

in the tonic major just prior to the words "A fertile brain, a full-skilled hand," but the entire movement is well of those happy touches which show a master-hand. A descriptive and picturesque aria for Leofwin, a Saxon messenger (mezzo-soprano), is followed by a dramatic recitative for Hereward, in which various motives are re-introduced with good effect. The succeeding aria is weaker, though it ends with a vigorous strain not unlike Weber's "Oh! 'tis a glorious sight." The next number is a chorus of Hereward's followers on their voyage to England. This is both original and charming, the ceaseless passages of semi-quavers in the accompaniment graphically illustrating the motion of the sea, while the voice parts are not wanting in interest. The scene is again shifted, and we are introduced to William, who has an air written in a quaint, formal style, but very spirited. A march of the Norman force introduces the battle-scene, which is developed at considerable length. It opens with a duet for Hereward and Torfrida in which a Handelian flavour is prevalent. The change to common time brings an accession of energy, and soon the opposing forces are united in a double chorus which is worked up with infinite cleverness, a short *Presto* movement serving as *coda*. The last part of the cantata, "Hereward's fall and death," opens with a Mozart-like introduction, after which Alfruda (soprano), the siren who tempted Hereward from his allegiance to his country and his wife, proclaims her triumph in an arduous air, "Hail the might of woman, hail!" Here, again, Mr. Prout is scarcely on congenial ground. The words are eminently suggestive, but the music savours rather of commonplace, though containing some grateful passages for the voice. A trio for the hero, Alfruda and William, in which imitation is introduced, is followed by a solidly-written chorus, "Gleemen, lift a tuneful strain." We then pass to the death-scene of Hereward. This commences with an agitated introduction leading to a monologue for the hero. The entrance of the conspirators and the fight are illustrated by much picturesque writing, and the close displays genuine feeling and pathos. A recitative for Torfrida, in which we hear some faint echoes of the preceding scene, is one of the most expressive numbers of the work; and the chorus of lamentation, "Weep for the Viking slain," is also truly admirable. The finale consists of a solo for Torfrida, in which she depicts in glowing terms the coming greatness of England, while the chorus takes up the theme with enthusiasm. Mr. Prout has adopted a broad, vigorous style in his setting of this oration. The music is solid rather than brilliant, dignified rather than glowing and rapturous. Speaking of the work generally, the defects may be said to be a want of freshness in the melodies, and a certain squareness and formality in the phrases. The merits are the masculine breadth and vigour of many of the movements, the constructive excellence throughout, and the splendid orchestration. In this last particular the cantata stands almost unique among English compositions. If the interest flags in other respects now and then, the continuous play of light and colour in the orchestra prevents the attention from drooping even for an instant. It would be rash to predict so soon what permanent position *Hereward* will gain in the estimation of the musical public. But this much may be said with safety, that if any works produced in the present generation by English composers merit longevity Mr. Prout's cantata is one of them. It is replete with evidence of the soundest musicianship, and its most prominent feature is intellectuality. In default of positive genius we should be content with these qualities when they are so richly developed as in the present instance. If any who were present at the performance of the work on Wednesday week deem these remarks unduly depreciatory, let it be understood that our desire has been to maintain the strictest impartiality in dealing with the

new work; and if we have erred it has certainly been on the side of judicial severity rather than of excessive laudation. It only remains to add that the first appearance of the Hackney Choir at St. James's Hall was a complete success, and that, as a body, it is quite worthy to compare with the best of those associations which are accustomed to occupy this arena.

HENRY F. FROST.

MME. VANRANDT appeared as Charubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at Her Majesty's on Saturday last, showing, as in her previous parts, more of promise than of actual performance. On Tuesday Mme. Nilsson once more essayed the part of Valentine in *Les Huguenots*. Dramatically her rendering of this character is very fine, but if she is wise she will eschew such trying embodiments for the future. Her voice, when not unduly forced, retains all its wonted charm; but the time has arrived with Mme. Nilsson when it is advisable to husband resources rather than to waste them in unnecessary efforts.

MME. ANNA MEHLIG gave a concert of classical chamber music on Monday afternoon at St. James's Hall. The most important item in the programme was Rubinstein's quintet for piano and strings in G minor (Op. 99). This work was first performed in London two years ago, the composer himself presiding at the pianoforte. It contains a few beautiful ideas, but they are not well developed, and there is much that appears extravagant and unmeaning. Mme. Mehlig's best solo performances were Liszt's transcription of Bach's great prelude and fugue in E minor (Book II., Peter's edition), and Field's nocturne in A. She was assisted by Mme. Essopoff, Herr Straus, Herr Ries, Mr. Zerbini, and Herr Daubert. The vocalist was Herr Elmblad.

At the Musical Union on Tuesday, Schumann's quartet in A minor (Op. 41, No. 1), Mendelssohn's trio in C minor (Op. 66), and Haydn's quartet in G (No. 81) were performed. M. Marwick and Herr Jaell appeared for the first time this season.

THE second of Messrs. Shedlock and Lochner's Chamber Concerts took place at Lancaster Hall, Notting Hill, on Wednesday evening last, when the chief items of the programme were Beethoven's sonata in C minor for piano and violin, Molique's trio in B flat (Op. 27), the third book of Heller and Ernst's "Pensées Fugitives," and Rheinberger's "Intermezzo and Fuga Chromatica" for organ solo.

THE programme of Herr Sebarwenka's pianoforte recital on Wednesday at St. James's Hall was formed largely of works already played by him on other occasions during the present season. To these no further reference need be made, but the pianist merits warm encomiums for his beautiful rendering of some examples of Chopin—the polonaise in E flat (Op. 22) and the *Scherzo* in B minor (Op. 21). In *forte* passages Herr Sebarwenka's style is sometimes wanting in clearness, but at other times the purity and delicacy of his manipulation are exquisite.

THE Philharmonic concert of Wednesday contained no features of special interest, but the performance generally was successful beyond the average. Señor Sarasate again created a *furor* by his masterly performance of three movements of Raff's suite for violin and orchestra in G minor (Op. 160), and Herr Jaell gave his customary finished rendering of Schumann's pianoforte concerto. The society departed somewhat from its usual groove in selecting Rubinstein's "Ocean" symphony, but the work was well played, and despite its serious inequalities was received with favour. Miss Emma Thursby sang Mozart's arduous aria "Ah! non sei" with ease and brilliancy, winning deserved applause.

MR. WARDLIE's enterprising choir at Edinburgh, of which we have more than once had occasion to

speak in these columns, gave a concert on the 3rd inst., of which the very interesting programme included Brahms's "Song of Destiny," a selection from the third act of *Tannhäuser*, Schumann's "Requiem for Mignon," and Handel's *Acis and Galatea*.

MR. GEORGE RISELEY, the organist of the cathedral and the Colston Hall, Bristol, is doing a good work for music in that city. He has lately brought to a close a series of weekly orchestral concerts, and a summary of the proceedings of the season has been forwarded to us. From this we find that the very large number of 181 different pieces has been brought forward. The list comprises 16 symphonies, 54 overtures, 83 miscellaneous orchestral works, 24 concertos and solos for various instruments, and 4 choral works. The names of 77 different composers have appeared in the programmes, and 10 compositions by English writers have been given. Such a record may compare without disadvantage with that of many of our best musical societies; and the inhabitants of Bristol will show themselves unworthy of their privileges if they do not warmly support so excellent and spirited an effort in the cause of art.

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