

## MUSICAL ENGLAND:

### THE GLOUCESTER FESTIVAL.

BY F. KLINKMANN.

*Photo by]*

*[Prith & Co., Reigate.*

GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL.



MUSICAL ENGLAND is, after all, a wide place, when viewed from all points of the compass. To the foreigner it merely means London—and only a few weeks out of the year at that—and he consequently announces that, in his opinion, we are not a musical nation.

As a matter of fact, however, England is practically permeated with music from north to south, and from east to west, and the London concert season supplies only a small fraction of the good music that is to be heard through the length and breadth of the land from one year's end to another.

Before the London season is ended, choristers are gathering together in other parts of the country, and steady, hard work is being done in order to prepare for one or another of the

great provincial festivals that take place every autumn; and the gentlemen of the orchestra have scarcely breathing space, after the Philharmonic and Richter concerts, before they are in earnest requisition at these provincial concerts.

One of the most important of these gatherings is the annual "Festival of the Three Choirs." This is held alternately at Gloucester, Worcester, and Hereford, and the proceeds are devoted to the benefit of the widows and orphans of the poorer clergy of the three dioceses.

This month the "Three Choirs" will meet at Gloucester, it being their 175th Annual Festival. In addition to the choirs of Gloucester, Worcester, and Hereford, the forces are further augmented by choristers from Bristol, Cheltenham, and Tewkesbury.

During the week of the



*Photo by]*

*[Watson, Gloucester.*

MR. A. HERBERT BREWER.

Festival (which starts this year on September 11th) the whole town is practically *en fête*; indeed, these concerts may be said to be the great feature of the year—a kind of landmark in the provincial calendar from which personal and local affairs can be reckoned.

The first day of the Festival—Sunday—will be devoted to special services in the Cathedral. Monday is a day of rest in this case, the music being resumed on Tuesday. Without giving a detailed account of the programme of the Festival, I may mention that “Elijah,” Dvorak’s “Stabat Mater,” “The Creation,” “The Golden Legend,” Bach’s “Christmas Oratorio,” “Judas Macca-bæus,” and the “Eroica” symphony are amongst the items to be performed.

But our primary interest here is with the personal side of the Festival. The first name on the programme is the ever welcome one of Madame Albani, the most popular of all our singers. At the time I am writing this, Madame Albani is the honoured guest of our Australian cousins, and is being fêted in a royal manner in that most hospitable



[Photo by]

MDLLE. GIULIA RAVOGLI.

[Russell.]



[Photo by]

MISS ELLA RUSSELL.

[Alfred Ellis.]

“island set in the seas.” Her Majesty the Queen cabled a message of congratulation to Madame Albani, on her arrival in Australia, expressing her gratification that she had reached there safely; and during the whole of the tour the Australians seem to be as charmed with the famous *prima donna* as she is with them. Government and other officials have vied with each other in doing everything in their power to promote her comfort when travelling, and to contribute to her enjoyment while in their midst. At each city her reception has been as enthusiastic and brilliant as it could possibly be. And once again we English shake hands with Australia across the seas, and say how much we appreciate the generous, open-handed welcome that is always given to those who visit her “from home”; but at the same time we add, “Please send our lady back to us in good time, for we want her ourselves for the Gloucester Festival; and the following month we need her for the Leeds Festival. And what would a festival be without her?”

Madame Albani is already a familiar figure in the pages of the WINDSOR

MAGAZINE, and next month, when dealing with the Leeds Festival, I shall hope to give yet another portrait of this gifted musician.

Miss Ella Russell, who has a world-wide reputation, will share with Madame Albani the honours of the principal soprano music at Gloucester. To attempt to extol the ability of Miss Ella Russell savours somewhat of "gilding the rose." Both in opera and in oratorio her name is synonymous with success. As an operatic star she is, perhaps, best known to the public, though latterly she has appeared regularly at the Crystal Palace and other great musical festivals.

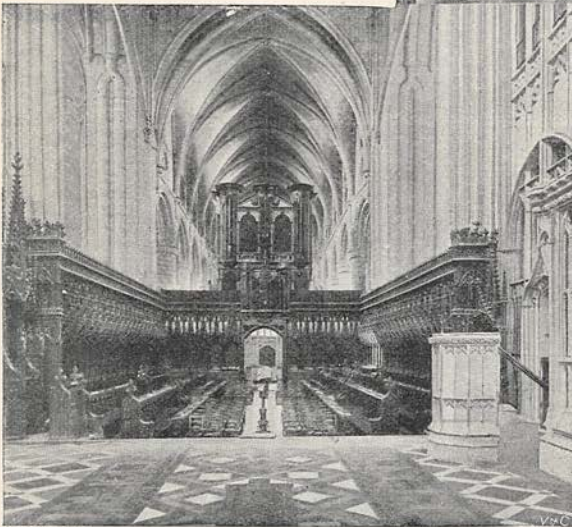
Musical England is certainly cosmopolitan in its affections, and of all the foreign musicians whom we are proud to welcome from time to time to our shores, none are more enthusiastically received than

I have never yet heard Mdlle. Ravogli in that oratorio; but I am fully prepared to be as enraptured with her rendering of "O, Rest in the Lord," at the coming Festival, as I was when first I heard her sing that oft repeated tale, "Che farò."

Gloucester deserves to have a festival of its own if for no other reason than the surprisingly large number of musicians the county has produced. She is loyal to her own, too,



THE NAVE, LOOKING WEST.



Photos by]

[Frith & Co., Reigate.

GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL: THE CHOIR.

the two Roman singers, Giulia and Sophia Ravogli.

The majority of English people associate the name of Giulia Ravogli with *Orfeo*, and with nothing else. For us, indeed, there could be no *Orfeo* now without this incomparable singer. But magnificent as she is in this rôle, it is good for us that she lets us hear her in other parts. We stand sorely in need of another "Patey," and every fresh performance of "Elijah" only emphasises the fact.

and no festival would be complete without the smiling, happy face of Miss Hilda Wilson, who, though born in Monmouth, removed with her parents at an early age to Gloucester, which is practically the city of her adoption. It was here that she made her *début* when fourteen years of age.

Her brother, Mr. H. Lane Wilson, who is also appearing this year, is a native of the cathedral city. This young baritone originally intended to devote his time to composition,

and many of his songs have met with unusual success. But Nature ruled it otherwise, and gave him a voice that it would have been a sin to neglect. Mr. Charles Santley urged him to study singing, and as a result he is now one of the most promising of our coming men.

Mr. Watkin Mills is another product of this fortunate county, and he possesses all the thorough, unaffected straightforwardness that seems to be inherent in the west country

men. The strength of his voice appears to be equalled by the strength of his physique. He is an ardent golfer, and maintains that



Photo by]

[Elliott &amp; Fry.

MISS ROSALIND ELLICOTT.

the exercise is most beneficial to him in his profession. But have you ever met a confirmed golfer who did not make similar protestations?

The principal tenor this year will be Mr. Ben Davies, who, though scarcely a Gloucestershire man, comes very near to it, having been born in Wales, and still in the "magic west." Ever welcome as Mr. Ben Davies is, one regrets to notice that Mr. Edward Lloyd is not likewise singing this year. I believe this will be the first of these festivals that he has missed for twenty-seven years.

Miss Jessie King is always popular at the Three Choirs Festivals, her first public appearance having been made at an organ recital given by Mr. C. Lee Williams in Gloucester Cathedral.

Mr. David Bisham will, of course, be a host in himself, but I shall have more to say about him when dealing with the Leeds Festival. Mr. Hirwen Jones is another vocalist whose portrait has appeared quite recently in our pages.

Mr. Henry Sunman, who takes part in "The Creation," is a prominent man in Oxford, where he is one of the leading teachers of singing, and also a soloist in Christ Church Cathedral.

Miss Agnes Nicholls is yet another native

of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham being her birthplace. She was a student at the Royal College of Music, where she obtained one of the open scholarships in 1894. She made her *début* at Windsor Castle in 1895, before her Majesty the Queen. On that occasion Delibes' opera, "Le Roi l'a dit," was performed by some of the students of the Royal College, Miss Nicholls playing the principal soprano part. She also sang some of the "Parsifal" music at a Mottl Concert in May last year, and a few weeks later sang the same music at a State Concert. At the thanksgiving service at St. George's Chapel, Windsor, on June 20, 1897, Miss Nicholls sang with Madame Albani the duet, "I Waited for the Lord," from the "Hymn of Praise"; and to commemorate the occasion her Majesty afterwards sent Miss Nicholls a pretty brooch. Last winter she won golden opinions in the chief cities of the kingdom as principal soloist in the Mendelssohn and other music of Mr. F. R. Benson's beautiful revival of "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

One great advantage that is the outcome of our provincial festivals must receive special mention, and that is the opportunities they afford for the production of new works by native composers. The programme of the forthcoming Gloucester Festival shows a



Photo by]

[Russell.

MISS HILDA WILSON.

goodly array of new works. To mention only a few: Miss Rosalind Ellicott, daughter of the Bishop, has written for the occasion



Photo by]

MR. BEN DAVIES.

[Russell.

a choral ballad for men's voices, "Henry o' Navarre." Miss Ellicott, who is one of the cleverest of our women composers, is most popular in musical circles generally, and in the West of England in particular. Another Gloucestershire composer who will be represented at this Festival is Mr. Basil Harwood, whose setting of Psalm lxxxvi., "Inclina Domine" will be performed by Madame Ella Russell and the choir. Mr. Basil Harwood is the son of Mr. Edward Harwood, J.P., of Olverton, Gloucestershire ;



Photo by]

MR. WATKIN MILLS.

[Russell.

and though he is now the organist of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, he commenced his musical studies at Bristol under Mr. George Risely and Mr. and Mrs. Roeckel.

That very promising musician, Mr. S. Coleridge-Taylor, will conduct a "Ballade" in A minor, which he has specially composed for the occasion. Mr. Coleridge-Taylor is an Anglo-African, born in London, 1875. He studied at the Royal College of Music, where he obtained a scholarship for composition. In addition to his success as a composer, Mr. Coleridge-Taylor is an



Photo by]

MISS AGNES NICHOLLS.

[Kilpatrick, Belfast.

became a chorister in the Cathedral of which he is now the organist. Later on he obtained the first open organ scholarship at the Royal College of Music. In 1896, Mr. Brewer was appointed organist of Gloucester Cathedral, owing to the retirement, through ill-health, of Mr. C. Lee Williams. His position is no sinecure, but Mr. Brewer is the embodiment, not only of ability and energy, but also of enthusiasm ; and, as Dr. Hans Richter once said to me with his inimitable smile, "Zere iss plenty off musicke in Englandt, but vot iss wanted iss more entoosum!"

accomplished violinist, and the conductor of an orchestral society at Croydon.

I have reserved the most important of the Festival musicians till the last. To Mr. A. Herbert Brewer, the organist of Gloucester Cathedral, is allotted the arduous task of conductor of the Festival. Mr. Brewer—yet another of the geniuses that seem so prolific in the county—was born in Gloucester in 1865. Before he was eleven years old he



Photo by]

MR. S. COLERIDGE-TAYLOR.

[Bender, Croydon.



Photo by]

MR. HENRY SUNMAN.

[Güllman, Oxford.

# MUSICAL ENGLAND.

# THE LEEDS FESTIVAL



By  
F. Klickmann.

Photo by]

[Prith & Co.

THE TOWN HALL, LEEDS.

**I**N Yorkshire singers are born, not made. It seems to make no difference whether he be brought up on moorland air or factory smoke, the Yorkshireman will *sing*—and that right earnestly. Not only is his voice large in volume and rich in quality, but its staying power is remarkable. The first time I ever had this practically demonstrated to me was some years ago, in the Handel Festival Choir, where on either side of me I chanced to have a native of that happy county. I naturally expected them to be in good form on the first day of the Festival; it was also excusable, perhaps, that on the second day they likewise did justice to every note in the “Messiah.” But on the third day, when their voices seemed, if anything, only to have gained added strength and freshness, while my own was becoming distinctly lacking in enthusiasm, and the worse for wear, I regarded them with a certain amount of curiosity. I consoled myself, however, with the knowledge that the fourth day would be devoted to “Israel in Egypt,” the work of all others best calculated to reduce the choristers’ vocal cords to a state of chaos and of “darkness that might be felt.”

But, no! when the day came those two were as energetic and ardent as at the commencement of the Festival. Through chorus after chorus did they plough their way with

a reckless prodigality of tone that was simply appalling; while the voiceless one between them had only sufficient strength left to watch, with thirsty eyes and a dry throat, the can of water that was being passed round by the soprano and contralto superintendents among the fainting ladies. Since then I am always inclined to believe that the success which regularly attends “Israel in Egypt” at the Crystal Palace is due to the Yorkshire contingent of the Handel Festival Choir. For I know that while the jaded Londoner is making strenuous efforts to pull himself together and compel his few remaining notes to assert themselves, the Yorkshireman is joyously rolling forth the final choruses with a voice that for quality and quantity combined cannot be beaten the whole world over.

Small wonder, therefore, that the Leeds Triennial Festivals are some of the most enjoyable musical gatherings in this country. The history of the Festivals is interesting. They were set on foot exactly forty years ago. The first one, in 1858, was not arranged as a musical function pure and simple; it merely formed part of the ceremony of the opening of the Town Hall by the Queen. Sir William Sterndale Bennett was the conductor, and on that occasion his “May Queen” was performed for the first time. The number of new works that have

been written for and produced at the Leeds Festivals is remarkable. To enumerate only a few : Sullivan's "Martyr of Antioch" was produced in 1880, likewise John Francis Barnett's "Building of the Ship." Perhaps 1886 was the most memorable year in this respect, as that brought to light, among other works, Sullivan's "Golden Legend," which, next to the "Messiah" and "Elijah," is the most popular choral work in this country. Mackenzie's "Story of Sayid," and Dvorák's "St. Ludmila," were also written for that Festival.

Financially these gatherings seem to be as successful as they are musically. The profits are given to the various medical charities in the district. The amount distributed on each occasion is invariably £2,000, or thereabouts ; though in 1889 the profit of the Festival was no less than £3,142. The 1898 Festival, which takes place in the first week in October, will be no way behind its predecessors in the matter of novelties.

Sir Arthur Sullivan, who is always the attraction *par excellence* at Leeds, will again conduct, this being the seventh Festival at which he has presided. It was hoped that

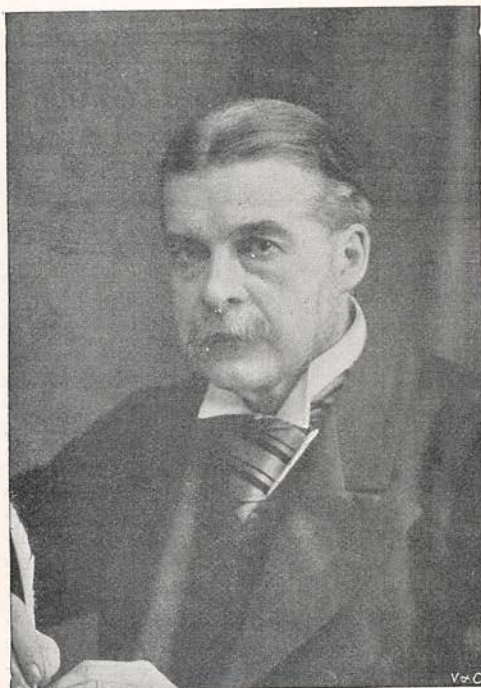


Photo by]

[Elliott &amp; Fry.

SIR ARTHUR SULLIVAN.



Photo by]

[Barrauds, Ltd., Oxford St.

MR. FREDERIC H. COWEN.

he would have been able to compose something specially for this occasion—there were delightful rumours of another work on the lines of the "Golden Legend" ; but the composer's health, which is always more or less of a minus quantity, broke down again, and all further idea of the work had to be abandoned for the present.

Next to Sir Arthur Sullivan, Mr. Frederic H. Cowen is the most popular of our English composers. His work, in addition to being scholarly, is musical, a quality that is strangely lacking in the works of some composers. Mr. Cowen's contribution to the forthcoming Festival is a setting of Collins's "Ode to the Passions." He will, of course, conduct this new work himself. I have heard Mr. Cowen say that he would rather conduct anyone else's composition than his own ; but, delighted as all music lovers are to see him conduct other people's works, they are still more gratified when he conducts his own, for Mr. Cowen is a composer whose name is a household word wherever an English song is sung, and "The Better Land" has worked itself as a classic into our national repertoire, just as "The Lost Chord" has done.

The first singer to be mentioned must be Madame Albani, the most popular prima

donna in England. It matters not whether she is singing in oratorio or in opera, she is always certain to receive the warmest welcome



Photo by] [Dupont, New York.  
MR. DAVID BISPHAM.

of Albany, U.S.A., where her wonderful voice first attracted public attention. She herself is a French-Canadian, born at Chambly, near Montreal. She was educated at the Convent of the Sacred Heart, Montreal, her father being the first to instruct her in music. But this all happened before she had any idea of taking a stage name, and while she was still Mdlle. Lajeunesse. Later on her family moved to Albany, and it was her singing in the cathedral that first emphasised the fact that she had a voice of remarkable promise, and this led to her



Photo by] [Elliott & Fry.  
MR. ANDREW BLACK.

Gye in 1878) has just returned with her husband from a tour in Australia and South Africa which has been little short

that can possibly be accorded her from her devoted admirers who comprise the British public. Her name — Albani — is merely her professional name, adopted as a compliment to the town

ultimately studying in Paris and Italy. In 1870 she made her *début* at Messina. Since then she has known nothing but one long record of successes.

Madame Albani (who was married to Mr. Ernest

of phenomenal in its success. There are many interesting stories that might be told in connection with Madame Albani's tour were more space at one's disposal, but the following is so characteristic that I must mention it here. The prima donna had been singing in Maritzburg, and someone asked the son of the town clerk what he thought of it. The boy replied that he would have to look right through the dictionary to find words to express his feelings. Madame Albani heard of this, and, with her unvarying kindness of heart, sent a letter, accompanied by her autographed portrait, to this youthful admirer.

Miss Marie Brema will be heard to the very best advantage at this Festival, works by Wagner and Brahms having been allotted to her. Miss Brema's nationality has sometimes puzzled people. Her father was a German and her mother an American, while she herself was born in Liverpool. Her success has been achieved very rapidly. In 1890 she commenced to study under Mr. Henschel, and the following year she appeared at the Monday "Pops," and also in "Cavalleria Rusticana." Miss Brema has a wide Continental reputation and is also very popular in the United States. In 1894 she was



Photo by] [Elliott & Fry.  
MR. EDWARD LLOYD.



Photo by] [Dupont, New York.  
MR. PLUNKET GREENE.

Miss Brema has a wide Continental reputation and is also very popular in the United States. In 1894 she was





MADAME ALBANI'S LATEST PHOTOGRAPH.

TAKEN ON HER RECENT AUSTRALIAN TOUR BY TALMA, MELBOURNE.

introduced to Madame Wagner, and the outcome of this was an engagement to appear at the next Bayreuth Festival, where she took the part of *Ortrud* in "*Lohengrin*." Wagner's music is undoubtedly Miss Brema's *forte* and is admirably suited to her powerfully dramatic voice.

Madame Marian Mackenzie is another popular contralto whom Leeds will be glad to see once more. She is no stranger to the city, this being her third appearance at these Festivals; indeed, she has now sung in nearly every city in the British Isles, as well as in Germany and the principal towns in Australia. Madame Marian Mackenzie is married to a brother of Miss Anna Williams, the celebrated singer. She is usually heard in oratorio, but it must not be supposed that she devotes herself entirely to music of this class. She has already appeared

song cycle, "*In a Persian Garden*," by Liza Lehmann.

It seems difficult, at first sight, to say

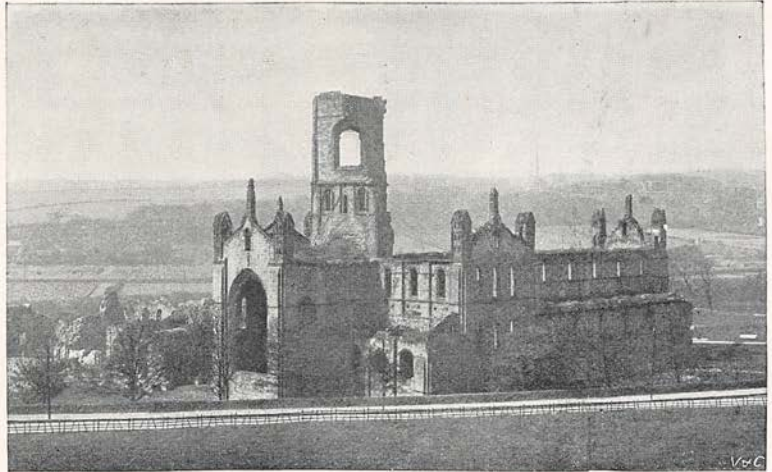


Photo by]

KIRKSTALL ABBEY.

[Frith & Co.

anything that is unknown about Mr. David Bispham, as so much has already been published concerning his career. But there is one thing, he tells me, that the general public does not seem to have grasped, and that is the fact that he is an American. He has sung his way so completely into our

hearts that we are always endeavouring to pay him the highest compliment we can by claiming him as one of our own countrymen. Mr. Bispham is descended from one of the original Quaker families of Philadelphia, that city of "Friends."

I asked Mr. Bispham his opinion on the subject of industry and intelligence brought to bear on an artistic career, and how it is that occasionally some seem to succeed with so much less than

others, who may have worked very hard.

"I know nothing about anybody else's intimate concerns," he replied. "I only

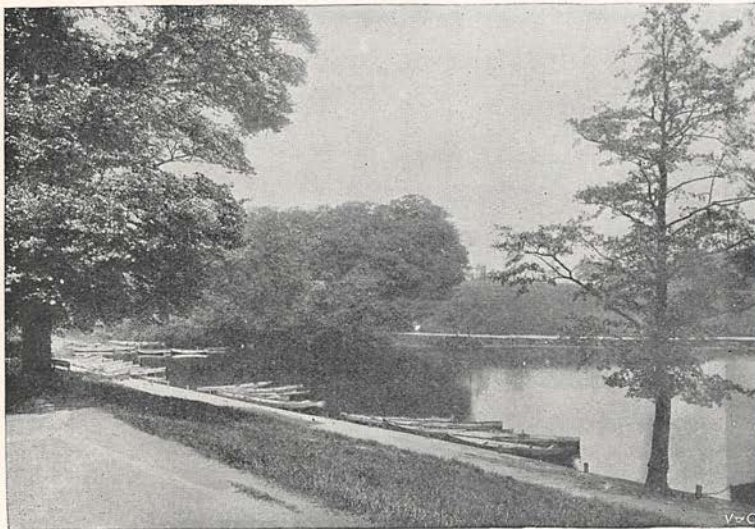


Photo by]

IN ROUNDHAY PARK.

[Frith & Co.

very successfully in opera, and as a ballad singer she is difficult to excel. One of her recent successes was her rendering of the

know that I seem impelled to do what I do. It is not a matter of inspiration. I only feel as the servant to whom his master saith, 'Do this,' and he doeth it. Some people have inferred that I know very well how to take care of my own interests. It may be so, but I doubt it myself. A musician, as a rule, has a brain too full of music, and such intangible stuff, to contain a thought of a more practical character. But as to the necessity for work! Why, I have worked like a slave, yet with the keenest enjoyment; and whoever does not so work is unworthy to be called an artist."

On the library shelves there are close



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[Window &amp; Grove.

MADAME MARIAN MACKENZIE.

upon thirty operas in which this great singer has actually taken part, and between forty and fifty oratorios and cantatas in which he has sung, while in a little book there are the names of about four hundred classical songs he has rendered. No need to question his having worked hard!

For some years now Miss Esther Palliser has been before the public, and well deserves the reputation she has earned as a most conscientious and artistic singer. She is fortunate in belonging to a musical family; her father was a professor of music, voice production being his speciality, and her mother



Photo by]

[Dupont, New York.

MISS MARIE BREMA.



Photo by]

[Elliott &amp; Fry.

MISS ESTHER PALLISER.

was also a singer. Her father trained her voice until she went to Paris, where she studied hard for three years. All outdoor recreations have a great attraction for her, especially walking. On one occasion she walked twenty-five miles, stopping to rest only once, and then but for five minutes. Travelling is another of Miss Palliser's favourite pastimes. She is a wanderer by nature, and once she remarked to me that she took an actual delight in feeling that she had no permanent home.

Mr. Harry Plunket Greene is one of our singers—and, alas! their number is all too few—who may be said never to disappoint the audience. What he sings he always sings well, and, furthermore, what he sings is always worth the singing. He is very popular both in Germany and in America.

Perhaps one of the most interesting among the musicians connected with the present Festival is Mr. Otto Goldschmidt, who has set to music Sir Lewis Morris's Ode, "Music," for this occasion. Mr. Goldschmidt is one of the very few remaining links that connect us with a golden past wherein Schumann, Mendelssohn, Chopin, and, above all, Jenny Lind, were realities and not mere names, as they are to those of the present generation. He was born in Hamburg in 1829. His mother, who was an excellent musician, gave him his first pianoforte lessons, and he soon developed into a child prodigy. He played in public in Hamburg when he was eleven



Photo by]

[Elliott &amp; Fry.

MR. EDWARD ELGAR.

Chopin. It was while he was a student at Leipzig that he first saw the lady whose name, a few years later, was destined by fate

to be linked with his—Mdlle. Jenny Lind; and thereby hangs an interesting story. It was the first appearance of the famous prima donna in Leipzig, and she was to sing at a Gewandhaus concert, under Mendelssohn's direction. Naturally there was a great demand for tickets, despite the fact that the prices



Photo by]

[C. E. Fry &amp; Son.

MR. OTTO GOLDSCHMIDT.

were raised; it was therefore decided that the students of the Conservatorium must waive their usual right to free admission to these concerts. But the students objected with vigour. They were as anxious as anybody to hear the "Swedish Nightingale." A protest was made, and young Otto Goldschmidt, aged sixteen, was the student deputed by the others to personally interview the authorities. In the end he won the day. He little thought then that in half a dozen years he would be equally successful in winning the lady herself.

Among other works that have been composed for this Festival, Mr. Edward Elgar's cantata, "Caractacus," must be mentioned. Mr. Elgar's work belongs to the romantic school and is entirely free from the pedantry that is noticeable at times in the compositions of some of our native musicians. He has recently been elected conductor of the new Worcestershire Philharmonic Society. Her Majesty has graciously accepted the dedication of "Caractacus."

One can only mention some of the other great names that will figure on the Leeds Festival programme. Mr. Edward Lloyd, the greatest English tenor, has some very arduous work falling to him. Mr. Andrew Black is another singer whom it is worth going a long way to hear. Altogether this Festival will represent not only Great Britain, her Colonies, America, and Germany, but also France, M. Fauré having likewise contributed a work.