

MUSIC - UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



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The Choral Society.

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32 Sussex Ave

THE CHORAL SOCIETY.

BY

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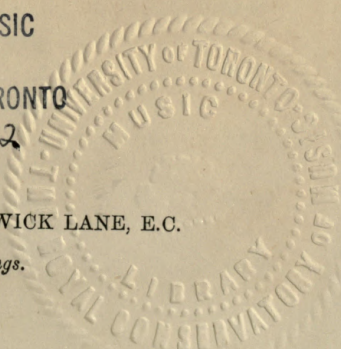
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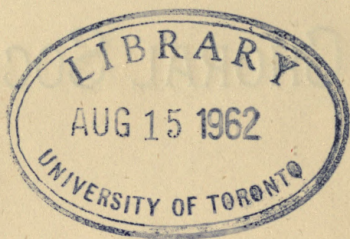
London:

J. CURWEN & SONS, 8, WARWICK LANE, E.C.

Price Three Shillings.

[1889]





806105

LONDON:

PRINTED AT THE TONIC SOL-FA PRESS,
PLAISTOW, E.

MT
88
V4



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INTRODUCTION.

CHORAL Societies may be divided into two classes; those which are corporate (*i.e.*, governed by a committee or officers appointed by the members) and those carried on at the risk and under the sole control of the conductor. The locality, object, and circumstances attending the formation of a new society can alone guide its projectors as to the basis to adopt. When the society is the outcome of Instruction Classes carried on by a teacher (either professional or amateur) the conductor will naturally wish to keep the reins of government in his own hands, asking probably for no more assistance than that of a secretary. The members of such a society, feeling indebted to their conductor for their musical training, will bow to his authority and carry out his wishes without question. The conductor will equally respect the members. He has led them from the alphabet of music to a more or less advanced stage of the art; he knows of what they are capable, and he should be the best judge of the steps to take to complete the work which he began, and to the fulfilment of which he may have for years given his best energies. A conductor in this position should think carefully before launching into printed rules, elected officers, and committee. Committees who are not consulted, and officers who have no duties assigned them, resent the unreality of their position; and if the conductor be not ready to let them take their share in the management of the society, dissatisfaction or open rupture will be the result.

A society raised by the combined efforts of several individuals, and consisting of experienced singers, stands in a different position. Their object will be best attained by an elected committee and officers, with a complete constitution and set of rules. In this instance the conductor will probably be a professional man, who, if he be not liberally paid for his services, will at least be relieved from financial responsibilities and the details of concert and general management.

Imagine a town in which reside many ladies and gentlemen, possessing fair musical skill, who are desirous of starting a society. Amongst the number will be a few more enthusiastic than the rest. These should meet together to exchange views and draw up a draft scheme for the consideration of all the persons interested. Tact must be exercised in making arrangements for the general meeting to keep clear of religious and other prejudices. The divine art of music should not suffer from sectarian differences. The meeting ought to be on "neutral ground," or, if no other suitable room be available than one belonging to a place of worship, the requisite impartiality could be indicated by holding the meeting in a chapel schoolroom, presided over by a prominent churchman, or *vice versa*. The evening for the "open" meeting has arrived. In response to the circular issued to those known to be favourable to the project, supplemented by the personal canvass of the promoters, and public announcements, an encouraging number of persons have assembled. As soon as possible after the stated time, the chairman, previously appointed, explains the purpose for which the meeting has been called, and asks the gentlemen who has acted as secretary *pro. tem.* to give in detail the plans proposed for the formation of the society. These are subsequently discussed in this order:—

Object and Title of the Society.

Musical Qualifications for Membership, and Subscription.

Constitution, Officers, and Committee.

X Conductor. (This is best left to the committee when there are several candidates for the post.)

A series of rules are submitted and approved ; the officers and committee are elected ; the names of intending members are taken down, and arrangements made for commencing the practices.

The object of the following pages is to assist those persons who may be concerned in the formation and management of choral societies, by embodying the replies of about 200 conductors and secretaries of societies throughout the Kingdom to a set of questions ; by quoting articles and extracts from books by well-known and competent authorities bearing upon the subject ; and by recording the experience of the author in a branch of music to which he has devoted more than 20 years of his life.

CHAPTER I.

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE.

THE number of officers which a society should have must of necessity vary with the constitution, size, and peculiar features of each case. When it is a conductor's society the executive may consist merely of a secretary with one or two assistants, or perhaps a Librarian and several choir superintendents. These may form a committee of advice which the conductor will gladly consult when proposing to take any new departure, or he may entrust them with all the business arrangements of concerts, &c.

CONDUCTOR.

A Corporate Society will of course have the appointment of all the officers in its hands, and the task of finding a good conductor will demand the most careful attention. Without a competent conductor a society cannot achieve satisfactory musical results. But a man may be able to "conduct" well without possessing the equally important art of enlisting the sympathies and commanding the hearty support of his forces. Such a man, whatever his musical abilities, would never really succeed because he would not be able to retain his members until their number and skill enabled him to exercise the full amount of his talent.

What are the qualifications of a conductor? Mr. N. Kilburn, Mus. Bac., in an article in the "Orchestra," thus attempts to solve the problem:—

"Berlioz, a very high authority on such a matter says, 'a bad conductor spoils all,' and experience emphatically attests the truth of this statement. The first, nay, the essential thing then—if your effort is to prosper and bring forth satisfactory results—is a competent conductor. Is it enough that he be a musician, even what is commonly called a good musician and a composer and critic to boot? That he be a finished performer on some instrument? That his theoretical knowledge rival that of a University Professor? Alas! no. These are important qualifications, in their place most important, but there are others to which they must here give way. Notwithstanding that Mendelssohn, to name but one instance in the past and several musicians of our own times, afford examples to the contrary, it is curious to find that the greatest composers have often been unsatisfactory directors, even of their own music; for it would seem that no amount of emotional feeling, of scholarship, or even of creative power, will compensate for the want of what may be termed the rhythmic faculty. That man alone is truly fitted to conduct in whose mind the pace and stride of the music resounds ere a note has been heard. Doubtless many other qualities are desirable in a musical director, but this is essential, and common experience proclaims that it is rare.

"What then are the other qualifications? Schumann says, 'without enthusiasm there is no art,'—and truly without this quality there is no real conductor. You cannot give to others what you do not possess yourself, and you will never inspire, or as the American expression has it, you will never 'enthuse' your orchestra if there glow not within your own breast that fire of the gods—enthusiasm. Why is it that under the direction of one so endowed superior results are frequently obtained from less competent performers than a dull and commonplace conductor will evoke with an accomplished and high-class orchestra? Is it not because the conductor is the very heart and soul of the musical frame, and if he be apathetic, weak, or vacillating, the influence is felt even by the humblest among his forces? A conductor must also be a man of tact and judgment. Knowledge of the world, of men and things is important. Emerson affirms that in nature, physical, intellectual, and artistic, all things tend towards unity, each aiding and attesting the other; and certain it is that in an office such as director of a choral society ignorance of the ways and

thoughts of men, and let me hasten to say it, of women also—is disastrous. Nature's law of unity must be exemplified in the confluence of many and varied qualities in a man who would successfully conduct a choral society. Above all, then, a competent conductor!"

A writer in the now defunct musical periodical "Concordia," speaking particularly of Orchestral Band Conductors, gave expression to the following views:—

"It seems to be popularly imagined that if an orchestra plays all the notes set down for it, observes the composer's dynamic marks, and keeps good time, there is nothing more to be considered. Yet, oddly enough, were an instrumental soloist to do this, and this only, he would raise a storm anent his entire inability to grasp the spirit and character of the work in hand. It would be said that he is a mere machine, incapable of giving any 'reading' at all of his music, much more a distinctive one. Why do we not expect the same from an orchestra? which, though consisting of seventy or eighty individual players, is but a unit for the purpose of its existence. The orchestra, like the instrumental soloist, has to 'read' its music, to show a clear and definite conception of the composer's meaning, and to be animated by one spirit and mode of expression. How are these requirements met? Not by insistence on mere mechanical accuracy, leaving the rest to individual judgment, which is the course most often sanctioned by usage in this country; but by the absolute subordination of the performers to one dominant mind—the mind of the conductor. The *chef d'orchestre* who lifts his bâton in a concert-room without being fully acquainted not only with the text, but with the spirit of the work to be performed, lacks the very elements of success. More than this, he is woefully deficient without the knowledge that he has infused his own ideas and feelings into the men before him, and that, so far, they are as much reflections of his own capacity as exponents of the composer's text. The key to all successful conducting lies here, and apart from it there never was and never can be a good conductor. We see this dominating personal influence, this powerful individuality, in all cases where a man makes his mark with the bâton. Sir Michael Costa may often go wrong in matters of taste, but there is no mistaking the fact that whenever an orchestra plays under him we get no hap-hazard version of the music. Costa's idea is put before us, and, whether we agree with it or not, we are bound to recognise its existence. So with Mr. Manns; who, amidst all the eccentricities of his style, contrives to make his instrumentalists do exactly as he pleases, and thus

secures an individual rendering of the music. So, above all, with Herr von Bülow, whose influence acts like magic upon an orchestra, making it his very obedient and ready servant in all things. Here, then, we repeat, is the test of a competent conductor."

To the foregoing artistic and emotional qualifications should be added the possession of a large fund of patience, the ability to give directions to the members in clear and strictly grammatical language, and a naturally polite and gentlemanly manner.

There can be no doubt that, other things being equal, the most successful conductor of a choral society is he who can pattern with his voice any difficulties met with in the course of a practice. By correcting mistakes in this way a conductor is led to sympathise with his singers, and will probably exercise the cardinal virtue of patience to an extent which the striking of the notes on the pianoforte would not be likely to provoke.

Something must be said upon the question of Professional *versus* Amateur Conductors. No argument is necessary to prove the justice of the claims of men who have dedicated their lives to the study of music receiving every consideration. They should even receive the benefit of any doubt of their complete fitness. Beyond that the circumstances of the candidates for the appointment should not enter into the discussion. The society is formed, or carried on, for the accomplishment of certain things, not as an act of charity toward this or the other person; and the single point to be decided is, which of the candidates will best ensure the success of the society. It does not follow that because a man is the organist of the parish church, and a good pianist and teacher of the organ and piano to boot, that he will be a good conductor. He may be deficient in some essential qualifications, the absence of which would be fatal to the prospects of the society. On the other hand, it must be admitted that the possession by an amateur of the general attainments looked

for in a conductor unsupported by sound musical knowledge must inevitably lead to mediocrity in a society's work.

The extracts before quoted have dealt with ideal, and probably professional, conductors. The following is an amateur's experience :—

“Choral societies in our neighbouring towns are shipwrecked on the point of professional jealousy as to conductorship. Unless some professional has unquestioned pre-eminence an amateur should be chosen as conductor. He will usually make up in spirit and in sympathy with difficulties what he may lack in technical knowledge.”

Referring to the choral portion of some very “High Class” concerts in one of the largest cities in the kingdom, a conductor writes :—

“It is generally admitted that the quality of our concerts is steadily deteriorating and the performances becoming less and less artistic in finish. What is the cause? First and foremost, the scheme of concerts throws too much work on too short a space of time. Second, the trainer of the chorus does not conduct the concert. Now, the orchestra being more efficient at their work than the chorus (any chorus of amateurs) can be at theirs, I think this arrangement as to conducting ought to be reversed. Thirdly, I think the committee did not act for the best when they appointed as choir trainer (writer was not a candidate) a gentleman who never had an hour's experience in choir-training nor in voice management, who has, in fact, no voice of his own, but who merely played well at sight on the piano.”

ACCOMPANIST.

Societies formed for the performance of oratorios or cantatas require an Accompanist, and the tendency of modern composers to crowd their scores with elaborate instrumental effects renders the selection of such a person a matter of considerable moment. The choice of an accompanist should rest chiefly, or entirely, with the conductor. They must work together in every way. They cannot do this unless their musical tastes coincide, and they entertain mutual respect for each other's abilities.

It does not follow that a brilliant pianist or organist must be a good accompanist. Rigid accuracy to time, and that the time of another person, is extremely irksome to some performers. Even good song accompanists sometimes fail when playing to a choir, for the habit of "dashing off" the introductions and interludes at a quicker speed than the vocal parts has become so confirmed that they have extreme difficulty in keeping to one rate of movement all through a piece. The points of excellence for a first-rate choral accompanist may be summed up as a perfect sense of time; thorough mastery of the key-board so that the effects of the composer and the "reading" of the conductor can be readily interpreted; knowledge of the organ and harmonium, in order that he may be ready for his duties in all places and all occasions; ability to transpose; and skill in reading from full orchestral score.

SECRETARY.

Second only to the conductor in value to a society, and in many respects of even greater importance, is the Secretary. He is the cement that keeps the bricks (members) of the musical edifice together. The secretary who neglects to make the personal acquaintance of each member, and omits a pleasant word or smile as each enters or leaves the practice-room, is not the man for the post. He should consider himself (representing the whole executive of the Society) as the host of the gathering, treating all his visitors with equal courtesy and attention. It must ever be borne in mind that members of a choir voluntarily submit themselves to vocal drill and discipline, and pay for the privilege; they do not consequently expect to be regarded as "hired servants." Music is their recreation. Great as their love for singing may be it will not for long impel their attendance at a practice where social amenities are disregarded.

In small societies all the following duties would usually devolve upon the secretary.

- (1) Receiving of subscriptions.
- (2) Entering members' addresses.
- (3) Keeping register of attendance.
- (4) Issuing tickets, &c., for concerts.
- (5) Keeping the music for sale to members.
- (6) Conducting correspondence, keeping accounts, and seeing to all the necessary business details.
- (7) Keeping minutes of any formal meetings of committee or members.

A secretary whose heart is in his work will always be at the practice-room half-an-hour before the time announced for rehearsal, seeing that the seating arrangements are properly looked after, making the appearance of the room comfortable, and welcoming the early arrivals.

TREASURER.

Sometimes a Treasurer is appointed. His chief duty may be inferred from his title: to look after the finances of the society. Generally speaking, he has not much to do with the detail of either receipts or expenses, these being managed by the secretary. The office is frequently conferred upon a gentleman of good social position, whose name and influence are likely to be valuable to the society, but who has not time or inclination to do much real work.

LIBRARIAN.

This official is required only when the society is a large one, or when it provides the music for use of members. In the former case, by taking charge of the music account, the purchase and sale of copies, he will materially lighten the labours of the secretary. Where all the "parts" are provided, being issued and collected at each rehearsal, and also when a band assists, a Librarian is decidedly necessary. One of his duties will be to compile and keep a catalogue of all music in the possession of the society.

CHOIR SUPERINTENDENTS.

Choirs of several hundred members are beyond the powers of a single secretary to manage. His assistants in individualizing the members and marking their attendance are termed choir superintendents. One for sopranos and contraltos, and another for tenors and basses will sometimes suffice. Larger societies will have a superintendent for each vocal part, and another for the band. These will also assist the librarian in the issue of music to their respective sections, and be of use to the secretary in distributing tickets and bills, &c., for concerts.

COMMITTEE.

Members of a Committee should be chosen for diverse attainments. Skilful or well-read musicians, business men, social leaders, and those with special knowledge upon subjects connected with the details of musical performances are likely to be the most useful. If the operations of the society are extensive, sub-committees will be of advantage; such as one for finance, another to carry out arrangements for concerts, a third for advertising, &c. Composed of men with experience in the subject, and with power to act to a certain extent without reference to the General Committee, these sub-committees will save much time and conduce to efficiency of management.

The number upon a committee must be controlled by the size of the society and the work it proposes to do. A small committee is more manageable than a large one. The head of a large provincial society remarks, "The smaller the number of members on the committee the better. We have a committee of twelve, but both the secretary and myself often wish it were two."

Other conductors remark:—

"If I had life to begin again I would say there should be no committees. The conductor to choose his own secretary and treasurer, and ask the choir to select a council to give

advice on important matters *when asked*, but not to have the power of settling anything by vote, and having given their opinion they have discharged their duty. I have seen so much the evil of small minds in committees that I think societies would be better without them. Unfortunately, some conductors have no capacity for management, and so the plan might not always work."

* * * *

"Committee must not be too large. I would limit it to eight."

* * * *

"I think when a society exists as the creation and work of the conductor, who takes all profits and liabilities, he should keep the sole management in his own hands; otherwise a small committee is preferable as giving members a direct interest in the work and success of the society."

* * * *

"The Committee of a choral society should consist to the greatest extent of men of means and position, both of which have a great following, because if the A's or B's are going the C's and D's will support them."

In the selection of all officers and committee-men, fussy, conceited busybodies should be avoided, for their chief aim is rather to air their vanity than to do the work required. They are continually fidgeting about, distracting the attention of the members from their music or conductor. The people to be trusted with important posts in a society are those who go about their duties with the least ostentation.

Every one will admit that the success of a society is greatly due to its lady members; and indirectly they largely influence its management. Very rarely have they been invited to sit on committees. The conductor of a society in Scotland writes "we have tried, with success, to have ladies on our committee—the accompanist, one soprano and one contralto—and this has had a good effect on the harmony of the business meetings, keeping talk, strange to say, within bounds." A new society in Bristol has also decided to elect its committee from the four vocal "parts," thus admitting ladies to its councils.

CHAPTER II.

RULES.

RULES are a necessary evil. They are necessary to the uniformly business-like conduct of a corporate choral society. By their means each unit in the combination takes his appointed place with a sense of the relation which he bears to the rest. He enters the society with its objects clearly defined, and the means by which those objects are to be attained fully stated. A members knows through rules what is expected from him. He has no excuse for indifference to the welfare of the society. The "evil" arises when members instead of loyally supporting the spirit of the rules carp, at their letter, and worry the executive at some real or fancied departure from what they consider their meaning. A gentleman who likes to hear himself talk, who prides himself on his knowledge of legal matters, and is a stickler for forms and ceremonies, is a thorough *bête noire*. Whenever opportunity offers he rises to propose an alteration of the rules. He will remorselessly consume time in arguing that an "or" should be an "and" while questions vital to the welfare of the society are postponed for want of time. All possible care should be taken to have the rules properly drawn up in the first place; and after that it should

be rendered extremely difficult for them to be altered. A *perfect* set of rules has never yet been framed by one person, much less produced by the frequent patching up of a number of persons. The perusal of the following extracts from the rules of various societies, will help those engaged in organising similar societies to understand what is wanted and how rules are generally worded. The inverted commas show the extent of the quotation from each set of rules.

TITLE.

“That this society be called the _____ ”

“That the title of this society be the _____ ”

OBJECT.

“That the objects of this society be to attain proficiency in the performance of sacred and secular music for the recreation of its members and to give and take part in such concerts as may be agreed upon by the committee.”

“That the objects of this choir are:—

(a) To promote the knowledge and cultivation of vocal music in the town and neighbourhood by means of the Tonic Sol-fa method and notation.

(b) To afford members the opportunity of studying the compositions of the great masters.”

“The object of the society shall be the improvement of its members in musical knowledge, by means of instruction classes, by the study and practice of music, or by any other means which may be approved by the committee.”

The title and object are sometimes combined in one rule as in the following:—

“That the Association be called the _____ and that its object be the practice and performance of high-class sacred and secular music.”

“That the Society be called the _____ its objects being the study and performance of vocal and instrumental music.”

“That the Society shall be called the _____ and that its object shall be to practise the works of distinguished composers, and to give public performances thereof, with a view to the cultivation of a taste for high-class sacred and secular music.”

MEMBERSHIP.

“No person shall be admitted a member of the society until his qualification shall have been approved by the conductor, after which upon being proposed and seconded by a member he shall be elected (either by ballot or show of hands), on one of the regular nights of meeting.”

“That any person desiring to become a member of the society shall make application, either personally, or through some member to the conductor, or one of the secretaries, and after the conductor is satisfied as to his or her efficiency he shall give a certificate to that effect which shall be handed to the financial secretary, who will report the receipt of such certificate at the next meeting of the committee, when the applicant shall be elected. * * * * That members on election shall be required by the financial secretary to give their addresses and sign the following form:—

I am willing to sing at all concerts given or taken part in by the society; to attend all rehearsals punctually and regularly as far as possible; to observe all rules; and to promote the interests of the society in every way in my power.

Name.....

Address.....”

“Any person holding the “————” certificate of the Tonic Sol-fa College shall be eligible for membership.”

“Ladies and gentlemen wishing to join the association will be required to present themselves for approval at a preliminary meeting for the examination of new members. These meetings shall be held by the conductor at frequent intervals during each season. Time and place of meeting to be appointed by him.”

SUBSCRIPTION.

“That the subscription of performing members be two shillings and sixpence per annum, payable in advance.”

“The subscription for the course of practices for the season for members taking part in the chorus, shall be seven shillings and sixpence payable in advance, either in one sum, or in monthly payments of one shilling and threepence. Such subscription will entitle each practising member to a free pass to the orchestra on any concert night if otherwise duly qualified.”

“That the subscription to the choir shall fall due at the commencement of the session, and the amount shall be fixed by the committee from year to year, and be subject to any alteration of which they shall approve.”

“The subscription is one shilling and sixpence per quarter, payable in advance. All music to be provided at each member’s own cost.”

“That an entrance fee of five shillings be paid by each practical member when admitted (ladies excepted) and that such member be entitled to two tickets at half price for any of the concerts given by the society should he desire to subscribe for them. The lady members shall be exempt from paying any entrance fee, and shall be entitled to receive one free ticket to each concert of the society.”

“That the subscription for vocal members be *not less* than 5s. annually, but that it be left to the honour of those who can afford it to subscribe 7s. 6d. or 10s. 6d.”

HONORARY MEMBERS.

“The yearly subscription of honorary members shall be one guinea, which entitles the holder to four front seat tickets to each concert.”

“That honorary members may be admitted at a subscription of five shillings or more, the value of the same to be returned in reserve seat tickets for the first concert or concerts which may be held after their admission.”

“Subscribers of one guinea and upwards shall be termed patrons, and shall have the privilege of attending practices and rehearsals; they will also receive a coupon entitling them to two reserved seat tickets for each concert (transferable), date and particulars of each concert will be notified to them by the secretaries.”

“That guarantors of £10 and upwards, or donors of £5 and upwards, constitute the honorary members, the former to have the right of nominating ten members upon the committee of the society.”

“That the subscription be half a guinea for honorary members, and five shillings for active members per season payable in advance, the active members to provide their own music.”

“That the society be composed of acting members (*i.e.* members of the choir) and honorary (or subscribing) members.”

“That the subscription for each member entitling to one or more tickets for each monthly concert, one night excepted, be as follows, viz:—

One sofa stall ticket	12/6 per annum.
Two or more sofa stall tickets, each	10/-	„ „
Two ordinary tickets 10/-	„ „

“All subscriptions to be paid in advance, commencing at the date of entrance.”

“The ordinary subscriptions may be paid quarterly by the acting members.”

MANAGEMENT.

“That the affairs of the association be managed by an honorary president, president, vice-president, conductor, secretary and treasurer, and librarian, and a committee of five (three ladies and two gentlemen), all to be elected at a general meeting to be held in September of each year; that five form a quorum for the purpose of transacting business; that retiring office-bearers are eligible for re-election; and that at the general meeting above mentioned a report and balance sheet shall be laid before the meeting by the secretary and treasurer, such balance sheet to be first audited by two of the office-bearers.”

“That the management of the society shall be carried on by a conductor, secretary, treasurer, and a committee of four, with power to add to their number, but no such increase shall exceed the proportion of one in ten of the members. The secretary, treasurer, and committee to be elected annually by ballot, at which election no member shall be entitled to vote whose subscription is unpaid. The election to be held in the month of January.”

“There shall be held annually in or about the month of April a general business meeting of the gentlemen members of the association, from whom shall be elected seven directors consisting of president, treasurer, secretary, and four part superintendents, who shall have full management of all business in connection with the association for the ensuing year. The conductor and accompanist of the association to be elected annually, and to be *ex officio* members of the directorate, and have the right to attend all meetings, with power to vote.”

“The business of the union shall be transacted by a council of twenty qualified male members, which shall include the following office-bearers, viz:—choirmaster and vice-choirmaster, president and two vice-presidents, secretary and two assistant secretaries, treasurer and one assistant treasurer, librarian and three assistant librarians.”

“That the management of the choir is vested in a committee consisting of a president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary, and eleven members, the officers and four members of the committee retiring—in rotation—annually, but being eligible for re-election. The four receiving the least number of votes at the election to be considered the retiring members.”

“The council shall have power from time to time to enact such bye-laws as they consider necessary, provided these are not inconsistent with the constitution and rules; but said bye-laws shall only have effect during the session in which they are enacted.”

“The committee shall have power to fill any vacancies in their number caused by death or resignation during any season.”

CONDUCTOR.

The appointment of the conductor is seldom made the subject of a separate rule. It is usually included in that of the committee of management, of which examples have been given above.

“A Conductor shall be elected by the union at the annual general meeting, at such a salary as may be fixed by the committee.”

“That the Conductor be appointed by the committee.”

“The committee for the time being shall dispose of the funds derived from the yearly subscriptions of the active and honorary members as set forth in rules ——. The committee shall also have full power to appoint and remove Conductors on such terms and for such reasons as they consider proper.”

“The Conductor shall be a paid officer of the society.”

“The committee of management shall each year fix the salaries to be paid to the Conductor and Organist.”

MEETINGS, VOTING, &C.

“The annual meeting of members of this society shall be held on the last Tuesday in August in each year, at such place as may be fixed by the committee, at 8 o'clock in the evening, seven clear days' notice thereof shall be given to each member by post.”

“Special General Meetings may be called at any time by the authority of the committee and shall be called on receipt of a requisition signed by six members; the nature of the business being clearly set forth in such requisition. At all general meetings ten members shall form a quorum. In the absence of the president and vice-president the meeting shall proceed to elect a chairman. All questions shall be decided by a majority of the votes of the members present, personally or by proxy, in the event of an equality of votes the chairman shall give a casting vote.”

“That no member shall be eligible for election on the committee, except nominated in writing to the secretary at least a fortnight before the annual meeting; and that balloting lists containing the names of all members proposed as committee-men be printed and obtainable from the secretary at the annual meeting.”

“That the committee shall be elected annually by means of voting-papers issued to the members; and the management of the election shall be intrusted to a committee of three members of the society (who are not members of the committee or candidates for election as such) to be elected at the final rehearsal of each season.”

“That an annual general meeting be held in April, at which the officers and committee shall be elected; auditors appointed; and the accounts of the society, made up to Lady-day, laid before the members; and any bye-laws framed by the committee submitted for approval.”

“That a special general meeting be called by the secretary within fourteen days, upon his receiving a requisition signed by not less than twenty members.”

“That the committee or fifteen of the ordinary members, on giving fourteen days’ notice in writing to the secretary shall be qualified to call a special meeting of the society.”

ATTENDANCES OF MEMBERS.

“That all members are expected to attend punctually at rehearsals. Any member not being present at 8.45 shall be considered absent. Any member being absent more than one third of the rehearsals shall be disqualified from taking part in public performances, unless by express permission of the conductor.”

“That choral and orchestral members who have not attended at least one-third of the rehearsals shall be required to satisfy the conductor as to their proficiency before taking part in any of the society’s concerts.”

X "The conductor shall have power to request any member not to take part in a concert who has not attended sufficient rehearsals."

"Members absent from all meetings for practice during four consecutive weeks without valid excuse, may, in the discretion of the council, be cut off from the roll; notice of absence having been first of all sent to them by the choir committee."

X "That the conductor shall have the power to request any member not to take part in a performance who has not attended three-fourths of the rehearsals, or when, from any other cause the conductor is of opinion that the member's taking part in such performance would tend to impair its success."

"That any members absenting themselves for four successive rehearsals without giving a satisfactory reason to the secretary shall forfeit their membership."

"That the attendance of the members be taken at each rehearsal, and that, on the first convenient night in each quarter, the attendance be read of the previous quarter."

"That the register shall be marked each practice night at half past eight o'clock, and the attendance of members arriving after that time shall not be registered."

DISSOLUTION.

"That the society shall be deemed dissolved when the number of members falls below ten."

"The union shall not be dissolved so long as one-fourth of its members desire its continuance."

"That in the event of the dissolution of the society the committee or officers shall within three months sell its property, and after discharging all claims, pay over to the Infirmary any surplus that may remain. That the society shall be deemed to be dissolved when the number of its members falls below fifteen."

"The association shall not be dissolved so long as there are twelve members desirous that it should continue to exist."

"The association shall not be dissolved unless by a majority of three-fourths of its members."

"That at the dissolution of the society, the property of the same shall be sold or otherwise disposed of for the benefit of those who are members of the society at the time of such dissolution."

ALTERATION OF RULES.

“That no alteration shall be made in the foregoing rules except at an annual meeting, of which seven days’ notice in writing shall be given to the secretary; or at a special general meeting, which shall be convened by the secretary on receipt of a requisition signed by not less than one-fourth of the members of the association.”

“That no alteration of the foregoing constitution and rules shall be made, except at a general meeting of the Institute, and then only, provided that one month’s notice, specifying the proposed amendment, shall have been given at an ordinary rehearsal.”

“That all the foregoing rules shall be strictly adhered to, and that no alteration may be made in any of them, unless by a majority of two-thirds of the active members, at a meeting specially called for the purpose.”

“That if any circumstance arise in the association which is not provided for in these rules, it shall be referred to the committee, whose decision in the matter shall be final.”

“That no alteration be made in these rules without the consent of a general meeting.”

“The foregoing rules may be added to or altered from time to time provided the additions or alterations are approved of by a majority of votes at an ordinary meeting of the society.”

“No alteration shall be made in the constitution and rules, except at a general meeting, and then only provided at least three weeks’ notice, specifying the proposed amendment or amendments, shall have been given by circular.”

“No alterations in, or additions to the above rules shall be made except at the annual meeting, or a special general meeting, summoned by the committee, or on a requisition of a majority of the members present at an ordinary meeting. Fourteen days’ notice to be given of such special meeting, such notice to specify the business to be brought forward, and to be posted in the practice room two weeks before such meeting takes place.”

“That no rule be altered or new rule made without the consent of two-thirds of the members present at a meeting specially convened for that purpose.”

“That no rule shall be altered or rescinded without the approval of a majority of members present at a general meeting.”

MISCELLANEOUS.

The circumstances and requirements of societies in the way of rules differ greatly. No two set of rules agree either in substance or wording. The members of every society must determine what rules are necessary for their guidance. Most societies would not think of including as a rule "That all individuality be sunk," and to outsiders the meaning of it is, at least, a little obscure, but no doubt the injunction has particular significance to the society which framed it. Without, therefore, attempting to present an exhaustive list of clauses upon all the heads which may require treatment in the rules, or bye-laws of societies, the following extracts are made from a large number of printed rules kindly furnished by officials of choral societies throughout the kingdom, as showing the topics which in different cases are dealt with.

RESIGNATION OF MEMBERS.—"Members on resigning to give a quarter's notice, or pay a quarter's subscription."

"That when a member leaves the society he shall be considered to give up all claim whatsoever to the property of the society."

PRIVILEGES OF CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP.—"Gentlemen who have been members of the association for seven consecutive years are entitled to the privileges of the association free of the membership fee."

COPIES OF MUSIC.—"That vocal members shall provide their own music, but that the necessary instrumental music shall be provided by the society."

X SELECTION OF MUSIC.—"That the selection of music to be performed shall be left to the conductor, subject to the approval of the committee."

"That the choice of all music to be sung by the choir, and the selection of soloists and principals for concerts be left to the committee."

DUTIES OF PRESIDENT.—"The president, or, in his absence, the vice-president, shall preside at all meetings of the committee, and general meetings of the association, and be

possessed of a deliberative and casting vote. In the absence of the president or vice-presidents, any member eligible may be elected to preside at the respective meetings, with similar powers."

DUTIES OF TREASURER.—"The treasurer shall keep a correct account of the funds of the association, lodge all moneys in excess of five pounds sterling in bank appointed by the committee, and give a statement of his intronmissions to the annual general meeting, and to the committee at any time."

"The treasurer shall take charge of the funds of the society, disburse them under the direction of the committee, and furnish a statement of his accounts to the society at their annual general meeting in every year, and to the committee at any time required by them."

DUTIES OF CONDUCTOR.—"To attend and conduct all rehearsals and concerts given by the society, when able; in the event of being unable, to appoint a deputy."

"The conductor shall conduct and have entire control during all practices, rehearsals, and public performances of the society, and shall be consulted prior to all engagements with artistes."

DUTIES OF SECRETARY.—"The secretary shall take minutes of all business meetings of the association, and transact all business not otherwise provided for by the rules, and keep a correct list of names and addresses of the members."

"The secretary shall conduct the general correspondence of the society, issue summonses for all extraordinary meetings of the society, and meetings of the committee, and take minutes of such meetings; he shall receive all monies due to the society and hand them over to the treasurer and keep an account of the same."

DUTIES OF LIBRARIAN.—"The librarian shall be responsible for all books and other property confided to his charge, keep a correct list thereof, and report to the committee at any time."

"The librarian shall keep a list of all the music belonging to the society, enter all music borrowed by the members, and shall be present at all the rehearsals to distribute the music requisite, and to collect the same after such rehearsals."

CUSTODY OF PROPERTY.—"That the music and other property of the association be kept in the box provided for

that purpose, the keys of which shall be held by the conductor, secretaries, and librarian."

DAMAGE TO PROPERTY.—"All loss or injuries to the property of the association shall be paid for, at the award of the committee, by the member or members causing the same."

SUB COMMITTEES.—"The committee shall have power to appoint sub-committees, a majority of the members of which shall be a quorum."

X VISITORS.—"Parents or guardians of lady members may be present at meetings for practice, but no other visitors shall be admitted except with the special permission of the conductor."

"That when the conductor does not object, members may bring friends to the rehearsals; provided that they shall have admission from the secretaries, stay the whole time, and sit apart from the choir."

"Open meetings may be held at such times and places as the committee may consider desirable."

LOSSES ON CONCERTS.—"The association shall during each year give such public performances as the members shall deem expedient; and, in the event of any loss from such public performances, the gentlemen members of the association shall each pay an equal proportion of such loss."

IMPROPRIETY OF CONDUCT.—"That at the discretion of the committee any member may be expelled from the society for refusing to conform to the rules or for impropriety of conduct at any of the rehearsals or meetings; but any person so expelled shall have the right of appeal to the next general meeting on giving notice to the secretary of his or her intention ten days previous to such meeting."

"Any member conducting himself improperly, or not obeying the conductor, shall be expelled."

"Any member may be expelled by the full committee without reference to the members."

REGISTRY OF ATTENDANCES.—"Every member must see that his or her name is entered by the registrar before the commencement of each rehearsal; and no member will be permitted to leave before the close of each rehearsal without the permission of the chorus-master or conductor."

ORCHESTRA TICKETS.—“No member shall be admitted on the orchestra on concert evenings without an orchestra ticket, which shall be produced at the commencement of the concert and given up at the second part. Orchestra tickets must also be shown at the door of the refreshment room.”

DISPOSAL OF FUNDS.—“The funds of the society, after defraying expenses, may be used in the purchase of standard musical works for the purpose of forming a library, and otherwise promoting the objects and furthering the interests of the society.”

“The union shall have power to grant any available surplus funds for charitable and benevolent societies in town.”

“The money received from subscriptions and concerts, after payment of expenses, shall be disposed of at the discretion of the committee.”

“That the funds and other property of the society shall belong to, and be at the sole disposal of the practical members.”

“The council shall have power to vote from the funds of the union any sum they may deem requisite towards the expenses of one social meeting of the members in each session.”

MEMBERS TAKING THEIR SEATS.—“The hours of meeting for practice shall be ———. Members coming after that time shall wait until the termination of the piece which is being practised before proceeding to their places.”

For the further guidance of those interested in the formation of a society whose operations are expected to be on a large scale, two sets of rules are printed in full, the first those of one of the most important suburban societies of London, and the second those of the association over which I have the honour to preside.

(No. 1.) RULES.

1. That the Association be called the ———, and that its object be the practice and performance of high-class sacred and secular music.

2. The sole management and direction of all the affairs of the association, financial and administrative, shall be in the hands of a committee of twenty members, four of whom shall retire in rotation every year, being eligible for re-election. The conductor shall be *ex officio* a member of the committee.

3. The subscription for members of the association shall be as under :—

Ladies	7s. 6d.
Gentlemen	10s. 6d.

Such subscription to be paid in advance. Ladies and gentlemen wishing to join the association will be required to present themselves for approval at a preliminary meeting for the examination of new members. These meetings shall be held by the conductor at frequent intervals during each season. Time and place of meeting to be appointed by him. If in the opinion of the conductor all or any department of the choir be complete, the secretary shall then register the names and addresses of any persons wishing to join the association, and on a vacancy occurring shall give notice to such persons in the order of their applications, who will then be required to attend for examination in the usual manner.

4. A copy of the rules shall be given to every member before joining the association ; and the fact of joining shall be taken to imply acceptance of and obedience to such rules. Should any additions to or alterations in the rules be made, a copy of the revised rules shall, as soon as possible, be furnished to every member.

5. The meetings for practice shall be held at _____, every Friday evening, from 7.45 to 9.30 during the season, commencing in September and ending in May.

6. An attendance book shall be kept by the superintendent of each section of the choir, and no member shall be allowed to take part in a concert who has not attended at least five rehearsals for that concert, including the two immediately preceding the performance, unless the absence of such member be explained to the satisfaction of the committee.

7. Any member who, during any season, shall have attended less than three-fourths of the meetings of the association, will be liable, at the discretion of the committee, to have his or her name removed from the books of the association ; and no attendance will be counted when the member arrives later than 8.45, unless satisfactory explanation of such late arrival be given to the chorus superintendent.

8. Any member whose conduct or conversation be deemed offensive shall be cautioned, and on repetition of the offence be required to resign ; and the committee further reserve to themselves the right of declining the re-admission of any member at the commencement of a new season, if, in their opinion, the interests of the association render such a step expedient.

9. A general meeting shall be held at the close of each season, due notice of which shall be given to every member of the association. At this meeting a report of the proceedings during the past season, and a financial statement of the funds of the association, shall be presented. The meeting shall then proceed to fill up the vacancies in the committee caused by the retirement of the four senior members.

10. Should any member of the association wish to offer himself as a candidate for election on the committee, he shall send to the secretary, at least fourteen days before the general meeting, a written nomination, signed by three members of the association.

11. Should there be more candidates than there are vacancies on the committee, the election shall be by ballot. Balloting papers shall be posted to all members of the association seven days before the general meeting, which papers shall be personally presented by the voters at the meeting, and collected by two scrutineers appointed by the members themselves. The votes shall then be counted and the result declared by the scrutineers.

12. The committee shall meet on the first Wednesday of each month, or at such other time as may be appointed by themselves for the transaction of business; and special meetings may at any time be called by five members of the committee upon giving seven days' notice in writing to the secretary, stating the object of such meeting.

13. At their first ordinary meeting after the annual meeting the committee shall elect from amongst themselves a president, vice-presidents, treasurer, librarian, auditor, one or more secretaries, and a superintendent for each department of the choir, all of whom shall hold office during the pleasure of the committee.

14. If at any meeting of the committee the president be absent, one of the vice-presidents, if present, or, failing them, one of the members, shall be elected chairman for the time being. In all cases, when on a division the votes are equal, the chairman shall have a second or casting vote.

15. Notice shall be given in writing to each member of the committee seven days before the next meeting of any proposed alteration of or addition to the rules.

16. An attendance book of the committee shall be kept by the secretary, and should the attendance of any member be deemed unsatisfactory by his colleagues, he may be required to resign by a vote of not less than two-thirds of

the members of committee present at a meeting for consideration of the subject, seven days' written notice of which shall be given to every member of the committee.

17. The committee shall have power to fill up all vacancies in their number, except those provided for by Rule 2.

18. The accounts of the association shall be audited at the end of every season, or at any period the committee may require, when the treasurer shall produce to the auditor his vouchers for receipts and disbursements.

19. Any member shall be at liberty to examine the books of the association upon giving seven days' notice in writing to the secretary.

20. No music in the possession of the association can, under any circumstances, be lent to, or taken away by, any member. The librarian may, however, with the consent of the committee, lend to other societies any music not in actual use.

21. In the event of the association being dissolved from any cause whatever, the assets shall be realised, and, after meeting all liabilities, equally distributed amongst the members for the time being.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS.

The committee will be glad to receive suggestions from any member as to matters affecting the interests of the association. Such suggestions should be sent in writing to the secretary, who will lay them before the next committee meeting, where they will receive the fullest consideration.

(No. 2.) CONSTITUTION AND RULES.

1. That the Association shall be called The South London Choral Association.

2. That the object of the association shall be the promotion of the study of music by means of the Tonic Sol-fa Method, especially through the organization of classes and choirs for the practice of vocal music, and the formation of an institute for imparting instruction in other branches of musical education.

3. That the association shall maintain at least two choirs in South London, "Advanced" and "Intermediate"—of which the following shall be the qualifications for membership with any additional regulations which the committee may from time to time deem it expedient to make :—

-
- (a.) **ADVANCED CHOIR.**—The possession of the Intermediate Certificate of the Tonic Sol-fa College and a voice approved by the conductor.
- (b.) **INTERMEDIATE CHOIR.**—The possession of the Elementary Certificate of the Tonic Sol-fa College.
- (c.) The subscription to either choir shall be 10/- per annum, or 2/6 per quarter for ladies, and 3/- for gentlemen, payable in advance.

4. That the affairs of the association shall be managed by Messrs. G. I. & L. C. Venables and a committee appointed partly by them and partly by the members, under the following conditions:—

- (a.) Messrs. G. I. & L. C. Venables shall be chief secretary and conductor permanently, neither the committee nor the members having power to displace or supersede them in any way whatever.
- (b.) Messrs. G. I. & L. C. Venables shall have the sole power of appointing teachers, secretaries, and all other officers of the association, such officers to have a seat upon the committee and equal voice with the representatives elected by the members of the association.
- (c.) The members of the association, who by Rule 6 shall have power to vote, shall in the manner hereinafter described annually elect to serve upon the committee a number equal, plus one, to those who may be appointed under Rule 4b. In the event of any vacancy occurring on the committee, the place or places shall be filled up by the Messrs. Venables, or the members of the association, according to the division in which such vacancy or vacancies shall exist.
- (d.) The meetings of the committee shall be held at such times and places as the members thereof or the secretary may appoint. One half of the full number less one to form a quorum.

5. That the qualification for membership of the Association shall be:—

- (a.) Admission to either of the choirs under the conditions set forth in Rule 3; or
- (b.) Payment of a donation of five guineas to the "building" or other funds of the association, constituting life honorary membership.

6. That the qualification for voting shall be:—

- (a.) Membership of the association from the month of October preceding the date of the election, and the possession of the Intermediate Certificate of the Tonic Sol-fa College; or life membership under Rule 5*b*.
- (b.) Subscription to the "Building Fund" by present or past members of the association to the amount of £1, an additional vote being allowed for ever further sum of £1 subscribed until ten votes be under this clause acquired, after which an additional vote for every sum of £2 subscribed until twenty-five votes be under this clause obtained.
- (c.) All votes under this rule must be given personally at the time and place appointed.

7. That the qualifications for election upon the committee shall be:—

- (a.) Membership of the choirs or classes of the association for two years preceding the date of the election; and
- (b.) Possession of the Intermediate Certificate of the Tonic Sol-fa College.

8. That the members who may be qualified to vote shall annually appoint, by a show of hands, three of their number (not being members of the committee or officers) to audit the accounts of the association. A written notice of the time and place of this election shall be placed upon the notice boards of the association seven days prior to the said election taking place.

9. That the election of the committee shall take place at an annual business meeting of the association which shall be held in the month of September in each year; vacancies occurring in the committee during the year being filled up as provided by Rule 4*c*.

- (a.) Notice of this meeting shall be deemed to have been given to the ordinary members by an announcement posted upon the notice board for 28 days prior to the date appointed, and to life members and those entitled to building fund votes under Rule 6*b* by a written or printed communication sent to them at the address standing in the secretary's books.
- (b.) The election of the committee shall be by ballot, the members to attend personally and record their votes upon a printed list of those who, being qualified and

willing to serve, may have been nominated in writing to the chief secretary by one member 14 days prior to the date of the meeting.

- (c.) Two scrutineers shall be appointed by the members present at the meeting, and they shall sign their report and affix it to the notice board within seven days from the date of the meeting.

10. That immediately upon the acquisition of a building the same shall be put in trust as an institute of music for the perpetuation of the South London Choral Association, a trust deed being duly executed, and the trust formed consisting of not less than seven persons, including the Messrs. G. I. & L. C. Venables and (if possible) two gentlemen chosen from those who were the first members of the association. It shall be provided that if at any time the number of trustees shall have fallen below five, the trust shall be made up to the original number, the appointment of such new trustees to be made by the committee of the association.

11. That if, previously to the trust deed being executed, it shall be declared by a majority of three-fourths of the votes given at a special meeting of the members that the South London Choral Association shall cease to exist, the assets shall be disposed of as the members then present may determine.

12. That in the event of the death or resignation of either of the Messrs. Venables, the appointment of a successor shall be determined by a majority of the members voting at a meeting called for that purpose, and the consent of the remaining Mr. Venables, the person so appointed being subject to such conditions and rules as the members may then make and impose. All the powers vested in the Messrs. Venables under Rule 4 shall be then exercised by the surviving Mr. Venables alone.

13. That the foregoing rules so far as they relate to Messrs. G. I. & L. C. Venables shall be unalterable, and that in other respects they shall not be added to, altered, or abrogated, except by a majority of three-fourths of the votes given under Rule 6 at the annual business meeting of the association, twenty-one days' notice in writing being given to the chief secretary of any proposed resolution or resolutions affecting any of the said rules.

CHAPTER III.

BOOKS AND ACCOUNTS.

BUSINESS habits should prevail in choral societies if their managers wish them to succeed. Neglect to keep proper records of all monetary transactions may give rise to much unpleasantness, and will afford the grumblers (which every society possesses) a ready excuse for fault finding. The following is a list of the books and accounts recommended to be kept.

- | | |
|--|---|
| (1) A Cash Book | } These might be combined in one book,
say cash book, pp. 1 to 100; ledger,
pp. 101 to 200. |
| (2) Ledger | |
| (3) Address Book | |
| (4) Minute Book, and | |
| (4a) Attendance Book for members of committee to sign. | |
| (5) Registers of Attendance | |
| (6) Concert Ticket Accounts. | |

For the assistance of those who may not be acquainted with the principles of book-keeping, a specimen of a cash book and ledger is appended. The items, on account of the space, are restricted in number.

CASH BOOK.

CASH.

(Receipts).

CONTRA.

(Disbursements).

DATE.	PARTICULARS	Folio of Led.	AMOUNT.			DATE.	PARTICULARS	Folio of Led.	AMOUNT.		
1886. Oct. 1.	To Subscriptions. 30 at 10/6	101	15	15	0	1886. Oct. 1.	By Rent of practice room 6 months...	120	7	10	0
"	" Music. 30 bks. at 1/-	110	1	10	0	"	" Music. Purchase of 7 doz. copies at 9/-	110	3	3	0
" 8.	" Subscriptions. 50 at 10/6	101	27	10	0	"	" Printing. Bills and circulars ...	120	2	5	0
"	" Music. 50 bks. at 1/-.	110	2	10	0	"	" Stationery and Books. Cash book, Ledger, Address book, &c....	"	1	10	0
1887. Mar. 15	" Performance of ——. Cash taken at doors ... Sale of pro- grammes...	130	8	5	0	1887. Mar. 15	" Performance of ——. Soloists' fees per list	130	8	8	0
" 31.	Sales of tickets by members as per list..	"	2	7	0	"	Band,	"	10	10	0
		"	18	14	0	"	Rent of hall	"	5	5	0
						"	Printing & Advertising R'fr'shm'ts	"	4	10	0
						"	"	"	1	12	0
						Mar. 31	" C'nd't'r's honoraryium	150	21	0	0
						"	" Rent, &c. Gratuity to hall-keep'r..	120	0	10	0
						"	" Postage & Petty Exps.	"	1	7	0
						"	" Balance...	"	9	1	0
									76	11	0
1887. Mar. 31	To Balance bro't f'rw'rd		9	1	0				76	11	0

LEDGER.
SUBSCRIPTIONS (fol. 101).

Dr.

DATE.	PARTICULARS.	FOL.	AMOUNT.		DATE.	PARTICULARS.	C-bk. FOL.	AMOUNT.	
			Dr.	Cr.				Dr.	Cr.
1887 Mar. 31.	To Profit & Loss Account..	Led. 150	43	5	0	By Cash, 30 at 10s. 6d.....	1	15	0
			43	5	0	" do. 50 "	"	27	0
								43	5

Dr.

MUSIC (fol. 110).

DATE.	PARTICULARS.	FOL.	AMOUNT.		DATE.	PARTICULARS.	C-bk. FOL.	AMOUNT.	
			Dr.	Cr.				Dr.	Cr.
1886 Oct. 1.	To Purchase of 7 doz. —,	C-bk 1	3	3	0	By Cash, 30 books at 1s. ...	1	1	0
1887 Mar. 31.	at 9s. per doz.	Led. 150	0	17	0	" do. 50 "	"	2	0
	" Profit & Loss Account ...		4	0	0			4	0

Dr.

GENERAL EXPENSES (fol. 120).

DATE.	PARTICULARS.	FOL.	AMOUNT.		DATE.	PARTICULARS.	C-bk. FOL.	AMOUNT.	
			Dr.	Cr.				Dr.	Cr.
1886 Oct. 1.	To Rent of prece-rm. 6 mo.	C-bk 1	7	10	0	By Profit & Loss Account..	Led. 150	13	2
"	" Printing circulars & bills	"	2	5	0				
1887 Mar. 31.	" Cash book, Ledger, Address book &c. ...	"	1	10	0				
"	" Gratuity to hall-keeper..	"	0	10	0				
"	" Postages & Petty Exps. ...	"	1	7	0				
			13	2	0			13	2

Societies which print their accounts for distribution amongst the members or subscribers sometimes give an analysis of receipts and payments. When it is not thought necessary to go into such detail as that a copy of the profit and loss account is sufficient. The possession of any property, such as musical instruments, band desks, &c., would have to be shown in a balance sheet; so also if there were any debts owing to or by the society.

A book suitable for addresses, with alphabet index cut in the leaves, can be bought for a small sum.

The Minute Book is to contain a record of all the meetings of the Committee, and of the Members of the Society when any resolutions are proposed or formal business transacted. The following is a specimen:—

Minutes of a meeting of the Committee held at the _____, on _____, 1887. Present, Mr. _____ in the chair, and Messrs. _____.

The Treasurer presented his Financial statement for the Quarter ending _____, showing a balance at the bank of £_____.

The Secretary submitted the Members' Register of Attendance for the previous quarter, and the Ticket Account of the performance of _____.

A letter was read from the Rev. _____, inviting the Society to give a Concert in aid of the building fund of _____. Upon the motion of Mr. _____, seconded by Mr. _____, it was resolved that the Secretary be instructed to inform the Rev. _____ that the existing engagements of the Society will not admit of their complying with his request for the present, but that the Committee will be happy to arrange for a concert at the end of their ordinary season. &c. &c.

The register of attendance can be either in a book or on a sheet of foolscap. It will require columns for the name, &c., and for each week's attendance, thus:—

REGISTER OF ATTENDANCE.

NAME.	VOICE.	OCTOBER.					NOVEMBER.				DECEMBER.				TOTAL ATTENDANCES
		1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26	3	10	17	24	
Miss A	Soprano	x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x		10

CONCERT TICKET ACCOUNT.

Performance of " ————— " on ——— .

NAME.	RESERVED, 2s.			ADMISSION, 1s.			AMOUNT.		
	Issu'd	Retd.	Sold	Issu'd	Retd.	Sold			
Miss A &c., &c.	10	4	6	20	5	15	1	7	0
Totals			<u>74</u>			<u>226</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>0</u>

CHAPTER IV.



MEMBERSHIP.

LOCAL circumstances will always control the regulations made by societies for the musical qualifications of their members; therefore if the suggestion were made that all members of choral societies ought to pass a test in quality and compass of voice, in singing a piece of music at first sight, and in possession of a certain amount of theoretical knowledge, an objection would be raised by the vast majority of societies that by adopting it they would for one reason or another lose most of their members. Yet, in the face of such a possible catastrophe, it must be distinctly affirmed that to admit members to a concert-giving society, and, upon their word (given, or inferred from their making application) that they can read music, to launch them into the intricacies of cantata or oratorio, is in the highest degree harmful to them, unjust to the particular work in rehearsal, and injurious to our national progress in music. Why should singers expect their parts to be drummed into them by piano or organ more than would the members of a dramatic society theirs? It would be considered absurd to hear the professor of an elocution class teaching a piece of poetry by ear, word by word and line by line. Is it less

ridiculous to hear a chorus taught in a similar way. Familiarity with this childish manner of learning their music alone accounts for singers' indifference to the feelings of disgrace with which such incompetency ought to fill them. People of all ages and of every social status do not mind learning the rudiments of languages, drawing, painting, botany, instrumental music, or even wood carving, but to attend an elementary singing class is thought by many to be quite beneath their dignity. Whose fault is this? Clearly the responsibility rests upon conductors or committees who accept members without testing their knowledge. So long as laxity prevails in societies will frail human nature take advantage of it. The glory of being one of the "performers" in the rendering of an oratorio supported by eminent artistes and a full orchestral band outvies every consideration of their fitness. The case of two young men who said to their fellow shop-assistant that if they "got well through the 'Messiah' this winter they would go in for the rudiments of music next winter" is not by any means an isolated one; although it may be doubted if such good intentions are generally carried out.

The enquiry "What proportion of the members of your society are really good sight singers" elicited the information that about a third of the societies possessed 50 or more per cent. The remainder of the societies gave percentages varying between 5 and 45, or met the question by the reply "small proportion," or, "very few indeed."

Taking for granted that an individual test is necessary, of what kind and extent shall it be? For societies which use the letter notation, the certificates issued by the Tonic Sol-fa College form admirable passports. The Elementary Certificate is usually insisted on for a choir which practises cantatas of moderate difficulty, glees, part-songs, &c. Societies performing oratorios should make the Inter-

mediate Certificate their standard. For the information of those unacquainted with these certificates it may be explained that the first includes tests in the memory of tune, in time, in cultivation of ear (naming tones sung or played by the examiner), and in sight singing. The Intermediate Certificate proceeds upon the same lines with more difficult tests in each instance. The same College also issues certificates in reading from the ordinary notation of which the requirements are as follows:—

TONIC SOL-FA COLLEGE STAFF NOTATION CERTIFICATES.

FIRST GRADE.

The candidate must satisfy the examiner that he already possesses the Elementary Certificate of the Tonic Sol-fa College.

1. Bring the names of three tunes, each in a different key, and Sol-fa from memory, while pointing it on a blank treble staff, one of these tunes chosen by lot.

2. Sing on one tone, to the syllable "la," any two of the First Grade Rhythms chosen by lot. Two attempts allowed.

3. Sol-fa from the examiner's pointing on a blank staff, a voluntary moving at the rate of M. 60, the position and pitch of the key-note being given.

4. Sol-fa not more than three times, and afterwards sing to "la," a tune in one of the following keys, viz., G, D, A, E, F, B \flat , E \flat , A \flat , not seen before, on treble or bass clef at the option of the candidate, and not containing any passages of transition or of the minor mode, or any division of time less than a pulse.

5. Write upon a blank treble or bass staff, from memory, the key signatures of two of the keys named in requirement four chosen by lot.

SECOND GRADE.

The candidate must satisfy the examiner that he already possesses the certificate of the First Grade.

1. Bring the names of three tunes, each containing either the sharpened fourth (*fe*), the flattened seventh (*ta*), or the leading note of the minor mode (*se*), and half-pulse notes, and write from memory one of these tunes, chosen by lot.

2. Explain the time signatures, and sing on one tone to the syllable "la," any two of the Second Grade Rhythms chosen by lot. Two attempts allowed.

3. Sol-fa not more than three times, and afterwards sing to "la," a six or eight-line hymn-tune not seen before, in the major mode, containing extended transition to the dominant (first sharp) or sub-dominant (first flat) keys, and half-pulse notes.

4. Sol-fa not more than three times, and afterwards sing to the syllable "la," a tune in the minor mode, not seen before, containing the sharpened sixth and leading note (*ba* and *se*).

5. Write down from ear the notes of any two simple phrases of four and six tones respectively, or a single chant, not already known, the examiner giving the name and pitch of the key note, and singing the tune to "la," or playing it on an instrument, but not more than three times.

6. Write from memory a tune containing transition to the dominant or sub-dominant keys, in any one of the following keys, viz., B, F \sharp , D \flat , G \flat . One tune may be used and transposed as required.

7. Write from memory the scale of the minor mode ascending and descending, each in a different form, at any pitch asked for by the examiner.

8. Write examples of diatonic and chromatic intervals, two of each, as required by the examiner.

The following are the certificates in use by the Bristol Musical Festival Society:—

REQUIREMENTS OF THE ELEMENTARY CERTIFICATE.

1. MEMORY.—Point on the modulator and sing from memory the melody of any two of the single chants, Nos. 114 to 118, selected by the examiner.
2. TIME.—Sing on one tone to "laa" in perfectly correct time any two of exercises Nos 30, 38, 43, 74, 90, 92, 98, 102, 104, 119, 125, selected by the examiner.
3. SIGHT-SINGING.—Pitch by help of the tuning fork, Sol-fa not more than three times, and afterwards sing to words, or the open syllable "laa," passages selected by the examiner, not necessarily containing change of key or chromatic notes.

4. THEORY.—(a.) Answer correctly, verbally, without book or other help, questions on the structure of the Tonic, Dominant and Sub-dominant chords.
- (b.) Answer correctly, verbally, without book or other help, questions on measure, time signature, accent and key signatures.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE INTERMEDIATE CERTIFICATE.

1. TIME.—(a.) Sing on one tone to “laa” in perfectly correct time a passage or passages with examples of broken time rhythms.
- (b.) A similar passage or passages with examples of syncopation and silences, or rests.
2. SIGHT-SINGING.—(a.) Pitch by help of a tuning-fork, Sol-fa not more than three times, and afterwards sing to words, or the open syllable “laa” passages selected by the examiner, containing change of key of at least one remove in either direction, *i.e.*, to the first sharp key or first flat key from the original key of the passage selected.
- (b.) In the same manner sing a simple phrase written in the minor mode; also a short passage containing examples of chromatic intervals.
3. THEORY.—Answer correctly, without book or other help, questions on key signatures, major and minor, and how they are written.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE THIRD OR ADVANCED
CERTIFICATE.

1. TIME.—(a.) Sing on one tone to “laa” in perfectly correct time a passage or passages of examples of broken time rhythms.
- (b.) A similar passage or passages with examples of syncopation and silences, or rests.
2. SIGHT-SINGING.—(a.) Pitch by help of a tuning fork, and sing to words, or the open syllable “laa,” passages selected by the examiner, containing change of key and broken rhythm. Not more than three attempts allowed.
- (b.) In the same manner sing a short passage of not more than twelve bars written in the minor mode; also a similar short passage containing examples of chromatic intervals.

3. VOICE CULTIVATION.—Sing to the open syllable “*laa*” with good quality of voice, in time and in tune, the melody of “*Jackson’s Evening Hymn*,” or any similar composition which might be preferred by the pupil, in any key suited to the voice—without flattening in pitch. One trial only allowed.
- 4.—Sing not more than three examples of minor mode phrases and three examples of chromatic phrases, taken by lot from the selection in use at the classes. One trial of each example allowed.
5. THEORY.—Answer correctly, without book or other help, questions on key signature, major and minor, and how they are written.

The Paisley Choral Union thus provides for the admission of singers from either notation.

1. STAFF NOTATION SINGERS to answer the following questions:—

- (1) Name, on being shown them, the different kinds of notes and rests, and state what proportion they bear to each other.
- (2) Name the clefs in general use, and name the notes on the lines and spaces. (NOTE.—Ladies will require only to name the notes in the treble clef; gentlemen in either clef.)
- (3) Describe what is meant by common and triple time.
- (4) Describe the composition of the major scale, noting how many full tones and semitones are in it and where the semitones occur.
- (5) Name the different keys on being shown the signatures. (Two attempts allowed.)

SOL-FA SINGERS to possess the elementary certificate and a certification of attendance at not less than 12 meetings of an intermediate class.

2. SING A SIGHT TEST to the satisfaction of examiners appointed by the council. (Similar tests to be used for both notations.)

An analysis of the printed rules of 51 societies will show that even where method and order reign supreme (at least on

paper) this subject of the examination of members' proficiency is commonly omitted or insufficiently stated :—

- 17 do not mention the subject of musical skill.
- 13 require members to possess a Tonic Sol-fa College Certificate.
- 5 „ „ to submit to a test by the conductor.
- 5 „ „ to be passed as efficient by the conductor.
- 3 „ „ to satisfy the committee of their efficiency.
- 2 „ „ to be equal to the satisfactory performance of music selected.
- 2 „ „ to be able to read music.
- 1 „ „ to answer questions and sing a sight test to the satisfaction of examiners.
- 1 „ „ to read at sight music printed in the old or new notations.
- 1 „ „ to submit their musical abilities for the approval of the conductor.
- 1 „ „ to satisfy the conductor when considered necessary by the committee.

And one society has a rule that “ each practical member shall undergo re-examination by the examining committee once every five years.”

In some instances the conductors or committees probably keep to a certain standard of skill by imposing particular tests, but in many others the absence of published requirements probably leads to a very low average of attainment.

A choral society is essentially an educational body, seeking, by means of its concerts, to train the public to appreciate the best music and to raise popular taste for delicacy and refinement of execution. As charity should commence at home, so education ought to begin with the teachers. Attached to every ordinary choral society should be an elementary or students' class in which musical notation, expression, &c., could be systematically taught. At the end of the course of lessons

there should be an examination of the pupils for a certificate, or for admission to the society. Conductor, society, and members will alike profit by work of this kind. The conductor is sure of having his directions, at least up to a certain point, understood and carried out: he no longer "speaks in riddles" to a section of his choir, and gets impatient because not knowing his meaning, they are unable to effect the desired improvement. Societies gain in solidity: it is the house built on a rock compared to that on the sand—the shifting sands of ignorance, conceit, and individual fancies. Members profit most of all: they learn to be self-reliant, to sing with understanding. Many of the beauties of music, which under the old plan they would only faintly discern or pass over altogether, are rendered transparent; they enjoy the singing, respect the music, and honour the society.

As to the kind of tests imposed by societies where a rule on the subject exists, the following particulars furnished by conductors will be useful:—

"(1) Questions on theory are asked.

(2) A Handelian chorus (with quick divisions) is gone through by each singly, taking his or her part after previous home practice.

(3) Each has to sing his or her part in a new and unknown chorus, at sight."

* * * *

"I ask them to sing a scale, major and minor; then a chord, major and minor. Afterwards to read at sight, then ask them the key and time signatures of the music they have read."

* * * *

"A few questions as to keys and intervals and the reading at sight of a part in a chorale or chorus."

* * * *

"Questions with regard to time and key signatures. Exercises in singing 4ths and 5ths in various keys and generally making them as awkward as possible."

* * * *

“(1) Must have a voice.

(2) Must know their notes, time signatures, time table, and the use of sharps and flats.

(3) Give a promise to attend regularly.

(4) Must be respectable.”

* * * *

“After about 4 practices as probationers some easy chorus of the work in practice is given as a test.”

* * * *

“Inquire of the different organists as to capabilities.”

* * * *

“Test as to compass of voice. Must be able to sing a scale correctly; pitch any note within their compass I may strike on the piano.”

* * * *

“Each candidate sings to a sub-committee appointed for the purpose (1) a scale, to show compass and quality of voice, (2) a piece of the candidate's own selection, (3) a sight-singing test chosen by the committee.”

* * * *

“Applicant must sound any given note or series of notes consisting generally of some difficult intervals.

„ „ understand the time and value of notes.

„ „ possess a fair voice.

„ „ be able to commence his or her own part after a few bars have been played over on the piano leading up to the point of entry.”

* * * *

“Examination of compass of voice, singing of scales. Singing “*prima vista*” a simple phrase, chorale, &c.; also a part of a chorus from an oratorio with pianoforte accompaniment.”

* * * *

“I think the rules for admission into musical societies are too lax. I would hold an examination in every case and to be very strict with regard to the elements of music. I have had persons coming to try for places in our society who didn't know a minim from a crotchet rest, what key they were supposed to sing in, or time signature. I have had the most absurd answers given to the simplest questions. It has been suggested to me that we should have our chorus examined at

the beginning of each season, and thereby we should be able to weed out the bad ones, but that would not do. Very few societies could afford to be so independent."

Choral societies in small towns are less able than those in populous places to insist on their members passing individual tests. One conductor replies :—

"We have no examination. This was a great trial to me, but in a small town we couldn't be strict, and we often had to admit two or three members of a family who were useless for the sake of another member who was a good singer."

Another says :—

"The idea of a test frightens a good many singers who are not apt readers, and in a small community such as this, where the individuals are known to the conductor, we impose no test."

A third states :—

"We once tried to impose such, but, to speak plainly, failed, as we depend upon the members' subscription of 7s. 6d. for the working expenses."

The following speaks well for the power of music to break down social barriers.

"We are always glad to welcome any who are willing to aid in improving the taste for good music. Our society is very mixed. M.P's daughters and milliners, lawyers, parsons, tradesmen, clerks, and working men. Examination would be fatal in our case."

Is there no remedy for the humiliating fact that more than fifty per cent. of choral societies in this kingdom admit members without the slightest proof of their musical knowledge or ability to read the notes of the works of the great masters in which they take part? Why is it that the members do not possess any skill in singing "prima vista" (at first sight)? Simply because they have had no opportunity of learning. An elementary class well taught would provide

“readers” for the choral society, which in its turn from the good work done would attract pupils to the elementary class. Such classes instead of being the rule are almost the exception. Out of 135 societies which answered the question, “*Have you an elementary class for teaching the rudiments and thus feeding your choir?*” 97 replied “No,” to 36 who said “Yes”; and of these latter 20 were Tonic Sol-fa societies. In one society it is the custom to devote the first half-hour to elementary instruction and in another to begin each practice with scales and exercises.

(For hints on starting and teaching elementary classes see ch. xvi).

CHAPTER V.

BOYS' VOICES.

ARE boys desirable in choral societies? This question has two sides, the musical and the social. Boys' voices when good and well trained are very beautiful in quality; their roundness of tone and precision of attack give them an indescribable charm. They are naturally deficient in emotional feeling, and hence rarely blend with ladies' voices. A writer in the *Musical World* in an article headed "Linsey-Woolsey Sopranos," advances reasons for this want of assimilation which are worthy of attentive consideration:—

"Mixed materials do not as a rule answer in the long run; sooner or later, in wear or appearance, defects present themselves, and the Levitical law which prohibited their use is admitted to have a utilitarian as well as a symbolic meaning. The now obsolete fabric called linsey-woolsey has a counterpart in music, in the combination of boys' and women's voices in the treble or alto part of choral music. An excellent opportunity for observing the effect produced by an equal number of treble voices of either sex was afforded at the interesting concerts given lately by the Russian choir under the direction of Dmitri Slaviansky d'Agreneff. The system of telling an audience what they are to think by means of 'Opinions of the Press' printed on the prospectus, is one of which we cannot approve, though it is almost universally adopted. One of the 'opinions'—happily it is that of a Parisian, not a London critic—is sadly at variance with the actual state of the case. We read that the 'poetical northern

melodies' were 'incomparably rendered by deep bass voices sustaining the clear sopranos and contraltos of the ladies, and enhanced by the celestial voices of the boys.' Now about the first part of this statement there is no doubt at all; the sonority and richness of the bass voices, though once or twice the phenomenally low notes were painfully sharp, are so remarkable that expectation is not disappointed; and to hear a human voice sing the A on the third leger line below the bass stave is an experience that will not readily be forgotten. The voices of the ladies might or might not have been 'clear,' and those of the boys might or might not have been 'celestial,' when heard separately. We cannot tell, for they always sang together, and it is quite certain that neither epithet could be honestly confirmed. As people say, the voices did not 'blend' in the least degree, and the result was that they sounded actually out of tune in many places where the pitch was not really at fault. We draw attention to this not because we wish to judge our foreign visitors harshly, but because a moral may be deduced for the guidance of those who have to form choirs in England. The result will be found to be the same wherever boys and women sing the treble part in anything like equal proportions. It is not easy to say in what respect the combination fails to please us, for the tune or pitch may be perfectly kept, and yet the voices sound untrue. To say that a woman's voice is more emotional than a boy's, or that a boy sings with less of human passion than a woman, is to enunciate a truism without assigning any reason for the fact. But the reason is not really so difficult to find as the result is to describe. The fact is that besides the difference of *timbre* or quality of voice, the two sexes regard musical intervals from entirely different points of view. In singing any given interval a boy thinks of the two notes as separate things; he sings first one and then the other, without reference to the notes that intervene, or even to the harmonic relation subsisting between them. On the other hand, a woman, however clearly she may sing the notes of an interval, is always sentient of the harmonic relation of those notes, and her attention is chiefly directed, whether consciously or not, to the notes by which she passes to the end of the interval. One sees the two notes as if they were unconnected points on a map, the other traces the road by which they are united.

"We do not mean to imply that no woman is capable of singing an interval without slurring it over, or that it is impossible for a boy to execute a *portamento*; but as a matter of fact, the great majority of female singers do fall into that besetting sin, while the great majority of boys sing intervals

without the smallest consciousness of their relation. It is against the employment of the two qualities of voice in unison that we must protest. There are parish churches at this moment where the boys and men who are seen by the congregation and supposed to comprise the whole choir, are reinforced by a number of ladies who are sufficiently self-denying to conceal themselves from view, and increase the volume of sound in the treble part. In hymn-tunes and music where the congregation are supposed to join in, this does not of course matter, but in these parish churches anthems and evening services are of common occurrence, and their effect is absolutely spoilt by the mixture of the two kinds of sopranos. If all the ladies would sing the alto part, leaving the treble to the boys alone, no drawback would be felt, and what is generally the weakest part in parish singing, would be raised to its proper standing among the other parts. Here, again, our protest must not be taken as of universal application. Those who have had to deal with large choirs or choral societies, in which the soprano part is supposed to be taken by ladies alone, will know the great help that is afforded by a few boys' voices judiciously interpolated among the sopranos. Boys are far more courageous about the high notes, and just as a few male altos do not spoil, but rather improve, the tone of the larger body of women's voices, the effect in the soprano part will be decidedly enhanced; but it should always be remembered that the ratio of boys to women must be very small, never exceeding that of one to ten. Where the boys are numerous enough to be heard as distinct from the women, a harshness of texture strongly suggestive of the feeling of linsey-woolsey, is sure to be the result."

Whether or not the opinions expressed in the above article be subscribed to, the fact remains that in societies where boys assist, they can nearly always be heard standing out distinctly from the ladies' voices. If boys are admitted their voices should be carefully trained so that the forcing of registers upwards (a most prevalent habit with ordinary church choir boys) may be corrected. A correspondent of the *Tonic Sol-fa Reporter*, writing upon this subject, said:—

"There is a method, used by a most successful teacher, of developing the small register in boys and women, and the thin in men, by making the pupil shut his mouth and sing through his nose. When he has practised a note well in this way, then he attempts it with open mouth. It is wonderful

how much higher some pupils can sing with the mouth shut; one boy who could not sing well above F sharp with natural voice, reached easily up to C² with closed mouth. The teacher in question is Dr. Buck of Norwich Cathedral; and I have never heard any boys' voices approach his in excellence."

Many societies strengthen the *alto* part with boys because they are too young and careless to be afflicted with the affectation which prompts the majority of ladies to want to sing no other than the top part, and to otherwise "give themselves airs." Boys do as they are told; ladies frequently want their own way, and use all the art and persuasiveness of their nature to gain it. The effect is similar to that of adding boys to the soprano part, although not so pronounced. The alto being an inner part the difference of *timbre* is not so apparent to the ear.

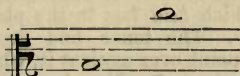
The "social" side of the question is the probability that a number of boys out of reach of school discipline may become unruly, and talk or play instead of singing. Nothing more quickly lowers the character of a rehearsal than repeated calls to order; there is too much of the schoolroom about it for adults, and their interest in the rehearsals soon declines. When a number of boys are combined with an adult choir, separate practices for them, with a few rehearsals with the full choir, would remove this objection.

CHAPTER VI.

MEN ALTOS.

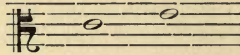
THE celebrated injunction with reference to making hare soup—"first catch your hare"—applies with some force to this case. Men with natural or well-cultivated alto voices are scarce, and when discovered it will be commonly found that they have made singing, in whole or part, a profession, and will not attend a choral society without payment. Stainer and Barrett's "Dictionary of Musical Terms" (Novello & Co.) contains a description of this voice, from which the following is an extract:—

"Alto voice. Called also counter-tenor when used by men, and counter-alto or contralto when used by women. It is the deepest tone of voice among women and boys, and it is called the highest among men for lack of a better term to describe it. Properly speaking the tenor voice is the highest man's voice, the alto or counter-tenor voice being entirely an artificial production, and simply a development of the *falsetto*. The register usually written for this voice lies between tenor G and treble C



"As the best notes of the alto voice are within the octave from B flat, those notes are most generally employed, for the higher notes are harsh and discordant, and the lower of small musical quality, and therefore ineffective. The alto

voice in man is mostly formed upon an indifferent bass voice, and there is always a break between the chest and the head voice; this break varies between C and E



and the careful union of the chest and head qualities of voice, and the judicious employment of the 'mezza voce' are characteristic of every good alto singer.

"The male alto being an artificial voice its usefulness is of limited duration, for when the singer is past fifty years of age the voice becomes harsh, reedy, nasal, and the break is painfully apparent."

A highly interesting letter was recently printed in the *Tonic Sol-fa Reporter* from Mr. W. F. Callaway (since deceased) a gentleman who made men's voice music a special and lifelong study.

"The historical aspect of the matter is not involved in any obscurity. The name counter-tenor is the English form of *contra tenor*; and *contra tenor* and *alto* are the Latin and Italian names for the same part in music written in vocal counterpoint. The difference of meaning between the two is simply this, that counter-tenor indicates, in the first place, the relation of the part in the harmony as immediately against the tenor, while *alto* indicates, in the first place, the kind of voice, a high voice, by which the part is intended to be sung. The terms were always used interchangeably. While the English adopted the Italian name, *alto*, for the high voice, the French and the Germans used words in their own languages conveying the same meaning.

"It is only in these days that it has been supposed that counter-tenor indicates a kind of tenor voice. It would be as reasonable to suppose that *contr'alto* indicated an alto or high voice. Counter-tenor was originally one of several names of parts which indicated their place in the harmony. Part music was first written to accompany the tenor (from *tenere*, to hold), which *held* fast to the plain song, or simple Gregorian melody. The tenor had first a counter-tenor written in counterpoint over against it, which, when a bassus or fundamental part was written beneath, naturally flowed mostly above the tenor. A *triplum* (treble) or third part from the tenor was written above that, and the *cantus* or upper melody, with the *quintus* or even *sextus* (fifth or sixth parts) were added if the composer desired more parts.

These names did not at first indicate the kinds of voice by which the parts were to be sung: that was indicated by the clef signatures. A counter-tenor part *might* have been written beneath the tenor, or far above it in the soprano range, as the mean (a third part, complexing the chord indicated by the tenor and bass) was sometimes sung close against the tenor and sometimes an octave above; but practically it was found best to write the counter part on a staff with a clef signature which gave it a range a third higher than the tenor, and the word counter-tenor was used as the name of the alto or high male voice.

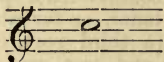
“The question whether the voices of that kind, anciently used, were best obtained from tenors or basses, was never raised. The compass and flow of the ancient music seems indeed to be more suited for the upper registers of the tenor voice than for those of the bass, but apparently it was considered that if a man’s best voice was in the alto region, it did not matter where his second-best was.

“Men have sung the counter-tenor or alto part, in England, ever since part-singing began. The great cathedral composers have written some of their choicest music for this voice. The alto part in Handel’s choruses and many of his alto solos were written to be sung by men, and objection to such rendering of alto music was never made, so far as I know, until the movement for popularising music in this century led to the rough-and-ready classification of voices, as two for women and two for men; and the alto voice became less cultivated and less known.

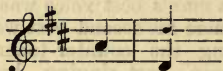
“Whether the voice is pleasing to the ear must be a matter of individual taste. If any one after hearing a good cathedral choir or a madrigal and glee society, such as the Bristol society so beautifully described by Mr. Venables in a recent *Reporter*, can think the alto voice objectionable, it is not possible by any argument to change that opinion. There may, however, be a plea advanced for fairness. If critics hear a person sing soprano, tenor, or bass with an unpleasant tone, they blame the singer; without dreaming of condemning the use of that denomination of voice. Why should the demerits of any ill-developed altos lead to the wholesale denunciation of a kind of voice which is as ‘natural’ as any other; is identical in register with the lighter upper tones of the tenor, and the corresponding portion of the contralto; and is as capable of being developed and improved as they?”

From these extracts it will be gathered that the compass of men altos does not ordinarily permit them to sing with

ease a part written for women's voices, since the former cannot sing, with good quality of tone, above C



Handel wrote many airs for the male alto voice, and the alto parts in his oratorios are strictly limited to the compass mentioned above. Only once in the *Messiah* choruses has he written above C. In the "Hallelujah Chorus" where the fugal entry of the parts is so striking at the words and "He shall reign," Handel wrote the lower D the first time it occurs, and cautiously gave the upper D as an optional note



the second time the phrase occurs. Compare this with Rossini's "In sempiterna" (*Stabat Mater*), with its high F's, E's, and D's, or with (Gounod's "Hymn of the Apostles" (*Redemption*, Part III), which abounds in high D's set off by an occasional E.

Societies which admit men altos should be careful in selecting the music they ask them to sing, or the conductors should compel them to avoid trying extremely high notes. The difference in the composition of the alto part in the Birmingham festivals within the last 40 years is noticeable. In 1846, of the 60 altos, 59 were men and the other was a boy. At the next festival in 1849, there were 59 men and 17 ladies. In the most recent festival (1885), 31 were men and 59 ladies. The Leeds Festival Chorus shows a similar reduction in the number of men altos, for in 1883 the numbers were 28 men and 49 ladies, while in 1886 there were 16 men and 57 ladies.

From 130 answers given by choral societies under the head of boys and men altos, it seems that 31 societies have boy sopranos, 43 boy altos, and 36 men altos. The number of

boys in each part is very small (from 1 to 12), and these, especially the sopranos, are usually cathedral or church choristers. The proportion of men altos is still smaller, very few of the 36 societies having more than one or two.

Here are some of the comments made by conductors on this topic :—

BOY SOPRANOS.

“Half a dozen good boys’ voices—boys I mean who will open their mouths, and attack a high C without a fear of failing—lend a confidence to the women, and add brilliancy to the chorus.”

* * * *

“Unless boys’ voices are thoroughly good and well trained they are undesirable. As a rule, boys are apt to be troublesome, and we do not care to import more of this element.”

* * * *

“They blend better with female sopranos than adult male altos with female contraltos; but, as a rule, are best in church music, in unmixed choirs.”

* * * *

“Consider them very valuable, as they attack high notes fearlessly and promptly.”

* * * *

“Such a voice in ——— is almost unknown, that is, boys who really sing; the boys here, as a rule, yell and shout.”

* * * *

“I do not care to encourage boy trebles for oratorio music.”

BOY AND MEN ALTOS.

“Boy alto very unsatisfactory, and giving a different quality to the chorus altogether. Adult male alto mixed with contralto voices of women is decidedly good.”

* * * *

“If they (boys) apply we admit, but we don’t try to get them. They ‘go’ (break) so soon that it is hardly worth giving the time to them that they need.”

* * * *

“We do not consider adult male altos blend well with female contraltos, nor boys altogether so.”

* * * *

“We have three boy altos—a great acquisition, giving firmness and body to the alto part.”

* * * *

“I think adult male altos very objectionable in a choir of S.C.T.B.”

* * * *

“I would not allow a boy alto in any choir I had under me. We have two adult male altos.”

* * * *

“We want all our boys for church work. We formerly had them, but they were under no discipline, and gave too much trouble; their voices, however, were invaluable in choruses.”

Dr. Roland Rogers in a paper read to the Cymmrodorion Society at Cardiff, after deprecating the use of boys' voices in the alto part, thus speaks of men altos:—

“I have no hesitation in saying that one of the primary causes of the success for three consecutive years of the Penrhyn Quarry Choral Union was due to the fact that we had contraltos and men with falsetto voices to sing the alto part, the former giving a fulness and brilliance to the upper parts ranging from G to D in the treble cleff, and the latter supplying a corresponding power in chest notes from tenor G to the first treble D; and though perhaps they were numerically and vocally weaker than the trebles, tenors, or basses, still their quality of tone flowed on smoothly, and did not in any way either interfere with the pitch, or mar the beauty of the other voice parts.”

Several conductors, who are also organists and choir-masters, state their preference for boys' voices in church music, but do not like them in choral societies.

CHAPTER VII.

REHEARSALS.

Too much attention cannot be given to making rehearsals attractive. The permanent success of a society depends more on this than on the style or expense of its concerts. Many members much prefer rehearsals to performances, and such are the backbone of a society, for they will stick to it when the "butterfly" members, who care only for display before an audience, have grown tired, and have flown to some fresh amusement. Thibaut in his "Purity in Music" says: "As a rule, it is seen that those who possess a real taste for art have the reverse of dislike for practice as long as works of good quality in their various kinds are tendered to them; for the more pains spent in the pursuit of the beautiful the greater the appreciation of it."

What should be the guiding rules for those responsible for the conduct of rehearsals?

- (1.) To secure a clean and comfortable room. The seats (chairs if possible) should be arranged in groups for each part. Tidiness in all the arrangements of the room—a table for the secretary's books. Music, &c. Places for ladies cloaks, gentlemen's hats, &c.
- (2.) Punctuality in commencing the practice. Conductor, secretary, and other officers should set the example

by being at the room some time before the stated hour. Some societies practically lose half their time by want of punctuality. First-rate choral singing is scarcely possible when members are coming in and going out all the evening. Although met for pleasure, business principles must prevail if success is desired.

- (3.) Keeping registers of attendance. The secretary or choir superintendent should carefully mark this *in sight of the members*, for the latter are thus constantly reminded that their attendance is appreciated or their absence noticed. A specimen register was given on p. 37. The plan adopted by one large society may commend itself to some.

————— CHORAL UNION.

‘ TWENTIETH SEASON.

—————
ATTENDANCE TICKET, 1885-6.
—————

M.....

BASS A.

No.....

N.B.—On each attendance at Weekly Rehearsal this Ticket must be deposited in a box placed at the entrance. It will be returned before the close of the practice.

Attention to this regulation is particularly requested.

In another society “each member has a member’s ticket bearing a number. At all rehearsals and concerts, upon entering the door the member mentions his number (not name) to the registrar who puts a × to the number in the book.”

About two-thirds of the societies who answered the questions keep a “Roll” or register of attendance, and about three-fifths have a rule as to the number of rehearsals to be attended in order to qualify for performing at a concert. This number varies considerably. Three-fourths, two-thirds, or one half of the total practices; not less than three; last four; four out of last six; last three.

Some societies do not keep a register of attendance for rehearsals; but, according to their rules, require a certain number of attendances to qualify for a concert. How this last information can be gained without a register (except perhaps in very small societies, or by asking the members themselves) is a mystery.

Upon the subject of attendance a few comments by conductors and secretaries may be quoted.

“We do not allow a member to sing if there has been neglect in attending weekly rehearsals. It is the unusual interest shown in the weekly rehearsals, and the real enjoyment thereby given, that stimulates the honorary officers of the society to continue their efforts to promote high class concerts.”

* * * *

“I have been a member of a society where such rules were in existence, but not strictly carried out, and I found that when they were fully exercised many members left the society.”

* * * *

“Not a strict registration. We ‘jog the memory’ of absentees occasionally.”

* * * *

“We issue a circular six weeks before a concert asking a regular attendance from all who mean to take part.”

* * * *

“We do not find members who are irregular in attendance anxious to be among the performers. Those who mean to perform usually attend well.”

* * * *

“We find it difficult to get a good secretary to attend to this matter, so the rule of attendance is almost put aside. I (conductor) make a quiet note of absentees and claim the option of refusing permission to a member to take part in the public performance of any work.”

* * * *

“A register is kept, but no rules observed, much to my disgust. We have a ‘Committee of Management!’”

* * * *

“Members must attend a certain number of rehearsals before each concert, the number is fixed by the conductor.

This number depends generally upon the work to be performed; for instance, for a new work more are required than for a well-known work."

* * * *

"Chief difficulty is in getting punctual attendance. To obviate this I always make a point of commencing with however few may be present, that late comers may seem to lose something of the night."

* * * *

"We have found that the more strict we are with regard to *punctual* and *regular* attendance, the more successful our performances are; besides the members have more respect for the society. To give an example we practise once a week from 8 to 9.30 p.m. Any member coming in 3 minutes after the hour, or leaving before 9.30 is not given credit for attendance. No excuse is taken for illness (many will feign illness for want of a better excuse), and no excuse from final rehearsal."

Upon the advisability of keeping a register of attendance there can be no doubt; and a good secretary, or other official, who looks after this matter, "jogging the memories" of absentees, making kindly enquires in cases of illness, or in many other ways "keeping touch" with the members is a tower of strength to the society. In large towns members live at greater distances apart, and are not so likely to meet each other away from the society as in smaller places; when they have been away three or four weeks they feel to some extent strangers again, their interest in the society has been disturbed. A note from the secretary will do much towards bringing them back.

Some societies have a rule that members absent (say) three consecutive rehearsals have forfeited membership. Such a rule could only be enforced when the choir is one of especial excellence or high character, to get into which is considered a privilege.

With regard to attendance qualifications for singing at concerts, it is well to have some rule or understanding on the subject, so that members may know what is expected of them. It cannot be denied, however, that to have a rule for

a fixed number of attendances leads in the course of time to a good deal of friction. Members, who, years ago, thoroughly learned the "Messiah" should not be expected to attend the same number of rehearsals for that work as "raw recruits." The conductor, who is responsible for the result, should be the arbiter, acting under certain regulations named in the rules, or acknowledged by the society as one of its unwritten laws. One way of intimating to members that they are, or are not, to sing at a concert is to issue "orchestra passes" to those who may be deemed by the conductor, secretary, &c., to be qualified.

Separate part rehearsals are most useful when the music is difficult, or a very high standard of excellence in choral singing is aimed at. For one part at a general rehearsal to be taken through a "passage" time after time is irksome to the remainder of the choir. The members of that part feel that the others are criticising them, and the knowledge makes them nervous. A conductor who is too busy to take such practice himself can get a deputy—the accompanist or member of the executive whose musical skill is recognised by the members.

When an orchestral band is connected with the choir their rehearsals should be held on separate evenings or different time of the same evening. The attempt for chorus and band to learn a work together must lead to a great waste of time. Singers' difficulties are not those of the instrumentalist. If each section have thoroughly got over the reading of their music, the combination of band with choir will give to all an increased pleasure in studying the expression of the work. Where only one evening a week can be devoted to the practice the following arrangement has been found to answer well:—

Choir alone at 7.

Choir and Band at 8.

Band alone at 9.

ADMISSION OF LISTENERS TO REHEARSALS.

The general practice of choral societies appears to be not to admit strangers to rehearsals. Honorary members invariably have the right to attend, and in some cases they may introduce a friend. Other societies allow members to bring a friend. A few societies exclude listeners from the ordinary practices, but admit them to full rehearsals. The reverse plan is adopted by another society, viz., allowing listeners at weekly practices and not at the full rehearsal. Occasionally a charge is made varying in amount from a penny to a shilling.

Large and influential societies occasionally issue a limited number of tickets for the full rehearsal. The Philharmonic Society of London for some years issued one to each subscriber to the series of concerts. In New York all the large societies hold public rehearsals, charging for admission.

CHAPTER VIII.

SELECTION OF MUSIC.

THE stated objects of the society, number and musical skill of its members will largely govern the choice of music to be practised. A "Sacred Harmonic Society" performing comic opera or cantata is, to say the least, incongruous. A "grand performance of Handel's 'Israel in Egypt;' band and chorus of 50" is absurd. There is a fitness of things in the choice of music which must not be overlooked. At the present time (1886) there is a great race between societies all over the kingdom to be the first in their several districts to perform the works written for the great musical festivals. Nothing will satisfy the ambition of conductor, committee, or members but to attempt Gounod's latest oratorio, Dvorak's last cantata, &c. They do not stop to enquire if their members can "read" a single page of the score. What does it matter if the chief interest of the work is in its orchestral details which they must render (?) upon a simple pianoforte, or worse, much worse, with an incomplete band utterly unable to master the intricacies of their parts? Have not the leading musical critics praised the work, and will not their society be applauded for its enterprise? It is to be feared that this haste

to be famous hinders rather than helps true musical education. Instead of calm, steady work well suited to the capacity of the performers, work which would mould their tastes on a sound model, and increase their knowledge by sure steps, there is produced a musical fever, a false estimate of their powers, and a meretricious standard of performance. For a season or two small societies may by such means force themselves into a fictitious importance. Their glory will be brief. A reaction will follow the fever. Too often complete collapse ensues, the society breaks up, and its failure stops for a time the legitimate course of musical progress.

Choral societies, like oak-trees, should be of slow growth. First, the Instruction Class; secondly, the Practising Choir with its part-songs tastefully rendered, and its glees and madrigals thoroughly understood; thirdly, the simpler kind of cantata and the selection from oratorio. Finally, the noblest work to which a singer can aspire, the complete oratorio of the greatest masters. Society and singer alike profit by sustained work of this character. Respect for the choir and its history animates all its members, rendering them jealous of its reputation.

Granted a firmly-established, fully-competent choir, equal to any demand made upon its skill, the choice of works must be guided by circumstances. Three points have to be considered. (1) The members' enjoyment in rehearsal; because if this is sacrificed, bad attendance, or indifferent performance will result. (2) Interest of the work to the public (audience). (3) Financial aspect; will the expense of production upon an adequate scale be met by the subscription or sale of tickets?

On the first of these heads the experience of societies all over the land is (with a single exception quoted below) unanimously in favour of works by Handel, Haydn,

and Mendelssohn, and against the style of modern works by Gounod, Dvorak, and Mackenzie. The answers to the second point vary according to the size of the town and the extent of the musical work done in it. Where frequent performances of established works are given, novelties attract, and in such districts it is probably necessary to occasionally perform a modern work of the advanced school. As to the financial side of the question all agree that the expense of producing modern works is very much greater than that incurred for the older ones. Solo vocalists and band must be decidedly good to make the music interesting. This means great outlay and almost certain loss.

Here are the views of some of the best known conductors of choral societies :—

“The works of the ‘classic’ composers, whose great beauty lies in the perfect form and fluent harmony, are of course easier to perform and more or less already familiar to the societies. Those of the modern or ‘romantic’ school striving to illustrate the literal sense of the poem with all the extension of modern harmony, form, as well as with the most refined instrumentation, are more difficult to comprehend and require a better musical knowledge than the former. In consequence choral societies do not, as a rule, take kindly to the hard labour of interpreting them.”

* * * *

“I have performed recently the ‘Redemption,’ ‘Rose of Sharon,’ ‘Mors et Vita,’ and ‘Sleeping Beauty.’ I do not think these works are so interesting to chorus singers as works in the older style; but is quite certain I could not keep my singers if I did only works of Handel, &c. They are very eager to try novelties and they put up with their unvocal difficulties.”

* * * *

“We have done the ‘Redemption’ and Dvorak’s ‘Stabat Mater.’ I can confidently assert our committee were warmly complimented by the members for their selection, and the attendance at the weekly rehearsals showed how much a new work was appreciated. We have been asked frequently to repeat the ‘Redemption,’ but the expense prevents.”

* * * *

“Recent choral works are not in general so interesting to the chorus as those of the old school; but I must except Dvorak’s ‘Stabat Mater,’ which roused the highest enthusiasm of my choir. The *greatest* favourite is Mendelssohn.”

* * * *

“In my opinion the works of the more modern composers are better for practice than those of the older masters, inasmuch as the various marks of expression, &c. are indicated in the works of the former and not by the latter unless we except Mendelssohn. Again they are often more interesting, being picturesque and florid, and I think that among amateurs generally there is a preference for this kind of music. On the other hand, they are often more difficult of execution, and therefore some singers get alarmed about them.”

* * * *

“In Yorkshire they (modern works) are quite as much appreciated by the chorus, but not sung as much on account of difficulty and on account of audience.”

* * * *

“Two years since we were obliged to close for a season on account of a falling off in attendance caused through the music (recommended by our then conductor) not being appreciated. It was altogether too heavy: Bach’s ‘Passion’ and ‘Creation.’ I think had some lighter work than the ‘Passion’ been taken up we should have been still flourishing.”

By whom is the choice of works for performance to be made? So much discretion must be exercised in this matter that it is probably the safest to place upon the committee the responsibility of the selection. The views of the members of the Society and those of the subscribers can then be well ventilated. The conductor ought always to be present at committee meetings when this subject is under consideration, and his opinion should carry great weight with the members. If possible a unanimous vote should be arrived at, so that all should feel committed to work heartily for the success of the performance. A conductor is to be pitied who has a distasteful work thrust upon him by a committee; nor is he likely to carry the rehearsal through

with any great spirit. Equally entitled to sympathy is a society upon which a too enthusiastic conductor has forced a work quite unsuited to its capacities, or one which will not interest the majority of the performers and audience.

Several conductors had a word to say on this topic in their "Answers to Questions":—

"Music to be chosen by the conductor subject to approval of members."

* * * *

"Conductor to have sole management of musical matters subject to approval of committee. I have known of people engaged in commercial pursuits presuming to dogmatise as to suitability of music, &c., to one whose whole life has been devoted to the study of the art. This is especially the case with partisans of Liszt, Wagner, Raff, &c., who with brazen tongues denounce Handel, Mozart, and Mendelssohn as childish, or even infantile."

* * * *

"Society to have a definite object, or else it will deteriorate through vanity of singing committee men who prefer ballads to oratorios. It is a good rule, which we have, to admit no solos but 'Recit. and Airs' from oratorios, operas, or cantatas at miscellaneous concerts. This excludes royalty ballads (Sterndale Bennett or Schubert excepted)."

CHAPTER IX.

CONCERT PROFITS AND LOSSES.

THREE questions were asked in connection with the financial side of concert giving.

(1) "Do your concerts pay well?" To this 2 replied "Very well," 22 replied "Yes," 12 "fairly," and 16 "just pays expenses." 76 said "No" with more or less emphasis.

(2) "What class of concerts pays best?" Answers "Miscellaneous" (Ballad, Part-songs, &c.) 64, "Oratorio" (chiefly "Messiah" and "Elijah") 26, "Cantata for Part I and Miscellaneous, Part II," 17.

(3) "Do you depend on the public, members of society, or subscribers, honorary members, &c., for your audience?" From the answers to this question it appears that a very small proportion of the societies depend on any one source for their audience. The great majority have to work in all three directions. Taking into account that "subscribers" are chiefly found by the executive and members of the societies, the support accorded by the outside public seems extremely limited.

In large towns oratorios can be made to pay when given on a grand scale. Smaller places in which that class of work is attempted find the engagement of soloists and band swallows up their receipts.

The Chatham and Rochester Choral Society have a full rehearsal with band on the evening before each concert. They engage second rate soloists, and charge 1s. admission to all parts of the hall. This boon is greatly appreciated by hundreds who cannot pay the prices charged for the final concert, and does not injure it in the least.

A plan that several societies have found to answer well in the production of new works like Gounod's "Redemption," Mackenzie's "Rose of Sharon," &c., is to raise a list of subscribers and a list of guarantors.

A circular is issued to the members for distribution amongst their friends, and copies sent to the leading people of the district. This contains particulars of the work to be performed, the date, and names of principal singers and instrumentalists, &c., and invites the guarantee of

"(1) The sale of tickets.

(2) A fixed sum in the event of loss.

All who guarantee will have a first choice (by ballot) of seats, provided their names are received by _____.

Guarantors of tickets have the value of their guarantee in tickets without further liability.

Guarantors *against loss* will participate in the ballot, if in addition to their guarantee they desire seats. If in this form the sum of £100 is guaranteed, and the loss is £25, each guarantor will have to pay only one-fourth of his guarantee. It is, therefore, to the interest of all such guarantors to increase the list, and *it is earnestly hoped* that friends will not shrink from rendering their support in this manner.

The expenses of this performance will amount to nearly £100. The seats are arranged and priced with a view to cover this amount, but the committee is glad to be able to offer guarantors tickets at the following rates:—

Six at 4s., or eight at 3s. for one guinea.

Three at 4s., or four at 3s. for half-a-guinea.

The object of the performance is purely artistic, and not for profit. Any surplus remaining after expenses are paid will be retained to promote future musical enterprise.

An early reply on the enclosed form is particularly requested.

Yours faithfully,

On behalf of the choir concert committee."

A "First List of Guarantors" accompanies, and is a most important accessory to, the circular. People like to know that they are not alone even in a good work; while the publication of certain names, and the knowledge that their own will appear in print influences a good many.

The form of guarantee is as follows:—

PARTICULARS OF PERFORMANCE.

To Mr. _____

Sir,

In the event of the above performance resulting in a loss, I am willing to be responsible for a sum not exceeding £ , and I request that you will allot me — numbered tickets at 4s. and — numbered tickets at 3s.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Date.....

Honorary members or annual subscribers who receive a certain number of tickets for their subscription are a part of the scheme of most concert-giving societies. Amongst the advantages of such are the fixed income which they ensure, the reduction of trouble in canvassing for the sale of tickets, and, in places where such considerations have weight, the patronage of the "nobility and gentry" of the district. However, as one conductor says "there is a serious danger that your responsibility to hon-members may lead you to give three concerts when you ought to give only two."

The same gentleman observes "the three great oratorios, "Messiah," "Elijah," and "Creation" pay best; especially the "Messiah" as it costs very little for strengthening our band. Next to these are concerts where we engage one

vocalist and one solo instrumentalist, completing the programme with, say four choral and four orchestral items."

Another conductor's experience is that the "latest novelties performed with the best resources pay best; but we have to secure our public beforehand. At our last concert we took about £100 before the performance and about £2 10s. at the doors. I believe the latter is about all we got from our general advertisements."

One of the secrets of successful concert giving is to make all the members feel a personal interest in finding the audience, and in meeting the expenses. The lists of subscribers and guarantors referred to above do this in the best way. When this plan cannot be adopted the necessity of selling tickets must be frequently urged upon the members. As a recognition of the efforts of those who exert themselves in this direction the secretary or other official should, at a practice meeting as soon after the concert as convenient, read out the value of tickets sold by each person, omitting perhaps those below a certain sum, since the object is not to ridicule those who have done little, but to stimulate them to do more next time.

Speaking on this matter a conductor says, "I throw as much responsibility for concerts as I can upon the members of the choir. It is *their* concert which I conduct—not my concert at which they kindly help."

Amongst the reasons given for the want of success of concerts in some towns are the "Penny Readings," "Concerts for the People," and "Charity Concerts." It is certain that, whatever benefit they may confer in a social sense, they seldom raise the standard of musical culture. Incompetent performers are tolerated on such occasions because they are "assisting a charity." People who are fed with the average royalty ballad, comic song, or negro

minstrelsy, have little appetite for the highest forms of music.

A wise remark is contained in a pamphlet called "Choirs and Choral Singing" (Jarrold & Sons) with respect to the insufficient time allowed by some societies for the preparation of the music and the business arrangements of concerts.

"Choral bodies and the public alike are also unjustly dealt with by the want of commercial acumen and musical knowledge, as well as the indecision frequently shown by the managing bodies of local festivals.

The first, by the changing and withdrawal of works which have been rehearsed for no purpose, as well as by new and difficult works, which are promised for performance, being thrust upon them at the eleventh hour; and the second, by the consequent want of finish which is only the natural result."

CHAPTER X.



ARRANGEMENT OF MISCELLANEOUS PROGRAMMES.

MUCH of the effect of miscellaneous programmes depends upon how the items are placed. The inability of an audience to give wrapt attention to one sentiment or style of music for many minutes at a time must never be forgotten. Contrasts should abound. "From grave to gay, from lively to severe" is a good motto for the maker of a programme. The best compositions—those which require most attention on the part of the listener—should come first. Hence arises the almost universal plan of placing a cantata or other concerted work, where one is to be given, in Part I. Both performers and audience are fresh, and their executive and receptive faculties equal to the strain put upon them. Later in the evening they may

equally feel jaded, and then discontent will ensue, the audience laying blame on the performers, and the performers ascribing their want of success to the inattention of the audience.

“A very familiar type of miscellaneous concert is that where Part I consists of “Sacred Music” and Part II of “Secular.” This arrangement conforms to the suggestions already made. “Sacred Music” is an incorrect as well as a most elastic phrase. Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as sacred music. What is meant is, music with sacred words. Even if Part I be strictly limited to music of the latter kind there can be introduced great variety of style. Much of what passes current as sacred music is decidedly secular in character; for instance a large number of Handel’s oratorios; so that the more solemn or heavy items of Part I can be relieved with lighter selections without calling forth adverse comment. When a programme is entirely secular care has to be taken not to introduce the flippant or humorous element too soon. Glee and madrigals are much better appreciated early in the evening than towards the end, because their writing is more intricate to follow, and the style not so familiar to modern ears as the English or German part-song. Some concert-givers prefer not to make any distinction between “sacred” and “secular” compositions arranging them for purely musical effect.

No better examples of miscellaneous programmes could be found than those of the famous choir conducted by Mr. Henry Leslie. Three of them are printed below:—the 1st consisting of Part I sacred and Part II secular; the second a specimen of the mixture of the sacred numbers (marked thus *) with the secular; and the third containing all secular music.

No. 1.

PART I.—SACRED.

- Part-song, "Resurgam," Henry Leslie
 "Ave Verum," Gounod
 Song, "Ave Maria," F. Schubert
 Miss Santley.
 New Part-song, ... "The Mighty Caravan," ... Josiah Booth
 (First time of performance. Conducted by the composer.) Member of
 (Composed expressly for the choir.) the choir.
 13th Psalm—for C. Solo and Ch. (with Organ Acc.) Mendelssohn
 Miss Marian Burton and Choir.
 23rd Psalm—Female Voices, "The Lord is my Shepherd," Schubert
 "O Salutaris Hostia," F. Westlake
 (First time of performance.)
 Cantique de Noel, ... "Nazareth," Gounod
 Mr. Santley and Choir.
 Motett—for Double Choir, "I wrestle and pray," J. S. Bach

PART II.—SECULAR.

- Madrigal, "As Vesta was descending," ... J. Weelkes
 (A.D. 1601.)
 New Song, "My soul is an enchanted boat," Maude Valèrie White
 Words taken from *Prometheus Unbound*, by Shelley.
 Miss Santley.
 (Accompanied by the composer.)
 New Part-song, "How sweet the Moonlight," ... J. G. Callcott
 (First time of performance. Conducted by the composer.)
 Duet,
 Miss Santley and Mr. Santley.
 Part-song, "The Sea hath its Pearls." ... Ciro Pinsuti
 Pianoforte—Duet, "South American Airs," Arr. by Maude V. White
 Miss Santley and Miss Maude Valèrie White.
 "Hunting Song," Sir J. Benedict
 Old English Song, "Here's a Health unto his Majesty,"
 Mr. Santley, [King Charles II Time
 Part-song, "You stole my love," ... Walter Macfarren

No. 2.

PART I.

- *Motett for Double Choir, "In exitu Israel," Samuel Wesley
- *Part-song, "Homeward," Henry Leslie
- Solo—Piano.—Three Gavottes and Musettes— Bach
In B Minor, D Minor, and G Minor.
Mr. Charles Hallé.
- Madrigal (in Ten Real Voice Parts, "Sir Patrick Spens,"
R. L. de Pearsall
- Song, "Annabelle Lee," Henry Leslie
Mr. Joseph Maas.
- *"Ave Verum," Gounod
Composed expressly for Mr. Henry Leslie's Choir.
- Song, "Farewell," Louis Engel
Madame Trebelli.
- Harp Accompaniment, ... Mr. John Thomas.
Harmonium, ... Mr. Louis Engel.
- *The 43rd Psalm, (for an Eight-part Choir) "Judge me, O God,"
Mendelssohn

PART II.

- New Part-song, ... "The Golden Year," Henry Leslie
- Aria, "Di tanti palpiti," (*Tancredi*) Rossini
Madame Trebelli.
- Part-song, "Departure," Mendelssohn
- Part-song, "Come, live with me," .. W. S. Bennett
- Solo—Pianoforte, {
a. "Berceuse in D Flat,"
b. "Polonaise in A,"
Mr. Charles Hallé.
- Aria, "Il mio tesoro," (*Don Giovanni*) Mozart
Mr. Joseph Maas.
- Part-song, "The Silent Land," A. R. Gaul
- Madrigal, "Now is the month of Maying," (A.D. 1595) T. Morley
- Aria, "La Habanera," (*Carmen*) Bizet
Madame Trebelli.
- Glee, "The Cloud-capt Towers," R. J. S. Stevens
By the Full Choir.
- Part-song, (by desire.) "The Bells of St. Michael's Tower," Stewart
"God save the Queen."

- No. 3. PART I.
- Madrigals, { "All creatures now are merry," (A.D. 1599) J. Benet
 "Sweet Flowers," Walmisley
 Song, "The Storm," John Hullah
 Miss Orridge.
- Part-song, "The Flax Spinner," Henry Leslie
- Songs, { a. "To Blossoms," Maude V. White
 b. "Montrose's Love Song,"
 Mr. Santley.
 (Accompanied by the composer.)
- Part-song, "O hush thee, my babe," Arthur Sullivan
 Glee, "Come, bounteous May," R. Spofforth
 Messrs. H. Lester, Albert James, Arthur Thomas, F. A. Bridge, and
 J. Langman.
- Song, "O bid your faithful Ariel fly," Arne
 Miss Mary Davies.
- Madrigal, "As Vesta was descending," (A.D. 1601) T. Weelkes
 Old Song, "Sally in our alley,"
 Mr. Barton McGuckin.
- Trio & Chorus, "The Chough and Crow," Bishop
 Miss Mary Davies, Miss Orridge, and Mr. Santley.

PART II.

- New Part-song, "The Golden Year," Henry Leslie
 (First time of performance.)
- Duet, "I know a bank," Charles Horn
 Miss Mary Davies and Miss Orridge.
- New Part-song, "It was a lover and his lass," Josiah Booth
 (First time of performance)
- Song,
 Mr. Santley.
- Humorous Part-song, "Humpty Dumpty," A. J. Caldicott
 (First time of performance by this choir.)
- Glee, "Sigh no more, ladies," R. J. S. Stevens
 Messrs. H. Lester, Albert James, Arthur Thomas, F. A. Bridge, and
 J. Langman.
- Catch, "Would you know my Celia's charms," Webbe
 Old Song, "The Bailiff's Daughter,"
 Miss Orridge.
- Part-song, "The Vikings," Eaton Fanning
 (Accompanied by the composer.)
- Irish Melody, "The Minstrel Boy," Moore
 Mr. Barton McGuckin
- Part-song, "Sweet and low," Joseph Barnby
 Madrigal, "Who shall win my lady fair," Pearsall
 Song, "Pretty Mocking Bird," Bishop
 Miss Mary Davies
- Part-song, "Love you for beauty," Hamilton Clarke
 Madrigal, "Fire! Fire!" (A.D. 1595) Thos. Morley

It will be observed that interest is imparted to the madrigals by reminding the audience of the period when the composers lived. In his books of words Mr. Leslie frequently inserted short biographical and explanatory notices. By these means the audiences were educated and their enjoyment of the music increased.

Madrigal, "As Vesta was descending,"

(A.D. 1560-1609) *Thomas Weelkes*

This very fine specimen of the Madrigalian School is remarkable for the admirable counterpoint in the development of the subject introduced with the words, "Long live fair Oriana." This is taken up consecutively by the 2nd Tenors, 1st Soprani, 2nd Soprani, Basses, 1st Tenors, Alti, when the Basses are heard singing the subject in notes eight times lengthened while a profusion of imitative points is continued in the other parts. Further on, another fine effect is produced by the Basses giving the subject, four times lengthened.

Thomas Weelkes, Mus. Bac., Oxon., was organist of Winchester Cathedral, and afterwards held the same post at Chichester.

As Vesta was from Latmos hill descending,
 She spy'd a maiden Queen the same ascending,
 Attended on by all the shepherds swain,
 To whom Diana's darlings came running down amain ;
 First two by two, then three by three together,
 Leaving their goddess all alone, hasted thither,
 And, mingled with the shepherds of her train,
 With mirthful tunes her presence entertain,
 Then sang the shepherds and nymphs of Diana,
 Long live fair Oriana !

Concert programmes are frequently much too long. Two hours of music ought to be sufficient, especially when the programme is made up of detached pieces as in miscellaneous concerts. Songs, ballads, part-songs, and choruses may be reckoned to take upon an average five minutes each ; therefore, twelve numbers in each part, with a few minutes interval between the parts will fill up an evening. Instrumental solos take longer, ten to fifteen minutes. There is not the same objection to *encores* being responded to in concerts of this kind as in cantatas or oratorios. When an

audience is known to be a voracious one in this respect the number of items in the printed programmes should be reduced. An understanding that an encore will be replied to by a repetition of the last verse of the song, *not* by the substitution of another song, generally keeps the noisy portion of the audience in proper bounds. The immediate compliance by soloists with an *encore* from "half-a-dozen hands" is a feature of the modern system of "royalty ballad singing" which conductors should resolutely repress. Soloists who get a certain sum for each copy of the song sold, or who receive a fee from the publishers every time they sing a particular song, don't care who may be inconvenienced by the undue lengthening of the programme, or how the latter part of the concert may be scrambled through so long as their ends are served. A capital rule, if it could be carried out, would be for encores to be responded to *after* the printed programme had been completed. A more practical suggestion is for conductors to arrange with the soloists not to repeat a number, or at least to avoid giving another song, *in the first part*.

CHAPTER XI.



MANAGEMENT OF CONCERTS.

A THOROUGHLY successful concert is a pleasure to look back upon. To ensure success a large amount of business forethought has to be exercised by those responsible for its management. The smallest detail must be looked to: nothing left to chance. Military Commanders who wish to secure a victory "all along the line" know how essential it is for their men to be in good spirits, having confidence in their leaders, and a belief that ample provision has been made for their requirements in the Commissariat Transport and Hospital Departments. Individual valour is of no avail where there is disorganisation at head quarters. The arrangements for a concert resemble in some respects those for a military campaign. Those who neglect to provide for every emergency must not be surprised if they fail when the critical moment arrives. Experienced concert givers may smile at the, to them, elementary matters referred to below. Let them pass on, and, however dearly their experience may have been bought, be thankful they are now so wise. The suggestions are offered only to conductors and others who are contemplating their first concert.

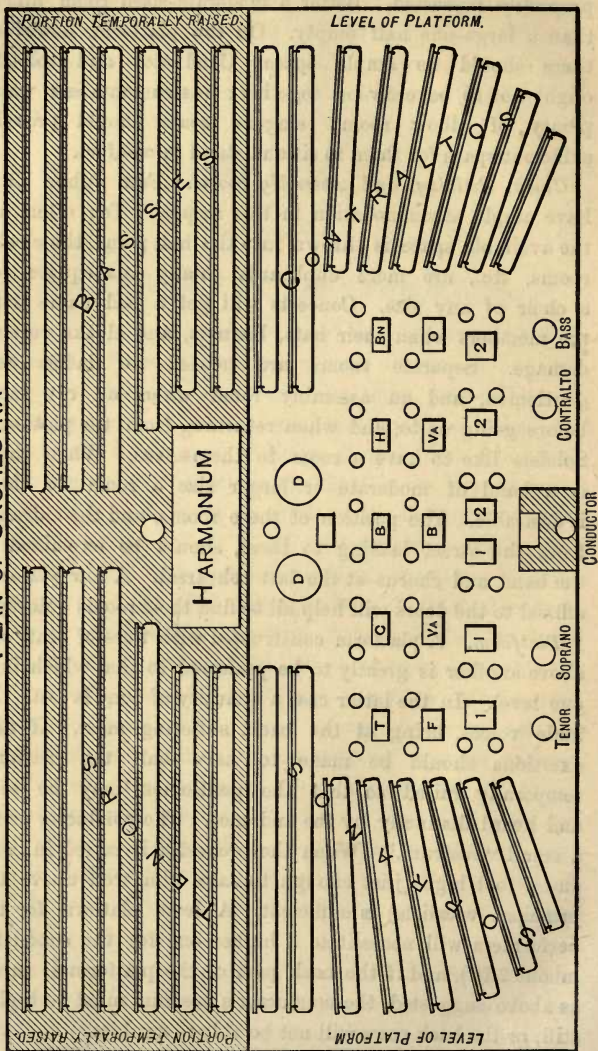
Engagement of the Hall. This should be made, where a choice exists, with a view to the size of the audience expected, the number of performers, and the acoustic

properties possessed. Better a moderate-sized room filled, than a large one half empty. On the platform, however, there should be ample space. Conductor and soloists ought not to be crowded together; instrumentalists want plenty of elbow room; singers' seats should provide sufficient space for them to sit and stand in comfort.

Cloak, Retiring, and Assembly rooms. Few public halls have ample accommodation in this respect. Too often all the available space is thrown into the hall; and the cloak-rooms, &c., are mere cupboards totally inadequate for a choir of any size. Concerts will get a bad name with the members when their hats, bonnets, and cloaks receive damage. Separate rooms are needed for ladies and gentlemen, and an assembly room where all can meet before going on to, and when returning from, the platform. Soloists like to have a room to themselves. When there is a band of moderate or larger size a room for them is desirable. The position of these rooms, and the entrance from the street leading to them, should be explained to the band and chorus at the last rehearsal. A few placards affixed to the doors will help all to find their rooms quickly.

Platform. A platform constructed with tiers of seats one above another is greatly to be preferred to that which is of one level. In the latter case a quantity of tone is lost; the male voices, being at the back, suffering most. If flat, exertions should be made to have half the platform temporarily raised so that the gentlemen may be seen and heard distinctly by the audience. The conductor needs a small "rostrum." When the orchestra is raised in tiers, one a foot high (just enough to raise him well above the principal vocalists) is sufficient. A level platform for the performers will necessitate a higher one for the conductor (about 2 ft.), and if the back part of the platform is raised as above suggested, the conductor's rostrum must be higher still, or the back rows will not be able to see him.

PLAN OF ORCHESTRA



KEY TO PLAN, &c.

□	Desks.	○	Chairs.	≡	Choir seats.
1.	1st Violins.			O.	Oboe
2.	2nd „			C.	Clarinet
Va.	Viola			Bn.	Bassoon
B.	'Cello and Double Bass			H.	Horn
F.	Flute			T.	Trumpet
				D.	Drums.

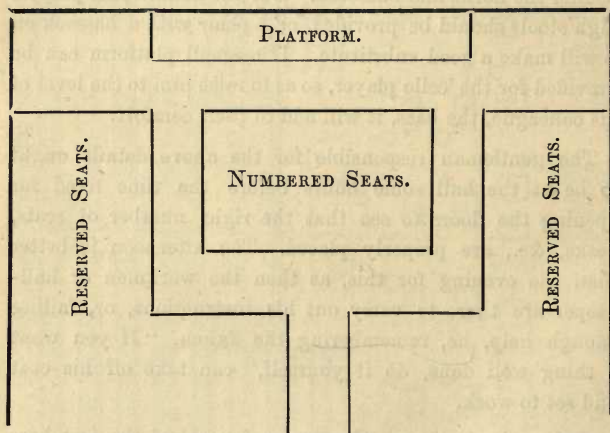
If trombones were included their best place would be behind the horns and bassoons. For the double-bass players high stools should be provided, or a chair with a hassock on it will make a good substitute. If a small platform can be provided for the 'cello player, so as to raise him to the level of his colleague, the bass, it will add to their comfort.

The gentleman responsible for the above details ought to be at the hall some hours before the time fixed for opening the doors to see that the right number of seats, desks, &c., are properly placed. The afternoon is better than the evening for this, as then the workmen or hall-keeper are there to carry out his instructions, or, failing enough help, he, remembering the axiom, "If you want a thing well done, do it yourself," can take off his coat and set to work.

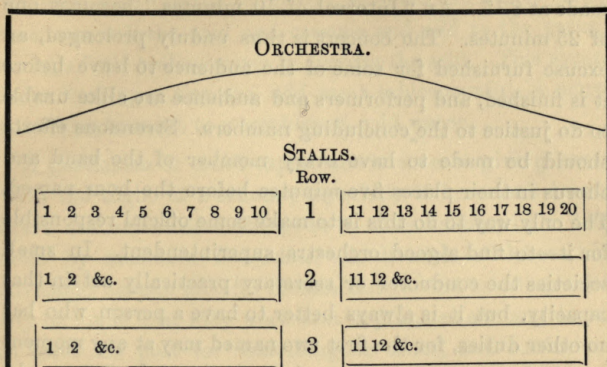
Seating the Audience. Gentlemen friends of the members can always be found to act as stewards at concerts. They vary in value. Some are ornamental; others useful. The latter are to be preferred, for they do not forget their duties when they happen to espy a lady of their acquaintance. Place the trustworthy men at important posts—the barriers dividing the various classes of seats. All the stewards should wear in their buttonhole some insignia of office, by which any of the audience who wish to make enquiries may distinguish them. To seat late comers

quickly without noise or the disturbance of those who have already taken their places, is the aim of the efficient steward. When the hall is wide, more than the one avenue down the centre is desirable.

Below is a plan which has advantages: it gives the best place for seeing and hearing (the centre) to the highest priced seats instead of stretching them right across the hall.



The avenue on each side of the centre block enables any seat to be reached without passing in front of many people. The numbers (which have to be provided by the hirers of the hall) are usually tied on the backs of the seats, facing the audience as they come in. When the numbered seats are numerous the rows should be labelled with letters or figures. A lithographed plan of the seats for issue to the ticket agents, &c., is very useful in such cases. It may be got up in this style:—



Tickets for numbered seats should have a portion so printed that it can be detached on entering the hall, and retained by the visitor as a passport to his seat throughout the evening.

ST. JAMES'S HALL. <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 5px auto;"/> (Particulars of Concert.) <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 5px auto;"/> Stalls, 10s. 6d. Row..... No.....	ST. JAME'SS HALL <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 5px auto;"/> (Date.) <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 5px auto;"/> STALL. Row..... No.
--	---

Admission by Programmes is a favourite plan of some conductors, usually for small concerts of miscellaneous selections. A double card is the best material in this case, with the place, date, soloists, &c., given on the front page and the programme on the two inside pages.

Punctuality is a virtue sadly neglected at many concerts. Announced to commence at "8 o'clock precisely," a start is

made at 8.15. An "Interval of 10 minutes" becomes one of 25 minutes. The concert is thus unduly prolonged, an excuse furnished for some of the audience to leave before it is finished, and performers and audience are alike unable to do justice to the concluding numbers. Strenuous efforts should be made to have every member of the band and chorus in their places five minutes before the hour named. The only way to do this is to make some official responsible for it—to find a good orchestra superintendent. In small societies the conductor or secretary practically act in that capacity, but it is always better to have a person who has no other duties, for the first two named may at any moment be called away to answer enquiries from soloists, stewards &c. A large choir and band will need more looking after than a smaller number. The ordinary choir superintendents would usually take charge of their own "part."

Refreshments.—A few hints will not be out of place. Managers of this department are urged to have everything well arranged and ready in good time. The "interval for refreshments" should not be turned into a "scramble." A good plan is to have a number of cups of tea or coffee poured out during the performance of the last number in Part I. If malt liquors are provided jugs can be filled from the cask in readiness. Soloists will prefer to take refreshment in their own room. When they drink wine, port is generally the favourite, next to that perhaps claret. Stout is held by some to contain the best sustaining properties. Effervescing drinks are not good for singing. Home-made lemonade is much better. A very palatable drink can be made from the following recipe:—

- 1½ lb. loaf sugar.
- 1 oz. Citric Acid.
- ½ drachm Essence of Lemon.
- 1 quart boiling water.

Pour the water on the sugar and let stand till nearly cold ; then mix well the acid and essence and add to the syrup, using a little boiling water to dissolve the acid. This syrup is for keeping. For use, add say a tablespoonful, or more according to taste, to a tumbler of cold water.

A gentleman of much experience in concert-giving says, "On the night of a concert, especially if in a small town, there are numberless things to be done, which will be *best* done by members *themselves*. A division of labour is advisable, certain men for certain things, and it will generally be found that they work best in pairs, as one may have to leave his post for something or other, and confusion ensue. The choir, orchestra, principals, and conductor should be in their places not less than three minutes before the advertised time of starting. I attach the utmost importance to that."

CHAPTER XII.

ENGAGEMENT OF SOLOISTS, &c.

EFFICIENT soloists are very necessary for a satisfactory performance; but to lavish nearly all the receipts of a concert upon them, and screw every other expense down to starvation level is most unwise. With the great increase of musical training which has taken place in recent years there should be no difficulty in most towns of procuring vocalists fully competent to appear at ordinary concerts. It rests with choral societies to prove that singers, unlike prophets, can be honoured in their own country. A great deal of nonsense is foisted upon provincial societies by London "Artistes." On the strength of a term or two at the Royal Academy, or London Academy of Music, and an appearance at some benefit, and a few local concerts, a circular is issued announcing that "Mr. ———, R.A.M., or L.A.M., &c., &c., of the Crystal Palace, St. James's Hall, and the principal London concerts, is open to receive engagements." Then follows some eulogistic notices from, say the *Hornsey Hornet*, *Brixton Budget*, and *Kensington Kernel*. All this information is valueless. In the first place the "artiste" has probably no authority

to use the initials of the Royal or any other musical Academy; in the second, the reference to the Crystal Palace, St. James's Hall, &c., might lead one to suppose that no first-rate concert at those and similar places was considered complete without the presence of Mr. ———, the truth being that the only appearance at either place was in one of the smaller rooms of those buildings on some very "off" day. Lastly, no reliance can be placed on reports of concerts in local papers. Sometimes they may be written by competent, impartial hearers, at others by any of the staff of the paper or friend of the editor who may happen to be present; and, not unfrequently, they are sent by an intimate friend of the singer who allows the wish to be father to the thought as regards the attainments of the performer.

A distinct advantage of engaging local singers is that they can rehearse with the choir. This promotes a good *ensemble*, and, if a rehearsal with all the soloists can be held a week or two before the concert, the choir will enter into the spirit of the work, practise their parts with increased assiduity, and re-double their efforts to sell tickets.

Soloists' terms vary according to circumstances; in other words second-rate professional vocalists get as much as they can. They proceed on the assumption that a society is a flourishing institution, with crowds of members and friends dying to hear them. When a list of artists has been selected, instead of asking them to quote their terms, it is better to offer them — guineas, according to their presumed value, and the amount to be expended on the concert. "Concert agents" may sometimes be consulted with advantage, although they mostly have a direct interest in naming large fees for the soloists they represent. As with soloists, they should be asked to furnish names of singers they can provide for a certain sum.

The names of many concert agents and solo vocalists are to be found in the advertisement columns of the leading musical papers. A full list of names and addresses of London and Provincial artists (vocal and instrumental) is included in "The Musical Directory" (3s.) published by Rudall Carte & Co., 23 Berners Street; "Reeves' Musical Directory" (2s.), 185 Fleet Street, and other works.

Orchestral players of great experience and skill can be engaged (in London) for one guinea, which includes a rehearsal in the day-time. In or near garrison towns good wind instrument players from the military bands can be secured for a smaller fee. Double bass players always receive an extra sum for portorage of their instruments. A tympanist will expect drums to be provided him. If he is to bring his own a further fee for hire and carriage will have to be paid.

To avoid any cause of misunderstanding it is advisable to make engagements with the members of a band by a printed form (specimen below) upon which the date, place, and time of the concert and rehearsal, the fee, &c., are very clearly stated. When any considerable distance has to be traversed, or the hall is not well-known, particulars of the trains or other means of conveyance should be added.

— CHORAL SOCIETY.

—:0:—

(Address and Date.)

[DEAR SIR,

I beg to offer you an engagement as _____ at a performance of _____ at _____ on _____

Terms _____ to include a rehearsal at _____ on _____ at _____ o'clock.

If you accept please sign the annexed form, and return same at once.

Yours truly,

Trains leave _____ at _____ and _____

— CHORAL SOCIETY.

—:0:—

Performance of _____
at _____
on _____

DEAR SIR,

I beg to accept an engagement for the above concert as _____

Terms _____ including a rehearsal on _____ at _____ o'clock.

Signature

Address

Date

To Mr. _____

A vexed question is that of allowing members of the choir to sing solos at concerts. In theory it would seem to be only just for any members who may have studied solo singing, and possess sufficient voice and skill to warrant them in attempting the music, to be invited to perform at the societies' concerts. In practice it is too often found to lead to dissatisfaction or even to disruption. There is the elation (developing into conceit) of the one chosen: the dejection (breeding envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness) of the many passed over. The chorus parts are weakened by the subtraction of some of the best voices. Solo singers frequently become so impressed with a sense of their own importance that they *look down* on the ordinary members, and speak slightly of chorus singing. All this is very harmful to a society. The choral music should be regarded as the all-important thing. A conductor cannot place too much honour upon the members of his chorus, for they are the backbone of his public performances. Better a thousand times to have trained a good choir, whose members work zealously for their society's and their conductor's reputations, than to have forced one or two individuals to the front as soloists, and who, if they succeed in establishing themselves, will probably disparage the society which gave them birth. The above views are endorsed by the following extracts:—

“To avoid jealousy and ill-feeling principal vocalists should invariably be professional, and not members of the society.”

* * * *

“I do not allow any of my amateurs to sing solos at concerts. I am certain it is much better for them to listen to good professional singers.

* * * *

“Allow no singing member to take a more prominent part than the others, except such as occupy an influential position in the society, as secretary, &c.”

 HIRE OF BAND PARTS.

Unless frequent performances of one work are contemplated it is not worth while for a society to buy band parts. They can be hired from librarians (see list below) at a moderate cost. Prior to placing the parts before a band the conductor should look through to see in what state they have been left by previous hirers. Much has of necessity to be "cut" (omitted) from Handel's oratorios; but conductors do not always agree as to the numbers, or portions of numbers, to be left out, and a variety of conflicting marks may be found in the parts. If these cannot be effaced by india-rubber without damaging the copies a list should be prepared of the numbers to be performed with brief directions attached to each. This can be pinned or pasted to the desk so that it hangs below the music in front of the performers.

- Example: No. 1. Overture, without repeats.
 ,, 2. Air, 1st movement only.
 ,, 3. Chorus, down to double bar.
 ,, 6. Duet, begin at "Allegro."

In the case of new works the band parts should be obtained from the publishers of the piano and vocal scores.

 LIBRARIANS.

Goodwin & Tabb, 71, Great Queen St., Holborn, W.C.
 Alfred Mapleson, 47½, Leicester Square, W.C.
 F. W. & F. J. Middleditch, Covent Garden Theatre, W.C.
 Novello, Ewer, & Co., 1, Berners St., W.

CHAPTER XIII.

BANDS AND ACCOMPANIMENTS.

The study of orchestral instruments is increasing so rapidly, that probably in a few years all important choral societies will have an orchestral band in connection with them. At present, the cost of an efficient professional band, added to that of solo vocalists, renders oratorio performances an expensive luxury. From the replies to the "question" on this subject it appears that about one-third of the choral societies, with whom I have been in correspondence have amateur bands more or less intimately connected with them, *i.e.*, under the same conductor and management. A few of the largest societies have the help of friendly orchestral societies for their concerts; some smaller choirs invite the assistance of good local amateurs to form a "scratch" band for their performances. The experience of those conductors who have now, or have had, amateur bands will be of value to others who may be contemplating starting them.

The question replied to was, "*Have you an orchestral band attached to your society?*"

"Yes. This is a great advantage, but there are drawbacks. It is much more difficult to train the singers.

When a concert is near we have separate practices, but in the usual way if the chorus know the band is not coming there will be a reduced attendance."

* * * *

"No. I had formerly, but found the members irregular, inconsistent, and wanting pay. The amateur vocalist is bad enough, but the amateur instrumentalist is worse."

* * * *

"Not exactly: but members occasionally invite orchestral performers to the rehearsals."

* * * *

"I admit members to play at practices only (for their own benefit). The best of them are selected to add to my concert band."

* * * *

"In this society we have an excellent leader of the band, although an amateur, and who has hitherto done his work well, but we find it would be better if we could have the benefit of a professional leader, as we take up works of greater difficulty. This, however, our leader declines to see, and threatens to resign if carried out. As the difficulty we are now in must be obvious, I should like to impress other societies of the policy of starting their orchestras under a professional leader, the remainder, if amateurs or quasi-professionals, will work with more confidence, and better than they will under one of the same or of even greater ability than themselves."

* * * *

"No. I once had an amateur band, and found it an unmitigated plague."

* * * *

"Yes. String and wind. Some of the wind by little orchestrions, such as "oboe orchestrion";* but extra wind and strings engaged for concerts."

* * * *

"No, not lately. I had once; but the expense of getting extraneous help swept away all profits. Am content with a grand piano and harmonium. Better than an amateur band."

* * * *

* Instruments of the harmonium class of very small size, producing a tone resembling the orchestral instruments after which they are named. The maker of these Orchestrions (Mr. Evans) died some years ago, and they cannot now be readily obtained. Another invention has taken their place, the Voixophone, which has at least two advantages over its predecessor. It is considerably smaller in size and weight (3½lbs), and is quite portable, and the tone being produced by simply breathing gently through a tube acting upon reeds, every delicacy of expression may be obtained. These instruments are sold by Messrs. Beare & Son, 34, Rathbone Place, London, W. Price, £2 2s.

“No, but good local amateurs attend the last four practices for any concert, by invitation, most of them being members of the local orchestral union.”

* * * *

The above experiences, it must be admitted, savour somewhat of the famous advice offered by “Punch” to those about to marry, “Don’t.” Amateur bands suffer from the extreme opinions entertained of their abilities. Conductors who do not temper enthusiasm with discretion are prone to expect amateurs to tackle the most difficult of modern works, and then, because they fail, to go to the other extreme of asserting that they can do nothing. In works written before instrumentalists had reached the present high plane of execution, especially in Handel’s oratorios, a very creditable rendering of the music by amateurs is frequently to be heard. By getting professional help in some departments, a really excellent performance can be secured.

The secret of success in organising a band is to proceed cautiously. Performers of all kinds are apt to overestimate their abilities. It would never do to accept violinists on their own opinion of their skill. If the conductor does not possess a practical knowledge of the instruments he should obtain the assistance of his “leader” (presuming him to be fully competent for the post), or of a professional man to test all applicants. The “strings” are the foundation of the orchestra, and the violins are the most important section of the strings, therefore some good violinists must be secured before the band can be started. Violas, violoncellos, and double basses can be added as players present themselves, or the number of violins warrant. The proportion of the different kind of stringed instruments is, usually, 1st violin 8, 2nd violin 8, viola 4, ’cello 3, and bass 3, but the violins may be greatly increased in number without spoiling the effect.

Amateur wood wind instrumentalists, flute, oboe, clarinet, and bassoon are much more rarely met with. Gentlemen who play the flute tolerably well in a drawing-room solo with pianoforte accompaniment are fairly numerous. As a rule they are not up to the work of an orchestral band. They are not sufficiently quick readers, and they find keeping time to a conductor's beat a very different thing to taking their own time.

Brass instrument players, cornets, horns, and trombones, are to be feared. They have in their hands (and mouths) so much destructive power that they can easily mar the effect of the whole orchestra. By all means dispense with them unless they are tolerably sure and tasteful players. Members of volunteer corps and similar bands, accustomed to playing in the open air and in coarse kinds of marches, &c., are not often equal to the true intonation and delicacy required for orchestral music. The euphonium may be occasionally employed as a substitute for the bass trombone. It is easier to learn (having the same fingering as the cornet), and is therefore safer in the hands of amateurs than the trombone.

All the performers provide their own instruments, excepting the double basses and drums. The double bass is not very heavy, but it is far too cumbersome to expect the performer to carry it himself. Societies ought to arrange for the carriage of the basses to and from their owners' houses unless they can possess one or two instruments for use at rehearsals. Good servicable basses may be purchased for about £5. Kettle-drums (tympani) are more inconvenient than basses to move about. They require a conveyance of some kind. The cost of a pair ranges from about £12 to £30, according to the size and maker.

Before attempting to direct a band the conductor, failing a practical acquaintance with the instruments, should study

all the books he can procure on the subject of orchestration. The appearance, compass, peculiarities of notation, and commonest effects to be obtained from the different instruments ought to be familiar to him. Prout's "Instrumentation" (2s., Novello & Co.) will be a treasure to him. With this admirable little book as his constant companion a conductor will not be "all at sea" when he stands up to rehearse his band. Berlioz's fine work on "Modern Instrumentation and Orchestration" is more costly (12s., Novello & Co.), and perhaps written more from a composer's point of view than a conductor's, with the exception of the last chapter, which is devoted to "The Orchestral Conductor." The perusal of tutors for the separate instruments will also be useful in a technical sense, while general knowledge can be gained and imagination of orchestral effects kindled by reading the criticisms and articles bearing on the subject which are constantly appearing in the *Musical Times*, *Musical Opinion*, *Monthly Musical Record*, and similar periodicals. Above all, it is important for the inexperienced conductor to hear performances by good professional bands under the best orchestral conductors. Where opportunities for doing so are limited, the best use can be made of those which do present themselves by a close study of the full score before the concert, (trying to "hear with the eyes," as the late Dr. Hullah said), and careful comparison, score in hand, of the real effects as interpreted by the instrumentalist.

Oratorios are usually written for an organ as well as a full orchestra. In buildings which do not possess a pipe organ, the harmonium or American organ has to supply its place. Of these two, a good harmonium is mostly to be preferred to an American organ, as the tone of the latter, although sweet, is too soft. A modern grand pianoforte has so much sustaining power that it makes a

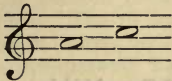
very fair substitute for the organ, and is in some respects to be preferred to the harmonium, as its tones are brighter and better heard. Where there is an organ of fair dimensions, the services of wind instrument players can sometimes be dispensed with, and the cost of a band much reduced; or the organ can supply the wood wind parts (flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon,) and the horns and trombones, leaving the orchestra to provide strings, trumpets (where the part is important), and drums. Handel's oratorios are frequently and effectively performed in this way.

Without a band, good results can be obtained with a piano and organ (harmonium or American organ), the piano taking the passages written for string instruments, and the organ that for wind instruments. Lastly, we come to a single instrument for the accompaniments; the organ, pianoforte, or harmonium. The place of the performance and character of the music will decide which of the first two to employ. The harmonium should rarely or never be used as the sole accompaniment, as its tones are more or less harsh and imperfectly heard by the singers, and flattening is likely to ensue.

MUSICAL PITCH.

Conductors should carefully ascertain the pitch of the organ or its substitute if they are going to employ it with a full band. Strings can, of course, tune to any pitch. Wood wind instruments can vary but slightly. They are constructed to a high (concert) pitch, which they can lower about one-third of a tone, so that the keyboard instrument with which they are to play must not be much below concert pitch. Church and chapel organs are usually tuned a semitone below this, and many times in such buildings where a full orchestra has been arranged

for without reference to this point, either one or other division has had to be silenced. For the purpose of testing the pitch of an organ, Eardley's chromatic pitch pipe may be recommended. The note A or C of the

same pitch  as the pipe being sounded

on the organ; the slide of the pipe can be altered until the throbbings (beats) entirely cease, and the two sounds blend perfectly. A scratch made on the movable plate corresponding with the line on the body of the pipe will record the result. The pipe should then be compared with the reed instruments of the orchestra (clarionets, oboes, and bassoons) after they have been played upon for some time—for wood instruments rise in pitch when thoroughly warm. (See pp. 104 and 105.)

Equal care should be taken to secure agreement in the case of a pianoforte being used with an organ or harmonium. The different quality of tone given by these instruments is misleading to those not accustomed to accurately testing their pitch. A piano and harmonium placed in different rooms may be regarded as of the same pitch by a person who tries them, trusting to his ear alone. Brought into the same room and played together, they would, perhaps, be distressingly out of unison.

CHAPTER XIV.



TUNING.

TUNING is the name for a fearful and wonderful operation in an amateur band. Who has not seen and heard it?—the agonising wailings of the violins, the profound grunts of the double basses, the piercing shrieks of the flute and piccolo, the frantic scales of oboe and clarinet, the blasts of trumpets and trombones, the throbs of drums, and the thunder of the great organ. Most of this is unnecessary. Violinists will go on “tuning” for an indefinite period, and be out of tune after all. They give way to the habit of sounding their fifths with desperate energy whenever they get the chance. Even at a concert, if not checked, they will not allow the last chord of a piece to die away before “rasp, scratch, squeak” go the fiddles; with the full force of their bow-arm they try to vanquish their old enemy “the A.” Conductors should sternly rebuke such a habit. When really needful they can test their strings in a way that will disturb no one.

An able article from the pen of Dr. W. H. Stone, which originally appeared in “Concordia” will be useful to conductors:—

“No doubt the first and almost instinctive act of every player on entering the concert-room is to try the pitch of his instrument by touching a few notes at random; with

this, however, he too often rests satisfied, and the result is that the first bars of the performance discloses the incompleteness of the adjustment. Moreover this important preparative is usually left to the last moment, when many players arrive at the same time, each of whom performs some familiar flourish *fortissimo*, and simultaneously with his neighbours. The delicacy of the ear is overwhelmed with discordant notes, no standard of pitch is referred to, the various instruments have not had time to attain the temperature of the room, and the noise itself tends to force them for the moment into an apparent agreement, which ceases directly they play independently of one another. The conductor on arriving takes it for granted that the band is in tune, and it is often only after a considerable interval that the united forces shake down into complete accuracy and its consequent sonorousness. Abroad a better custom prevails; there being a standard tuning-fork beside the conductor's desk, to which each player is expected to accommodate himself. One of Dr. von Bülow's many merits is attention to this detail, although his careful solicitude has been occasionally misrepresented and received with resentment. The chief boast of the Conservatoire band in Paris is the 'premier coup d'archet.'

There is considerable difference in even cultivated ears as to the appreciation of minute shades of pitch; some being much more sensitive than others; many possessing a personal peculiarity similar to what is termed 'personal error' in astronomical observation, by virtue of which they adopt slightly different estimates of concord and even of unison.

In great observatories a figure is set against the name of each observer which is tolerably constant, and indicates that he will note the transit of a star over the wires of the telescope, or even the beat of a clock, by an appreciable interval before or after another of his colleagues. I have little doubt, from extended experiments, that there exists a similar phenomenon in the ear as in the eye. We have indeed a means of correcting it in the former case which we have not in the latter, namely by the beats or interferences; but what musicians, except pianoforte and organ tuners, ever employ these? Corresponding shades of sharpness and flatness elude even this test, and are often difficult to distinguish except by exaggeration. This tolerance of discord increases enormously when instruments of very different timbre or quality are compared. I was myself surprised at the amount of tolerance in making

some observations which I communicated to a musical periodical last year, respecting the so-called French pitch at the two Opera houses; the difference between the oboe and clarinet for instance, which was marked when both were compared with a tuning-fork held to the ear, did not strike it painfully when unassisted by the unvarying standard.*

Slight dissonances are more audible at a distance than in their immediate neighbourhood. In this respect, the plan adopted by organ-builders of placing a listener in a remote part of the building, to guide the tuner, might with advantage be imitated. Sharp notes, moreover, have a predominant power over the ear. If two notes be struck at nearly the same time, a player is almost certain to tune to the sharper of the two. No doubt this is one great cause of the constant tendency to sharpen, which is the plague of our modern orchestras, and has necessitated the enforced adoption of a lower diapason.

In a mechanical light, there is some difficulty in establishing an invariable standard of pitch. The oboe has the prescriptive right, handed down from ancient times, of tuning the band. This depends on the fact that in Handel's days it was almost the only wind instrument extensively used. But it is far from being the best for the purpose.

Like all double-reed instruments, its pitch is susceptible of great variation, according to the state of the lip muscles. It is not, therefore, uncommon to find a player give at the outset a tuning note much sharper than that he afterwards plays to. The clarinet is infinitely less easy to tune to various pitches, on account of its single reed, and from the fact that a slight pulling in and out of the mouthpiece socket, which is the only method of tuning open to it, tells more upon the 'throat notes' than on other parts of its scale, and thus makes it disagree with itself. On the other hand, it rises with the warmth of the breath more than any instrument. In very cold weather I have found the difference in the B flat clarinet to amount to a whole semitone. Players seem hardly to appreciate the extent of this rise. To this fact, also, no doubt much of the tendency to sharpen orchestral pitch is due. The brass instruments and metal flutes rapidly cool again and sink to their original pitch;

* A remarkable confirmation *e converso* of the statement here made is furnished me by Mr. Hipkins. He informs me that if two pianos of different quality be accurately tuned in unison, by means of beats, and placed side by side in a room, even the most practised musician, on trying them consecutively, will declare the softer toned instrument to be the flatter of the two.

but the solid wood of the clarinet and wooden flute retains heat, and may continue to sharpen for a whole evening. If the pitch is to be taken from any orchestral instrument, I think the one chosen ought to be the clarinet, on the ground of its inability to alter; but it should be well warmed first, and closely watched afterwards, to counteract the tendency to sharpen. Players often show great unwillingness to tune down their clarinets, apparently not knowing that warmth mainly affects the upper parts of the bore, and the slight lengthening of a warm instrument improves its accuracy. It is in pianoforte concertos that this defect of the woodwind, and particularly of the clarinets, is most noticeable; principally on account of the rise of the wind, but also a little from the sinking of the metal strings of the piano by dilatation with heat.

The organ is not devoid of the same source of error. A diapason pipe fed with cold and hot air varies very considerably, even to the extent of a quarter tone. Few organ builders, with the notable exceptions of Mr. Willis and Mr. Lewis, pay sufficient attention to this fact. The large, flat, and unwieldy organ at Exeter Hall, for instance, is fed by wind from the cold stone corridors and staircases below it, which communicate almost directly with the outer air. Consequently, at the beginning of a performance, when the air of the room itself is well heated and dried by the abundant gas in the roof, the organ is very flat, as it is drawing a denser supply from below and outside, whose undulations are calculably different from those in the rarefied medium in which the clarinets, contra-fagottos, and others are breathing and expiring. If all external apertures at the back were shut, and the bellows made to draw their wind from the hot dry air near the ceiling, by means of a large air trunk or wind sail, the organ would rise in pitch, and would cypher much less than it now does in damp weather. Besides this, the very defective ventilation of the room would be improved.

The best standard of pitch, however, is a free reed. This, though producing but a poor musical note is very little affected by changes of temperature, especially if made of a metal like German silver, which is well known, from electrical experiments, to alter its molecular condition very slightly for a given increment of heat.

The thinness of the tone, and the facility with which "beats" are produced, though æsthetical defects, are, in the cases before us, converted into advantages. All instruments should tune to open notes, whether strings or

wind; and the standard of pitch should possess not only the A, usually employed, but several others; notably the D in the bass. This latter I consider, on the whole, a better note to tune to than the A; certainly it is so for the bass instruments. If the perfect fifth of D A be sounded together, even the fiddles will hardly be able to tune sharp, owing to the marked dissonance which accompanies any augmentation of that interval. The D is moreover the middle string of the double basses, as used in our English orchestras; and this being fixed, a fourth on either side is more easily found than if two such intervals are built up from the lowest and least brilliant string.

In all orchestral tuning, the double basses require an attention which they have not yet received. They appear to have an immunity from rule or censure. This is due, in part, to the fact that long and special training of the ear is required to enable it to realise small differences in very grave notes. I have never yet known a case where the double basses were called to account for their pitch; and yet, as a rule, they tune sharp. The most ludicrous case of this kind occurred in the late futile attempt to introduce the French pitch at the operas. I am not aware that any change was made in the double basses, although an expensive and very bad set of wind instruments was procured abroad. The basses simply slackened their ordinary thin strings, instead of putting on a full set of stouter strings in proportion to the diminished rate of vibration. Of course the bow transmitted an instinctive sense of lessened tension very unpleasant to practised players, and in a few minutes they were up to their old discarded pitch; the treble instruments, attacked as being flat, were obliged to meet the difficulty by having *as many as four successive* slices hacked off their new outfit. In less than a month I found the pitch as high as it had formerly been. Two other instruments are commonly responsible for sharpness of the bass, namely, the G bass trombone, and the drums; the former is usually in the hands of a military player, accustomed to the foolishly sharp pitch to which our Guards' bands have risen, but the latter is the more serious cause of discord. According to the arrangement of modern English orchestras, in most of which four string double basses and other instruments, such as the contra-fagotto, of 16 foot tone, are ignored, the kettle-drum stands alone in possessing two, or at most three, notes of this octave. When these are correct, the effect is very fine; but many of our English copper-made

drums are so deep in the kettle, and so large in the head, that the note they give is very complex, more resembling a gong or a bell than an orchestral instrument; and as the drummer has to change their pitch frequently by means of a clumsy mechanism of key and screws during performance, it requires great tact and experience to keep them even moderately near the proper note. The tendency to tune a shade sharp is more marked with drums than even with double basses, and they are still more commonly overlooked at the outset. Where great changes of key occur, the kettle-drummer should always be provided with a third, and sometimes even with a fourth, drum. An octave of 16 foot reeds, in the form of a simple harmonium, placed within his reach, for comparison, would often prevent a mysterious but very painful wolfing, which we have all at times noticed, but which, like inaccurate tuning of the double basses, is very difficult to localise by the unassisted ear.

A great deal might be accomplished by very simple means, if conductors would consider it their duty to run through the principal instruments one by one against a trustworthy standard, but that not, if possible, a tuning fork. The note of even the best tuning fork is so feeble and evanescent that it is not fitted for the noise and bustle of the concert room, and moreover it is greatly under the influence of temperature. A free reed would be far better. The comparison of pitch should not be limited to a few treble instruments, but should begin with drums and double basses, and so proceed upwards. The process, lastly, should not be carried on by compelling all to tune up to the sharpest, but by bringing the sharper instruments slightly down to a medium pitch; this would obviate the constant need for cutting instruments to pieces, which is now felt, and prevent the steady tendency to sharpen, which is ruining our voices, and rendering much classical music impossible to all but singers of rare and exceptional organization."

In extended works like oratorios, cantatas, symphonies, &c., composers always provide time for the tuning of the drums and the changing of clarionets, crooks of horns and trumpets during the progress of the work, by giving those instruments a few bars rest in which to make the necessary adjustments. Even then, between the numbers,

it is advisable for the conductor to look at the performers to ascertain that they are quite prepared to play. At miscellaneous concerts and rehearsals when the items are not taken in the consecutive order of the work, it is much more important for him to give ample time for the performers on the instruments named to change.

CHAPTER XV.

ACCOMPANIMENT OF RECITS.

SIR Geo. A. Macfarren, in the course of an article on the "Accompaniment of Recitative" (*Musical Times*, December 1st, 1872), gives a short history of that species of musical declamation, and proceeds to record the way that Handel himself accompanied the recitatives in his works, and of the origin of the violoncello and double bass arpeggios as a substitute for the original accompaniment of the harpsichord.

"The late Sir George Smart, when one of the young gentlemen of the Chapel Royal, was engaged with his co-choristers, from year to year, to sing at the Ancient Concerts. He was, however, excepted from the vocal duties of his fellows, to turn over the leaves for the conductor, Joah Bates. Already, in those early years, Smart entertained aspirations to the conductor's office, to which in due time he rose, and which he discharged, with honour to himself and advantage to music, for more years than would have made the entire lifetime of many another man. His young ambition was therefore highly gratified by his being selected for the post of turner, since this gave him special opportunity of observing all the conductor's ways and habits and rules of action, and he accordingly observed most keenly, and as carefully stored up his observations to become the ground-work of his own future practice.

"Joah Bates was born about the year 1740; thus he had reached the age of 19 when Handel died, an age at which, with his fond love of music, he must have been

fully capable of noting the manner of musical performances, the effect they produced, and the means whereby such effect was obtained. Here, then, we have a direct line of evidence from Bates, who must have witnessed performances over which Handel himself presided, through Smart, whose habits of accuracy were most remarkable, and whose statements are implicitly reliable. Bates proposed, and organised, and directed the famous commemoration of Handel in Westminster Abbey, which was intended to celebrate the centenary of the composer's birth; but, from a misapprehension of dates, was held the year before, in 1784. He directed also the similar Abbey performances in the next following years; and, because of his success in this capacity, and of his thorough knowledge of the uses of the elder time, he was appointed conductor of His Majesty's Concerts of ancient music, which were instituted to preserve those uses to the world.

“ Chief among the few works in which the old original form of colloquial recitative is still kept in familiarity, are the oratorios of Handel, and, among operas, the *Figaro* and *Don Giovanni* of Mozart, and the *Barbiere* of Rossini. In these the old form is preserved to us, but very little of the substance. The intention was, as has been shown, that the accompaniment should be played on the harpsichord or its representative, the pianoforte, with the support of the principal, violoncello, and double bass, the players of which read from the same copy as the clavecinist or pianist. So late was the practice continued, that the first engagement of Sir Michael Costa at the opera was to preside at the pianoforte in the orchestra; and there accordingly he presided, until 1832, when, under Monck Mason's management, the first performances in this country of a German opera company were given in alternation with those of the Italians. The German operas were conducted by Chelard of Weimar, who presided not at the pianoforte, but at the conductor's desk raised above the rest of the orchestra, as is the present wont of opera conductors in England. On a certain Monday, *Der Freischütz* inaugurated the German season; on the following Tuesday evening, Sir Michael occupied the conductor's stool which Chelard had filled the night before; and from thenceforward, the pianoforte has never been used in the opera orchestra except to prompt the singers.

“ Before this time, the violoncello had for long assumed the conspicuous prominence in accompanying the recitative, which it has almost exclusively held for the forty years since. In the latter part of the last century, the celebrated

Cervetto officiated as principal violoncellist at the King's Theatre. The rich tone, the beautiful execution, and the fine taste of this artist have better than legendary authority; many of us now living have heard others talk of these his qualities, who had witnessed and delighted in their display. An artist so gifted commanded more than sufferance, even to the extent of admiration and applause, for flights of finger and perhaps of fancy, that would not have been tolerated in a player of less distinction. Accordingly, when the stage waited for the entrance of a new personage, for any necessary business of the scene, or for the ingenious by-play of a popular actor, Cervetto would fill up such otherwise moments of silence with arpeggios or like passages upon his instrument, and the audience would be pleased with his feats of skill. The pianist always resumed his functions with the resumption of the singing, and the escapades upon the violoncello served but as interludes to accompany so much of the action, or to compensate for such casual want of action, as would else make a break in the musical continuity. In Handel's time similar figurations were wont to be set forth upon the harpsichord, and the great composer is reputed to have been so happy in his performance of these that to hear him formed no little part of the evening's attraction. We read of composers of long after Handel's time, even down to Rossini, presiding at the pianoforte on the first representation of their operas; which means plainly that they accompanied the colloquial recitative. Lindley succeeded Cervetto in his post, in his excellence, and in his privilege of flourishing in the casual pauses, and Lindley's successors have taken upon them the last heritage as an heir-loom of the instrument. It is in England only, however, that the violoncello's usurpation of supremacy in recitative has ever been exercised at the opera, and in England only that it has ever disfigured the performance of oratorios.

“Cervetto was also principal violoncellist at the Ancient Concerts. There in the recitatives of Handel and his contemporaries he pursued his opera practice of passaging in all the breaks of the voice part. Then, with firm authority, Bates interrupted him, insisting that the single bass notes, and nothing else, should be played by the bowed instruments. In vain Cervetto quoted his King's Theatre commendations. ‘It was otherwise at the opera in Handel's time,’ said Bates, ‘and we are here to perform Handel's music as it used to be performed under his direction.’ The young choir boy stood by the side and witnessed this altercation, treasured it as a valuable experience, and, towards the end of 1866, when he

was some years beyond the age of ninety, and scarcely two years before his death, related to me the entire scene with the utmost minuteness. Handel did not, neither did Bates, neither did Sir George Smart, until his long career was very far advanced, beat time for the band. This was, when necessary, the province of the leader; so that the power was lost to the orchestra of the strongest violinist in it, in every passage of more than usual difficulty or requiring exceptional energy. The conductor then sat at the organ, with a harpsichord, later a pianoforte, so placed that he could reach also its keyboard, and, according to the more or less gravity of the music, he played on one or the other throughout the recitative, and likewise in the rhythmical pieces, adding in these latter, independent counterpoint of such greater or less interest, as his own musicianship, aided by the inspiration of the moment, might prompt.

“It is noteworthy that in 1753, when Handel’s blindness prevented him from reading his own scores, he sent for John Christopher Smith, his pseudo pupil and the son of his staunch and unalienable friend, who was at the time in France, to whom he believed he might confide the serious responsibility of the unwritten organ or harpsichord part. It would seem that the composer was not content with Smith’s performance; for in 1754, he discontinued the services of this really meritorious musician, and resumed his old post in the orchestra. This he must have done with very serious difficulty, since the works were changed from night to night during the Lenten series of oratorios, and, not seeing, he could only accompany if he had the music entirely by heart. His presidency was so important in the orchestra, indeed, so greatly enhanced the interest of the music, and added so much to the attraction of the performance, that he never again relinquished it, and accompanied the recitatives and filled up upon the organ the blanks in his score on that very sixth of April, 1759, which was the day week before his death, when he closed his public career by superintending the performance of his *Messiah*.

“When Sir George Smart became a conductor, he, persevering in the principles of his model, required the supremacy of the organ or pianoforte over the violoncello in the oratorio recitatives. Lindley, however, had taken Cervetto’s place, and, with his still higher excellence, he far more than filled it. Emulous of the same distinction in an oratorio that he obtained in an opera, the famous violoncellist would have interluded the recitatives, but was stopped by Sir George as Cervetto had been by Bates; and the veteran conductor assured me that the single professional quarrel in

which he was ever a party, during the many years of his being at the head of musical affairs in England, was with the brave old Lindley on this very subject. The immediate consequence was that the violoncellist, who would not forego his flourishes, seceded from Sir George's band; but his pre-eminence as a player was too widely recognised for his presence to be dispensable in other quarters or, after a while, even there. It was he then who established the practice peculiar to this country alone, of accompanying recitative with chords on the violoncello, and consequently, unless the usage has been carried to the colonies, the inhabitants of our three kingdoms enjoy exclusively the privilege of hearing the most unmusical exhibitions and the least satisfactory that have ever been habitually offered in public.

“About ten years ago, Herr Otto Goldschmidt, assisted by his accomplished wife, revived Handel's *L'Allegro*, and had the recitatives accompanied according to Handel's fashion, Mr. Lindsay Sloper officiating at the pianoforte, as he had done with the same purpose in the performance of Bach's *Passion*, under the direction of Sir Sterndale Bennett. At Mr. Joseph Barnby's revival of this latter work, the same instrument held its appropriate position, until the *Passion* was taken into its original, natural, and fitting home, the Church, when the harmonium, if not the organ, was, with perhaps better effect, substituted for it. Now, it may be believed, that, of all the thousands of persons who have witnessed these presentations of the works in question, there is not one—or if one, he must be a bass player—that does not infinitely prefer the effect of the keyed to that of the bowed instrument in the situation now being considered. The hard rough tone of the chords upon the violoncello, the indistinctness of their harmony, their questionable assistance to the singers, are all incidents for careful consideration; but, above all, the fact that the composers, whether of later secular or of earlier sacred music, intended an effect utterly dissimilar, should convince directors that, according to the size and uses of the building and the gait or gravity of the subject, the pianoforte or the organ ought to be the accompanying instrument of colloquial recitative. Let it be hoped that before long its restitution may be universal, when the richer tone and the fuller resonance of the pianoforte than of the ancient harpsichord, especially in the lower range of its compass, will render the bowed basses entirely dispensable.”

CHAPTER XVI.

ELEMENTARY CLASSES.

THE necessity for training classes as an essential part of the work of a choral society was referred to on p. 47. Let us now consider how such may be started and carried on.

An initial difficulty in many places may be that the conductor of the society is too fully occupied with his professional engagements to devote another evening per week to this work. This can be got over by appointing a deputy. He need not be a profound musician, it is not even requisite that he should play an instrument. The qualifications for a teacher of an elementary singing class are (1) Ability to sing in tune, and a voice of fair quality; (2) Pleasant manner, and power of imparting knowledge; (3) A good system of instruction (4) Patience and enthusiasm. These are mostly gifts of acquirement, and a little study on the part of a gentleman whom the conductor knows has his heart in the work will usually enable him to satisfactorily fulfil all reasonable requirements.

Of the above heads, number 3 is the one upon which many teachers and classes have failed. Of "systems" of reading music properly so called (singing by ear is not a system) only four can be named:—(1) *absolute pitch*, the

ability to produce any sound by thinking of its pitch name, A, B, C, G \flat , D \sharp , &c. : (2) The *fixed doh* ; (3) *Interval*, —the measurement of a sound from a previous one heard or sung ; (4) *Key relationship*, the recognition of the note in its proper key, and the sounding of it by thinking of its degree in the scale, either by syllables *do, re, mi, &c.*, figures 1, 2, 3, &c., or technical names, tonic, supertonic, mediant, &c.

A sense of absolute pitch is the natural gift of an exceedingly small percentage of the human race. By many years of practice, the sense may be acquired. Instrumentalists, organists, pianoforte teachers, and violinists, frequently have a quick perception of it. To suppose that the bulk of the people can be taught it at all, much less in the short time devoted to the subject in singing classes, is simply madness. The absurdity of the attempt is self evident when it is remembered that in this country there has never been any one standard of pitch from which to start. "The Society of Arts," "Philharmonic," "full concert," "medium," and countless other pitches have been and are now in use.

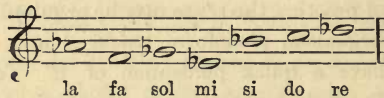
By the "fixed doh" is meant the use of the Italian syllables *do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si*, always for the sounds c, d, e, f, g, b, a. This was the method adopted from the Frenchman, Wilhem, by Dr. Hullah, and introduced, with the sanction of the government, into all their schools and training colleges. It was tried by them, and by classes and choirs all over the country, for many years, and proved an utter failure. How could it have been otherwise, when pupils were taught for months (to the end of Book I) to sing in key C, associating a particular pitch and effect with each syllable, and then in going into other keys had to sing the same names for totally different sounds? Fancy a person having to sol-fa No.

2 of the following as *la, fa, sol, mi, si, do, re*, making the 1st, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 7th notes a semitone lower than the pitch he had been trying for months to associate with those syllables; No. 3 would be *fa, re, mi, do, sol, la, si*, this time raising the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th, and 6th notes a semitone.

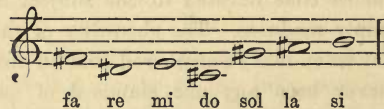
No. 1.



No. 2.



No. 3.



A moment's study will show these three phrases to be the same tune (tones occupying the same relationship to each other) in different keys, and by the system of key relationship explained below, No. 2 would be *sol-faed* exactly as No. 1, starting, however, from D_b as the tonic (key note). No. 3 again would require the same syllables but starting from B as the tonic.

We pass on to singing by "interval." The ordinary notation apparently favours this plan because it can be so readily distinguished how many degrees of the staff separate two adjacent notes, this number of degrees will be the "interval." This apparent simplicity is treacherous, for the lines and spaces do not show the semitones of the scale, and, as those semitones are made by means of the sharps or flats in the signature (or accidentals in the course of the music) to travel all over the staff, it is in

the highest degree difficult to think of the interval, and sing the right sound at the proper moment. Here is an example in which, although the notes in the two phrases are on the same degrees of the staff, the intervals are in every case different.

Semi- Im. Min. Tone. Tone Per. Ma. Semi-
 tone 5th. 3rd 5th 3rd tone

The practice of intervals, too, is sheer drudgery—a kind of musical treadmill; and considering that in all books containing exercises of this kind, the major and minor, perfect and imperfect intervals are placed side by side without comment, the state of mind of the student who tries to learn singing by interval may be imagined. Some proofs of this statement must be shown. "The Singing Class Manual" by William Jackson (Novello & Co.), has (p. 5) exercise in thirds.

Here the first interval is a major third; the second and third are minor thirds; the fourth is major; and so on throughout this exercise, and all through the book. "Crampton's Singing Class Manual" (Pitman) devotes Chapter V to similar exercises. So also do "Short and Easy steps in Music" by J. Henkin (Pitman). In the Primer on "Singing" by A. Randegger (Novello & Co.) the exercises on intervals as far as thirds (pp. 56 to 78) deal with the diatonic intervals of the scale as in the above books. On p. 79 "intervals of fourths," perfect fourths alone are given, rising by semitones. Fifths and sixths are similarly treated, all the former being "perfect," and the latter "major." The first page of sevenths consists of a

succession of major sevenths ascending by semitones. This is followed by a series of descending diatonic sevenths. In all these exercises not a word of explanation is given of the varying nature of the intervals; and why the tritone, imperfect fifth, and minor sixth should be altogether omitted while the very rarely employed major seventh has 13 examples seems strange.

The number of devices for simplifying sight-singing from the ordinary notation, which have from time to time been proposed, is a proof that something more than the usual signs of the notation is wanted to enable the singer readily, and of his own knowledge, to interpret the ideas of the composer. Many of these plans have never assumed any more practical shape than their publication in musical periodicals or in the transactions of scientific or musical associations. Others have had a partial success, such, for instance, as the American "character" notes—each note of the scale having a different shape—square, oval, diamond, &c. In this country the favourite idea has been to attach the initial letter of the Sol-fa syllables to the note in the staff; either over, under, or beside it; and in the case of Hamilton's "union notation," the letter is placed in the middle of the note.

All these are simply crutches, and, when removed, as they must be so soon as the very limited repertory of music printed in that particular manner is exhausted, the pupil flounders helplessly about, and degenerates into a singer by ear. Vastly better is it to let the student from the outset walk alone, relying upon his own skill to recognise and produce the tones; and all that is needed to accomplish this is a simple but effectual way of presenting to the pupil the truths of music, and afterwards of adapting them to the notation. Such a system would not require him to sing more than he could comprehend, or expect him to

understand more than he was able to sing. These requirements are most thoroughly met by employing the Tonic Sol-fa method of teaching the staff notation. At the first lesson the pupil can sing the first, third, and fifth (the tones of the tonic chord) in any key. After sufficient practice in them, the second and seventh of the scale (making with the fifth the dominant chord) are added; then the fourth and sixth (the subdominant chord).

The superiority of the Tonic Sol-fa way of reading from the ordinary notation receives frequent confirmation by professors and conductors of the "orthodox" school, who, in the course of various musical examinations, discover that candidates who pass most satisfactorily the tests given, or who are their most reliable "readers" in choral societies, have been trained upon this method.

Mr. Humphrey J. Stark, Mus. Bac. Oxon., in a paper read at Trinity College, London, speaking of scales and their notation, said:—

"Here, as we all know, lies one of the greatest imperfections of the stave system. Owing to the fact that the stave presents to the eye a uniform series of distances, irrespective of tones and semitones, there exists the utmost difficulty in clearly explaining to the learner that the distances upon the stave are, in reality, governed by the key signature of the composition. The importance of this to a vocalist is hardly to be over-estimated, and I believe that the general absence of creditable sight-reading on the part of amateur and even professional vocalists is directly traceable to this cause. Herein lies the great strength of the Tonic Sol-fa system, for in that notation the tones and semitones are distinguishable at a glance. I remember a curious confirmation of this view once happening to me when engaged in examining candidates in sight-singing at this College. Having written a short phrase of no particular difficulty, to be sung at sight without accompaniment, I submitted it to the various candidates, and throughout a long day's examination I found only one who rendered it without the slightest fault. Struck by this circumstance, I inquired upon what system he had been trained, and he informed me that he was an experienced

Tonic Sol-faist, and that he had succeeded in singing the test example mainly by his knowledge of that system. I cannot pretend to a complete knowledge of the Tonic Sol-fa notation, but such a striking proof of the value of the system ought not to pass unnoticed."

The best book for an elementary class is "Practice for Singers" Part I (see below). The teacher who is unfamiliar with the Tonic Sol-fa method and ways of teaching, must consult "How to Read Music" (1s.) or "A Staff Notation Primer" (6d.) both published by Curwen & Sons. Professors of music who wish to gain an idea of the application of this method to the ordinary notation, cannot do better than peruse the "Tonic Sol-fa Primer" (1s. 6d.) published by Novello & Co.

For a list of elementary instruction books founded on the Tonic (movable doh) principle, see next page. Those marked * contain exercises suitable for use in classes, the others are chiefly text-books.

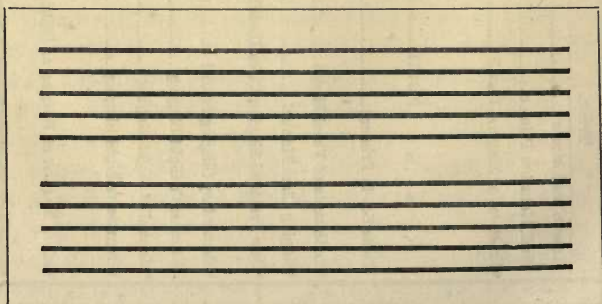
Let us suppose the case of a choral society in a small town conducted by a professional musician from a neighbouring city. There is no instruction class in the town, and the society not being able to pay the conductor for a second evening per week, must admit new members without requiring them to possess any skill in singing, or allow their numbers, and consequently their funds, to dwindle. Here is an opportunity for an enthusiast in the cause of music to confer a benefit upon the public and his society. He should announce a course of elementary instruction, commencing in October and terminating in March, 24 or 26 lessons. The fee need not be high, say a few shillings for the course; and the balance left after paying rent of room, printing, &c., should be handed over to the society's funds. In fact, it would be better if the whole of the business arrangements were carried out by the executive of the society so that it could be seen all through that the teacher

TITLE.	AUTHOR.	PUBLISHER.	PRICE.	REMARKS.
How to read Music	J. Curwen.	Curwen & Sons, 8, Warwick Lane.	1 0	Suited for teacher or private student.
Staff Notation Primer.....	J. S. Curwen.	" [E.C.	0 3	Exercises in both notations. Useful for pupil's home study.
*Practice for Singers, Part I	"	"	0 6	For classes of mixed voices (S.C.T.B.). Includes exercises in a variety of keys, Transition to the Dominant and Sub-dominant keys, and Modulation to the Relative Minor.
" " Part II	"	"	0 6	Minor, Transition to remote keys, the Chromatic Scale, &c.
Tonic Sol-fa Primer	J. Curwen.	Novello & Co. 1, Berners St., W.	1 0	Explanation of the relationship of Tonic Sol-fa and Staff notations, for professors or private students.
*Rudiments of Vocal Music.....	T. M. Pattison.	"	0 4	Short treatise and exercises for schools and choir boys.
*Singing Class Manual	W. Jackson.	"	2 0	Has Sol-fa syllables beneath every note. Gives prominence to Intervals.
*New Practical Singing Class Handbook...	G. Wells.	F. Pitman. 20, Paternoster Row, E.C.	0 6	Similar to "Practice for Singers," but not so carefully graded in difficulty as that book.
*Elementary Singing School	D. Colville.	"	0 3	Parts I & II. Letters are attached to most of the notes. Mixed voices.
Wareham's Sight Singing	F. W. Wareham.	"	1 0	For Teachers. A special feature is the "Old Notation Modulator."
*Manual of Sight Singing	Jordrell.	C. Jefferys, 67, Berners St., W.	0 6	Brief explanations. Exercises chiefly for single voices in treble clef.
*Progressive Sight Singing	R. McHardy.	London Music Publishing Comp. 54, Gt. Marlboro St., W.	1 0	Exercises only; no instructions. Letters printed beneath notes. Modulation and Minor Mode imperfectly represented.
*Sol-fa Method of Singing at Sight.....	J. Symmers.	Gall & Inglis, 25, Paternoster Square, E.C.	1 6	Full instructions for Teacher and Pupils. Very numerous exercises.

was undertaking the work solely in the interests of the society, and not merely to gratify his own ambition or make money for himself.

Presuming that the ordinary (staff) notation is to be used, the teacher should devote a little time to the study of the art of teaching. For this purpose, he cannot do better than procure the late John Curwen's "Teacher's Manual." Further information as to methods of treating the subject would be found in "How to read Music" and "A Staff Notation Primer" before mentioned. A blackboard ruled on one side with two staves, a "step modulator," pointer, tuning-fork duster, and chalk will complete his outfit. The lines painted on the blackboard should be on a bold scale so that they can be well seen in a large room by gas-light. Lines a quarter of an inch thick with two inches space between their edges, and, about six or eight inches between the staves, can be seen in the largest room likely to be used for teaching purposes. Sometimes a treble clef is painted at the commencement of the top staff, and a bass clef on the bottom staff.

For pointing on these staves a cardboard or metal (painted white) crotchet, the head of which should be $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 inches in diameter, and made to fasten on the end of a stick or pointer, will be more distinct and look more like printed music than the tip of a bâton.



CHAPTER XVII.

THE TONIC SOL-FA NOTATION.

IN the previous chapter some of the advantages of studying the staff notation by means of the Tonic Sol-fa method (movable doh and other devices) were spoken of. It is now time to speak of the Tonic Sol-fa notation. A very brief description of it must here suffice. Musical sounds are represented by the initial letters of the seven Sol-fa syllables, doh, ray, me, fah, soh, lah, te; thus, *d r m f s l t*, always calculated from the pitch of the doh indicated at the commencement of the tune. Octaves above or below the middle scale are shown by figures, thus: *d¹ r¹ m¹* or *d² r² m²*, &c., for the higher replicates, and *t₁ l₁ s₁* or *t₂ l₂ s₂*, &c., for the lower. Changes of key (modulations) during the progress of a piece of music are effected by the use of a double letter, giving the name of the tone in the old key with that to be substituted for it in the new, thus:—**d m l r s*, &c. Chromatic tones or changes of key of very limited duration are provided for by altering the vowels of the syllables, and printing them in full—for raised tones the vowel “e” (pronounced “ee”) is used *d de r re m f fe s se l le t d^l*. For depressed tones the vowel “a” (pronounced “aw”) is employed *d^l t ta l la s fe* (in accordance with general theory and practice) *f m ma r ra*

Sedley Taylor, M.A., member of the board of musical studies in Cambridge University, &c., &c., &c., writes:—

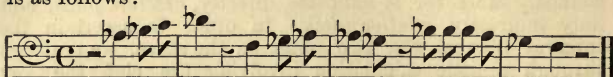
“The musical notation in ordinary use evidently takes for granted a scale consisting of a limited number of fixed sounds. Moreover, it indicates, directly, *absolute pitch*, and only indirectly, *relative pitch*. In order to ascertain the interval between any two notes on the staff, we must go through a little calculation involving the clef, the key signature, and perhaps, in addition, accidental sharps or flats. Now these are complications which, if necessary for pianoforte music, are perfectly gratuitous in the case of vocal music. The voice wants only to be told on what note to begin and what *intervals* to sing afterwards, *i.e.*, it is concerned with absolute pitch *only at its start*, and needs to be troubled with it no further. Hence, to place the ordinary notation before a child who is to be taught to sing, is like presenting him with a manual for learning to dance compiled on the theory that human feet can only move in twelve different ways. Not only does the established notation encumber the vocalist with information which he does not want, it fails to communicate the one special piece of information which he *does* want. It is essential to really good music that every note heard should stand in a definite relationship to its tonic or key-note. Now, there is nothing in the established notation to mark clearly and directly what this relation ought, in each case, to be. Unless the vocalist, besides his own ‘part,’ is provided with that of the accompaniment and possesses some knowledge of harmony, he cannot ascertain how the notes set down for him are related to the key-note and to each other. The extreme inconvenience of this must have become painfully evident to anyone who has frequently sung concerted music from a single part.

* * * *

I have enjoyed some opportunities of watching the progress of beginners taught on the old system and on that of the Tonic Sol-fa, and assert without the slightest hesitation, that as an instrument of vocal training, the new system is enormously, overwhelmingly superior to the old. In fact, I am prepared to maintain that the complicated repulsiveness of the pitch-notation in the old system must be held responsible for the humiliating fact, that, of the large number of musically well-endowed persons of the opulent classes who have undergone at school an elaborate instrumental and vocal training comparatively few are able to play and still fewer to sing, even the simplest music *at sight*.

* * * *

“It will be seen at once that the difficulty of remote keys which is so serious in the established notation thus altogether disappears. For instance, a vocal phrase from Spohr’s ‘Last Judgment’ which in the established notation is as follows:—



takes in the notation before us, the perfectly simple form

KEY D \flat .
 } | : | s : l.t | d' : | m : f.s | s : f. | l.l : l.s | f : m | : ||
 (Sound and Music pp. 208-212.)

J. Stainer, M.A., Mus. Doc., organist of St. Paul’s Cathedral, H.M. Inspector of Music, &c. :—

“I have heard people say sometimes, ‘What do you want with another system? there is no difficulty in the staff notation.’ Well, there is a very simple answer to that question. I always say, ‘If there is no difficulty in the staff notation, will you kindly tell me how it is that such a very large percentage of people who call themselves singers never master it?’ (Applause.) In my experience (you may think it is not a very long experience, but it is perhaps longer than you think; I have been a musician since I was seven years old, so I suppose I have had some experience) I have found that the number of people who pretend to sing from the staff, who cannot sing at all from it, and who look upon it as the most wonderful puzzle in the world, is a very large one. (Laughter.) I suppose if you were to go round and ask people who have learnt the staff notation whether they can sing from it or not, you would not get quite an honest answer, but the conductor who has to drag them through a difficult piece of music knows without asking them. I have found this to be the case even amongst selected candidates. In my experience as choir-master I have had boys brought to me, well educated and with natural aptitude, and I have found the difficulty of teaching them on the old notation to be very great indeed. No amount of patience or time will teach everybody the staff unless they are trained to an instrument. I have heard people say, ‘You really advocate Tonic Sol-fa for people who are below the average,’ but I deny that entirely. I say that this large percentage to which I have referred, of persons who have been taught the staff notation and who

cannot sing from it must be accepted as a fact, and requires to be dealt with. I would ask, after all, whether in the ordinary notation our 15 major keys, or whatever the number may be (laughter)—I would ask whether, for all intents and purposes, that is not a great sham for the singer. If I sing 'God save the Queen,' why should I not be allowed to sing it at any pitch I like, and treat it as in the same scale? People sometimes say that if you teach the Tonic Sol-fa system you ruin the sense of absolute pitch. Well, I have heard people who have said this, and who have been great opponents of this system, hum me a tune, and I have never heard them hum in the right pitch (laughter); the very people who talk about ruining the sense of absolute pitch never had it themselves. (Laughter.) I am really ashamed of the great prejudice which some of my musical brethren show towards this movement, but I have not the least doubt in my own mind as to the result. I believe the Tonic Sol-fa system will not only weather this last attack, but a hundred such attacks."—[Extract from a speech at the annual meeting of the Tonic Sol-fa College at Exeter Hall, May 15th, 1882.]

Henry Leslie, conductor of "Leslie's choir," composer, &c. :—

"The cause of musical education is very dear to me, and I have been watching of late the working of the two systems, Tonic Sol-fa and the old notation in our village classes here. All I can say is that Tonic Sol-fa has carried the day entirely. There must be something about it which commends it: perhaps it is that the Tonic Sol-faists have only one scale to teach, and when you have learnt that you have learnt everything; while in the old notation we have many scales. Perhaps it is that the Tonic Sol-faists learn intervals from their modulator, and that knowledge carries them through all their subsequent work. What it is, however, I care but little, as the results are so good. Here is this system of teaching music well and thoroughly, and if it does this it certainly cannot be a bad system. Certainly Tonic Sol-fa in Oswestry has been on every line victorious."—[Extract from a speech at Oswestry, October 20th, 1882.]

Professor Helmholtz :—

"It is impossible not to acknowledge that this method of notation [the Tonic Sol-fa] has the great advantage to the singer of giving prominence to what is of the greatest importance to him, namely, the relation of each tone to the

tonic. I had an opportunity when in one of the primary schools in London, of hearing more than forty children of between eight and twelve years of age, that performed singing exercises in a manner that astonished me ('mich in Erstaunen setzten') by the certainty with which they read the notes, and by the accuracy of their intonation. During my researches in acoustics I came from theoretical reasons to the conviction that this was the natural way of learning music, but I did not know that it had been carried out in England with such beautiful results."

To these may be added a single example from my own experience of the value of the letter notation in quickly mastering the most difficult music.

"The production by the Philharmonic Society of Hector Berlioz's choral symphony, 'Romeo and Juliet,' in the spring of last year will be remembered by all who take an interest in the musical progress of the country. Berlioz, writing of this work, said, 'It presents immense executive difficulties—difficulties of all kinds inherent in its form and style, and only to be overcome by studies patiently made and perfectly directed.' In apparent confirmation of this statement it has been recorded of the renderings of the work in London under the direction of the composer in 1852 and 1855, that the symphony was 'shorn of the choruses for the simple reason that the choir could not sing what was set down for them.' It was reserved for a Tonic Sol-fa choir to remove such an aspersion upon the abilities of English choristers under the following circumstances, which are given in detail so that no misunderstanding with reference to them may exist.

"The first intimation I had from the secretary of the Philharmonic Society was dated January 7th. I do not know what the reasons were which led to the invitation being given to my choir to assist in so noteworthy a performance, nor can I say if the fact that the singers would be Tonic Sol-faists was mentioned to the Directors as a body. Several of the Directors, however, knew that such was the case, and one of them had conducted the choir in oratorio performances at the Royal Aquarium when first opened. Some weeks elapsed before the copies of the music with English words were ready. Pending the receipt of these Mr. Cusins (the conductor) had given me a vocal score in French, from which I made a translation into the letter notation for the double purpose of getting the music in rehearsal, and of ensuring the most knowledge of the music the time would admit of.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOW TO RETAIN MEMBERS.

Every season brings a number of resignations from members. A large proportion of these come from members who joined only the previous year. They are the rolling stones of the choral world, and nothing can be done to keep them. Many of them may have joined through the persuasion of friends; others to gratify a passing whim, and without possessing any real love for music, or perhaps for that particular branch of music. Removals, illness, business and matrimony are the four causes which tend to thin the ranks of choirs of those who would otherwise remain. The extent to which they operate is controlled by the organization of the Society, the friendliness of the officers and members to each other, and the *esprit de corps* which has been inculcated. Thus members will travel long distances to the rehearsals of a society which they value. A polite or friendly letter will frequently preserve the link between the society and a member who has been absent through ill health long enough to have become weaned from the urgent desire for its practices. It is surprising too how "business" can be made to accommodate itself to other requirements when enthusiasm in any pursuit is the motive power. A member who experiences delight in the weekly choral practice, and who feels a personal interest in its success, will make great sacrifices to attend. So again with the fourth principal cause of resignation, "matrimony." In spite of the counter attractions of a new home, the "happy pair" will probably resume their places in the choir *if* they have previously acquired a deeply-rooted taste for choral music, and learned to respect the society which not unlikely was the means of bringing them together.

A good rule to follow may be given in the words of a well-known provincial conductor:—"I recognise no 'leaders' to the parts," and as far as possible avoid anything that may cause jealousies amongst members, believing that internal complaints are the most common causes of so many societies' premature decease."

No precise *data* can be given of the proportion of new members societies admit each season. Some have as many as a half, others not more than a fifth or sixth, a few only a tenth. Large societies have a greater proportion of new members than small ones, and in cities the number is higher than in small towns or rural idistricts.

Societies do not as a rule retain as members many married ladies. Natural causes more than loss of interest are chargeable with that result. People who can afford to keep a servant or two are manifestly better able to continue their attendance than those who have the whole weight of domestic duties thrown upon them. It is generally admitted that the married ladies in a society are amongst its best members, their experience atoning for any lack of freshness in the quality of their voices.

A few suggestions may be offered in elucidation of the problem at the head of this Chapter.

- (1.) Friendliness of manner on the part of Conductor, secretary, and chief officers towards all the members.
- (2.) The use of the personal pronoun "we" in speaking of the work and aspirations of the choir so that the members' sense of responsibility in all that relates to the Society is cultivated.
- (3.) Keeping of the registers of Attendance and Address Book in order that members may not drop out unmissed and that the regular attendance of others may be appreciated.
- (4.) Employment of the rehearsals in progressive work, avoiding alike music much beneath or far in advance of the capacity of the bulk of the members.

- (5.) One or more Summer Picnics or Excursions, and an annual Re-union or *Conversazione* during the winter season. These social gatherings, with the unbending of the "high and mighty ones" (conductor and officers) which will inevitably ensue, are anticipated with much pleasure by the members.

Further hints upon the subject are contained in the following extracts :—

"I have found it was a successful plan to have an interval of about ten minutes after an hour's practice, during which one of the members either played a solo or sang something, giving all prominent members a turn. It created interest."

This would act as a "safety valve" where there was a desire amongst the members to shine as soloists.

"The main element of success in choral societies seems to be in keeping up the interest both by a judicious selection of music and by thorough teaching, so that the merits and beauties of the pieces are fully appreciated."

"We have derived much benefit from the issue by the conductor of a short private circular to the members at the beginning of each season, thanking them for their work during the preceding season, and exhorting to good work in that then commencing."

CHAPTER XIX.

MEN'S VOICE SOCIETIES.

THERE are times and places when female or boys' voices are not available. Fortunately there is an extent of compass and variety of *timbre* in men's voices which enables them to sustain four part harmony with charming effect. From the highest tones of the alto to the lowest of the bass there is a range of nearly three octaves. This has enabled composers to write a very large number of pieces in all styles. Between the English glee, which, to fully display its artistic merit, requires a single highly-trained voice to each part, and the German student song—most effective when sung by a large number of voices—lies a wide field of music for men's voices. It is a pity that such a store of musical riches should not be drawn upon more frequently in this country. In Wales, Lancashire, and Yorkshire men's voice choirs are to be met with of first-rate quality; and to hear them sing makes one lament that a means of healthy and elevating recreation such as the practice of part-singing should not more generally be indulged in. In London men's voice societies have mostly taken the form of Glee Clubs, or Social Meetings where Cathedral and other professional singers contribute songs and glees for the enjoyment of the ordinary members who smoke, &c., whilst listening, and who are rarely called upon to take part in some standard piece. Several societies, however, could be named in which the "smoking, &c.," is reduced to a minimum, and glees, part-songs, and choruses are rehearsed by the whole of the members. It is this kind of society that

should be multiplied, and if in districts thickly populated by the artizan class a taste for this class of music could be cultivated to supplant the "Select Harmonic Meeting" and its competitor, of somewhat higher social standing, the "Smoking Concert" a great advance in musical culture would be effected.

The following description by Mr. J. S. Curwen of a visit to a rehearsal of the "Bristol Orpheus Society" will illustrate a phase of this subject.

"The 'Orpheus' as the Bristol people familiarly call it, consists entirely of men. There are forty members. These are mostly of middle age, and include merchants and professional men. As a consequence the society stands high in Bristol. It gives but one concert a year, when it has no difficulty in getting 1,200 of the *élite* of the city to attend; and no sooner is one concert over than all the tickets for the next are taken up. The members pay a subscription £2 2s. a year, and this seems to produce more money than the society knows what to do with. An ingenious plan has been hit upon for disposing of the surplus. Every member who is present when the roll is called receives eighteen-pence from the Secretary during the evening. Meetings are held every fortnight all the year round with short intervals at holiday times. One evening in the year, and one only, is a 'treble night,' when a number of ladies are invited to assist in rendering part-songs by Mendelssohn and others, written for a mixed choir. The rules of admission to the fraternity are strict. A would-be member is introduced to the Committee by a member, and if they approve he is proposed and seconded at the next meeting of the society. A fortnight later he is balloted for, and six black balls exclude, though this veto is rarely exercised. There is no musical examination. The society meets in an hotel which is to Bristol men as the London Tavern is to Londoners. Entering I found a large and lofty room well lighted and comfortably warmed. It was oblong, and tables were ranged round three sides of a square with a small table for the conductor in place of the fourth side. In front of each chair a reading desk was placed on the table, and a group of music books was placed at its side. I looked up and saw at one end of the room a long table with appliances for a tea, while at the other there were evident signs of impending bread and cheese and beer. A rap from the conductor's baton brought the members, who had been chatting in groups, to their seats. There were

some thirty-six present. The practice began; but it is not the custom of the Bristol Orpheus Society to stand up. They sit through their practice; they sit even through their concerts. It was now eight o'clock, the usual hour of commencing, and the music went on till nine, when half-an-hour's adjournment for supper took place. The members now repaired either to the 'beer' or the 'coffee' end of the room, and enjoyed themselves as companions usually do under the circumstances. The expense of the refreshments is borne by the general fund of the Society and can of course be well afforded with a £2 2s. subscription. During the recess the balloting for new members took place, and at 9.30 the music was resumed, the meeting ending at ten.

“The sociability of the Society's meetings is their most marked feature, and whether choirs generally can take a hint from it may fairly be asked. I am inclined to think that this feature has done much to keep up the Bristol Society. It is a sort of club, where you can always reckon on seeing your friends and having a chat with them, and from a musical point of view each member feels that he is something more than a pipe in a living barrel organ which the conductor turns. Music is linked with the pleasures of society and friendship, and all of them gain by the union. The concerts are merely public rehearsals. The hours of singing and of adjournment for tea are the same as at the practices. Tea is provided as well as the music for a nominal price (3s. 6d.) and there is no reserving or numbering of seats. Nor are the musical arrangements in any way different. The visitors hear only men's voice glees and choruses, with occasional solos in them, but there are no songs interspersed, and a pianoforte never comes near the society.

“Another feature of the society which a visitor at once notices is that the members meet for their own pleasure, not that they may grind up for a concert. The rehearsals are an end in themselves, instead of so much drudgery to be gone through in order to appear in public. The pleasure is in the fortnightly meeting, not in anticipating the next concert. All this gives a tone of ease and satisfaction to the rehearsals which is very attractive to every one concerned. Cannot other choirs take a lesson in this respect?”—*Tonic Sol-fa Reporter*, Dec. 15th, 1871.

Here is a description of a German Singing Club :—

“On our way up the Rhine we spent a night at the little town of Neuwied, known for its Moravian settlement and the admirable school connected therewith. In the

evening when we were sitting on the balcony of our hotel watching the twilight on the river as it changed to darkness, we were surprised to hear a fine burst of men's-voice harmony from the room below. After listening a minute or two we went down, and the landlord, who happened to pass, asked us in. We found ourselves in the presence of some twenty men, who were seated at tables arranged in three sides of a square. In the place of the fourth side was an oblong grand piano, behind which the conductor sat. The scene was truly German. The men were all of middle age. Each had a bottle of wine at the side of his music, and each was smoking a cigar. The conductor, a good-natured looking fellow, one of the seniors of the party, was extemporising dreamy chords at the piano, making a sort of back-ground for the buzz of conversation that filled the room. When the talk had gone on for about ten minutes, this worthy called out the name of a piece, and played the first few bars on the instrument. Then he raised his short bâton and started the singing. There was no great refinement about the style; the voices were not picked, but the singers had evidently a feeling for music, and that makes even a poor voice pleasant. The first tenors had strong voices, they had evidently been accustomed to use their 'thin' register from the time their voices changed, and now at middle age it was strong and blended well with the 'thick.' The second basses were, however, magnificent. They had voices like a double bass that sent a thrill through all the furniture in the room. The style of singing was remarkable for the sudden changes from *forte* to *piano*, also for the *accelerandos* which the singers seemed instinctively to give when the music rose in emotional force. When the first piece was over, there was another interval of ten or fifteen minutes for conversation; indeed, this plan was pursued throughout the evening, so that from half-past eight to ten, when the meeting closed, only six pieces were sung. . . . The name of the club 'Neuwieder Liedertafel' was upon all the property. The 'Liedertafeln'—literally 'song-tables'—were founded by Zelter at Berlin, about the beginning of the century. The institution spread through Germany, and is now to be met with in almost every village. It is certainly a more intelligent and refining way of spending an evening at an inn than Englishmen generally possess, and forms a good outlet for the musical feeling, since the greatest composers have written for the wants of these clubs."

Once more shall Mr. Curwen's pen describe a men's voice choir, this time a French choir.

“The Orpheonist societies are classified according as they embrace (1) capitals of departments, (2) capitals of cantons, (3) communes, (4) smaller societies. Perhaps the nearest English analogy to these grades would be (1) counties, (2) poor law unions, (3) parishes, (4) hamlets. These are the grades in which every society first competes. It remains in its grade until it wins a prize, when it moves up one place. The grades do not perfectly represent the skill of the choirs. In some country parishes there are large factories, the masters of which encourage the formation of an Orpheon among their men, and perhaps pay a skilled conductor to train them. Thus it happens not infrequently that a commune or village society will win prizes until it reaches the first class, and competes with societies representing a capital town. There is little more to be said. The Orpheons are independent of state aid. The prizes go to a common fund which helps to pay the railway fares and expenses of the members, who often travel long distances to compete.

“The Children of Lutèce (the classical name for Paris) interested us greatly. The choir was founded thirty-three years ago by M. Gaubert, a plain working man, employed in a musical instrument factory, who still conducts it. Several years ago they had a trip to England, when I heard them at the Surrey Gardens. The practice we attended was held in what we should call a Board School in the Rue Aumaire. It began at half-past nine, and ended at eleven—rather late hours according to English ideas. The singers were all working men, looking all the more genuine as they were mostly in their working clothes. How shall I describe the scene? A large empty schoolroom, the men standing close in a semicircle, three deep, M. Gaubert sitting before them at a harmonium. With his left hand he plays as much as he can, picking up a weak part, strengthening a wavering one; with his right hand he thrashes the case of the instrument with his bâton to mark the time. This, of course, in the process of learning. The men were mostly of middle age; some were men of sixty. Accustomed to outdoor work they had lung power which enabled them to throw out splendid tone. The tenors were the only part that grew coarse in the *forte* passages. The basses were grand—deep, hollow, soft voices—‘cavernous,’ as I once saw them described in a French paper; they gave a magnificent support to the harmony. The scene was animated and striking. Several of the men wore the blue blouse of the Parisian workman, others had white blouses. There was one old man with a red, beardless face, and a short and thickset

figure, who stood singing from memory, his cap on his head, his hands dived into his broad loose trousers, unconscious of anything but the supreme enjoyment of the music. The choir were working at a long and difficult motet by F. Hiller to the Latin words of Psalm cxxxvii, 'Super flumina Babylonis.' The first and second basses tried their parts first, then they gave way to the first and second tenors, who went over their own, afterwards the full choir was heard. All this was sol-fa'ing with the fixed *do*. At half-past ten there was a quarter-of-an-hour's interval for conversation. The members retired to the forms which were round the walls, and chatted. I remarked that only one lighted a cigarette. While we were talking with M. Gaubert and two of the honorary members who happened to be present, several of the second basses got round the harmonium and amused themselves by trying how low they could sing. Our old friend of the red face went steadily and firmly down to E in a big round voice, without the slightest diminution of power. A young fellow of twenty or so, with a large soft voice, went down to C, though the last two notes were weak. The physique of these men is in their favour, and this is largely due to their occupation. If we could get a choir of carters, butchers, policemen, and out-door workers of any kind in England, we should probably find as powerful and far-reaching voices. They do it in Wales, and this Orpheonist choir reminded me much of the Welsh quarrymen and miners. M. Gaubert has evidently a genius for music. His style of rehearsing is passionate and soothing by turns. His ejaculations, 'sing with more fury,' 'weep more,' &c., tell instantly upon the choir, which deafens you at one moment, and in the next is soothed to a murmur. One thought of the steam hammer, which beats a block of iron as if it were dough, and yet can be brought to crack a nut without injuring the kernel. Before the practice was resumed, several new members were proposed, and elected by a show of hands. The 'Prayer,' from *Masanello*, an old piece, was then sung from memory for our benefit, and the rehearsal ended."

In starting a Men's Voice Choir a difficulty will be experienced at first in finding voices to take the upper part. They will have to be trained. Until the voices of the first tenors are fairly developed the lower parts should be made to sing softly. Nothing will discourage the cultivation of the "thin" register so much as the loud "thick" register sing-

ing of the second tenors and first basses. The music practised should be well within the skill of the singers, so that they can give their whole attention to quality of voice. Many valuable directions will be found in the following paper read before the Tonic Sol-fa College by the late W. F. Callaway.

“The chief difficulty in the way of those who would like to have good men’s singing is, that of obtaining tenors capable of singing the highest part with good effect. Either a dreadful strain is inevitable, which injures the voices of the singers and afflicts the hearers, or music of a low compass is chosen, which from that cause would be too dull and sombre to please, even if it were not, as it usually is, otherwise uninteresting. The compositions of musicians who have been familiar with the execution of men’s chorus-music, such as Abt, and Kücken, and de Rille, make manifest, what experience confirms, that, except in unison passages, the music to be sung should be nearly all above C¹ in the highest part, and for particularly brilliant effects should ascend above G¹; yet there need be no lasting difficulty in obtaining good and easy singing of such music.

“First tenors are not really scarce, not nearly so scarce as second-basses, but they require, more than any other male voice, discreet training and good taste to develop their powers. So little true is it that they are rare and marvellous persons, that one German writer on men’s singing recommends that all the tenors should be trained as first tenors, and their division into two parts be regarded as entirely arbitrary, founded on no necessary difference in vocal compass. I believe that writer to be somewhat in error, but far nearer the truth than those who go about sighing and seeking for first tenors as if they were strange natural growths, like mistletoe, or even-leaved ash.

“The first tenor voice is chiefly distinguished from the second tenor by its freedom and power in the use of the falsetto or thin register. It is usually lighter and more flexible over the greater part of its compass as well; but it is its greater ease on the highest notes which really distinguishes it. It is not usually characterised by a higher chest compass. The powerful voices which can produce exceedingly high chest tones should rather be rejected from than preferred for the first-tenor part. Their high notes may please themselves, but in part-music will please no one else. Not robustness, but brilliance and delicate and feminine sweetness

should be the characteristic quality of the higher tones; and those lusty voices, however clear and fine, can only with great difficulty be made satisfactory in the first-tenor part.

“The fact that the voice required is largely the result of training, lays a preliminary difficulty in the way of the chorus-master who wishes to discriminate among the voices at his command at the beginning of a course of teaching. This difficulty is not lessened, but increased, when the chorus is composed of men who have been accustomed to sing in choruses of mixed voices. Such singers will probably have acquired habits of using their voices, and notions about them, which render it a matter of great uncertainty where, in men’s chorus, they should be placed. Experiments to ascertain their compass may be very resultless. A good clear baritone may sing a very fair upper G; while one who would make a splendid first-tenor may begin to strain and squeeze as soon as he has passed D. Of those who are unmistakably tenors, the ones whom after experience reveals to be properly *second*-tenors, may seem to have the higher compass. With such a body of tenors it would often be wise to follow the recommendation of the German writer I have referred to, and train all the tenors as ‘firsts,’ dividing them haphazard through the middle, when four part pieces are to be sung. One by one they may be discriminated by a separate examination, after a course of voice-training has developed their powers.

“It is, however, often possible to discover the first tenor by making him leap at once into the thin register, and leading him up (not diatonically, but by leaps upward and steps downward), to his higher tones. Frequently one who has never sung a good A in his life will thus produce a beautiful though weak C¹, and I have known such a one only become strained at E¹ and F¹ on the top space and line of the Treble staff. Some Basses can also play about very pleasantly and easily in their falsetto voice, but I assume that in an examination it has first been heard, from the general quality of the voice, that the subject is really a tenor.

“I do not know whether a wide experience might not show the next mode of discrimination which I mention to be undependable, but hitherto I have found the surest guide to the real quality of voice to be found in the ordinary speaking voice, when used without self-consciousness. The high piping tone of a first tenor in a lively and careless moment, reveals him unmistakably. It must be in a lively and careless moment, for mere indolence lowers the pitch, and the least self-consciousness leads often to most deceptive changes.

Multitudes of working men, through indolent habits of speech, constantly produce coarse and gruff sounds far removed in pitch and quality from their proper voice; and so usually do men drop their voices to a pitch unnaturally low, when they essay to read or speak in public—that few can avoid at such times some deepening of the tone. All voices can in familiar conversation be raised to the pitch at which a first tenor may speak, but the difference in quality between the voice of one to whom that pitch is natural, and another is very perceptible. I have usually formed opinions of the character of voices from their speaking quality, and only remember being once deceived.

“Whatever be the condition of the voices which a chorus-master takes in hand, it will usually require careful drill to get from the first tenors their sweetest and brightest tones.

“The first thing needful is to teach them to produce tones in their higher register; the second to teach them to unite that register to the lower; the third to equalise and strengthen the whole.

“For the first object, that of teaching them to produce the tones of the higher register, the best plan, the only one I think, is to make them leap to a note above F, and produce it very softly. The endeavour to lead them up from below, and thus gradually approach the higher register, will most certainly lead to their carrying the lower register too high.

“In the first production of the tones of the higher register attention should be fixed on the quality of the tone. Its quantity is of no importance.

“The pupils will perhaps be dissatisfied at the weakness of the voice, and will fancy they can do nothing with it. Let them fancy what they like, so that they do as they are told. No straining or pressure in order to strengthen the tone should be allowed. Some experimenters have been troubled at finding they could only get ‘falsetto’ notes, and, supposing that quality of voice to be in some way objectionable, have wearied themselves and worried their pupils in the endeavour to get something that should be higher than the chest, and yet not be ‘falsetto.’ Rejecting the voice which nature presents, they endeavour by peculiar contortions of the throat to produce something more natural than nature, gives. The wise teacher will endeavour to develop nature and not to correct her. He will hold that no register can be wrong which produces pleasant sounds; and will keep ever before his mind these two things—the ease of the singers and the pleasantness of the tone. He will, in a sense, ignore the fact that he is dealing with men only, and will seek the

same excellences he would desire in a mixed class. Instead of seeking a masculine quality upon notes really lying within the soprano compass, he will delight in obtaining the clearest and most brilliant tones the tenor falsetto can give. Working thus on the material which nature affords, he will find that it is easy for light tenors to produce tones in their higher register of a pure and limpid quality, which can be strengthened to a high degree of brilliance, so as in young and unspoiled voices to produce the illusive effect of being an octave higher than they really are.*

“The second object to be sought is the union of the higher and lower registers. This is absolutely necessary for most German music, though there is much English music for men, the alto part in which can be sung in the higher register alone. The different registers at first will have unseemly joinings, like the parts of a telescope. These are to be removed by exercises which carry the voice over the point of junction by steps, the teacher requiring the change at the right place. It is best, I think, to begin at the top and work downwards. Going upward is a later step. It is wise to appoint on the ‘extended’ or ‘voice’ modulator a space of about four tones within which the change may be gradually effected. When the transition can be easily made downward without any perceptible break, the upward or reverse process may be adopted; care being especially taken that the change be made sufficiently soon. Both the downward and upward scale exercises should be accelerated in speed until the change can be made during the most rapid motion. I am not inclined to attach any great value to exercises of peculiar forms, the simplest exercises are the best, and diatonic scale exercises, if not used to weariness, do very well.

“The third object, that of equalizing and strengthening the registers, will have been largely obtained in the measures already referred to. It is, however, of importance enough to have separate mention. The thing needed is something more than obtaining one even column of sound, gradually tapering from its strongest part up to its highest sound. It is necessary to have the power of producing *forte* or *piano* tones at any part of the compass. The means used are swells on single tones. On the lower ones breaking from the thin

* No reference has been made in this paper to the lesser “breaks” in the voice, dividing the chest or thick register, and the falsetto or thin register, each into two portions, my belief being that, though a full knowledge of those breaks is desirable in a teacher, it will be found that, practically, when the great break about E or F is clearly recognised, the endeavour to get the best possible tone in any part of the voice will be a sufficient preservative against wrong registers.—W. F. C.

register into thick ; but, before those tones are reached where the thin register only should be used, refraining from breaking into the thick, and getting all the swell possible in the one register.

“ By such means as these, mingled with the practice of good music, the true first-tenor voice may be developed from E on the 3rd space of the bass staff to C¹ on the 3rd space of the treble staff, with a beautiful unity and congruousness throughout. The chest voice will be made more delicate, and the falsetto so strengthened as to appear to be a continuation of it without a break, and the singers, far from being afraid of high notes, will sing them with the highest delight, as the composers intended they should, while those who listen will hardly be sensible of the one-sexed peculiarity of the choir.

“ Allusion to the practice of good music leads me to say that while in teaching to read music, that of narrow compass should be used, so that no needless difficulties may be encountered ; for the exercise of choirs for voice-training purposes, low music should be feared, and all music carefully scrutinized. Much resultless labour may be saved by a judicious choice of pieces in which the composer has used his knowledge of voices and registers, with a kindly regard for the singers. Much of Franz Abt's work will be found exceedingly helpful as voice discipline, while that of some composers, of whom I look upon Mendelssohn as one, will be found to require all the skill of a practised choir to render it with success.

“ I think it well, before concluding, to refer again to the baseless prejudice against the use of the falsetto voice by tenors. Many of those who object to it have never heard it when cultivated by tenors for part singing by men's voices, and judge of it from some one poor creature's old womanish squeal. By the same method of judgment the chest voice would be condemned, for that may be heard producing tones which the most imaginative ear could not call music. It has been said that the use of the falsetto is injurious to the voice, but I have never been able to find any evidence of the fact. Five minutes' talk with a bawling costermonger will reveal that the loud use of the chest voice is most certainly injurious, and doubtless the falsetto can be so used as to injure the quality of its tone. There is, however, I believe, no evidence whatever that singers who have made large use of the falsetto register have lost voice sooner than others. In all voices the extreme parts fail first, but there is every reason to believe that the use of different registers on the different parts of the compass is most healthy, as it undoubtedly is most pleasant to the ear.”

CHAPTER XX.



CHORAL COMPETITIONS.

WE live in a competing age. With the rapid development of railways and other means of communication between town and town, country and country, comes the desire to compare the industries of commerce and the results of art culture. No longer has Wales the monopoly of musical contests. Board School, Sunday School, and Temperance Choir Contests are now a recognised institution, and one which has worked a vast amount of good in raising the standard of taste and execution amongst the performers, and indirectly throughout their circle of influence. The National and other Welsh Eisteddfodau and occasional competitions at the Crystal Palace, Albert Hall, and various towns in England, have tempted some of the largest and best choirs in the kingdom to enter the arena.

The advantages of these trials of skill are well set forth in an article by Mr. W. H. Bonner in the *Tonic Sol-fa Reporter*.

“Competition is as useful in musical as in other matters; it has produced some of the finest choral singing, and is the secret of the success of some of the best choirs. Many good choirs have owed their existence to contests, and many more small and weak ones have been enlarged and strengthened by them. As soon as it is announced that a choir is to enter a contest, new members are attracted to it, old

members rejoin, and all feel united for one common object. They will meekly listen to the sharpest reproofs of their conductor, feeling sure that they deserve them; they will cheerfully submit to the severest voice-drill; they will most willingly attend early morning rehearsals, not at all objecting to meeting five evenings a week, with an open-air rehearsal on Saturday besides, as the time for the contest draws near; and, most wonderful of all, will even practise their parts at home between the rehearsals.

“The following remarks, some of which do not apply exclusively to Contest Choirs, are offered as the result of special experience in connection with a number of Choir Contests, in the hope that they may be useful to some choir officers, and suggestive of new thoughts to others.

“Choirs of Tonic Sol-faists only have many advantages over mixed choirs. Possession of a certificate can be insisted upon, all can *Sol-fa* their parts, the copies are cheaper, the trouble of providing both notations is saved, double references by the conductor are not needed, and the pieces are learned much more quickly and easily.

“Conductors should spare no pains to get all their members to obtain the Intermediate Certificate. If there is some incentive, as a contest, a select choir, or front seats at concerts and rehearsals, many will work for it who would not otherwise take the trouble. Half-an-hour's practice of the requirements before the rehearsals will help nearly all to get the certificate, and those who *cannot* pass may usually be well spared from a contest choir. Teachers have said that they do not trouble to push their singers on to the Intermediate Certificate, because directly it is obtained they go to a better choir. Why is that? Is it not because the choir they go to can sing more advanced music than the choir in which the majority hold only the Elementary Certificate? A choir of 50 or 60 Intermediates would be a permanent one. The singing would be so enjoyable that its members would not wish to go elsewhere, and as they increased in numbers and in skill, the more classical would be the music they could sing.

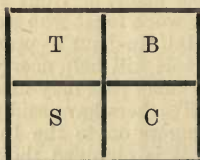
“Contest Choirs could be thoroughly organised; proper officers being appointed, not ornamentally, but each having certain duties to perform, and each feeling responsible for the performance of them. The conductor should see that the work is so mapped out that he is left free for his own duties, without having to look after others, or feeling more than a general responsibility. The secretary should be able to give necessary directions as to arrangements, and at the contest should be free to be near the conductor.

Marshalling and arranging the seats of the choir, should be done by the stewards, of whom there should be four. Exact registers should be kept of the members' names and addresses, and their attendance at all rehearsals and concerts, none being allowed to sing at the latter without attending a certain number of the former.

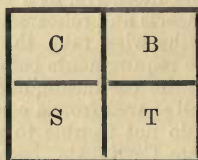
"The Members should each possess a set of the music, looking over being strictly forbidden: but at the Contest, music should not be required, as the pieces ought to be perfectly familiar to each singer. The great advantage in a Contest which a choir has that can sing without music, should be an inducement to all to spare no pains to attain the desirable result of 'all eyes on the bâton.' Judges cannot but be impressed in favour of a choir which shows such a sign of thoroughness and discipline.

"Some time before the contest the conductor should carefully arrange his singers, and settle their places, each singer having a numbered seat. And this raises the question as to the best way of grouping a choir. The following plans have been tried, the lower part of each diagram representing the front of the choir—

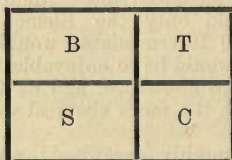
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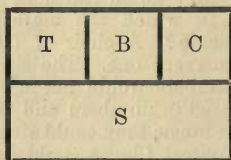
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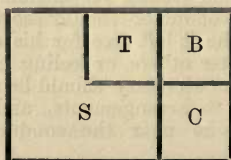
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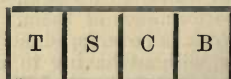
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“General experience has decided in favour of the first arrangement, though others may be used in particular cases; but the best effect is obtained when the choir is as nearly as possible in a compact square form. If the platform is shallow, the last grouping is better than the first, as it keeps the singers of each part closely together. A choir of 100 is best arranged in six rows, if the platform is deep enough, but five rows of 20 is a very convenient arrangement, and better than four rows of 25. Of course the platform must on no account be flat, but raised in tiers. At the contest, the platform seats should be numbered, so that the singers, each knowing the number of the seat to be occupied, will at once go to it, and all will be very quickly seated. If there is accommodation for a duplicate set of chairs in an ante-room, one choir can be arranged there while another is singing, and so all bustle and confusion on the platform will be avoided.

“All contest regulations should require the singing of one special test-piece by all, so as to enable the adjudicators to fairly compare them. There should also be, at any rate in contests between Sol-fa choirs, a sight-singing test, however simple; and each choir should in addition sing a piece selected by its conductor. No instrumental accompaniment should be allowed at the contest; therefore pieces originally intended to be sung without accompaniment should be chosen, and, as a rule, ‘arrangements’ should be avoided.

“A word to conductors will not be out of place. The writer has seen 15, 12, and smaller numbers of conductors follow each other at contests, besides a variety at concerts, and it has been amusing, if not painful to see the contortions of face and body exhibited by the majority. With many it is force of habit, and they are not aware how grotesque they look, but some seem to imagine that the whole of the expression of a piece must be dramatically represented in the person of the conductor, to both choir and audience. If they knew what merriment and jocular remarks they cause behind them, they would gain control over themselves, and avoid all stamping of the feet (it seems almost impossible to keep the right foot still), waving of the arms, and other gymnastics. All that is necessary should be done at rehearsals; at the performance the conductor should preserve a calm and dignified deportment, directing his choir by motions as few and as graceful as possible.”

The Regulations for carrying out Choral Competitions must be carefully prepared. At times of great excitement such as

these contests there should be no suspicion of a competitor having an unfair advantage, else widespread ill-feeling will be occasioned.

Beneath will be found the Regulations of three Choral Contests differing in character, and likely to be useful to the organizers of similar meetings.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CHOIR COMPETITION.

1. Each Choir must not exceed 25 nor have less than 15 voices, and be composed chiefly of Scholars, with a sufficient number of Teachers to properly sustain the parts the proportion of Adult Teachers not to exceed one-third of the Choir.
2. Members of the Choir (Conductors excepted), must be certified as being in actual attendance at their respective Schools.
3. Each Choir must be prepared to sing any of the 12 Pieces provided by the Committee when called upon by the Judges; and will also be allowed to sing one piece selected therefrom by its own Conductor, but such selections must be intimated to the Secretary before the evening.
4. Each Choir to be numbered, and the order of singing will be determined by the Judges, and their adjudication of the Prizes will be final.
5. No accompaniment of any kind will be allowed.

THE ASSOCIATION OF TONIC SOL-FA CHOIRS,

Crystal Palace, June 5th, 1886.

1. This Competition is limited to Associated Choirs whose membership is under 100.
2. Not more than 50 and not less than 40 singers may compete, of whom at least 30 must hold the Intermediate, and the remainder the Elementary Certificate of the Tonic Sol-fa College, prior to April 30th, 1886. All must be *bonâ fide* Members of the Choir, in regular attendance from March 1st, 1886. No person may sing in more than one competing Choir.

3. Each Choir will be required to sing one special test piece, chosen by the Adjudicators (the name of which will be announced in the *Tonic Sol-fa Reporter* for March); a Sight Singing Test from the Tonic Sol-fa notation (to be sol-faed once only); and a piece of its own selection, the performance of which must not exceed ten minutes. The Choirs must not be accompanied by any musical instrument.

[N.B.—Three copies in the Sol-fa notation, and three copies in the Staff notation of the piece selected by the Choir, must be sent with the Application Form, for the use of the Adjudicators. Unaccompanied pieces must be chosen and “arrangements” should be avoided.]

4. The order in which the Choirs will compete will be decided by the Committee, by ballot, or otherwise if distance has to be considered, and announced to the Choirs by post. Any Choir failing to present itself at the time appointed, will forfeit its entrance fee, and its place in the Contest, unless the Adjudicators consent to hear it at a later time.
5. The decision of the Adjudicators will be final in all cases. Any complaint against a Choir of infringement of regulations must be made, in writing, to the Secretary, before the commencement of the Contest.
6. Application must be made only on the proper form (which may be obtained of the Secretary), and accompanied by an entrance fee of £1, on or before May 1st, 1886. The entrance fee will be returned if the Choir competes at the appointed time. The Conductor and Secretary of each Choir will be held responsible for compliance with the regulations.
7. The Application Form must include the name of each member of the competing Choir, and state the Certificate held.
8. Application will be received only on the understanding that the Choir shall take part in the United Concert to be held in the Afternoon, when the prizes will be distributed.

INTERNATIONAL INVENTIONS EXHIBITION.

London, 1885.

CHORAL COMPETITION.

GENERAL REGULATIONS.

1. All applications for admission to the competitions must be made to the Secretary (on printed forms provided for the purpose by him) not later than 15th April, 1885.
2. A certificate will be required under the signature of the Conductor and Secretary of each Choir entering for competition, declaring that the Choir has been actually constituted for not less than six months prior to the date of application.
3. Choirs must enter (1) as consisting entirely of amateurs, or (2) as consisting of amateurs assisted by professionals; but under the latter head no Choir will be eligible to compete which has a larger proportion of professionals than one professional member to every fifteen amateurs; and the names and addresses of all professional members must accompany the application. No professional will be allowed to take part in any competition who has not been a member of a Choir to which he belongs for at least six months prior to the date of filing applications (April 15th, 1885). [By a "professional" is meant any person who is receiving, or has received, pay for musical services rendered, either to the particular Choir or to any other persons or body.] *
4. Each Choir will be required to sing two unaccompanied pieces selected by the Council, the names of which will be given on entering the Choir for competition, and also one unaccompanied piece of its own selection. The Choirs of Female Voices will, however, be allowed a pianoforte accompaniment to two of the three pieces selected.
5. By "member of a Choir" is meant performing member.

* This clause was subsequently modified as follows:—

Any member of a choir (male or female) whose livelihood is obtained from non-musical work is not to be considered a "professional" musician even if he or she from time to time accepts a stipend or honorarium for musical services rendered.

6. If only a portion of a Choir, or a selection of members, enters for competition this must be stated, and full particulars given as to the number of non-competing members, and why they are absent.
7. No competition will take place in Classes I. or II. unless three Choirs at least enter in either class; and no competition will take place in Classes III. and IV. unless two Choirs at least enter under either Class; and no competition in Classes V. or VI, unless two Choirs shall enter under either Class; but it shall be in the power of the musical umpires to recommend a gift of money to any deserving Choir excluded from competition from this cause only.
8. The Executive Council will make arrangements with the Railway Companies, whereby special facilities may be secured for bringing up to London, on favourable terms, Choirs wishing to take part in the competition. Actual competitors will receive a free pass of admission into the Exhibition.
9. No Choir may compete in more than one class.

CHAPTER XXI.

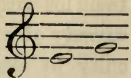
CHOIR TRAINING.

The average member of a Choral Society devotes little if any time to private exercises in voice cultivation. Whatever he has of study in this direction must be given in the practice room: yet how rarely is any attention given to the subject in societies formed for the performance of works by the great masters. For want of a little guidance bad habits of voice production are formed; the natural divisions (registers) of the voice are disregarded; the singing becomes forced and harsh, and the finer shades of choral expression become impossible of attainment. Because voice training in a class cannot be otherwise than "rough and ready," it does not follow that even a short time devoted to it will not amply repay the teacher's trouble. The least cultivated ear can distinguish between properly trained choirs and those in which the members bawl one against the other in utter disregard of all physiological laws. Some conductors content themselves with correcting any evident errors of voice management which they can detect in the course of the practice. This is good in its way, but is insufficient. A special time and kind of exercise should be devoted to the subject, either at every practice or at certain periods of the year. Teacher and pupils can then concentrate their thoughts upon the one thing, instead of having to divide their attention between the pitch and length of notes, words and expression.

The chief points of choir training are :—

- (1.) Voice. Production of good tone and correct use of the Registers.
- (2.) Skill. Flexibility and accuracy of intonation.
- (3.) Words. Pure vowels; clear articulation of consonants.
- (4.) Expression. Variations of force (*piano, forte, cres, dim, sforzando, &c.*) different styles (*staccato, legato, playful, serious, &c.*)

To enlarge upon each of the above to the extent that their importance warrants would consume more space than is at disposal. Only their principal features can be touched upon, and references given to books which treat more exhaustively upon these topics.

The production of good tone (*i.e.*, without breathing or harshness) depends upon three things, first, the “shock of the glottis” (the instantaneous formation of musical tone by the vocal cords, or ligaments); second, the throwing forward of the voice; and third, the control of the breath. Excellent directions for securing these are to be found in the Standard Course (3s. 6d., Curwen’s), in the Mechanism of the Human Voice” Emil Behnke (1s. 6d., Curwen’s), and the “Voice, Song, and Speech” by Lennox Browne and Emil Behnke (5s., Sampson Low, Marston and Co.), and a set of Exercises based on these theories, is published by Chappell and Co. (1s. 6d. for each class of voice). The same books deal fully with the vexed question of the “Registers.” Authorities differ greatly in the terms they employ when speaking of the breaks in the voice. All recognise the *fact*, but what one calls head voice another terms falsetto, and a third the “thin” register. The great break (change of register) occurs in all voices, between  that is, in the lower part of soprano voices, the middle of the contralto range and in the higher part of the tenor. It is the

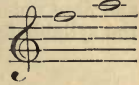
quality and volume of tone produced below F that decides whether a female voice is soprano or contralto. Similarly a pure tenor voice must possess power and sweetness in the series of tones between E and the A or B above.

Comparatively few individuals whom nature intended for contraltos and tenors take to the g parts at the outset of their musical career. Why? Because, having no need to use the distinguishing register of their kind of voice (lower of contralto and upper of tenor) in daily life, it remains uncultivated, in some cases even its possession unsuspected, and when they do attempt singing they join the already crowded ranks of the sopranos or basses.

Two "questions" were asked which bear upon this subject, "Which voice is most plentiful; which most scarce?"

The almost universal reply was soprano most plentiful, tenor most scarce. A large proportion qualified their answers by stating that mezzo sopranos and baritones were far in excess of *real* sopranos and basses. Without doubt that is the case, and being so, the absolute necessity of voice training as a part of the work of a Choral Society is proved. Next to tenors, contraltos were named as being scarce. Ladies do not neglect their lower register nearly to the extent that gentlemen do their upper registers. Another cause drives them to the soprano part. Their "reading" skill may be unequal to sustaining a lower part in the harmony. Knowing this, and seeing that the contraltos are already few, while the sopranos are numerous, they prefer to cast in their lot with the many. Conductors who complain of the scarcity of contralto voices must go to the root of the difficulty to effect a cure. The remedy is, an Elementary-Instruction Class (to give independent power in singing from notes), and voice cultivation.

The second question "Do your Tenors manage their voices properly between F and A generally written



brought forth a number of answers which may be quoted :—

"No, nearly all endeavour to force these notes in their upper thick register. Old singers especially are disinclined to use their thin register, because of its weakness through want of exercise; and only by privately showing what is wanted, the ease with which these notes may be sung and the strength and purity of tone that can be acquired by well-directed practice, is it possible to get them sung satisfactorily."

* * * * *

"Not as a rule. It is so difficult (without private training) to make them understand how to avail themselves of the veiled quality, and thus prevent the straining which arises from forcing up the more open quality."

* * * * *

"I find it advisable to train tenors to change before F, sometimes as low as D; and I think, in spite of one or two very poor voices amongst our tenors, we get good quality of tone from them. Personally, I much prefer sympathetic tenors to robust tenors."

* * * * *

"Those who have private lessons, Yes. Others, No. I believe that there would be no lack of tenors if all men had lessons from competent singing masters."

* * * * *

"A few: but the prevailing evil is a forcing of those notes, a tendency to render them *forte* even in *piano* passages, often at the cost of purity of intonation."

* * * * *

"Our tenors do not use their voices properly from F to A. They have no conception of the change of Register, and almost without exception, force these notes."

* * * * *

"Apt to become 'squeezed' in tone, viz., sung with tightened muscles of the throat. A very few reach from chest. Most force up the middle register. A few also take these notes in a falsetto."

* * * * *

“It is necessary to point out to them the use of *chest* notes and *head* notes; much, however, depends upon the quality of the syllable to be pronounced.”

* * * * *

“Not as a rule: some force their voices and sing flat. Some sing a kind of falsetto which is not sufficiently powerful and telling.”

* * * * *

“Owing to the exceptionally high pitch of our organ, the tenors have difficulty in singing these notes in chest voice *forte*; but manage their voices properly when singing *mezza voce*.”

* * * * *

“Yes, but I find it difficult to ensure in class singing, as members require individual attention to teach this.”

* * * * *

“About two (out of nine) do; the rest sing out of the stomach.” (!)

* * * * *

“All the tenors are very inferior in this locality. If perchance there is a good tenor voice, the possessor thinks himself above the work of choral society, and wants to shine as a solo singer. Nearly all tenors, unless they have had exceptionally careful training, manage the break between chest and head voice badly.”

* * * * *

The above extracts are sufficient to show the constant care that must be exercised by the conductor with regard to his tenor voices. A periodical course of exercises for this ‘part,’ either before the general practice or on a separate evening, is most valuable in putting gentlemen in the way of using their upper register, and in bringing back to the paths of sweetness and grace those whose carelessness or habit of loud singing, has led to force the thick register and neglect the thin. The books before referred to should be consulted by conductors who wish to improve their tenors. An exercise which the author has used with good effect is as follows:—

SOPRANO. CONTRALTO AND TENOR.*

Skaa - - - - laa,
Skaa - - -

BASS

- - - - laa. Skaa - - - - - laa.

SOPRANO. CONTRALTO AND TENOR.*

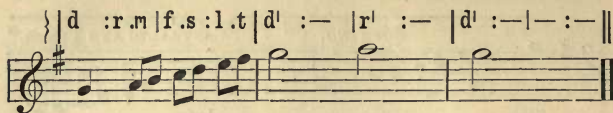
<p>$d^1 : t_1 s.f : m.r d : - t_1 : -$</p> <p>Skaa - - - -</p>	<p>$d :$ laa, $d : t_1, l_1 s_1, f_1 : m_1, r_1$ $d^1 : t_1 s.f : m.r$ Skaa - - -</p>
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BASS.

<p>$d_1 : - t_2 : - d_1 : -$ $d : - t_1 : -$</p>	<p>$d : -$ laa. $d : t_1, l_1 s_1, f_1 : m_1, r_1$</p>	<p>$d_1 : - t_2 : - d_1 : - - : -$ laa.</p>
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The points of it are the starting of the soprano and tenor voices on a note of the register which needs culture and the training of the same downwards. If the G's are sung lightly they can hardly fail to be in the right kind of voice. The tenors combining with the contraltos gives the former confidence in using the thin register on G, F \sharp , and E, and in changing to the thick on the D; while the support of the tenor voices in the lower A G F \sharp G helps to bring out the full tone of the ladies' "thick" register. The exercise can be varied by all the parts starting together; by taking higher (A \flat , A, and B \flat) or lower (F \sharp , E) keys: or it can be inverted

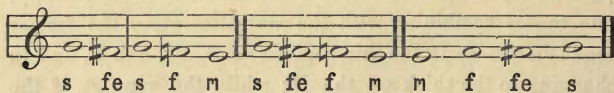
* Singing this in strict unison with the Contralto, *i.e.*, commencing on high G.



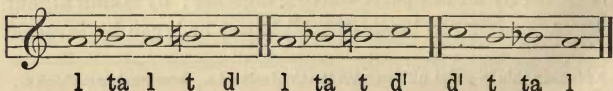
and taken by parts or collectively and at different pitches within F and A \flat . When taking the ascending form the conductor must be sure that the changes of register are properly made.

For promoting flexibility of voice exercises abound in all singing tutors, or they can be readily invented by the teacher according to his requirements. Many of the "runs" in Handel's choruses afford excellent practice.

Perfect intonation is natural to some persons, those with good ears for music and voices trained in sympathy with them. Others are deficient in accuracy of musical ear, have been badly taught, or have uncertain voices. The Tonic Sol-fa plan of teaching the scale by the tones of the chords, tonic, dominant and sub-dominant, ensures good intonation as far as the capacity of ear and voice of the singer will allow. So also with the chromatic tones. They should be taught by referring to their transitional model. Thus in singing F F \sharp G (f fe s) the pitch of the F \sharp has to be estimated by its being a semi-tone below G—a "leading note" proceeding to a "tonic"—not by remembering the pitch of F and then sharpening a little: therefore it should be taught



All sharpened notes would be treated in a similar way. Flattened notes are estimated from the note below (as a "sub-dominant" leading to a "mediant")



A most exhaustive work on "Pronunciation for Singers" is that by Alex. J. Ellis (4s. 6d., Curwen). Shorter treatises on the subject are to be found in the "Standard Course" previously referred to (consonants, pp. 60-62; vowels, pp. 136-144), and in the "Teacher's Manual," pp. 195-207. Some other books from which useful hints may be gathered are "The Singer's Guide" by J. Adcock (1s., Henry Farmer, High Street, Nottingham); "The Voice" by Wilbye Cooper (1s., Cramer & Co.); "The Elocution of Singing" by J. Williams (1s., Stanley Lucas & Co.) "Hints for Pronunciation in Singing" (1s., Goddard & Co.) The first-named book ("Pronunciation for Singers") contains chapters on "Alphabetical keys to German, Italian (including Ecclesiastical Latin), and French"; and "examples of songs" in those languages. A pronouncing version of the "Stabat Mater" (on pp. 231-233) will save conductors who are not well versed in singing Latin words an infinite amount of trouble.

Lastly we come to "Expression." Fetis' "Treatise on Choir and Chorus Singing" (1s., Novello & Co.), is a standard work on this subject, containing exercises for a choir as well as full letter-press directions for the choir trainer. Some attractive choral expression exercises are scattered through "Practice for Singers" Part II. (O.N. 6d., Curwen), and a little book compiled by the author ("Choral Drill, Tonic Sol-fa, 2d., Curwen), has short exercises on all the above subjects. From the latter shall be borrowed a plan for "drilling" a choir in degrees of force, vowels and consonants.

A double Anglican chant is written on the blackboard and sung from that until committed to memory, when it is rubbed out. Marks of expression are then written:—*pp*, *p*, *mez*, *mf*, *f*, *ff*, and pointed to as required for the sections of the chant, say first time

| *mezzo* || *piano* || *mezzo* || *forte* ||

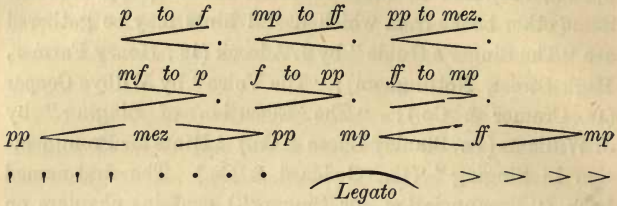
Second time

| *forte* || *mezzo* || *piano* || *pianissimo* ||

Third time

| *piano* || *forte* || *pianissimo* || *mezzo* ||.

Crescendo and *diminuendo* marks are next added, as



Afterwards the blackboard is cleaned, and the choir depend on the conductor's signals for the degree of force, &c., required.

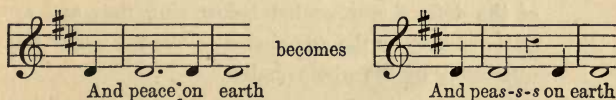
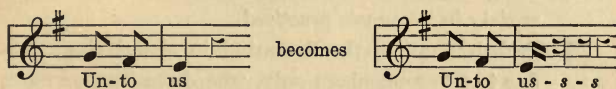
So far the vocalising syllable "laa," with attention to quality of tone and use of the proper register, has been used. Next comes practice of the other vowels, especially ai (avoiding ah-ee) and ee (keeping the teeth apart). The chants are sung through to the syllable *lai*, then to *lee*, &c. Lastly the clear enunciation of consonants is dwelt upon. Take for example t, which as a final is sadly neglected by many singers. Who has not heard even professional bass soloists gravely assert that "the people that walked in darkness have seen a great *lie*"; and chorus singers who give utterance to such nonsense as "O thou tha-telles-goo-tiding-stoo-zion beold"? The exercise would now take this shape, on blackboard:—

	LONG VOWELS.	DIPHTHONGS.
Initial Consonants	too— toa, tau taa— tai— tee, tei toi, tow teu—	
Pronounced as in	too, toad, taught, tart, tame, team tight, toy, town, tune	
Final Consonants	oot— oat, aut aat— ait— eet, eit oit, out eut—	
Initial and final Consonants	toot— toat, taut taat, &c.	

Before parting with this subject it might be well to call attention to several other common faults of singers. The

transference of the final consonant of one word to the beginning of the next word if it begin with a vowel; making "sweet as hope" sound like "swee-ta-sope." Only a few choristers take pains to articulate two consonants in succession, as in the words "that tellest," "good tidings" "all lands" &c., unless the conductor repeatedly admonishes them upon the subject.

The most troublesome consonant is "s." Some people seem never tired of dwelling upon it: they always anticipate the end of the note if the word to it finishes with the sound of s.



It is really difficult to avoid the terminal sibilant (s) attaching itself to the next word. Scores of illustrations could readily be found; let one suffice: "His burthen is light" usually sounds like "His burthen is slight." The remedy is for the s to be sounded more like z, "izz light," not "iss light."

CAUSES OF FLATTENING.

The retention of pitch in unaccompanied singing is a source of constant trouble to the conductor. How seldom at rehearsal is a piece finished at the pitch given at the commencement. Even with a pianoforte accompaniment the voices will sometimes drop. The causes of this flattening are varied and numerous. In a choir collectively the chief are—

- (1) Insufficient knowledge of the music, and its correlative, want of confidence in attacking the notes.

- (2) Atmospheric conditions: foggy and damp weather; bad ventilation of room.
- (3) Mental impressions induced by the music. Pieces in minor keys are more likely to drop in pitch than major; music in a slow tempo more than that in a quick one.
- (4) Violent changes of force *pp* to *ff*, &c.
- (5) Voices not properly classified. Ladies with contralto voices trying to sing soprano. Baritones attempting tenor, &c.
- (6) Fatigue due to long-continued rehearsal, or want of variety in the music practised.
- (7) Probably most of the flattening in choral singing is due to a few members only, who, from one or more of the defects enumerated below sing flat, and are followed first by the remainder of their "part" and ultimately by the whole choir.

In the case of individuals, the causes of singing out of tune are—

- (1) Inaccuracy of musical ear; or the inability of the ear to guide the voice. (Some people are very quick in detecting false intonation in others while they cannot sing in tune themselves).
- (2) Mismanagement of breath. Breathing in the wrong way: overfilling the lungs; attempting to sing too much with one breath; not properly controlling the breath in forming the tone.
- (3) Forcing of the lower registers upwards.
- (4) Ill-health and physical weakness.
- (5) Carelessness. Allowing the thoughts to wander to other subjects; want of interest in the music.

A course of voice training will go far to cure these faults both in the individual and choir. Soft singing is especially necessary as a corrective to the forcing upwards of the

registers, while it also enables the singers to listen to each other and to pay attention to the blending of the voices. A light and well-ventilated room and a cheerful voice and manner on the part of the conductor will minimize the tendencies of a choir to drop in pitch. It is a source of comfort to know that at performances choral singers keep the pitch infinitely better than at rehearsals. Over and over again has it been the author's experience that the unaccompanied portion of a chorus which always flattened at the practices, and was a source of dismay when the accompaniment again came in, were sung in perfect tune at the concert.

A few quotations from the "answers to questions" may shed further light on this important subject:—

"We flatten more than I like, and I have an idea that some of it is caused by the third of the scale, and at times the seventh, not being sung sharp enough, and consequently the other tones being sung a little lower.* There is no doubt that the most experienced singers drop the pitch in part-singing out of sympathy, and to make the chords in tune."

* * * * *

"My chorus sing sharp, when they are out of tune. The cause is nothing more or less than singing too loud at the lower part of their voices, and singing with their chest voices above C and D."



If properly trained singing out of tune is impossible."

* * * * *

"Contraltos sing most out of tune, but I think the chief responsibility of keeping the pitch up rests with the basses. If they sing firm and true the sopranos, though they may sing flat here and there on the high notes will recover themselves."

* * * * *

* The same remark is made by several conductors.

“A misplaced voice generally found to be the cause, or a singer from a choir where the teacher was ‘flat.’”

* * * * *

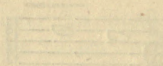
“In preparing for the ‘Inventions Competition’ there was one room in which we rehearsed where we *never* succeeded in retaining the pitch.”

* * * * *

“Our singing was horribly flat at times while we practised to an harmonium, but practice with the pianoforte has removed it almost entirely.”

* * * * *

“Flattening is usually caused by singing high notes in the wrong register.”



CHAPTER XXII.

HINTS TO CONDUCTORS.

THE qualifications of a conductor from an outside point of view were enlarged upon at p 4. Naturally the perfect man and musician was there contemplated. Modesty should prevent any man crediting himself with the honour of being a "born conductor." The greatest *teachers* of any subject in all ages have been those who were continually striving to increase their knowledge. The conductor of a Choral Society who wishes to excel must not be above learning from the experience of others even in the smallest detail. Let him remember that his reputation has to be built up in the practice-room more than in the concert hall. If he succeeds in training a choir up to a highly proficient stage he can hardly fail to make a satisfactory appearance in public.

Punctuality. Make it a hard and fast rule to be in the practising room at least a few minutes before the time named for commencing, and begin the rehearsal as soon as possible after that hour. If by any accident you are late apologise, and explain the cause to the members.

Orderliness. Set an example and encourage members in habits of regularity and order. (See rehearsals p. 59) In announcing the piece to be practised, speak distinctly, quoting (if a work) the page of the book and number or title of the chorus, and do not give the signal to start until all have found the place and are ready to begin.

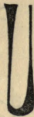
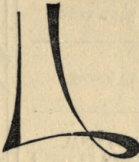
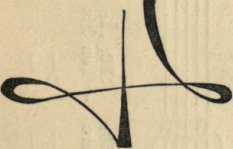
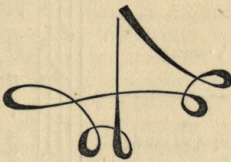
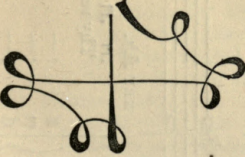
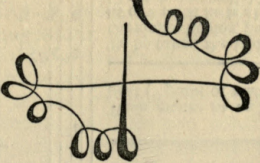
Personal Manner. Be friendly and affable to all your members indiscriminately before and after the practice. During a rehearsal be master of the room, kindly but firmly reproving "talking" or insubordination of any kind while the lesson or practice is proceeding. Do not address remarks to individual members, or you will lose power over the majority.

Matter and manner of Speech. Speak grammatically. Articulate all consonants clearly, for unless you do this how can you expect your pupils to make their words intelligible to an audience. Avoid too much talking and frequent joking (before the choir); it takes time which would be much better employed in singing.

Rehearsal Programme. Carefully arrange beforehand the order of the pieces to be rehearsed. Select an easy number to begin with: it serves to tune the voices and give confidence to the performers. Take the most difficult numbers about the middle of the practice. Reserve a cheerful, moderately easy piece for the end; or, if a difficult one must be taken, let it be one that can be got through fairly well. Repeated breakdowns at the end of an evening's work spoil the singers' enjoyment and leave an unpleasant impression.

Beating Time. Try to be clear and definite in your beats. Move the bâton quickly as far as you intend it to go in one direction; let it rest there until the next beat has to be taken, when proceed as before. This style cultivates the feeling of rhythm and enables the performers to tell what part of the measure they should be executing much more than the "round and round" or "snatching" ways of beating. The following are recommended, the thick end of each dash showing the point of rest for the beat. (See next page.)

Beating Time to recitatives is much more difficult than to a movement in strict time, because the singer treats his notes *ad lib*, and the beats must therefore vary in regularity. The rule to be observed is for the bâton to be held at the "point of rest" of one beat until the singer commences the note corresponding to the following beat, when it must be quickly moved to the next point. For example in "Thy rebuke" (*Messiah* No. 21.). See p. 168.

<p>TWO BEATS IN A MEASURE</p> 	<p>THREE BEATS</p> 
<p>FOUR BEATS</p> 	<p>SIX BEATS</p> 
<p>EIGHT BEATS</p> 	<p>TWELVE BEATS</p> 

For more complicated rhythms Berlioz's "Treatise on Orchestration" (Novello and Co.), pp. 245 to 251, may with advantage be studied.

DOWN. With pause at end of beat ("point of rest").	RIGHT. Pause at end until singer finishes.	UP. To be taken the instant the singer begins, pause at end until he is about to utter next syllable.	DOWN. Pause as before.	LEFT. Pause.	RIGHT. Pause.	UP. Making a slight pause at end to represent a deliberate tempo.	DOWN. Same as previous beat.	LEFT. Pause at end.	RIGHT. Pause until singer finishes.	UP. Pause.
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Thy re - buke hath brok - en his heart, He is full of

KEY A^b .

s	m	d	d	t_1	t_2	r	se	$hath$	bro	ken	his	$heart,$	t_1	t_2	He	is	$full$	t_1	t_2	of
s	m	d	d	t_1	t_2	r	se	$hath$	bro	ken	his	$heart,$	t_1	t_2	He	is	$full$	t_1	t_2	of
s	m	d	d	t_1	t_2	r	se	$hath$	bro	ken	his	$heart,$	t_1	t_2	He	is	$full$	t_1	t_2	of
s	m	d	d	t_1	t_2	r	se	$hath$	bro	ken	his	$heart,$	t_1	t_2	He	is	$full$	t_1	t_2	of

B^ht.m.
(¹) s_1 s_1 t_1 : t_1 of

Attacking difficulties. Make it a rule to study and practise the difficult portions of a long chorus separately; thus in the Hallelujah chorus (*Messiah*, No. 44) try the parts separately commencing at the fourth beat of the 19th measure; and stopping at the 32nd measure. When correctly done, repeat Tutti. Proceed in like manner with measures 41 to 51 (the fugal imitations to the words "And he shall reign,") Practise the sopranos alone on their sustained tones at "King of kings" counting time audibly for them, and insisting on every voice beginning and ending at the proper moment. All this time the singers may have been seated. Then ask them to stand and sing it right through. Both spirit and accuracy will have been imparted by such an analysis.

Vain repetitions. Never stop and repeat any part of a number, or take a whole chorus a second time without assigning a reason for so doing. Point out the errors made the first time and the performers will endeavour to avoid them the next time. If you fail to do this not only may the original mistakes be repeated (and thereby become confirmed) but listlessness will ensue and fresh inaccuracies make their appearance.

Conducting Oratorios. A list of queries should be made on paper as to the omission of Da Capos or any particular features of the work which require agreement with the soloists. These should be discussed with the persons concerned before the full rehearsal or concert, so that in the one case time may not be wasted, and in the other a breakdown may be avoided. If possible, devote an hour or two shortly before the performance to a private *mental* rehearsal of the work. Go over each page of the score, especially determining the speed of the various movements and calling to mind any difficulties which have been met with in rehearsal. Avoid all cause of excitement before taking your place on the platform, for the sustained watchfulness and energy required to conduct an oratorio (with full band, &c.) to a successful termination makes quite sufficient demands upon the nervous system.

Musical Literature. Study all the books on the theory of music that you can procure, so that you continually add to your knowledge. Read the biographies of great musicians: your sympathies will be aroused and musical taste improved. Subscribe to several of the best musical periodicals; a conductor should know all that is going on in the world of music.

Discipline. Do not allow any member to sit (at rehearsal) when the direction to stand has been given, unless excused on medical grounds. At concerts every member should be ready at the call to "attention" and rise together at the signal.

Signals. Every conductor who knows his own mind and intends to have his wishes carried out will arrange a code of signals. A few smart taps on the desk usually mean "attention"; an upward movement of bâton, hand, or finger, to rise; a reverse movement, to sit. Degrees of force can be indicated by the left hand; also by the space and style of the beats, a small space being covered by the beats for soft singing (say from the wrist) a moderate space for medium force (from the elbow) and a large sweeping kind of beat (from the shoulder) for loud singing. A specially energetic attack is suggested by using both arms for the *down beat* or for the entry of any part requiring great emphasis. This kind of movement should be very sparingly used, or it will lose its suggestive power to the performers, and become a source of amusement to the audience. When a band is engaged at a performance, before commencing the overture, a few taps should be given for general attention; after several seconds a couple more taps tell the players to get their instruments in position with all eyes on the bâton; a good start can then be effected.

Conducting in public. Mr. G. C. T. Parsons writes:—
"Since under the present system the conductor is visible to the audience, he becomes in his own person a representative of the choir or society by which he is engaged. There being no chairman, he becomes the centre on which both choir and audience depend. For their sakes, therefore, he should be, in dress and action, quiet and gentlemanly. The man who swells with conscious importance, and accompanies the introductory bow with an oily smile of self-satisfaction, not only fails to win the favour of the audience, but distinctly prejudices them against himself and the choir. A quiet business-like manner will always command respect. In turning towards his singers, the conductor may well answer their greetings with a pleasant smile; for they meet as old friends, and some—being fidgety and nervous perhaps think their conductor is also. His pleasant glance will re-assure them. A quiet look round the orchestra will encour-

age him, for he will see the eager expectant look of some faces, and the easy self-possession of others; he will also get accustomed to the positions of the different parts, and to his own position in front. The survey completed, let him make up his mind, especially if he feel nervous, to move deliberately and slowly, and to carefully avoid hurry in any shape or form. This self-government will in itself go far towards removing his nervousness, and preserving the choir from flurry or undue excitement. Let him take time in signalling the "stand up," in giving "the key," in taking the "tuning chord," nor admit of a start until all are waiting and watching. Once started, he must be not merely a live metronome, but a governing and stimulating power to the singers. He can be this without being frantic. The audience need know but little of it, for varying expression of face, with the modifications of the time-stroke and the signals before referred to, will do nearly all that is needed quietly and unostentatiously. Nor should these signals be overdone. A conductor who is always signalling, signals to no purpose. "Familiarity breeds contempt." Sometimes, however, the choir is not up to its work. Then the unfortunate conductor has not only to encourage and sustain them, but also to conceal their defects from the audience as far as possible. Helps are here admissible which the extremity of the case alone justifies. Such as, beating rhythmically to separate parts, or even singing out any "lead" which may have been missed by the singers. Young choirs especially are constantly subject to slips of this sort, through nervousness or other causes; and many disasters might be prevented, by a judicious audible correction from the conductor. Care should be taken to protect the reputation of the choir in this as in all other cases, and therefore not to correct the tenors in a bass voice or the sopranos in a tenor voice. The correction should always be made in the same octave and register of voice in which the failing part should have sung."

Stamping the feet. This is a very bad habit—unfortunately a very prevalent one. It may be excused occasionally at rehearsal, when, the performers being fully occupied with reading their music, their sense of hearing rather than of sight has to be appealed to for correcting speed of movement or want of force. Vigorously

tapping the desk for each beat or calling out "one, two, three" four," or "louder," "crescendo" &c., as the case may be, is infinitely better, because such actions are not likely to degenerate into habits, while stamping almost inevitably becomes in time quite involuntary.

Reference Letters. In modern scores and parts the capital letters placed over the music at various convenient points in the number are very useful when several editions of the work are used. The directions for starting at a particular place can be readily given, say "No. 6, letter D" &c. Old editions do not contain them: in that case at a rehearsal of band and chorus, if there is no prominent point, like a double bar, change of measure or key, unison passage, or well remembered expression mark, it is the quickest way to go back to the beginning of the number.

Marking chorus parts. Every member of a choral society ought to carry a lead pencil, to note any corrections or special directions of the conductor. When a chorus immediately follows a recitative or aria a place in that number should be marked in the books where the choir is to rise. This will accomplish three things: it will prevent the mind of the conductor wandering from the soloist and band accompaniment; will not disturb the soloist; and will give the choir confidence and precision in attacking their part.

Strengthening the "leads." When a part, say alto or tenor, is rather weak and they have an important "lead" (separate entry) an excusable device for hiding the defect is to borrow a few, or all, of the voices of another part to assist them. If the contralto part in question is of medium or high pitch the sopranos will be called upon; if it is low the tenors will be able to help them. So with a very high passage in the tenor part, the contraltos can render valuable assistance: if a medium or low part the basses must come to the rescue. Example: *Messiah*, No. 25.

C'ALTO. } | :r₁ | s₁ :f₁ | r₁ :r₁ | d₁ :t₂ | l₂ :—| r₁ :—| t₂ :—

And with His stripes we are heal - ed.

TENOR. } | :r | s :f | r :r | d :t₁ | l₁ :—| r :—| t₁ :—

CHAPTER XXIII.



DO CHORAL SOCIETIES PAY ?

The organization and management of a choral society makes great demands upon the time of at least the conductor and secretary. Why is the work undertaken? In the case of the secretary and all other officers it must be pure enthusiasm for music, or respect for the conductor and fellow members that prompts them to come forward in the general interest. With the conductor it is somewhat different. He may be ambitious to shine as a leader of men, his musical impulses may be so strong that he cannot play a subordinate part and must take a position where his energies can find vent; or, having been trained as a musician, he may accept the post as a means of bringing his name and attainments before the public. No doubt the consciousness of work well done and of success achieved is a reward in itself. That is the remuneration received by the secretary. The honorary conductor considers himself paid at the same rate. The professional conductor cannot live on glory alone, and must receive some practical return for the labour expended. In very few cases does this return take the shape of hard cash. The expenses of management and losses on concerts do not leave societies much money with which to reward the services of their conductors. His advantages are the advertisement of his name, the introduction to private pupils through the members, the

development of his powers as composer, conductor, or executant. To a teacher of, say the pianoforte, the change from many hours of that occupation to the rehearsal of part-song, cantata, or oratorio is a welcome relief, a recreation for which he does not look for payment.

To the question do choral societies pay their conductor, the answer must be given, in an immediate financial sense, "no." Most professional conductors of societies could earn more money by teaching classes or pupils than they receive for conducting a choral society. On the other hand few appointments they may obtain will assist them so much to rise in their profession as to be at the head of a choral and orchestral society; and therefore in a larger sense, the answer is, "yes."

Professional musicians must not start choral societies with the idea of getting much money from them. The "time serving" conductor will find himself very soon deserted by the members when they discover that it is not the pure love of music, or even the love of fame that is prompting his enterprise, but that his one motive is to fill his pockets. The only way to stimulate enthusiasm in a choral society is for all the officers to be enthusiastic in their work.

Some unsolicited remarks by professional conductors will bear out the above views:—

"My experience teaches me that if a choral society is to succeed and do really good work, the conductor must be prepared to spare neither time nor trouble—far beyond what he can expect to be remunerated for—in order to secure the result desired. I have found that a conductor determined upon having choral singing as nearly perfect as possible, and who does not spare himself in his work, will not lack enthusiastic assistance from his choir."

"I imagine my 16 years' experience is similar to others—it is uphill work, but fascinating to those like ourselves who are—or have been—real lovers of the work, and willing to make great sacrifices at times."

“I am inclined to doubt the wisdom of the custom that is very general with professional musicians of making their services as conductors honorary. I think a certain fee should be set aside, and calculated as a portion of the indispensable working expenses of the society.”

“Either your conductor or secretary, or both, must be enthusiastic and ready to be at a good deal of trouble for the Society.”

No good work can be accomplished without the self denying labours of those who undertake it. There must be no “looking back,” unless it be to gather encouragement from what has been already accomplished. Failures should be regarded as merely steps on the road to success. Fortunately in this country the love of choral music has impelled thousands of men and women to make sacrifices of time and money, to brave the inclemency of weather, and make light of bodily fatigue so that the priceless creations of the great composers should be studied and presented for hearing by the public. May the desire to combine for the practice of singing spread until every village, town, and district in the kingdom has its training classes and choral societies. The single hope of the author of the preceding pages is that they may assist the workers in that field of musical education.

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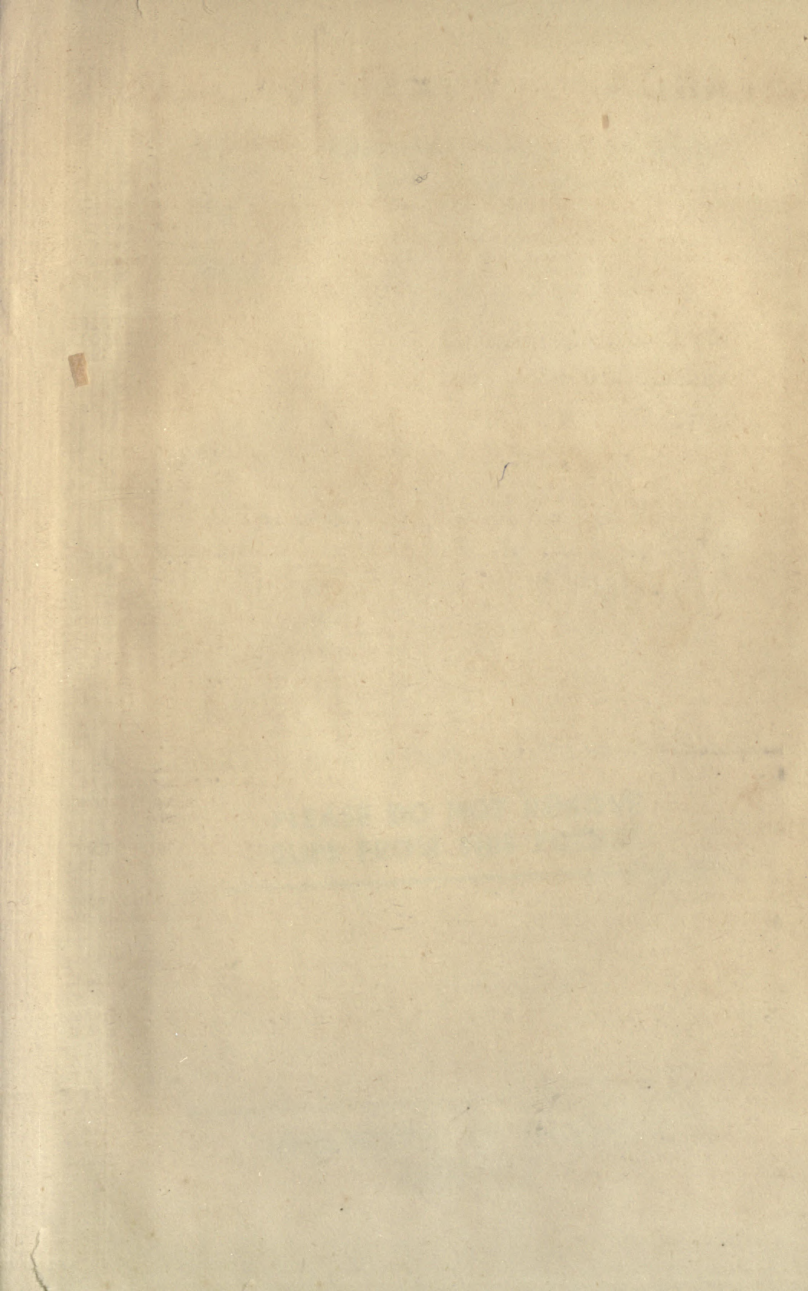
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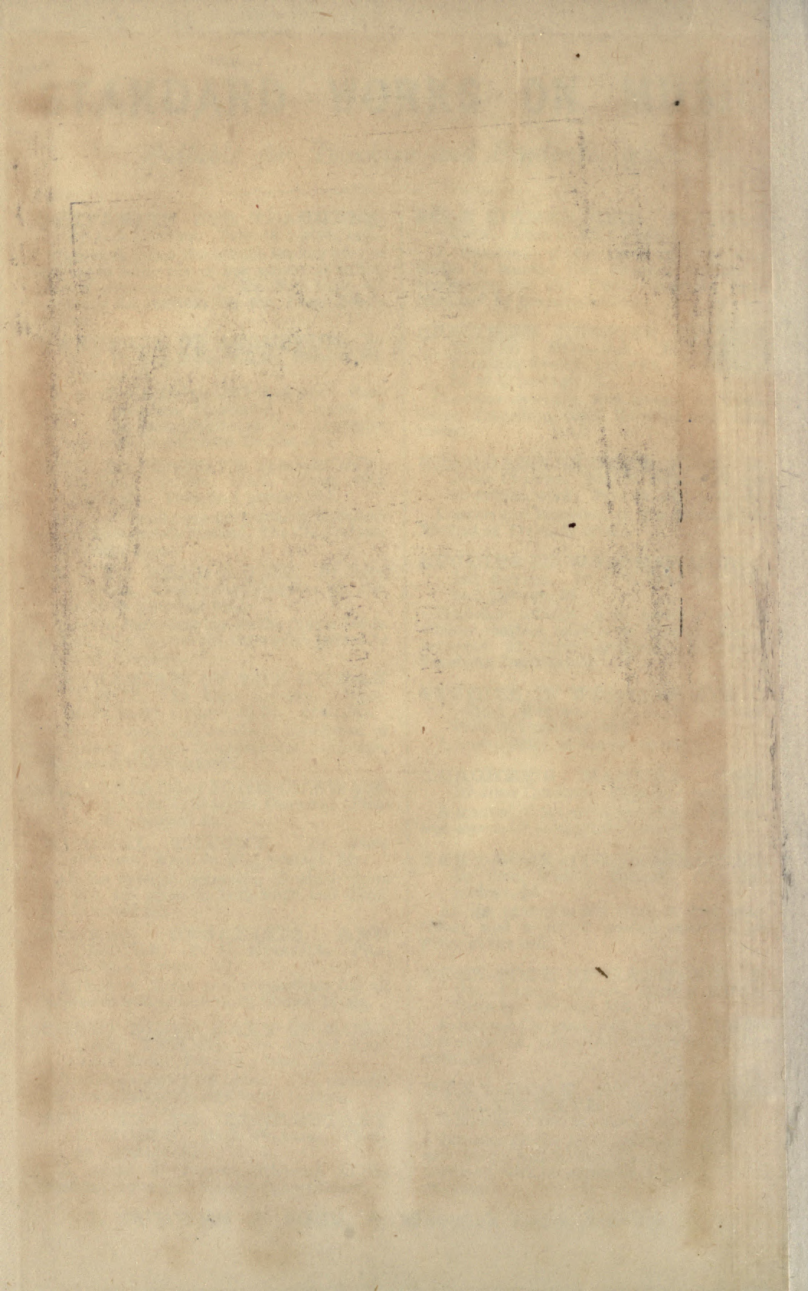
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