our expressions of hope in the ultimate recovery of this eminent musician have not been realised. The announcement in our last number that a Government pension of £100 a year had been conferred upon him we have reason to know afforded him the utmost gratification; and, although he did not live to enjoy the solid benefit of this national recognition of his talent, it must be a source of satisfaction to his surviving relatives that his unceasing labours in the cause of the art of which he was so bright an ornament were duly, if somewhat tardily, acknowledged. Peacefully, and surrounded by his sorrowing family, he passed away on the 6th ult., at his residence, King Henry's Road, in his sixty-seventh year, but, as his latest compositions attest, in the full ripeness of his musical powers. Henry Smart was born in a musical family, for his father was a well-known and highly accomplished violinist, and his uncle, Sir George Smart, not only held the post of organist to Her Majesty's Chapel Royal,

but was the acknowledged Conductor of his day. It was fortunate for the art that the young musician shook off the trammels of the law—the profession for which he was at first designed—before the study had unfitted him to develop the gifts with which nature had endowed him. In the profession of his choice he soon obtained eminence; for not only had he exceptional talent as an organist (his extemporaneous performance, especially, impressing most powerfully all who heard him), but his compositions evidenced the possession of an original creative faculty which at once placed him in the foremost rank of his art. His organ works are not only noble examples of musicianly skill, but are replete with a melodious beauty which ever ensures them a cordial welcome. As a composer of church music he obtained a world-wide reputation, his services and anthems having been long universally recognised as masterpieces. At the head of his important secular compositions must be placed the Cantata “The Bride of Dunkerron” (written for and produced at the Birmingham Festival of 1864), which achieved a success fully endorsed by subsequent representations; and there can be little doubt that it will retain its place as one of the most charming works of this fast increasing class by a modern composer. Amongst his other successful compositions must be mentioned the Oratorio “Jacob” and the two beautiful Cantatas, written for female voices, with pianoforte accompaniment, “King René’s Daughter,” and “The Fishermidens”; the rendering of the latter of these at a concert by the students of the Royal Academy of Music affording the most unqualified pleasure to the composer, who was unanimously called forward at the conclusion of the performance to receive the warm congratulations of the audience. Mr. Smart had evidently a special talent for writing pieces exclusively for female voices; not only the two Cantatas already mentioned, but numberless Trios for ladies only, being amongst the very best of his smaller works. Within our limited space it would be impossible to enumerate one-half of the contributions to the art which this prolific composer has left us; but in proof that, even with failing bodily health, his mental powers were as keen as ever, we may mention his compositions in the “Organist’s Quarterly Journal,” every one of which would almost build up a fame as a writer for the instrument upon which he was so excellent a performer. A cheerful and genial companion, Mr. Smart was ever ready to acknowledge in others any portion of the talent of which he himself possessed so large a share; and his enjoyment of music of the highest class was intense. For three or four years he was organist at the Parish Church of Blackburn; afterwards at St. Giles’s, Cripplegate; then at St. Luke’s, Old Street; and finally at St. Pancras Church, Euston Road, a post which he held at the time of his decease. Although afflicted with blindness, he was always active; and attracted by the organ in the Leeds Town Hall (which he assisted in designing), he was often to be seen and heard there during the summer evenings. His loss, indeed, will be long and widely felt; for never was there a more earnest musician, never one who more heartily laboured to raise the standard of the art he professed and deeply loved; and, as a mark of the national appreciation of these facts, we sincerely hope that the pension granted to him will now be continued to his widow, a precedent for which was established on the decease of Dr. Wesley, of Gloucester. At the funeral, which took place on the 11th ult., a large number of the most eminent members of the profession attended to pay the last tribute to his memory; and the grief of those present who were personally acquainted with him will, we are certain, be largely shared by the many who, knowing him only by his works, cannot but feel that they have lost a dear and sympathetic friend.

#### CHESTER MUSICAL FESTIVAL.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

It would be pardonable to take for granted that the Musical Festival held in Chester Cathedral on the 23rd and 24th ult. was absolutely “a new thing under the sun.” But it would be decidedly an error, because there was once a time when the antique city on the Dee had a cele-

bration of the kind septennially. Exactly fifty years have passed since the last of those gatherings took place, and any one who is fortunate enough to possess the *Harmonicon* may, by turning to the volume for 1829, read all about it. In some things it unquestionably puts the proceedings of 1879 to the blush, but in others not. There are, for example, greater reverence and propriety in the present than in the past. Then the Cathedral was given up to workmen for weeks, and desecrated by drinking and smoking, the service, moreover, being so arranged as to occupy the dinner-hour. We have changed all that, and for the better; but in other respects we cannot read the report of 1829 without envy. Imagine a festival with such singers as Madame Malibran, Miss Paton, Mrs. Knyvett, and Mr. Braham, supported by an orchestra one hundred strong (led alternately by Cramer and Mori), and a picked chorus of Lancashire and Yorkshire voices, numbering a hundred and thirty. In the orchestra were Lindley and Dragonetti, while we are told that the principal wind instruments were played “by the individuals who stand at the head of their several departments.” Chester, as will be seen, did not try to emulate this state of things the other day; but in some respects there was a curious parallel between the two festivities. This passage, for example, written in 1829, might be reproduced now: “Of the selections we cannot speak in terms of unqualified praise. There was not a single thing in them on which we have to give an opinion for the first time.” And this also: “The choral band was admirable. The steadiness and correct time of the trebles was quite delightful.” Likewise this, in a modified form: “With reference to the books generally we never saw anything so incorrectly got up.” As in instance take the following strange jumble of languages in the 1879 book: “*Sopranos primo et secundo.*” Further, it might be said now, as fifty years ago: “The evening concerts were but mediocre. Nor do the selections tell much in favour of the taste of the Chester public;” and, yet further: “The instrumental band, as we have before hinted, was miserably deficient in all the stringed instruments,” though it cannot be added, “We do not mean numerically deficient,” for that is just the fault to be now complained of. But when pointing out all this, criticism should bear in mind that the task of reviving the Cathedral Festival at Chester was one of peculiar delicacy, needing to be set about and discharged with great caution. A large party, whose sympathies were essential to success, would never have tolerated mere performances, no matter on how pretentious a scale, in such a place; while the committee could not know how far the public would support them. Great allowance should therefore be made for the shortcomings of the recent gathering, and, though it will be my duty to point them out, no reproach is involved, as regards some, but only a warning.

It would appear that, for all the discretion of the Dean and his colleagues, a perfectly unanimous feeling did not prevail in city and county. I look vainly for the name of the Bishop of the diocese as a supporter of the Festival, and it is obvious that the clergy as a body held aloof, since, beyond those connected with the Cathedral, very few were announced as patrons. This is the more regrettable since it is hard to see in what the Festival, as actually conducted, could offend the most delicate susceptibilities. The “Services” were really services and no sham, going beyond even those at Worcester in earnestness of religious purpose; the singers, soloists excepted, were all drawn from cathedral choirs, and, as far as I know, the most ardent stickler for “reverence” has never yet seen irreverence in the employment of an orchestra. But it may be said that places in the Cathedral were openly sold, and that people who could not pay were excluded from their own church. This was so, of course; otherwise no Festival was possible; yet I am strongly of opinion that the proceedings should have included, as a matter of policy if not of principle, one free service, with full musical accessories, at an hour convenient for the working classes. At Worcester, last year, the free service was a most interesting feature; and there is reason to believe that, apart from good in other ways, it did much to bring popular opinion into harmony with the entire proceedings. But, although the Chester solemnity was not unanimously supported, the Dean and Chapter have very good reason to know that the mass of