



MOMENTS WITH MODERN MUSICIANS.

THE GUILDHALL SCHOOL OF MUSIC.

BY F. KLINKMANN.

Illustrated by J. DINSDALE, F. PARKS; and from Photographs.

AN institution at which seven thousand lessons are given each week is at any time likely to be well worth a tour

of inspection; but the largest school of music in the world has been more than prominently before the public lately on account of the election of the new Principal, to fill the vacancy occasioned by the death of Sir Joseph Barnby. And now that the question has been settled, Mr. William Hayman Cummings having received the appointment, it may be interesting to spend a few moments wandering about among the four thousand students who in September will begin to work under his direction.

There is no difficulty in discovering the whereabouts of the Guildhall School of Music if one happens to be within a mile

radius. A few years ago Fleet Street and its neighbourhood was chiefly haunted by the law, busy men with journalistic tendencies, and small boys reeking with printers' ink. When gay hats and dainty dresses chanced in the vicinity, which was seldom, they were usually wending their way in the direction of St. Paul's Churchyard. But times are changed. The Temple station is no longer sacred to the use of barristers and editors; violin cases monopolise the hat racks in the carriages of the Underground



From a photo by

MR. WILLIAM HAYMAN CUMMINGS.

(Elected Principal of the Guildhall School of Music, June 4, 1896.)

[Barrauds.]

railway, while the orthodox bag of the City man has to go under the seat. No one thinks it remarkable to meet scores of pretty girls in pretty costumes hurrying along Fleet Street and the Embankment, or taking the big crossing at the bottom of New Bridge Street at a dive. They all carry music cases, and their destination is obvious. When one nears the building itself there is no occasion to read the brass plate to learn that it is London's largest music-school; that fact announces itself vigorously through all the windows in the place—and they are many.

containing perhaps a hundred performers, adds its quota to the general din; the booming vibrations of the organ pedal-pipes give a feeling of solid basis to everything, while above it all "there runs a loud perpetual wail as of souls in pain," though I am happy to say this is occasioned by nothing more serious than innumerable singing professors imparting instruction to innumerable diligent pupils.

Yet much has been done to tone down this cacophonous state of affairs. Each class-room has not only double windows but



THE ORCHESTRAL CLASS.

The impressions received outside are decidedly intensified when one enters the building. Wherever one goes, along corridors or up the broad stone staircase, a babel of musical sounds pervades the whole atmosphere. Scales in different keys are being harassed from countless violins. A familiar Beethoven sonata seems a new and unknown work when heard in conjunction with a Chopin polonaise, both being played with firm and vigorous touch on grand pianos in adjacent rooms. As one ascends higher and higher in the building an orchestral class,

double doors, and every effort was made when the school was being built to render the walls as noise-proof as possible. Hence it is merely the onlooker who is in any way disturbed by this troublous sea of sound; each class-room hears nothing but its own performance. But what must it have been like in the early days, when the locale of the school was a warehouse in the City! Things have improved since 1880, when a small handful of students and a still smaller handful of professors represented the Corporation Music-school of the largest city in the

world. Now it is an institution worthy of its name.

Not long ago the King of Italy sent a representative to England to inquire into the methods adopted with regard to the management of our large colleges of music, and particular injunctions were laid on the royal emissary to ascertain how the Guildhall School of Music was regulated. On being informed that the whole of the working part of the scheme was practically in the hands of the Principal, the secretary, and merely half a dozen clerks, the distinguished foreigner was astonished; and so, indeed, was the writer of this article when shown how small is the amount of machinery that keeps such an immense undertaking in motion.

The Guildhall School of Music, as its name implies, is one of the numerous educational institutions of the Corporation of the City of London, having been established by it in 1880. No less a sum than £50,000 has been expended by the Corporation on this flourishing school, which is under the control and management of the music committee. The Lord Mayor is nominally the head, whilst the present chairman of the committee is Mr. Brooke Hitching. The actual work of the school is of course done by the Principal and secretarial staff under the direction of the music committee. The Corporation makes a grant of £2100 per annum and a



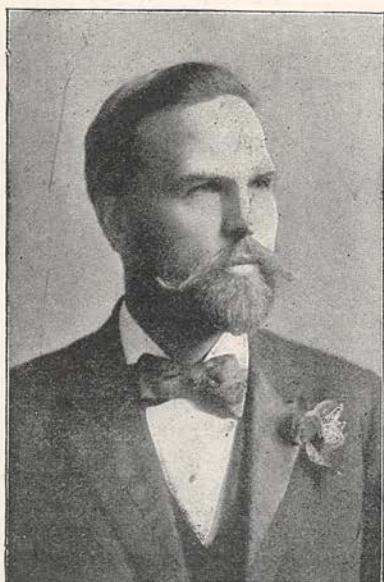
MR. T. H. BROOKE HITCHING.
(Chairman of the Music Committee of the Corporation
of London.)

further annual contribution of £200 to the Exhibition fund.

Mr. Hilton Carter, the secretary, is himself a musician of some ability, but he loses sight of the fact now in the serious responsibilities his position entails. And it is no simple matter to be secretary to a school of such dimensions, to be the Principal's right hand, even to assisting him in the examinations if need be. But Mr. Hilton Carter has proved himself to be the right man in the right place, and a man with an unlimited stock of patience and courtesy.

Speaking of examinations reminds me that though a number are held at the Guildhall School of Music, they are, unlike those held at the Royal Academy of Music, the Royal College of Music, and Trinity College, London, only open to their own students. These are primarily intended as an index to the progress made by the pupils. The Associateship of the school is a stiff examination however, and serves rather as a professional diploma. As in most other large educational institutions, many scholarships and prizes of varying monetary value are open to pupils attending the school.

The amount taken in fees for tuition since the opening of the school is £341,000. The present receipts are considerably over £30,000 per annum, out of which about £25,000 is paid to professors; last term the fees reached £10,754. Yet the whole of the financial business is conducted in a cashier's office not



From a photo by]

[Russell.

MR. HILTON CARTER.
(Secretary of the Guildhall School of Music.)

much bigger than a ship's cabin, and this in the charge of only two clerks. Space is at a great premium, owing to the ever-increasing number of the students. During the last two terms 1120 new students were admitted.

Even the secretary's room has the aspect of the largest amount of work being crammed into the smallest amount of space. Of course the keynote to the working of the school is system, and on the whole a remarkably excellent system. It has been said that the late Principal's policy was always aggressive; as far as the school was concerned it might be called revolutionary, so great and beneficial an alteration did he make when he took the reins of office in his hands; and the result is a music-school without an equal anywhere.

Of the 120 professors on the list none are dummies; that is to say, only those who are actually teaching in the school are announced in the prospectus. But if the number of the

students goes on increasing at the present rapid rate 120 professors will not long suffice. As may be supposed from the fact that tuition is given here by thoroughly qualified teachers at fees ranging from one and a half guineas per term, people come from all parts of the country to study at the Guildhall School of Music. Some come up several times a week from Nottingham, Eastbourne, Brighton, and towns of like distances. Others reside in London during term time, at various halls of residence, recommended by the school authorities—homes where it is known that every care will be taken of the students, and facilities for study and practice will always be at their disposal.

In consequence of the large number of lady students who attend the school, a lady superintendent has for years resided on the premises—Mrs. Charles P. Smith, the widow of the late secretary—and all these are in her charge. This is by no means a merely



Mr. Neill O'Donovan.

Mr. Esmond.

"ESMERALDA" BEING REHEARSED BY THE OPERATIC CLASS.

nominal office. Mrs. Smith is in personal touch with all. Not only does she continually move about the building from one class-room to another, but her rooms and her sofas are ever at the command of the feeble ones, when headaches, nerves, or tiredness take possession of the daughters of the muse.

The general scheme of instruction provides that each student should remain in a class-room while two other lessons are given, in addition to the one he or she receives. The benefit to be derived from this is obvious.

Another rule is that no one, not even a parent or guardian, shall be permitted in the room while lessons are being given. There is no occasion for the semblance of a chaperon for even the youngest of the lady students. Mrs. Grundy is amply appeased by the presence of the various others who sit about the room taking their prescribed amount of onlooking, and the peregrinations of Mrs. Smith, who ever and anon pays a visit and looks after the welfare of her charges.

It is curiously interesting to go over the school and watch the scores of professors at work. This can be done without in the slightest degree interrupting them, as all the upper halves of the doors are of glass, and the occupants of every room are open to the scrutiny of the passer-by. Curious pantomimes these lessons will often appear when one can only see the gesticulations of the teacher but hear nothing that he is saying. In one room there is Professor Ebenezer Prout, evidently dealing in words of wisdom, if one may judge by the attentive look on the faces of the men who are listening to him; a turn in the corridor brings us to the class-room where Mons. Johannes Wolff is giving violin lessons. But it is impossible to enumerate all the professors who are to be seen hard at work when one takes a journey over the school.



MONS. JOHANNES WOLFF TEACHING THE VIOLIN.

The committee room is perhaps the most formidable to the students. It is here that the examinations are held. A large portrait of Wagner hangs above the tall-backed chairman's seat. Sir Joseph Barnby once explained to me that he had it hung there because he liked to feel that he was sitting beneath the composer when he presided at the examinations. The late Principal was an ardent Wagnerian at heart, though he did not obtrude the fact in the school.

The largest amount of noise is wisely kept at the top of the building, and one has to mount a goodly number of steps in order to reach the theatre, a fair-sized hall, in which the orchestral practices are held. Here also the operatic class meets, under the direction of Mr. Neill O'Donovan. The latest work in this department of the school was the recent performance of "Esmeralda," given by the students at Drury Lane on June 18 last. And here I might mention that all the ladies of the chorus make their own dresses for the dramatic performances. This is done under the direction and with the help of Mrs. Smith.

The school possesses an excellent choir; but this is not surprising. The conductor of the famous Royal Choral Society naturally did not allow his school to fall in any way short of the mark; and at a rehearsal he would allow nothing but the very best work to pass, expecting the singing to be as

finished and as artistic as that at the Royal Albert Hall.

Year after year Guildhall students leave the school and take creditable places in the ranks of the professional world. We have only space to mention one or two, but these serve as ample evidence of the soundness of their training.

Of Mr. Ffrangcon-Davies the school has reason to be proud. He was born at Bethesda, Carnarvonshire, his father being an enthusiastic musical amateur. In due

of unqualified successes. The part of Cedric the Saxon in Sullivan's "Ivanhoe" was written expressly for him. Though Mr. Ffrangcon-Davies has sung extensively in opera, playing numerous parts for Sir Augustus Harris, D'Oyly Carte and Carl Rosa, he is equally at home in oratorio, and has sung in the majority of the modern works of this school. He has recently returned from his first tour in America, which has more than justified his expectations, and is already engaged to return to the



A SINGING LESSON BY MADAME HELEN ARMSTRONG.

course he went to Jesus College, Oxford, where he took his B.A. and M.A. degrees. At the same time he distinguished himself as an athlete, playing in the college football team, he was also stroke for the college eight, and he rowed in the 'Varsity trial eight. It was while he was at Oxford that Mr. Edwin Holland discovered he had a baritone voice of exceptional calibre, and advised his turning his attention to singing. This decided Mr. Ffrangcon-Davies to come to London and study at the Guildhall School of Music. He made his *début* at Manchester in the beginning of 1890, and has since enjoyed a series

States in November for a six months' tour in oratorio and song recitals.

Miss Florence Oliver, the young contralto, is also an ex-student of our City school, that is so far as her vocal studies are concerned, and strangely enough she is likewise of Welsh descent. Coming of a musical family, she studied pianoforte and theory for three years at the Royal College of Music. When it was discovered that she had a voice of more than ordinary promise she entered the Guildhall School of Music in order to study under Madame Bessie Cox, by whom her voice has been exclusively trained. Miss



From a photo by]

[Window & Grove.

MR. FFRANGCON-DAVIES.

Oliver bids fair to be a valuable acquisition in the realm of oratorio, where good contralto singers are by no means plentiful. She has already appeared in the "Golden Legend," "Judas Maccabæus," and other of the Royal Choral Society's concerts at the Albert Hall, in addition to singing in the Purcell Commemoration in Westminster Abbey, at the Cardiff Festival last year, and on many other important occasions. Miss Oliver gained several valuable prizes during her student days. She is now touring in South Africa.

Miss Jessie Hudleston is one of the school's successes. She was a student for five years, winning a scholarship after the first six months. A native of Bow, she began singing in public at the age of nine, though without any idea of ultimately becoming a professional vocalist. After appearing at various London concerts and making a favourable impression as an oratorio soloist in the Albert Hall, Miss Hudleston went to America with Sir Augustus Harris's company to play the part of Fairy Dawn in Humperdinck's delightful opera "Hänsel and Gretel." She sang sometimes eight times a week in that

popular work, and on her return to England appeared in the part of Gretel at Drury Lane theatre. A fine flexible voice and real dramatic power will win an increasing reputation for Miss Hudleston.

We have not too many bass singers nowadays, and this makes Mr. Alexander Tucker all the more welcome in the ranks of first-class vocalists. He can produce a fine musical tone on a double B flat—what think you of that? To hear him sing such songs as "The Raft," or "Rock'd in the Cradle of the Deep," enables one to appreciate the extraordinary quality of his *basso-profundo* notes. A native of Langport, Somersetshire, Mr. Tucker is thirty-five years old. After a commercial career he resolved to adopt his present profession on the advice of Sir John Stainer. His teacher at the Guildhall School of Music was Signor Visetti, and he also received lessons from Mr. Montem Smith, Mr. William Shakespeare and Mr. Wallworth. He has quickly made a success, and was chosen to appear with Madame Patti at her recent concert at the Albert Hall. His enunciation is particularly good.

These are by no means all the distinguished students the school can boast. Many other names come to one's mind, as for instance Mrs. Patrick Campbell, Iver Mackay, Dalgety Henderson, Bantock Pierpoint, and Miss Frances Allitsen the composer. But a school that numbers among its professors such musicians as Fred Walker, Henry Gadsby, Emil Bach, Francesco Berger, August Wilhelmj, Gustav Garcia, Johannes Wolff, John Francis Barnett, and a host of other celebrated teachers, can



From a photo by]

[Jacolette.

MISS FLORENCE OLIVER.



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MISS JESSIE HUDLESTON.

scarcely do other than continually bring to the front some promising genius, even though the larger proportion of its students are amateurs.

A short while ago a sudden, chilly fear seized the heart of a writer in one of our contemporaries as to how the musicians of the future could ever hope ultimately to make a livelihood when such immense crowds of fairly equipped students are being turned out of our large music-schools every year. But it was pointed out that by no means do the majority of these eventually find their way into the professional arena. Some of the most important work of these institutions lies in teaching amateurs. This is particularly so in the case of the Guildhall School of Music, where students can enter at any time, for as short or as long a period as they please, and are permitted to take up as many or as few subjects as they may desire.

One leaves the most important item till the last, and that brings us to the new Principal, who is, after all, the key for better or for worse to the whole situation. Of Mr. Cummings in this capacity it is impossible to speak, as he does not come into his own till next term. As a musician, however, he is no stranger to the world at large. It was as a vocalist that he originally won his laurels, and some of his reminiscences are most enviable. As a boy he formed one

of the choir in the performance of "Elijah" that Mendelssohn himself conducted in London, and he was afterwards personally complimented by the great composer. It may also be interesting to mention that Sterndale Bennett wrote the tenor part in the "Woman of Samaria" specially for Mr. Cummings. His fame has not been confined to England. He was most successful in America, and sang in Boston in 1871 at the Handel and Haydn Festivals. He has sung in opera at Drury Lane and the Gaiety theatres, and also was at one time a member of Westminster Abbey choir, and one of the Gentlemen of the Chapel Royal. Mr. Cummings studied the organ under Dr. Hopkins of the Temple Church, and for some years held an organist's appointment in London. He was obliged to resign this however as his other work increased. He has also done much to further music from a literary point of view, as his "Life of Purcell" and "Musical Dictionary" testify. Mr. Cummings is no stranger to the Guildhall School of Music; he has been connected with it as a professor since its commencement. In September he will move from the professor's to the Principal's room.

Before finally leaving the building one pauses a moment before a large oil painting



From a photo by]

[Russell.

MR. ALEXANDER TUCKER.

hanging in the waiting-room. It is a life-size portrait of Sir Joseph Barnby. The sight of this recalls the Principal's room as it used to be only a few months ago. One remembers the hundreds of students who every week went into that room with some difficulty for solution, or in need of advice; and practical help was always forthcoming. That room has heard some strange stories. "I think this carpet must be a very good

one," Sir Joseph once remarked to me. "If not, it would have been ruined long ago by the number of tears that have fallen on it." That the Guildhall School of Music has a brilliant future before it we all believe. It certainly has a past of which it may well be proud. And though one and all are glad to extend hearty congratulations to the new Principal, his predecessor is not likely to be forgotten.



From a photo by]

[Carl, Homburg.

THE LATE SIR JOSEPH BARNBY.
(Principal of the Guildhall School of Music, 1892-1896.)