

MOMENTS
WITH
MODERN MUSICIANS.

LONDON.

By F. KLICKMANN.

If the music of the year that is past may be taken as a forecast of the year that is before us, 1896 will be a brilliant musical success in England. New names and new

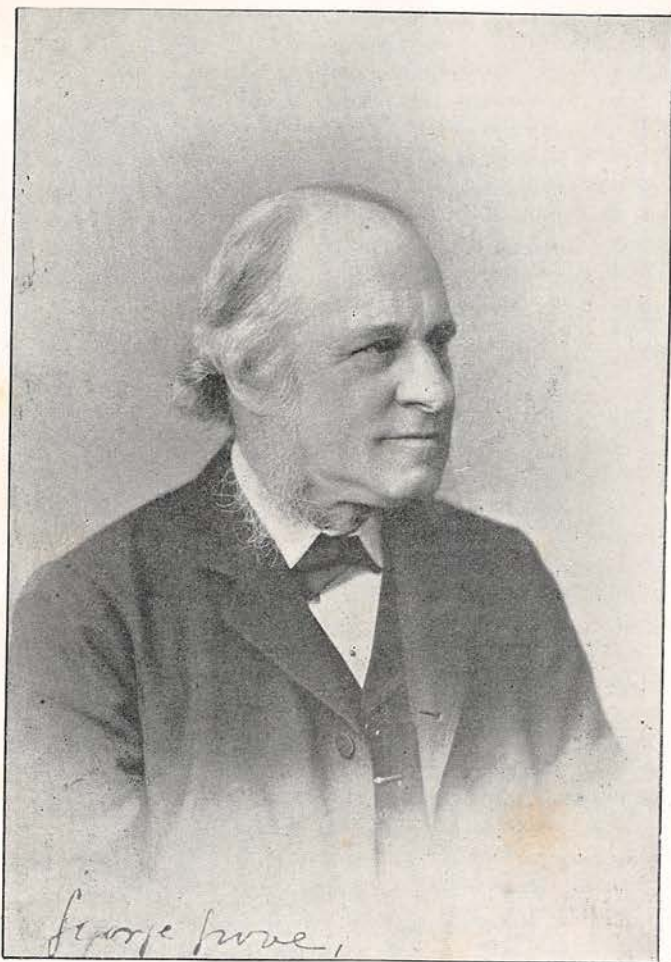
works are whispered, but of these it would be premature to write just yet. It is impossible to gauge beforehand the artistic value of composer or performer. Time enough for that when they have placed their claims before the public.

To the music lover, both amateur and professional, there are perennial joys, however, which year after year are welcomed with only an increase of enthusiasm as time goes on. As a nation, we are always ready to give a hearing to new names, but we never

let them replace the old friends, the musicians who have won our admiration by the sheer force of genius, and by the disinterested way they have worked for the cause of their art.

And it is to these men and women that we naturally look for the greater proportion of the music that will fall to our lot during the coming year.

It is curious that one's thoughts first of all should turn to a man who is neither a composer nor a performer. Yet most certainly Sir George Grove must be the first musician on our list to whom we wish a happy New Year in the very best sense of the word. Sir George has done as much for music as any man living, yet,



From a photo by

SIR GEORGE GROVE.

[Moyall, Brighton.]

strange to tell, he is an amateur, and what is more, music is only a very small item in comparison with the whole of his life work. To the general musical public he was at first merely an initial. G. was a letter found at the end of wonderfully interesting analyses of classical works in the programme books at the Crystal Palace and elsewhere. People began to find that G. was more instructive and entertaining to read than the majority of magazine articles, and there were many ardent musicians who carefully hoarded every scrap he wrote. But Sir George did not confine his labour to programme books. His famous expedition to Vienna, in company with Sir Arthur (then Mr.) Sullivan, and the discovery of the precious Schubert MSS. are now matters of history. He has always worked indefatigably to gain a proper appreciation for Beethoven, Schubert, and Mendelssohn in this country. As

Director of the Royal College of Music Sir George had a wide field for work, and came into touch with all sorts and conditions of hard-working students, whom he helped and encouraged on every possible occasion. His enthusiastic love for music is most contagious, and many students have been aroused by it to work with an earnestness that has been the making of their lives. At the time of writing Sir George is busy upon his work on Beethoven's Symphonies,

which it is expected will be published early in the year.

"At least I think it will be ready about then," Sir George said; "but it is difficult to tell. I always worry over a sentence after it is in type. I keep altering and altering. I am always so very dissatisfied with everything after I have written it." And then he added: "Don't expect too much from the book. It isn't what I would like it to be. I am afraid you will be disappointed." Yet I

do not think we shall be. Sir George Grove has never disappointed us yet.

The name of Sir Arthur Sullivan is a natural sequence to that of Sir George Grove. Two such friends must not be far apart in our pages. The world-famous composer is without a doubt the most popular of all our musicians. He throws himself with remarkable zest and energy into whatever he undertakes to do. At the Leeds Festival his personal

ity in itself works wonders, while his untiring activity surmounts every difficulty that can possibly be imagined. What his work for this year will be it is impossible to say. At present he is engaged upon the Ballet music that is to be produced at the Empire. Also there are rumours of a new Gilbert and Sullivan opera. Possibly by the time this is in our readers' hands one of these works may be an accomplished fact.

"Why doesn't Sir Arthur Sullivan write



from a photo by]

SIR ARTHUR SULLIVAN.

[Prümm.]



From a photo by]

[Negretti & Zambra.

MR. AUGUST MANNS.

another 'Golden Legend'?" a correspondent wrote to us the other day. We have not space to answer our readers' kind queries, as a rule. But I will answer this one here.

We really do not know—we can only echo the question, "Why doesn't he?" Undoubtedly one great obstacle is the difficulty there is in obtaining a suitable libretto. No work, with the exception of the "Messiah," and perhaps "Elijah," is more popular than the "Golden Legend" in this country, and very few works have ever taken such an immediate hold upon the public.

Sir Joseph Barnby was speaking to me quite recently about the popularity of the "Golden Legend" at the Albert Hall. The financial receipts are a very fair index as to the rate of esteem in which a work is held. At a Royal Choral Society concert nothing pays so well as a performance of the "Messiah." This by far and away eclipses all other works, from a monetary point of view, and next to that comes the "Golden Legend"—though even this will fluctuate sometimes, according to who may be the soloists.

After the "Golden Legend," "Faust," and "Elijah," there is a steady fall off in the general monetary appreciation of choral works.

Yet choral singing is our strong point as a nation. Sir Joseph Barnby is more calculated to speak on this subject than perhaps any other musician. He is of the opinion that we are going to do greater things in the future than we have ever done in the past. He also has very high hopes for the future of music in Wales. Welsh choral singing, he maintains, is scarcely second to that in Yorkshire. If the Welsh choirs will only centralise and solidify their efforts, great things may be expected from them.

A South Wales Choral Festival is announced to take place next June. If the committee show as much wisdom in their other arrangements as they have done in their choice of a conductor, success is inevitable. Sir Joseph is already extremely popular in Cardiff, and the greatest satisfaction was expressed on every hand when he once again consented to take charge of the *lâton* at a Welsh musical festival.

Nothing gives one a better idea of the immense strides music has made among the amateurs of to-day than the present condition of affairs at the Guildhall School of Music. There are now just upon four thousand students studying there, and about *seven thousand* lessons in all are given there per



From a photo by]

[Lombardi & Co.

SIR JOSEPH BARNBY.

To a little girl in Forest Hill
with the name of Florence

Florence to the Palace came
Looking at one, Manns by name,
Often wielding a little stick,
Right and Left, now slow, now quick,
Ever since that happy day
Night and Morn did Florence say:
"Could I but have his Autograph,
Evermore my heart would laugh"

Such was the substance of your
I've met your wish, you'll now feel ^{Letter}
better

August Manns
May 2 - 1894

week. When we recollect the high standing of the teachers and the excellence of the instruction given, and also bear in mind that the greater proportion of these students are amateurs, it augurs well for the future of music in England.

Sir Joseph Barnby has not only remodelled the greater part of the working of the Guildhall School of Music since he took the reins of office in his hands, but he has also become something more than merely a nominal Principal to his students. A

Music was dead. The following Sunday in church the congregation rose, and in all solemnity Barnby's *Nunc Dimittis* was sung as the funeral anthem most fitted to the occasion. Next week the report was contradicted. Sir Joseph was on the fair road to recovery, the papers announced, and when Sunday again came round the anthem chosen was Barnby's *Te Deum*. "And we were so glad," added the student, as she related the little episode.

On the whole I have come to the conclusion that conductors, as a race, are kinder to struggling young musicians than any other of the members of the profession. But it may be that I am distinctly prejudiced in this matter by the remembrance of many, many kindnesses perpetrated by that king among conductors, August Manns. For kind-hearted patience and ceaseless work on behalf of rising musicians he has no equal. One often wonders, when watching him conduct a rehearsal and then a long concert afterwards, whether he ever gets tired. A visit to his sanctum in the Crystal Palace only increases one's amazement. Music books and scores all around the room one naturally expects to see, but the piles upon piles of letters waiting to be answered give one a peep through a fresh door into the arena of work in the midst of which the great conductor lives. Pinned up about the walls are innumerable letters making appointments, cards, and all sorts of memoranda, which must be kept ready to hand. There are petitions from singers and pianists begging a hearing, instrumentalists desiring engagements in the band, young and unknown composers with works which they are sure will astonish the universe could they but get them performed. Of

course there are a great number of letters which have to answer themselves in time. It is simply an impossibility for all the requests to be granted; yet it is surprising how many letters Mr. Manns does manage to write, considering all the other work he gets through. The letters he writes to his intimate friends are oftentimes lengthy and unique curiosities. Perhaps one of the most interesting I have seen is one he wrote to his friend and fellow-worker at the Crystal Palace, Mr. Alfred J. Eyre, who was a prisoner indoors owing to illness. This



From a photo by]

[Maclure, Macdonald & Co.

MR. HAMISH MACCUNN.

little story came to my hearing the other day which will give a better idea than anything I could say of the universal affection in which he is held.

A Guildhall student had, after completing her studies, gone out to Texas to a musical appointment. Last year, it will be remembered, Sir Joseph had a severe illness, and at one time the gravest doubt was entertained as to his ultimate recovery. Bad news travels very quickly, especially when it is not true, and in due course report was rife in Texas that the Principal of the Guildhall School of

epistle was written in rhyming couplets of alternated Italian, German, French, and English. Instead of underlining words he placed *sforzando* accents above them. He concluded with the hope that the invalid would soon be well, and then keep so "For ever; FOR EVER; FOR EVER." A large

of the curious letters he sometimes receives, and remarking what odd things people will often write and ask.

"Yet sometimes one gets very interesting ones," said the white-haired musician with a sudden little laugh. "I received one this morning that was very pretty. It was from



From a photo by]

DR. JOACHIM.

[Russell & Sons.

crescendo sign was over these words, and they were respectively marked *mezzo-forte*, *forte*, *fortissimo*.

I was turning over some music books not long ago when I came upon an inscription which I thought far too good to be hidden away for ever in the dark.

On one occasion Mr. Manns was speaking

a little girl, who wrote in a very careful child's hand and said she had been watching me for such a long while, and the only thing she wanted was a little piece of my writing. Now that pleased me more than all the proper speeches that grown-up people make."

"And did you send her your autograph?" I naturally asked.

"Well I wrote her back a letter and—I daresay she will like it. Let me see if I can remember what I said"—and then Mr. Manns sent his hand through his hair and repeated an acrostic on the small girl's name. But he stuck fast half way through, because he couldn't remember how the name was spelt in English.

"I must write it down," he said, "and then I shall recollect how the lines start."

I had my "Messiah" in my hand and opened it at the blank fly-leaf and put it on the piano before him.

"I am afraid I shall spoil your book," he said hesitatingly.

But I thought otherwise, and in a few minutes my copy was returned to me with the queer little acrostic written inside, of which we give a reproduction. I quote this as an instance of Mr. Manns' kindness to children, and not as an example of fine poetry; personally I consider that there are several men who stand nearer the laureateship than does Mr. Manns. His accent is, happily, incurable; yet his English is, as a rule, excellent in composition. His conversation however is in animated, humorous, half-English, half-German little sentences that are far more delightful to those who listen to them than if he spoke our native



From a photo by]

SEÑOR SARASATE.

[Elliott & Fry.



MISS GABRIELLE WIETROWETZ.

tongue in the most perfectly grammatical manner.

In modern times there is a ceaseless

striving to penetrate behind the scenes into the lives of the great, and to some extent this is to be deplored. Idle curiosity is never a sign of a large mind. Yet, on the other hand, it is undoubtedly interesting to know that the men and women who by voice or hand can sway thousands at will are distinctly as human as oneself. I remember a small and very passing incident that seemed to show the celebrated conductor in quite a fresh light to the one in which we are accustomed to see him.

"We had a letter from Mr. Manns this morning," said a friend whom I chanced to be visiting, "reminding us that we owe him a long-promised visit. And he finished up by saying, 'Mind you bring the boy with you, because I want to take him to see the performing elephants.'"

Mr. Hamish MacCunn, the clever Scotch composer, is an especial favourite with Mr. Manns. I do not know a more interesting musical picture than when the veteran conductor brings the young musician on to the platform to conduct one of his own works at a rehearsal, introducing him as "my son."

Mr. MacCunn has made Scotch music peculiarly his own. Everything he writes is

thoroughly permeated with the spirit of the "land of brown heath and shaggy wood." As he is only now twenty-seven years old, it may safely be assumed that his greatest work is yet to come.

February is not far off, and to the music lover February in London means Joachim at the Popular Concerts. Dr. Joachim—as British musicians, remembering Cambridge University's Doctor of Music degree, call Herr Joseph Joachim—is the greatest living

young and unknown pianist to play at a social gathering where his own violin was silent in order not to detract from the success of the younger man.

In addition to Dr. Joachim being our finest violinist, he is a composer of high merit. The "Hungarian Concerto" is not the only work by which his fame will be maintained for many a day. A "Joachim night," especially that on which he annually makes his *rentrée*, is an event long to be

remembered. Even the most fashionable occupants of the stalls then manage to reach St. James's Hall punctually; the orchestra and balcony have been filled for an hour with hundreds of excited lovers of music. Eight o'clock sounds from the neighbouring church in Piccadilly; the music has been placed on the brass stands, and eagerly all eyes turn to the platform. With a diffident hesitation at last Joachim leads the way up from the artists' room, while enthusiastic applause greets him. But he will not take more than that fourth share of it which belongs to each member of the quartet till his talented colleagues insist on his recognising the personal tribute involved in the prolonged cheers. Then he bows right and left, and to the loyal orchestra full of connoisseurs. Quickly he gets to work, and in a moment there is that inspired look on

his kindly face which shows his heart is in the sublime music he knows and interprets so perfectly.

It is always peculiarly gratifying to see the traditions of a great master handed on to his pupil. The majority of celebrated musicians have pupils—or at any rate those who claim to be their pupils—but only a small percentage are the credit to them that Gabrielle Wietrowetz is to her teacher Dr. Joachim.



From a photo by]

LADY HALLÉ.

[A. Bassano.

violinist in the realm of classical music. It would be difficult, in tracing his career, to deal with any part of his life when he did not play, for Joachim was a child prodigy. For fifty years he has returned as regularly as the swallow to England, and ever since the Monday Popular Concerts began at St. James's Hall he has been a favourite performer. The real greatness of the famous Hungarian is only equalled by his modesty. I heard of him the other day inducing a



From a photo by]

MISS FANNY DAVIES.

[Elliott & Fry.

At first it seemed a daring innovation when the quiet-faced girl, who was, on the whole, but little known in England, took the seat that had hitherto seemed to be the exclusive property of Lady Hallé and Dr. Joachim, and led the quartets at the Popular Concerts. But Miss Wietrowetz soon proved herself to be a musician of exceptional calibre, and without a doubt is second only to Lady Hallé among women violinists.

Of an entirely different school, yet of immense genius and popularity, is the Spanish violinist Señor Sarasate. Ever since the days when one said "I am of Paul, and another I am of Apollos," there have been opportunities for public feeling to divide and range itself on opposite sides. And musical London to-day is very much the same as Corinth of old. Although it would take a critic of exceptional nerve to declare that Joachim is *not* the greatest violinist living, yet there are some who look pityingly at you if you express any strong opinions concerning the great Hungarian, and say that they "prefer Sarasate." In reality it seems most unnecessary that there should be any such comparison made at all; each man is great, and in his own province reigns supreme. The nationality and temperament of the two men are so entirely

unlike that it is only natural that their interpretation of so subtle an art as music should be stamped with widely different characteristics.

Whatever may be Señor Sarasate's exact position in the world of violinists he allows no one to excel him in the graceful art of chivalrous courtesy. Spaniards are celebrated the world over for their gallantry, and a pretty story is told of Señor Sarasate that will well bear repetition.

On one occasion he arrived at St. James's Hall in company with Madame Bertha Marx and Mr. Goldschmidt, and on alighting from the carriage found that it was not quite close to the kerb. Without a moment's thought he placed a piece of music on the ground in order that the lady might not soil her slippers when he handed her out of the carriage! One would almost imagine that he must have heard of Sir Walter Raleigh.

We have only space to give a portrait of one other violinist this month, and that of course must be Lady Hallé. It is forty-seven years ago since little Wilhelmine Neruda (aged nine years) was first heard in London, when she played a De Beriot concerto at a Philharmonic concert. But even that was



From a photo by]

MR. LEONARD BORWICK.

[Elliott & Fry.

not her *début*. In Vienna, at the mature age of six, she made her first appearance in public, and since then she has had a career of scarcely paralleled success to the present day, when the world at large not only vie one with another to do her honour, but endeavour to show in every possible manner the greatest sympathy for her in her recent bereavement.

So many names crowd to one's pen when thinking of the men and women who "make the life of London musical," and it is possible to touch on so very few this month. Yet Miss Fanny Davies must be included. At the time I write she is in Austria, giving recitals, though we hope to have her among us again early in the year. To see Miss Davies on the concert-room platform is, to my mind, to see her at the worst possible advantage—apart from her playing, of course. When speaking, and at all animated, her face has a charm that is lost when one looks at her from a distance. In her own home, among her pictures and her flowers, and the thousand and one mementoes that have been given her by loving friends and the great ones of the earth, one forgets that she is the chief among English pianists in admiration for her charming womanliness and her unaffected naïveté. There is a scene that frequently comes to my mind in connection with Miss Davies. She had been giving a lesson to a small child whose feet could not reach the pedal, though she played a Bach fugue from memory in brave style.

"That was capitally played," said Miss Davies as she stroked the child's hair. "Let

me see. What did I promise you if you played it from memory without one slip?"

"Some sugar almonds and a Mozart concerto," replied the little maiden, with a bright look in her pretty dark eyes.

"Ah! so I did." Then the sugar delicacies were produced, along with a Mozart concerto, and it seemed difficult to tell which gave the child the greatest pleasure.

Another pianist of whom we may especially be proud is Mr. Leonard Borwick, for is he not a Londoner? Born at Walthamstow,

he had as a youth the great advantage of musical tuition from Madame Schumann for some years, and has absorbed her enthusiasm and many of the characteristics of her beautiful style. Mr. Borwick belongs to the "natural" school of pianists. He aims not at individualising his interpretation of music so much as to render the composer's intention. He has a keen sense of the fitness of things, and looked quite shocked when an unthinking audience tried to encore Chopin's "Marche Funèbre," played as a tribute to the late Sir Charles Hallé. One of



MADAME ALBANI.

the most appreciative of his listeners in St. James's Hall is Mr. Borwick's father, who may well be proud of his son's genius. The combination of Leonard Borwick and Plunket Greene has been very popular, and their joint recitals drew crowds last season. By this time Mr. Plunket Greene will probably be singing in New York, and we must wait awhile for his return.

After all, it will doubtless be agreed that, among musicians, it is the vocalist who gives the greatest pleasure to the greatest number;



From a photo by]

[Elliott & Fry.

MR. EDWARD LLOYD.

and for an all-round favourite one may safely place Madame Albani the first on our list. The absolute beauty of her voice is simply wonderful, and when to this is added her musicianliness and her delightful personality, it is scarcely remarkable that she has the world at her feet. On the platform her every act is so peculiarly graceful, from her happy smile when she first appears to the considerate way in which she invariably insists on someone else sharing the storm of applause with her. If one of the gentlemen of the orchestra has played any special *obbligato* to her solo she straightway brings the blushing individual to the front and appears to be trying to persuade the public that she herself has occupied but a very subordinate part in the performance. Failing this, however, she never omits to acknowledge her appreciation of the conductor's merits, and shakes hands with him cordially.

"But all this is not *music*," someone may protest. Perhaps not; but such thoughtfulnesses are among the pleasant things of life, and though they may cost but little, give a large

amount of happiness to others, and the public is not slow to recognise this.

Next to Madame Albani in popular esteem must be named Mr. Edward Lloyd. There is something essentially English about the great tenor that appeals to the Britisher at the very outset. He makes no attempt to cultivate a foreign growth of hair, or any of the other little weaknesses in regard to personal appearance to which even the masculine nature is occasionally prone. His reliability is another of his many virtues. It may always be taken for granted that when his name is announced he will not only appear, but will also sing well. It is most unusual for Mr. Lloyd to be in anything but first-rate voice, and still more unusual for him to disappoint an audience. His excellent health may perhaps be attributed to the fact that he makes a point of never overtaxing his strength. His ordinary mode of life is quiet and surprisingly free from excitement, and among his hobbies he includes the cultivation of roses. Mr. Lloyd is held in especial regard among the members of his own profession, and he has on more than one occasion acted as a mediator.



From a photo by]

[Russell & Sons.

MR. BEN DAVIES.

However a musician may speak disparagingly of a variety of others of his craft he will invariably extol Mr. Lloyd, and thus it is in his private as well as his public life that many well-deserved laurels fall to his share.

Mr. Lloyd has paid two visits to the United States, singing on each occasion with marked effect. Even the enterprising interviewer on American newspapers failed to find any fault in him save the reticence which prevented Mr. Lloyd from answering all his queries. At Cincinnati Festival our great tenor had a

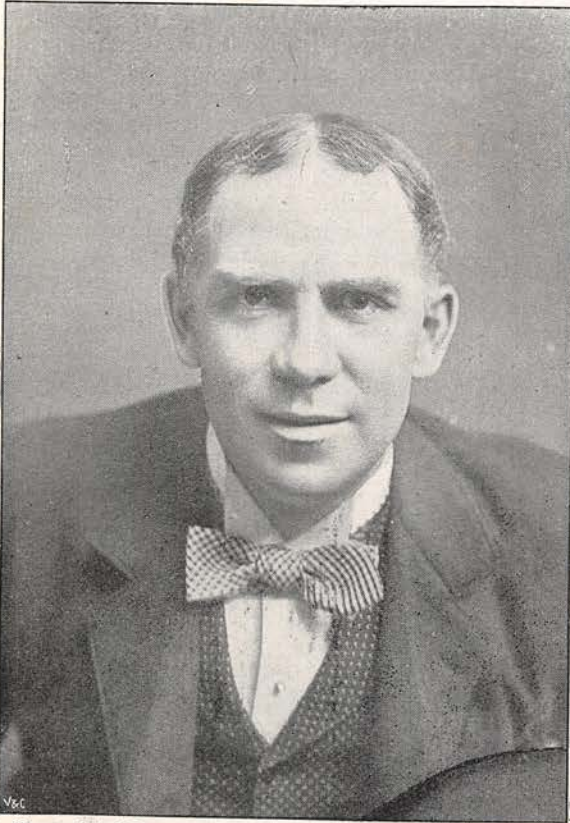
under Signor Fiori, after which he joined the Carl Rosa Company. Since he has turned his attention to other besides operatic work he has been an immense acquisition to the concert room platform.

Mr. Davies has been fortunate enough to attract in a special degree the favour of the Queen, who has presented him with a beautiful watch as well as with other marks of her Majesty's appreciation of his singing. Mrs. Davies (*née* Miss Perry) is also an accomplished singer, and occasionally has been induced to appear at charity concerts with her distinguished husband. Not long ago the two rendered Mendelssohn's duet, "My Song shall be alway of Thy Mercy," to the delight of a crowded audience which assembled in Westminster Town Hall at a concert on behalf of the poor of the neighbourhood. Mr. Davies has lately won new successes by a tour through Germany, where he was well received by the most critical nation (musically speaking) in Europe.

Madame Belle Cole, who for the last seven years has been as popular a singer in this country as she had previously been in the United States, made her London *début* at a promenade concert in the Crystal Palace. She is, like Madame Antoinette Sterling, a native of the State of New York, and longed to be a singer from the days of her childhood. Success came, and with it fatigue, which led to her spending a long holiday in England. Sir Joseph Barnby heard her sing in a drawing-room and told her that such a voice ought to be used in the Albert Hall. After a little while she had the opportunity, being engaged for six concerts of the Royal Choral Society, for whom she has often since sung. Madame Belle Cole has made a great reputation as a singer of ballads, but she is also very fond of

operatic selections. "The public won't let me touch half my *repertoire*," she said not long ago; "they will keep on wanting 'Douglas Gordon' and such like favourites." In 1891 she realised what she described as "the dream of my life" in singing at the Handel Festival, and how well she acquitted herself is well known. Madame Belle Cole is kindness itself; she has a keen sense of humour, and has made friends all over the United Kingdom.

We have only space for two more portraits.



From a photo by]

MR. DAVID BISPHAM.

[Russell & Sons.

splendid reception, and American critics admitted that he was unrivalled as an exponent of oratorios such as the "Messiah" and "Elijah." Dr. Richter is one of Mr. Lloyd's warmest admirers, and on his recent provincial tour the vocal part of each programme was sustained by the popular tenor.

Mr. Ben Davies is another invaluable English—or rather I should say *Welsh*—tenor. His early years were spent in the village of Pontardewe, near Swansea. He eventually studied at the Royal Academy of Music,



From a photo by] [Warneuke.
MR. ANDREW BLACK.

Mr. David Bispham, who comes of a New England Quaker family, is well known to all the *habitués* of Wagner opera, and is frequently heard in our concert rooms. His voice is a magnificent one, and it is considerably enhanced by his strong dramatic instinct and excellent taste. Last season he was in great request for ballad concerts and oratorios, as well as for operatic performances. The fact that he has been so quickly appreciated speaks well for the growth of discrimination among the musical public. It would not be surprising if Mr. Bispham appeared some day at Bayreuth; at all events his voice and style would commend themselves to continental critics.

It is just possible that Mr. Andrew Black may leave England during the present year for an extensive tour in South Africa and America, in which case we shall be deprived of one of our finest baritones. Mr. Black has already been on one very successful tour in America, where he sang in opera. Since his return to England he has left the stage (and has refused several tempting offers to return to it), and made a marked success in oratorio, and also as an exponent of Wagner.

He is of the opinion that it is next to impossible for a vocalist to do justice at the same time to both the opera and concert work for any considerable period; and after experi-

menting on both he has decided to devote all his energies to concert work.

He is engaged to sing in the "Creation" on March 7 at the Crystal Palace, which secures him in England for at least the early part of the year. It may not be generally known that, in addition to being an accomplished organist and a singer of advancing fame, Mr. Black is an artist of considerable ability. Portrait-painting is one of his great recreations. One of his best friends was the late John Pettie, R.A. (whose daughter is now Mrs. Hamish MacCunn). The great artist exerted a considerable influence over Mr. Black, and urged him to work more seriously at art, and not merely to follow it as a pastime. Mr. Black found however that he had not the time to follow two professions, and ultimately painting was relegated to a secondary place in his life work.

No mention of Mr. Andrew Black could be complete without an allusion to the lady who shares his name, and so devotedly enters into all his work. Mrs. Black is an accomplished pianist, and one of the most beautiful women in musical London.



From a photo by]

MADAME BELLE COLE.

[Russell & Sons.



MOMENTS
WITH
MODERN MUSICIANS.

II.—MUSICAL PITCH IN ENGLAND.

BY F. KLICKMANN.

THE subject which at present arrests most emphatically the attention of the English musical world is the much disputed question of our musical pitch. Broadly speaking, matters stand in this wise: the standard pitch adopted in our country is, on an average, a semi-tone higher than that of every other country, and thus in England vocalists are practically forced to sing everything a semi-tone higher than written.

Naturally this state of affairs is particularly trying to the foreign soloist who visits our hospitable shores for the first time, and, after having been accustomed to what is known as the "normal" or suddenly finds that "things are not what they seem"; and a semi-tone more or less makes a great deal of difference at the top of one's voice, and especially in a heavy work.

But this is not the worst part of the situation. Foreigners at least have the option of remaining away if they choose to do so. The most disastrous results of our system are felt by our own native singers, who are year by year straining their voices to their utmost limit in the endeavour to sing music that was never intended to be sung at such a pitch, and as the inevitable



From a photo by

[The London Stereoscopic Company.]

MADAME ALBANI GYE.



From a photo by]

[The London Stereoscopic Co.

MISS CLARA BUTT.

outcome very few voices ever survive the ordeal.

"But why are things allowed to remain in this condition?" the general reader may inquire.

Actually because it will cost a little money to rectify them. While our organs and the instruments in our military bands are tuned to the high pitch everything else appears to be obliged to follow suit, though there is no real occasion for this to be so. In any case the matter could be completely settled by the purchase of fresh instruments for the military bands if the Government would but give it serious consideration. The Government has had other matters to settle lately however.

Individual musicians have already done much. Sir Alexander Mackenzie and the Philharmonic Society (in addition to other important concerts) have adopted the lower pitch; Dr. Hubert Parry is in favour of its being used at the Royal College; the Opera also has given way to the inevitable. Yet

despite the action of such influential musical bodies our pitch, nationally, remains high.

This subject being so conspicuously in the foreground just now, it is not to be wondered at that the moments I spent with "modern musicians" this month were almost entirely monopolised by it.

Madame Adelina Patti was in the midst of New-Year festivities at Craig-y-Nos Castle, her lovely home at Ystradgynlais, in South Wales, and was on the eve of a visit to Paris when I brought the subject forward. I wanted to know which pitch she herself preferred. One would almost conclude that it would not make the slightest difference to a voice such as hers. But she was very decided indeed, and without a moment's hesitation said—

"Most certainly I find the French pitch in every way the better of the two. In the first place it puts so much less strain on the voice, and, in addition to that, I consider it much more pleasant to the ear." This last statement is directly opposite to the one advanced by many of our musicians, who maintain that the higher pitch is by far the more brilliant to listen to, though they agree that it is detrimental to the human voice.

A *prima donna* can often effect changes



(From a photo by Johnstone, O'Shannessy & Co., Melbourne.

MR. FREDERIC H. COWEN.

where the voice of a lesser light might plead in vain, and I believe it was in consequence of the attitude taken by Madame Patti that the pitch was originally lowered at the opera. A great singer can afford to make a definite stand and refuse to sing to our high pitch, but it is a different matter for the vocalists who have yet their way to make. As far back as 1868 Mr. Sims Reeves pronounced strongly in favour of the general use of the "diapason normal." Later on, in 1877, he declined to sing in the Handel festival, "because," he says, "the performances were, as usual, conducted by Sir Michael Costa, who insisted on maintaining the abnormally high pitch to which I had so often expressed objection, and to which I had finally resolved not to conform."

The Handel Festival in 1877 was celebrated as being the first occasion upon which M^dlle. Albani was heard in sacred music. This lady (who has since become Mrs. Gye) has

now no equal among soprano singers in the domain of oratorio music.

If Madame Albani looks attractive on the platform, she looks doubly so in her own home. One is so accustomed to see her with a background of orchestra and the general paraphernalia of the concert room, that it is a delightfully fresh picture to watch her, in the broad light of day, moving gracefully about among the dainty furniture, palms, and flowers in her boudoir, or writing at her *escritoire*. Her bright face and her

cordial manner are enough to conjure up sunshine on the dullest winter day; and it was a particularly dismal afternoon out of doors when I sat beside a large fire talking to her about singers in general and musical pitch in particular.

"Now do you want me to tell you which pitch I think is best for the majority of singers, or which I consider the best for myself?" she asked in her pretty English, that is tinged with a foreign accent.

"Tell me which pitch you yourself prefer. I want to know how the matter affects you personally."

"For myself I do not think it really matters. Best of all I like that used at the opera; it is neither low nor high, but just in between. But one has to get used to all kinds of pitch"—this with a shrug of the shoulders and a wave of the hand. "In Berlin one pitch, in Vienna another, in London yet another, and in New York still different. I make it a rule to practise scales

for about an hour early in the day in whatever pitch I shall have to sing in later on. Then I find no difficulty. I always have my piano tuned one-eighth of a tone lower than the highest pitch. This I find suits me best of all. Yet I think it *sounds* better when I sing quite high.

"I know some singers have such an accurate sense of pitch that they feel they are singing the wrong notes if they sing in the normal diapason. But that is not so with me. When once I have the A given



From a photo by]

MR. DAVID BISPHAM IN HIS STUDY.

[Elliott & Fry.

me by the orchestra I am all right, and the particular pitch that is being used does not trouble me.



From a photo by]

[Barrauds.

DR. C. VILLIERS STANFORD.

"But," she added quickly, "do not let me talk entirely about myself. I think that cannot be interesting. There are other singers who are most anxious to have the French pitch in general use. Miss Macintyre, for instance, strongly advocates it, I know."

I brought Madame Albani back to herself again, however, and she told how busy she was preparing for her visit to America, for which continent she hoped to start about the middle of January.

"And sometimes my head gets almost bewildered," she said laughingly. "There are so many things to think out and arrange when one travels about so much.

"I do hope I have not been talking any nonsense this afternoon," she added as a kind of postscript, after I had said good-bye, and was going downstairs. I turned round to have my last look at her—I should not see her again before she left England. She was leaning on the carved balustrade at the top of the stairs, with the happiest and kindest smile imaginable; and—I wished that I had been a photographer.

Both the opinions given so far have been

from sopranos. I was curious to know how the deep voice of Miss Clara Butt was affected by our present pitch.

"On the whole I think I prefer the French pitch," she said. "It enables me to sing songs that are rather high for a contralto, such as 'A Summer Night,' by Goring Thomas. Yet the difference is so trifling that I am quite willing to throw in my lot with the majority, and would advocate the greatest good for the greatest number."

And then we drifted into another subject, and I asked Miss Butt if she found that constant travelling had any ill effect upon her voice.

"At first I used to think it was bad for one's singing; one's nerves naturally get a little shaken by the continuous motion, in whatever form it may be. But there are compensations which I am inclined to think more than counterbalance this. When I am travelling I never talk, consequently a day's journey by train means a day's complete rest for my voice. Whereas at other times there are so many people to be seen that one is practically talking the whole day long. Latterly I have come to regard a journey as a recreation, provided one can take proper rest at night.

"What I find tries one more than anything else is the continual strain of concert work combined with the late hours it involves. But, as you know, I am going to Paris in April for a year, and shall then take a complete rest, merely studying, and not appearing in public at all. After that I expect you will find me eloquent on the subject of French pitch. At present I must own to being impartial."

Mr. Frederic H. Cowen needs no introduction. The readers of the WINDSOR MAGAZINE were fortunate enough to have a "Christmas Carol" written by the popular composer for their especial benefit, and although we have forgotten Christmas by now, the Carol is still ringing in our ears. The study in which it was written is not by any means the largest room in Amity House, St. John's Wood, but it is decidedly the most interesting room to the musical enthusiast. Professional and amateur alike will find within its four walls material to entertain them for hours together. For my own part I have sometimes wished that the owner would keep me waiting for say a quarter of an hour, in order that I might have time to still more thoroughly inspect the musical curiosities from all parts of the world, the hundreds of inviting books ("first editions" are a special hobby with Mr. Cowen) and the unique collection of photos

of musicians past and present. But the composer is the essence of courtesy, and never keeps one waiting a minute, hence I have not yet exhausted the treasures of that room.

To-day we have only a "moment" at our disposal, and so we plunge at once into the subject on the *tapis*.

"I confess that as regards brilliancy and general effect in the orchestra and solo instruments I prefer the high pitch," Mr. Cowen remarked. "But the great inconvenience is to the singer, who, coming from the Continent, where the low pitch is in general use, naturally finds our pitch a great strain on the voice. Also, many choral works, such as Beethoven's Mass in D, become comparatively easy with the low pitch (for which they were originally written), while they are all but impossible of effective execution with the high.

"There is much to be said in favour of both; but as it is certainly very inconvenient to have two pitches, one for orchestral concerts only, and the other for vocal or choral concerts, it is better to sacrifice the brilliancy of tone for the sake of the other advantages to be gained."

I note in passing that Mr. Cowen's new work, "The Transfiguration," is to be performed at the Crystal Palace on March 28.

Another of our most prominent conductors, Dr. Villiers Stanford, has also very kindly given me his views for publication in this article. I spoke to him just before he left England for Berlin, where he subsequently gave a concert of English music, which proved a tremendous success. He expressed himself very emphatically, and straight to the point.

"I am wholly and uncompromisingly in favour of the low pitch, both for the sake of preserving singing in this country and for allowing the works of the great masters to be heard as they were intended to be played."

Mr. Plunket Greene—than whom we have not a more artistic singer in England—also holds pronounced opinions on this subject.

"Personally I am only too glad to add my quota to the general appeal for a lower pitch in this country," he said. "I hold very strong views on that point, and my reasons for them are legion. In the first place our present system is simply ruining the majority of English singers, while true bass and contralto voices are fast disappearing, all merging into either baritone or mezzo-

soprano. The cause of this is clear. Owing to our abnormal pitch, basses and contraltos must force their voices in order to be able to sing the upper notes in their solos, and this can only be done at the sacrifice of the lower notes, the consequence is that we have scarcely any good bass or contralto soloists coming on now. Every student studies oratorio singing—that being pre-eminently what we have most to do with—and when the bass solo has frequently the high F the voice must be forced up to reach it.

"Take 'Elijah' for example. In England it requires a baritone to sing the music allotted to the prophet, though it stands to reason that 'Elijah' should be a bass; one's



From a photo by]

[Alfred Ellis.

MR. PLUNKET GREENE.

whole artistic idea of the part insists on that. On the Continent this is the case; but here it takes a baritone to adequately render the music. Standigl, the singer Mendelssohn chose for the first performance, was a tremendous bass.

"Then again it goes without saying that the strain on the high voices is immense. It is only a tenor of the exceptional calibre of Mr. Edward Lloyd who can stand a continuous course of it. Let anybody look at the tenor music of the Bach Passion, for instance.

"Another most deplorable outcome of our

high pitch is the fact that, owing to the wrong training voices are compelled to undergo, they are rapidly losing all 'colour'—all individuality or distinctiveness in timbre. This is a tremendous loss, as 'colour' is the greatest charm in a voice."

"Do you think that the lower pitch would in any way detract from the brilliancy of the orchestra?"

"By no means. If the string instrumentalists, for instance, use proper strings of a lower pitch make, instead of merely lowering those in present use, and get their sound-posts readjusted (at a cost of about 2s. 6d.), the result should be every whit as brilliant. This point however comes less in the province of the singer than in that of the composer and conductor. Yet there was a curious experiment made in America which, being apropos of the subject, might interest you:—

"Theodore Thomas, who, as you will know, is the greatest musical authority in America, told me that on one occasion, when he was rehearsing Beethoven's Choral Symphony, he was so utterly dissatisfied with the general effect of the vocal portions that he stopped the rehearsal and told the band to go through the work again, *playing everything a tone lower*. Being first-rate musicians they did this without a moment's hesitation. The result was such an immense improvement that Mr. Thomas had the last movement of the symphony re-copied, and has adhered to this rendering ever since. I myself heard it played in this manner at a Cincinnati festival and never enjoyed it so much in my life; and it was actually a tone and a half lower, according to our English pitch, because America uses the French pitch. If such a man as Theodore Thomas (who is a stern purist so far as things musical are concerned) considers it an improvement to play a work a tone and a half lower, it is surely safe to say that it would not lose in brilliancy by being lowered a semitone. I believe Sir Charles Hallé performed it half a tone lower, and actually wrote out all the band parts himself on the way to or from Australia.

"I think it is most trying to listen to a performance of the Choral Symphony in this country. One feels an actual pain in sympathy with the voices that are being

strained to the last degree over the high passages."

"Do you yourself usually practice to a high or a French pitch instrument?"

"I always use a French pitch piano; and also when Mr. Leonard Borwick and I are giving our recitals we always have a French pitch piano in use. All the great pianoforte makers prefer this lower pitch. As a rule it is an inferior piano that is strung up in order to give it temporarily as much brilliancy as possible. A good instrument does not need this."

"You think the lower pitch will ultimately be accepted here?"

"I have not the slightest doubt but that it will. It is merely a question of money; and I believe, if the matter could be set fairly afoot, musicians themselves would subscribe a good deal towards defraying some of the cost. Of course organs are a great obstacle; they are in such requisition in an oratorio-loving country, and it is an expensive matter to have them altered. Yet I am hopeful."

We have only space to give the opinion of one more musician, Mr. David Bispham, and he is entirely at one with those who would consign our present high pitch into oblivion. When I called upon him he was busy making arrangements for a tour in America in 1897.

"I think we ought not to be behind other countries," he suggested. "We are using an artificial pitch, not a natural one. Personally, I find it extremely difficult to sing to. It is a curious thing that it is a much greater effort to me to sing E in the high pitch than it is to sing F in a low one. I know that many people would maintain that they are nearly one and the same sound, but to me they are quite distinct. I also think that the final decision as to which pitch becomes national should be left to vocalists, seeing that their voices are injured so much more easily than instruments.

"There are a small proportion of people who have a keen sense of actual pitch, but these are in the minority; and after all it is but a matter of training. Had they heard nothing but low-pitched instruments all their lives, that would be the correct pitch to them. I feel convinced the time is soon coming when the 'normal diapason' will be used here," Mr. Bispham said cheerfully.



From a photo by]

MADAME ADELINA PATTI,

[H. S. Mendelssohn,

MOMENTS

WITH

MODERN MUSICIANS.

III.—A CHAT WITH MISS MACINTYRE.

BY ARCHIBALD CROWWELL.



HE Albert Hall is apparently a magnet to singers as well as to audiences, for near it you find the residences of many famous vocalists. Madame Christine Nilsson, now the Countess de Miranda, used to live in its immediate neighbourhood; Madame Albani's house is only a few minutes' walk from the hall where she so often sings; and it was not far from it that I found Miss Margaret Macintyre's home on a recent sunny afternoon.

Since I interviewed the young prima donna one foggy morning five years ago, after she had been the heroine of *Ivanhoe* at the National Opera House, "a good many things have happened." The promise which Miss Macintyre then gave of becoming a great singer has been fulfilled, and she has had the unique honour of being the first British prima donna at La Scala, Milan.

There was plenty of singing throughout our chat, though the music was provided, not by Miss Macintyre, but by a large orchestra of birds brought from South Africa as one of the many mementoes of her visit, and their lovely notes were a fit accompaniment to the voice of Miss Macintyre as she told me of her holiday tour in the Dark Continent.

"I had been feeling very tired with my work at La Scala, Milan, and so it was a very welcome change for me to go to the Cape. And besides, my mother and I wanted to see my two brothers who have been living there some time. No, they fortunately were not in the least affected by the political disturbances in January; they have nothing to do with the Government. I liked Africa very much indeed. We travelled a good deal about, for there was no original idea of my

singing much. But after being engaged for four concerts, the audiences were so large that ultimately I sang in opera eighteen times in one town alone. The Scotch folks everywhere were so kind; they came to the railway station to meet me, and there was always a deputation with an address of welcome, and they seemed as if they could not do too much to make me happy. I was never so proud of being Scotch as when they treated me so well in Africa. For encores I nearly always gave a Scotch ballad, or 'Home, Sweet Home,' and that used to please them immensely."

"Did you see President Kruger?"

"Yes, and I have just received this admirable portrait of himself and his wife, with his autograph. He is a very quiet, long-headed man; he does not care for music, I think. He and Mrs. Kruger live very simply; but there is no doubt as to his immense power."

"And did you have many gold-diggers in your audiences, Miss Macintyre?"

"Oh yes, but no thrilling incidents of men leaping on the platform, such as you read happen in California. They were appreciative, and more critical than I expected. The people in the stalls were, of course, acquainted with good music in Berlin, Paris, or London, so it was not surprising that they preferred opera to a general concert. Mr. Santley and Signor Foli have visited many of the towns. One thing I could not help noticing, the same people came every evening. Oh yes, we singers recollect faces very well, as a rule. Naturally, you see a different set of faces at the opera in Covent Garden theatre to those you see at a ballad concert. Of the two I think the ballad concert audiences

look more pleased. They regard the occasion as an unusual treat, and are determined to get their money's worth—and a good deal more if possible."

"What are your views about encores?"

"Well, the way I look at the question is that everybody likes appreciation, and it is easy to show gratitude by a little extra effort. You have no idea how trying it is when there is no applause, such as is the case at the State Concerts in Buckingham Palace. I never feel more nervous than when I face that brilliant and highly discriminative audience. Of course all the royal family are good musicians, and a word of appreciation from them is really valuable; and they are very kind in their expressions after you have sung."

"That reminds me, Miss Macintyre, that you have sung several times before the Queen."

"Yes, and very delightful it has always been to appear before her Majesty. That autograph portrait she gave me after one of my visits. Another time the Queen gave me this lovely gold ornament of an angel with exquisite diamond wings. Is it not beautiful? She gave Signor Tamagno a silver box in which to keep the cigars he loves so much. What an artist that man is! I did enjoy singing in opera with him. When we were to play 'Otello' there was hardly a chance of a proper rehearsal. But he took such a lot of trouble to show me the many little points that one has to regard in a performance. He is one of the few great singers who, though they are anxious to achieve personal success, want their colleagues to make a hit as well.

The Queen was charmed with his voice, though when I thought of the small room in which we were to play I wondered how the roof would stay on if Tamagno were to exert himself to his full powers! But he was, like Lord Clive, surprised at his own moderation. The Queen sent for us after the performance, and was very complimentary and gracious. Her manner quite disarms nervousness, and it is a pleasure to listen to her clear voice and well-chosen phrases.

The Queen knows a great deal about operas, new and old, and recollects the singers whom she has heard interpret them, even as far back as fifty years ago. When I have sung pieces before the Queen she has chosen which she would prefer out of a list submitted to her. The princesses too take a great interest in the programme, and the whole occasion is one of much interest. The Queen is so quietly dignified that it is difficult to realise that your most attentive listener is the ruler of the British Empire."

"Tell me something about your work in Milan."

"I went to La Scala in 1894, and stayed till 1895. It was at first rather an ordeal, for, being a foreigner, the Italians were disinclined to receive me cordially. In fact some of the officials said that they did not think my voice was strong enough to fill La Scala, and altogether I was rather frightened at my first appearance in the great theatre. However, gradually the audiences grew more appreciative, and in the end they were on the best of terms with me. The Italian methods of singing are very interesting, and I think the experience did a great deal



From a photo by]

MISS MARGARET MACINTYRE.

[Elliott & Fry.



From a photo by] [Elliott & Fry.
AS ELIZABETH IN "TANNHAUSER."

for me—at least people say so, and they are the best judges. Not that I worry much over what the newspapers say. Life is too short to read most of them, though they have been very kind to me. Out in Africa I saw rather more of English newspapers than I've ever found time to see at home. You find the *Graphic* and the *Illustrated London News* in the most out-of-the-way parts—old copies, worn with constant handling, testifying to the value they put on news from the mother country. I forgot to tell you that I went to Kimberley and saw the diamond mines. They gave me a lovely uncut stone as a memento of my visit. I didn't carry away any nuggets of gold with me! They have invited me to go back again to South Africa, and perhaps I may some day, if only for the sake of seeing the many kind friends I made there."

"When are you going to America?"

"I don't know; I've just had an offer to sing at the Cincinnati Festival, where Mr. Edward Lloyd has twice appeared. But I am told it is very tiring work travelling long distances in the United States, so I rather fear the business. One has to do plenty of travelling in any case. Last week, for instance, I sang six times, all in different places, going as far as Scotland. Yet I'm thankful to say I have only failed to keep one engagement in the last few months."

"I suppose, Miss Macintyre, you get plenty of letters?"

"Indeed I do. And some of them are so extraordinary. A mother will write and say she is sure her daughter will be a second Albani if only she could be encouraged; a lady will ask me to sing at a bazaar ever so far away and assure me that it will make the success of the day, adding that she cannot offer even travelling expenses. Then the autograph-hunters are always busy, sending such pretty books for me to scribble in; and people want to know your favourite pudding or poem! I have had some curious presents, too, from people who wanted to show their appreciation; all the way from Africa we are constantly receiving little reminders of our pleasant visit. Sometimes these well-wishers are rather embarrassing. When I am at the opera, perhaps just as a quick change has to be effected, a message comes—'Will Miss Macintyre oblige two ladies with her autographed portrait?' Yes, it is a trifle irritating to be thus interrupted, for singing in opera requires all your



From a photo by] [Ricci, Milan.
AS SIEGLINDE IN "DIE WALKURE," AT LA SCALA,
MILAN.

best strength and thought. The public does not imagine the strain on the nerves and the memory which the playing of an important rôle implies, and when one's work is over it is delightful to sit quite still and rest. Yet, as I have often said, opera is splendid."

"By the way, have you played in opera on the Continent otherwise than at Milan?"

"Not very much, though I have had several chances. Only to-day I got a telegram from Signor Mancinelli asking me to undertake a rôle at Naples, but my list of engagements quite prevents me doing so at such short notice.

You may recollect I sang in Berlin. They did not require me and other foreign artists to sing in German, so we used Italian, which was all the pleasanter. I liked the Berlin audiences, for they were not too speedy in applause. It puts you on your mettle to know you have critical hearers."

"As to the Festivals, are you likely to appear at any this year?"

"I am not sure; one is glad not to look too far ahead. It is always a delight to sing in such works as 'Elijah,' of which I am specially fond, or the 'Messiah,' of which the public fortunately never tires. I am going to the Eisteddfod in the summer for the first time, though I have often sung in Wales."

Before I conclude this brief record of a very interesting conversation, all the pleasanter because Miss Macintyre abhors formality almost as much as interviewers, perhaps a few words about her early career

may fill in the gaps in the foregoing story of her later work. She is the daughter of General Macintyre, late of the Royal Artillery, and was born in India. She went to Dr. Wylde's branch of the London Academy of Music in Brighton, and then continued her musical studies in London under Signor Garcia's tuition. The bronze medal of the London Academy was won by her in 1883, the silver medal in the following year, and the gold medal in 1885. When the illustrious Abbé Liszt paid his last visit to this country he spent one afternoon at the London Academy and heard his own

oratorio, "St. Elizabeth," rendered by the students, Miss Macintyre taking the soprano soli and earning his cordial praise. Liszt delighted the students by sitting down to the piano after the performance and playing in his inimitable manner two or three pieces. It was one evening in May 1888 when Miss Macintyre took by storm the great audience which thronged



From a photo by]

MISS MACINTYRE AS MARGUERITE.

[Walery.

Covent Garde. theatre by her brilliant singing as Michaela in "Carmen." There was only one opinion about her fine voice, and soon was evident the high dramatic instinct which has since been allied to her vocal achievements. Miss Macintyre has now attained so undisputed a position in the musical world that it would be redundant to say more about her present style, which wins for her wherever she sings new friends and admirers who are proud of the speedy success attained by our popular British prima donna.



From a photo by]

[Elliott & Fry.

MISS MARGARET MACINTYRE.



Moments WITH Modern Musicians.

BY F. KLICKMANN.



ENGLISH composers who are worthy of the name, and whose works have attained to anything like a national popularity, are in reality very few in number. Sir A.

Sullivan, Frederic H. Cowen, and the late

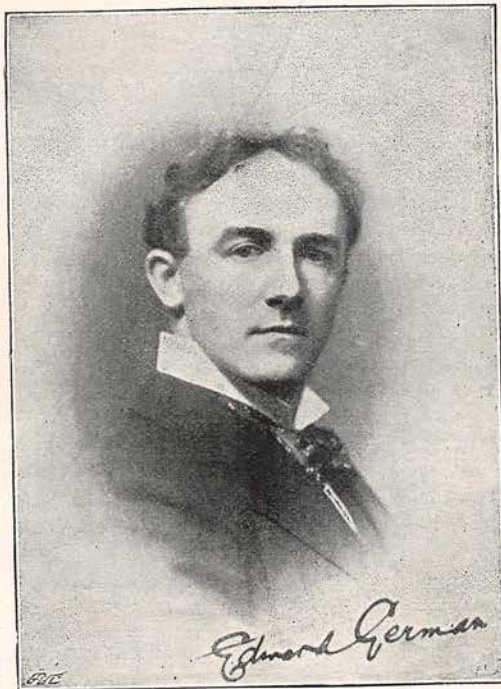
Sir Joseph Barnby, have written music that will appeal to English people for many a year to come, music that touches equally an Albert Hall audience and the mixed crowd that gathers around a County Council band on Sunday afternoon in one of the parks. I do not attempt to explain why it is that "The Lost Chord," "The Better Land," and "Sweet and Low," are always acceptable to the popular ear, I merely state that it is so. And though we have now a goodly number of Englishmen who are scholarly musicians and talented composers, scarcely any besides those already mentioned have a big reputation outside the concert room door, and beyond the pale of the musical world. The works of only a very small proportion of our composers have actually entered the homes of England, and some of our cleverest men are nothing more than a

name—if even they are that—to the average middle-class amateur.

The first portrait we are giving this month is of a composer who may be said to have already attained to a wide popularity. He is young; but, by a happy turn of her wheel, Fortune has sent some of his compositions very far afield.

His three Dances from "Henry VIII"—those dainty, melodious little trifles—appear to be included in the repertoire of every young lady who studies the pianoforte nowadays, judging by the number of times and the variety of circumstances under which one hears them.

But we are dealing with personalities in these papers, not with compositions, therefore the reader shall be introduced to Mr. Edward German without further delay. If one were asked to guess where he lives the natural reply would be St. John's Wood, so many musicians and artists have made that suburb



From a photo by]

MR. EDWARD GERMAN.

[Elliott & Fry.

their headquarters, and Mr. German is among the number. He is fortunate in having Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Mr. Cowen, and Mr. Hamish McCunn among his near neighbours. His house has one or two features that would distinctly commend

themselves to the soul of a composer. It lies back some distance from the road and is surrounded by its own grounds. It is therefore tolerably quiet—for London. Its seclusion is further emphasised by the fact that a high iron gate, in a high brick wall, very effectually bars the progress of the ordinary wayfaring man who, beside being a fool, is usually a beggar and a great nuisance into the bargain. As it is, the composer can sit in peace in his study, with its French windows opening out on to the garden, the distant gate and the road beyond being hidden by high shrubs and trees. When I commented on the wisdom of his arrangements he said—

“Yes, I think I have managed to secure quietness at last. The house is old-fashioned but I do not mind that at all. It is so pleasant to be within touch of the centre of London, and yet as absolutely quiet as though one were in the country.”

The room in which Mr. German works is not what one would call a “show” study; it has not at all the *blasé* air of a study that has to live up to the constant scrutiny of the ubiquitous interviewer. On the contrary, a vague sense of pleasantness and comfort is the general effect of the room. The photos on the mantelpiece appear to have been placed there because the owner liked to have

them there, not so much that he desired other people to see that they were there. The upright piano looked as though it would stand any amount of practice; the writing-table was large and in a good light, and everything seemed conducive to hard work. The composer himself gives one the impression that he possesses a highly-strung and refined nature, albeit there is a certain determination and strength of character frequently apparent.

He has managed to accomplish a great deal in the comparatively few years that he has been composing. It may not be generally known that he started life with the intention of becoming a violinist. When he was quite a lad he taught himself to play on the violin after a fashion, and then joined the band of the choral society belonging to his native town, Whitchurch, in Shropshire. Thanks to the energy and interest of the conductor, his parents consented at length that he should study at the Royal Academy of Music, which institution he entered in 1880. Here he worked at organ, violin, pianoforte and composition. After a while he gave up the organ in order to devote more time to the violin. He was successful in winning the prize violin bow, also bronze and silver medals, and a certificate for violin playing. In due course he was appointed



From a photo by]

MRS. HELEN TRUST.

[Russell.

a sub-professor of that instrument at the Royal Academy.

In time, however, the violin went the way of the organ. Mr. German's great ambition was to become a composer. In 1885 he won the "Charles Lucas Medal" for composition, after which he centred his whole attention on his aim. When he finally left the Academy, in 1887, he had won six certificates and six medals, whereupon he was elected an Associate.

These academical honours, though proclaiming him a musician of exceptional calibre, gave him no standing in the world at large. So far as the general public are concerned, they first made his acquaintance through the incidental music written for Mr. Mansfield's production of "Richard III." at the Globe theatre in 1889. Though this was eminently successful it can in no way compare with the fame he achieved in 1892 when, at Sir Henry Irving's request, he composed the incidental music for "Henry VIII." He had written far more important compositions before this, notably a symphony in E minor, and, without giving a list of his compositions, it is safe to say he has done greater things since, but the "Henry VIII" music still remains the first favourite in public estimation. There is really no reason why his Gipsy Suite should not be equally popular; the four movements are in every way as tuneful and as delightfully fresh as the "Henry VIII" Dances. Doubtless in time we shall hear them also on many an occasion when a pianoforte solo figures on the programme.

Mr. German is somewhat reticent when conversation turns on the subject of his work. I naturally asked him what his next composition would be.

"I am busy at present with the incidental music for 'Hamlet,' which is to be produced by Mr. Alexander. In addition to this I have nearly completed the score of another orchestral work."

"You invariably confine your attention to orchestral compositions?"

"Yes; as a rule I am happier when writing for the orchestra. Unfortunately I have written very little vocal music. I do not think that is my forte, so I generally leave it alone."

"What is your opinion of the future of orchestral music in England?"

"I think the prospect is hopeful, but audiences are often treated rather too severely.

"To my mind it is a mistake to give so much Beethoven, for instance, at all con-

certs. We require programmes suited to the middle-class musical amateur as well as those which gratify the high-class amateur and the professional. I would advocate the more frequent performance of light suites, such as those written by Bizet and Gounod. There is an abundance of beautiful music in this form that seldom gets a hearing at an ordinary orchestral concert. It would be quite possible by these means to cultivate the taste of many who now only appreciate ballad concerts. Mr. Randegger is going very much on these lines at the Sunday Concerts he conducts at the Queen's Hall. But we ought to have similar concerts all over the country."

"Whom do you consider the greatest orchestral conductor?"

"First and foremost, Hans Richter, while Nikisch certainly heads the other school. But there is no lack of good conductors."

The moments passed quickly. It was evident that the score on the table was only patiently waiting my departure. The thought suddenly occurred to me that perhaps I was depriving the world of some of Mr. German's best work, therefore I refrained for that afternoon from further questionings.

My host escorted me to the gate with a courtesy that was pleasantly reminiscent of the old world, and then I observed that, like St. Peter, he carried a key.

A few steps from Mr. Edward German's house will bring us to the home of another musician whose name is now a familiar one to concert-goers all over the country. Mrs. Helen Trust has the reputation for being one of the most artistic and conscientious soprano singers in England. Other vocalists there are who have larger voices and a more florid and brilliant execution, but for the perfection of artistic finish Mrs. Trust has few equals.

We sat talking in her pretty drawing-room one morning about the difficulties a singer has to encounter before she can make a success in the present day.

"Tell me about your own career," I said.

"There is nothing more useful to aspiring musicians than to hear the actual experiences of those who are the acknowledged heads of the profession."

"There is really little to talk about. I learnt music, as girls do, when I was young, and as I grew up my voice seemed to be fairly good, but nothing extraordinary. My home was in Norwich, and I sang at small concerts and such like in the neighbourhood; but it was not until after my marriage that

I thought seriously of entering the profession. I studied under more than one good master, but the teacher in London to whom I owe most is Signor Tramezzani. He taught me more particularly how to use my voice. Others had told me that I was not producing my notes properly—and I could hear that I was not myself—but they did not explain to me *why* I was producing them wrongly—or it may have been that I was stupid," she added. "At any rate I never understood the matter until I went to him."

"If I remember rightly you made your first big success at one of the Popular Concerts?"

"Yes; Mr. Chappell was very kind, and, after hearing me sing, engaged me for several concerts during the one season. It was in 1892, when Miss Liza Lehmann was ill and had to take a complete rest. It happened that I sang much the same kind of songs that she did, and I was therefore able to step into the gap as it were."

"Where do you find the old songs and *chansonnettes* that you have made so popular? Do you search the British Museum?"

"No; many of them I found among books of ancient music that have been in my family for I don't know how long. Then again, friends will often send me anything they may chance to come upon in the way of a discovery. People know that I have a preference for singing music of that description, and I often get old songs sent to me."

"Do you consider it difficult for a young vocalist to obtain a good hearing?"

"Yes; it is by no means an easy matter, even if one has introductions. There are so many, all of whom are naturally anxious to get to the front, that although there is room at the very top, the problem is how to get there. Concert directors, such as Mr. August Manns and Mr. Chappell, are simply besieged with applicants, and unless one knows someone really influential it is next to impossible to get one's foot on the first rung of the ladder. Yet no one is to blame for this. It is merely that life is too short to hear the large number who want to be heard. Of course some who are really indifferent musicians get engagements through influential friends, but time and public opinion soon sift these, and eventually they disappear. Audiences are too educated and critical in the present day to tolerate anything that is not the best of its kind."

I asked Mrs. Trust whether either of her two children were likely to follow in her

footsteps, but she said she thought not. Mr. Trust, who is a clever 'cellist, is likewise in the musical profession, and both he and his wife realise only too well how unwise it is for anyone to rely on earning a large income by music unless they are exceptionally, one may almost say phenomenally, gifted. The competition in this as in every other department of life increases as the years go on.

Another singer who is a perennial delight to the British public is Miss Marian McKenzie, who is known in private life as Mrs. Smith-Williams. She has married into a musical family, though she says she does not belong to one herself. Her husband is a brother of Miss Anna Williams, the well-known soprano.

Her home is a delightful flat in Victoria Street. From the quaint-looking windows, built at odd angles in the rooms, one gets idealised views of busy London, everything melting away into a blue haze, till even the immense assortment of chimney-pots looks picturesque, while green open spaces, dotted about, give one the feeling that there is yet breathing room in our big city.

"I am very fond of this outlook," Mrs. Smith-Williams said when showing the extensive view to be seen from one of the dining-room windows. "I think London always has an immense fascination for those who have been brought up in the country."

"Then you have not lived here always?"

"No. My home was in Plymouth. I came to live in London when I entered the Royal Academy of Music as a student."

"I conclude you had studied music a great deal before that time?"

"That was the strange part of it, I had scarcely studied it at all—really nothing to speak of. I should never have thought of going in for music I suppose had it not been that a great friend of mine joined the choral society in Plymouth, and of course, just like a school-girl, I said I must join too. I had rather a large voice but no idea whatever of singing, the consequence was I frequently made mistakes, which were all the more noticeable as my voice was fairly strong. At last the conductor, Mr. Samuel Weekes, said I ought to have some lessons, and he spoke to my people about it. They said they had no objection, and as my dear friend was taking lessons, I wanted to do the same. I must have made some progress, because, after a while, my master suggested that as I would be visiting in London at the very time the 'Parepa Rosa Scholarship' was

to be competed for at the Royal Academy of Music, he would like me to enter my name and at any rate try for it.

"I was perfectly willing. I had not the very slightest idea that there would be the most distant chance of my getting it, consequently when I appeared at the examination I was as unconcerned as possible, while many of the candidates were so nervous that they could

a really congenial family with whom I could board. I think students coming to London from the country are often at a great disadvantage; they miss all the hundred-and-one things that are implied by the word 'home.'"

"Yet I have heard students profess to enjoy what they call the bohemianism of living by themselves."

"It may be all right for men, but for women

I think it is a great mistake; it is apt to spoil the best that is in them. But I am a great lover of home myself so perhaps I am prejudiced."

Miss Marian McKenzie has had a most distinguished career as a vocalist. She has appeared, with great success, at concerts on the Continent. In England she has sung at the State Concerts at Buckingham Palace, at the Vice-regal concert in Dublin, at Handel Festivals, and has even appeared on the stage. She sang in "The Old Guard" at the Avenue theatre for six months. I inquired whether she liked the stage.

"No; I enjoyed 'The Old Guard,' but on the whole I much prefer concert work. A contralto has so little chance in opera. As a rule she is the witch or the cruel mother-in-law. An actress has a far more eventful life than a singer as a rule. Yet I enjoy the quiet routine of concert work. I think one of the most sincere compliments I ever had paid me was on one occasion when I was singing in Scotland.

"I had been asked to sing in a certain town, but when I stated my terms the secretary wrote back and said they were very sorry but they

could not afford to pay me so much as I had asked, and he named a lower figure. As I should be singing quite close to this town only the day before, I agreed to take the sum they named. The concert was a great success, and when the worthy secretary paid me my fee he gravely handed me the sum I had originally asked, remarking, 'Don't say a word; I ken ye're worth it.'"



From a photo by]

MISS MARIAN MCKENZIE.

[Russell.

hardly sing. To my astonishment I was informed that the scholarship had been awarded to me. When I found I really had it I didn't know what to do with it! I wrote home and told them, and asked what was to be done, in reply to which I received a telegram: 'Return at once,' and there was nothing for it but to obey. Eventually they decided to let me settle down in London, but it was rather doleful at first, until I found

"How long do you usually practice each day?"

"About two hours. I have an accompanist who comes to me every day, and she always plays for me when I am practising; I have had her now for ten years. I do not play well enough to be of much use to myself. Personally I prefer singing in oratorio. I greatly enjoy Dvorak's 'Stabat Mater' and Saint-Saëns 'Samson and Delilah.' At the same time I study every new work that comes out. It is most necessary that a singer should do this in order to keep abreast of the times."



From a photo by]

[Hoffmann, Weimar.
HERR BERNHARD STAVENHAGEN.

Mrs. Smith-Williams has a bright and vivacious personality. She differs from some singers in that her sympathies are very wide. So many people unfortunately can only discuss intelligently the matters connected with their own profession. Mrs. Smith-Williams is one of the exceptions. She is extremely well read, and though she has no pronounced hobbies, apart from her singing, her interests are with art and science in every shape and form. She and her husband make a point of reading a great deal together. They read all the important books that are published from time to time, and history has a special interest for them.

"I think all musicians should have a thoroughly good all-round education," she explained to me. "It is impossible for them to do the best that can be done with their art otherwise. It is such a pity that students are not able to give more time to serious study than they do. Of course they are anxious to get engagements as soon as possible, but it is a mistake. All do not sufficiently study music itself, much less other things. There is one point. I would strongly recommend to young singers, and that is that they should go to orchestral concerts more frequently rather than to ballad concerts. It is surprising how they will neglect the very highest kind of music while they listen to feeble ballads that are worth positively nothing."

It may be interesting if I mention, in passing, that it is to the father of Miss Anna Williams and Mr. Smith-Williams that we owe the discovery of Charlotte Brontë and her sisters. He it was who read their works in the first instance, and advised their publication.

Unlike the preceding musicians, Herr Bernhard Stavenhagen is but a bird of passage, who only visits our shores at irregular intervals. This season he is with us once again however, giving recitals and playing at the Philharmonic, the Popular, and the Crystal Palace Saturday Concerts.

Herr Stavenhagen, who has for long been a great favourite with English audiences, was born at Greiz in 1862. When he was five years old he commenced to study the pianoforte under Herr Urban, a local organist. His progress was so extraordinary that he was sent to Berlin when he was twelve years old and placed under the late Theodor Kullak. He remained with Kullak a year, after which he decided to enter the Hochschule. Young Bernhard Stavenhagen believed in variety, as is evidenced by the fact that when he was sixteen he became a pupil of Professor Rudorf, who was at that time the second director of the Berlin Academy. One year with Rudorf sufficed the aspiring pianist. He had at this period been studying composition under Dr. Kiel, and he was successful in carrying off the Mendelssohn prize when he was eighteen years of age.

All these masters sink into insignificance however beside Liszt—the teacher for whom Stavenhagen entertained the highest admiration. He studied with the virtuoso about a year, during which time Liszt took him with him everywhere; and between master and pupil a great affection existed.

His first appearance in London was just five years ago, when his playing created a great impression. Needless to say he is well known on the Continent and has made various tours through the principal towns.



From a photo by]

[H. S. Mendelssohn.

MISS CLARA EISSLER.

In 1890 he was appointed Court Pianist to the Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar, which necessitated his making his home in Weimar—that town of so many memories. Here he leads a most ideal existence from a musical point of view. Each summer pupils come to him from various parts of the country, and like his master Liszt he gathers around him a congenial circle of young and rising pianists. His official duties require him to play on all State occasions, but in addition to this he frequently gives private performances before the Grand Duke.

In 1891 Bernhard Stavenhagen married Fräulein Agnes Denis, prima donna of the Weimar Hof Theater. Last year he was appointed Hof-Kapellmeister, which necessitates his conducting the greater number of the operas at the theatre.

Mention should be made of his compositions. It is not generally known that he has written a large number of songs and pianoforte solos, though only a few of these have been published so far. About a year ago he put the finishing touches to a pianoforte concerto, upon which he had previously been for some time at work.

Our final moments are to be spent with those two clever musicians the Misses Eissler. Like Herr Stavenhagen they are not natives of our foggy land, but unlike him they have made a permanent home with us. This is the more singular seeing that both the sisters

hold official appointments at a foreign Court, Miss Clara Eissler being Court Harpist and Miss Marianne Eissler Court Violinist to the Duke of Saxe-Coburg Gotha. When State functions require their attendance, the sisters take a journey abroad to fulfil their engagements, after which they return to their home in Redcliffe Square.

It was in Miss Clara Eissler's boudoir that I first heard the story of their earlier years. I had been wandering around the room looking at the innumerable portraits of the ever youthful Madame Adelina Patti. To no one are they more attached than to the prima donna, and there is no lack of evidence—if one may judge by the inscriptions on the photographs—that the affection is mutual. Another photo that also attracted my attention was of a bright-faced happy-looking boy in a sailor suit. It bore an inscription, written in a round schoolboy hand—"Alfred, 1887." When I commented upon this I was shown a diamond and sapphire ring that had been presented to Miss Marianne Eissler by the royal parents of the little sailor boy. Inside the ring is engraved, "From the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh."

The Misses Eissler are natives of Brünn, Moravia—a town already famous in the annals of violinists. Ernst was born there, also Wilhelmina Neruda (now Lady Hallé) and her brother Franz Neruda, the 'cellist.

Herr Eissler was a professor of science at the Brünn University. On his death how-



From a photo by]

[H. S. Mendelssohn,

MISS MARIANNE EISSLER.

ever Madame Eissler removed to Vienna, in order that her daughters might have greater musical advantages than was possible in Brünn.

"How was it that you made the harp your speciality?" I inquired of Miss Clara Eissler, after examining the exquisite instrument that had been made for her by Messrs. Erard.

"When I was ever so small I used to be taken to the concerts at the Vienna Conservatoire, where my sisters were studying, and the harp always fascinated me greatly. I made up my mind that if ever I played anything it must be the harp. At last they agreed that I should at any rate try what I could do with it, and when I was seven years old I likewise became a student at the Conservatoire and was placed under Zamara. Later on I studied under Hasselmans in Paris."

"Seven years old seems very young to enter a Conservatoire," I remarked.

"No, I think not. My sister Marianne began her studies at Vienna when she was the same age. By the way, it was rather curious that her first master at the Conservatoire was Professor Heissler."

Our conversation was interrupted by the appearance of the young violinist herself, who had just returned from fulfilling an engagement at an afternoon concert. At my request she exhibited her beautiful "Carlo Bergonzi" violin, which bears the date 1732. This violin cost £400, and was presented to her by her friends in London. Violin collecting is a pardonable weakness in which Miss Marianne Eissler indulges; her partiality for autographs is a less expensive pursuit however.

Miss Clara Eissler—who has a most artistic eye for such matters—finds her chief delight in arranging furniture and generally beautifying the home, while her favourite pastime is playing billiards.

The sisters have the highest regard for the musical ability of our royal family.

"I have heard that her Majesty takes a great interest in the music that is performed before her," I said.

"Yes, and not only the Queen but likewise the princes and princesses," Miss Clara Eissler replied. "On one occasion when my sister was playing at a concert in Portsmouth the Duke of Edinburgh came into the artists' room and shook hands with her, and said how much he had enjoyed her playing, adding, 'I have heard you play that solo before,' and he mentioned the occasion on which she had previously played it. It is surprising how they can possibly remember trivial things like that, and yet they do."

"You have often played before the Queen?"

"Yes we have played before her Majesty on several occasions. Once she honoured us so far as to command an encore."

Our musical chat was finally broken up by Tristan—a terrier belonging to the harpist—who noisily demanded to be admitted to his mistress's domain without further delay. The rest of our time we employed in trying to induce that quadruped to perform certain tricks in view of a prospective piece of sugar. But he was a superior dog and declined to sell his genius to so base an end—though he ultimately ate the sugar with little compunction.

