



### SIR JULIUS BENEDICT.



WHEN the history of music and musicians has been completed to the end of the present century, the position occupied in its annals by Sir Julius Benedict will be found in many respects without a parallel. To very few musicians eminent in several departments of their profession is it given to celebrate their fiftieth annual concert, nor does a case frequently occur of a composer in his eightieth year conducting an oratorio from his own pen. These circumstances would alone form a sufficient claim to honourable remembrance; but—still keeping aside Sir Julius Benedict's right to be considered as a representative musician of his time—there are other respects in which his career merits more than ordinary distinction. The opportunities which he has enjoyed of holding intercourse with many of the great creators of musical composition are, we should think, unique. Benedict knew Beethoven in 1827, and he had the honour of being not only a pupil, but a friend of both Weber and Hummel. Mendelssohn he numbered among the companions of his youth, and later on, while in Paris, he was on the most

intimate terms with Rossini, Auber, Meyerbeer, Berlioz, Hérold, Halévy, and others distinguished in the musical world. In our own country, during his long and honourable career, now extending over half a century, he has been the friend, and not unfrequently the patron, of most of the eminent musicians of his time, and has gained for himself a position in our midst such as no foreigner has succeeded in attaining since the days of Handel.

Julius Benedict was born at Stuttgart, on the 27th of November, 1804. His father was a banker—a profession to which also Mendelssohn's father was attached. When he was but fourteen years of age, young Benedict had so far anticipated his future career as to play at a public concert, and receive great praise as a pianist. After taking a course of lessons from Hummel, who was at that time the leading German pianist, and a ready writer of all classes of music, Benedict had the good fortune to secure for a teacher one of the leading composers of the day—Carl Maria von Weber. The latter had always refused to take pupils, but was, by the pleading of a friend, induced to alter his resolution in Benedict's favour. From 1821 to 1824 the young student had the benefit of Weber's



exclusive instructions, and was treated by the illustrious musician more as a son than a pupil. Benedict accompanied his master to Berlin, where he first met Mendelssohn, and afterwards to Vienna, where, in 1824, when he was but nineteen years of age, he was appointed, on Weber's recommendation, accompanist and musical director at the Kärntnerthor Theater. In the following year he removed to Naples, where he filled the post of *maestro al piano* at San Carlo. It was while here, in 1827, that he composed his first operatic work, *Giacinta ed Ernesto*, which met with considerable success. Three years later he produced for the same house another work, which did not gain so warm a reception as his first venture, but which was afterwards cordially received by the musical public of his native city.

In 1830 Benedict paid his first visit to Paris, at that time the home of most of the composers who have made the French school of music what it now is. Here Benedict formed the acquaintance of Madame Malibran, the famous singer, and her husband, the distinguished violinist, De Bériot. These eminent artists met him again after he had returned to Naples, and prevailed upon him to give up his position in Italy, and accompany them to London in the capacity of pianist at their concerts. We read in the "Life of Moscheles," that in 1835 "Julius Benedict became a member of the great musical guild in London, and asserted his position at once as an excellent musician and pianoforte player. His long residence in Italy made him peculiarly fitted as an accompanist to the Italian singers, and in Moscheles' house he was heartily welcomed as a distinguished compatriot." From 1835 until the present time we have had Weber's favourite pupil permanently among us.

The late John Mitchell, famous for his musical enterprise in London for many years, introduced *opera buffa* at the Lyceum in 1837, and Benedict was appointed to the direction of the music. In this year he produced a little work which had been originally performed at Naples; and in 1838 *The Gipsy's Warning* was brought out at Drury Lane. The work contains a very dramatic air for the bass voice, "Rage, thou angry storm," which is frequently sung, but the composition as a whole is now almost forgotten. As orchestral conductor at Drury Lane, Benedict had much to do with the first presentation of Balfe's most popular works, including the popular *Bohemian Girl*. At the same theatre he produced, in 1844 and 1846, *The Brides of Venice* and *The Crusaders*. Of the former Moscheles says: "There are fine orchestral effects, and the vocal parts are well treated, and worthy of special commendation"; and of *The Crusaders* we are told that "the music is pleasing, and often dramatically effective." Both these works have been translated, and given with much success in the composer's native country.

In 1850 Benedict accompanied Jenny Lind to the United States, where he acted as conductor and pianist, and shared in the "Swedish Nightingale's" unexampled success in a series of 122 concerts.

When he returned from America, he was engaged as musical conductor at Drury Lane, and afterwards at Her Majesty's. At the latter house, in 1860, an Italian version of Weber's *Oberon* was produced, when Sir Julius Benedict added the recitatives, which were wanting in the English form of the work, and also introduced six additional numbers from *Euryanthe* and elsewhere. These additions were greatly approved, and have since been considered as belonging inseparably to the Italian version of Weber's romantic work. In 1860, too, Benedict's beautiful cantata on the subject of *Undine* was produced at the Norwich Musical Festival; and in the end of the same year the first performance of the work took place in London—a performance which received an additional interest from the fact that on that occasion Clara Novello took her leave of the English public in the part of Undine. In 1862 he brought out the *Lily of Killarney*, on the whole perhaps the most spontaneous, melodious, and, at the same time characteristic work which has proceeded from his pen. After this, with some smaller compositions, came the oratorio of *St. Cecilia*, written for the Norwich Festival of 1866; that of *St. Peter*—his first sacred work—composed for the Birmingham Festival of 1870; and the cantata *Graziella*, written for the same festival of 1882.

Of purely orchestral work Sir Julius Benedict has given us two specimens in the form of the symphony. The first was heard at the Crystal Palace in 1873, and the second in the following year. His latest compositions include an overture and *entr'actes* to *Romeo and Juliet*, written for Mr. Henry Irving in 1882, and a scena, *Mary Stuart*, for the Philharmonic Society in 1883. He has also given us samples of literary work in the form of a loving memoir of Weber, and a short, but delightful, sketch of the life and works of Mendelssohn.

From 1842 to 1878 Benedict held the post of conductor at the Norwich Musical Festivals, and with some few interruptions he has officiated in a similar capacity at the Monday Popular Concerts since they first started, now more than twenty-five years ago. His own annual concert has been looked upon for fifty years as one of the most prominent features of the musical season, and seldom fails to draw a large audience. Sir Julius Benedict received the honour of knighthood in March, 1871, and he has been the recipient of decorations from most of the sovereigns of Europe. But his merits as a friend and a musician have been testified to in a manner more substantial than the bestowing of titles and orders. In 1874, when in his seventieth year, it was determined by his many English friends and admirers to offer him a testimonial "in appreciation of his labours during forty years for the advancement of art, and as a token of their esteem." As an outcome of this resolution, Sir Julius Benedict was presented in the following summer with a costly service of silver, including a magnificent group of candelabra. The presentation was made at Dudley House by the Duke of Edinburgh, before a company of the most eminent musicians and amateurs in London. On the 6th and 7th of June in the present



year Sir Julius celebrated his jubilee by two concerts given in the Royal Albert Hall, at the first of which his oratorio *St. Peter* was performed. Sir Julius Benedict will shortly be the recipient of a money testimonial, which has already reached a large sum, and which has been subscribed to by many distinguished musicians and lovers of the divine art.

Such is a brief outline of the career of one who, as composer, performer, and teacher of music, has now held an exceptionally high position in this country for

over half a century. We have found space to mention only the leading works which have proceeded from his pen. These may be taken as representative specimens of his musical gifts, but they form only a small number of the gems which have been the outcome of his genius. There are few forms of music which he has not cultivated; and though many composers have written more, there are few who have been so successful in so many different styles as Sir Julius Benedict.

JAMES C. HADDEN.

### COMING THROUGH THE WOOD.

I SAW her coming through the wood,  
 My pretty one, my dear ;  
 I said, "An' you will marry me,  
 I'll wait for you a year.  
 And I'll give you a silken gown,  
 And I'll give you a ring,  
 An' you will only marry me  
 I' th' coming of the spring."

My love, she tossed her pretty head  
 As she went on her way,  
 And said, "I'm in a hurry, sir,  
 For it is market day."

She had a basket on her arm,  
 And she began to sing,  
 As she went on into the town  
 To do her marketing.

She stayed to rest as she came back  
 Upon a fallen tree ;  
 She'd bought a ribbon for her hair  
 And put it in for me.  
 And then we sat and wondered what  
 The coming year would bring ;  
 And, oh ! I think she'll marry me  
 I' th' coming of the spring.

REA.



### A SHILLING A DAY AND HIS BOARD

BY THOMAS ARCHER.

A FEW years ago there appeared in a popular journal, conducted by the late Charles Dickens, an amusing description of a journey in a large square caravan, the external walls of which were covered with staring advertisements printed on great bills known as "posters," while the interior was occupied by the proprietor, who represented that he was known as "King of the Bill-stickers." The writer of the description saw this portentous vehicle slowly passing along Cheapside, and frequently blocking or being blocked by the traffic of other vehicles. He gained an introduction—or, rather, introduced himself—to the owner, who sat within in solitary state on a wooden stool, and during their jolting and somewhat prolonged journey through the City, not only participated in certain refreshments which were handed into the

caravan from a tavern on the route, but gave his audience of one some technical information on the interesting subject of the bill-posting business and its recent developments.

Glancing at that lively description to-day, one is almost startled to find what remarkable changes have taken place in the methods of public advertising since it was written.

Bill-posting is now not only a science, but an art, the professors of which have to deal with sheets, several of which are combined to make a bill of stupendous area, proportionate to the vast extent of hoarding on which it is to be displayed.

So large, so strikingly illustrative, and so varied in style and colour are the modern posters, that London thoroughfares, where extensive "improvements" are going on, take the aspect of irregular