

BIRMINGHAM MUSICAL FESTIVAL.

(FROM THE COURIER.) BIRMINGHAM, THURSDAY MORNING.—The appointment of the new Oratorio of David for yesterday's performance attracted an immense audience. The interior of the spacious building was densely crammed soon after the opening of the doors, and although there was much disappointment for those who were obliged to stand under the galleries and in the doorways, and still more for those who struggled in vain to attain those coveted stations, the confusion was comparatively trifling.

The new Oratorio went off with a success which decidedly places it at once among the standard works of this class, and will greatly advance the reputation of the Choralist Nankom. The action described in the Oratorio includes only the early history of David, beginning with his departure from Bethlehem, to go up against the Philistines, and ending with the slaying of Saul and his sons, and the advancement of David to the throne of Israel. We understand that the subject was originally framed in his own language by the composer himself, and has been put into English by the Rev. John Webb. The following are the persons concerned in the action:—

- David Mr. Bramham
Saul Mr. Phillips
Jonathan Mr. Vaughan
High Priest Mr. E. Taylor
Messenger Mr. Bellamy
Michael of David Mademoiselle Stockhausen.
Sister Daughter of Saul Mrs. Knappert.
Chorus of Shepherds, Warriors, Levites, Male and Female Attendants.

The opening scene is a desert near Bethlehem, where David is taking leave of his sister and friends, whom he invites to join in supplication of the divine blessing on his purpose, which they do in a beautiful choral hymn, arranged for four choirs. In the treatment of this hymn the composer at once puts forth his powers, and commands the admiration of his hearers. The devotional feeling thrown into it is of the highest character, and the harmony is rich and free, without effort. A very fine effect is produced by the repetition of the word "Almighty," in bursts of grandeur which powerfully express the sentiments of praise and adoration. The second stanza is beautifully written, in a more subdued but exquisite strain of harmony, and followed by an air, in which David bids farewell to his flock and friend, and announces his purpose there.

"O" for the rescue of my father land. Steeled be my heart, and new'd my youthful hand. I feel done. No fears, no dangers shall appal. I feel the impulse, and obey the call.

The change from the tender and pastoral spirit to the martial impulse is marked fully, and the contrast was used most skillfully by Mr. Bramham. This is responded to by his sister in a recitative and air of the most enchanting character, in which she enjoins him to remember, "amid the camp's wild tumult," the tranquil and happy scenes of his pastoral life, and entreats them to return amongst them. The melody is quite delicious in its expression of the feelings of the sister, and her delight in the scenes of her happy life. It was sung by Madame Stockhausen with an earnest appreciation of its beauty, and in a strain of pure rich tone such as we have seldom heard surpassed. We next come to the rally of Elgah, and the camps of the Israelites and the Philistines, where a fine chorus describes Goliath.

"The giant swelling in his pride." The painting of the terrible approach of the giant is most powerful, and especially in the instrumentation. The two champions exchange their defiance in a well sustained recitative, which ends in a chorus describing the fall of the monster, the shout of victory, the route, and the pursuit of the flying foe. The diminished, imitative of the night closing upon the slayer and the slain is a good conception and well executed. Then there is not a very good song from the daughter of Saul, describing the return of the Israelites, bringing the stripling champion in triumph through their cities, and breathing the thanks-givings of the pious daughter for the deliverance of her father and his house. A grand and triumphal march and chorus bring the army into Gibeon. The low movement of the approaching host is opened by the semi-chorus, and the gradual swell of the whole power of the band and voices has a very fine effect in describing the action of the advancing army and the increasing enthusiasm of the people as they are welcomed on their near approach. The first part here concludes with a quartette by David, Michael, Jonathan, and the High Priest, followed by a grand chorus upon a fugue movement of a very high order, and treated with a power worthy to be compared with the greatest productions in this difficult description of writing.

The second part opens in the Palace of Saul, where the gloomy King gives us a recitative and air describing him as sinking under his cares, envious of David, and in vain seeking the balm of sleep for his unquiet, and then hurrying into fury that he cannot command it. This was sung admirably by Mr. Phillips. David is now called in by Jonathan to soothe the troubled spirit of his sire, and after a happy prelude of considerable beauty he sings an air which was certainly not very well calculated for its immediate object, as it is flatly sarcastic upon such Kings as Saul had proved himself. Saul is of course enraged, and Michael and Jonathan persuade David to go. The *torsetto* in which this scene is one of the choicest morceaux in the work. We have then the despair of Saul, his last moral effort, and the description of his slaughter. In this portion of the work there is a battle symphony of much force. "The Lament of Israel," which follows, is a chorus finely felt, but its effect is marred by the introduction of the organ. We then come to the final scene where the High Priest, in the midst of the people, announces David King, and they ratify the act in a chorus which finely paints their enthusiasm and the acclamations in which they express their joy. The organ in this chorus, and indeed the full power of the band and choir, is employed with splendid effect. The air in which David accepts the diadem is not effective, but it is followed by a return to the exaltation of the chorus as a preparation to one of the finest portions of the subject, and in which the composer has put forth all his strength. This is the prophecy of the Messiah. The celestial choir are made to reply—

"Blessed be that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed in the highest." And to give an idea of celestial music, the composer, instead of being content with drawing upon his own imagination, and leaving the filling up to that of his audience, had some voices placed on the top of the organ to sing the foregoing passage. The consequence was a failure in the time and tone,

and a complete blot upon the finest portion of the work. All was, however, retrieved by the concluding chorus, "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord," which was admirably, if not fully, completed, and completed the very powerful impression which the work has deservedly made. There are parts in it which may be strengthened, but a single hearing is sufficient to warrant the decision that it will live among the most favoured of our Oratorio productions. It is impossible to bestow too much praise upon the manner in which the whole work was executed.

The third part of this performance was chiefly from Handel. It opened with the *Ether Overture*, which went splendidly, and displayed the power of the organ with striking effect. The first vocal piece was "Gentle Air," from *Althalia*, sung with excellent feeling and fine execution by Mr. Horncastle, and accompanied by Lindley's delicious violoncello. This was followed by Mozart's magnificent "Hymn for the Ascension," then which nothing could be more effective. It is very high praise to Mr. Novello's Anthem, "Hear me, O Lord," to say that, what with the singing of his daughter in the solo, and the admirable precision with the chorus, it was heard and admired immediately after one of Mozart's finest productions. The concluding pieces were the great recitative and the chorus, "Gloria to God" from *Joshua*; and a magnificent one from *Belshazzar*, "Sing, O ye Heavens." The latter seems with all the most sublime power of Handel, and was heard with emotions which can never be forgotten. In the first of these choruses we heard the organ again.

There was a concert and operatic performance at the Theatre in the evening, the prices of admission being raised, and every part of the house occupied by the most distinguished talents at the Festival. The splendid band was heard to the greatest advantage in Beethoven's overture to *Egmont* and Weber's *Oberon*. The operatic performances consisted of the last acts of *Othello* and *Juno Boana*, in both of which Madame Caradori was the *prima donna*, and her performances gave the highest degree of satisfaction. She was supported by Curioni and Madame Costelli, and a good chorus. The concert terminated about half-past ten o'clock. The receipts amounted to £821 13s.

Table with 2 columns: Day, Amount. Rows for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Total.

Total amount of receipts up to this evening £821 13s 6d. This amount exceeds, at this period of the Festival, the one in 1823, by the sum of £1,739.

(FROM THE TRIBE SUN.)

Friday Night.—The selection for this evening was not very classical—nor, as a miscellany of pleasing pieces, very successful. Again, we had Nankom and Moschelles to the exclusion of British talent. No Nicholson and Willman as concerto players. "Napoleon's" "Midnight Review," by Nankom, is a dreary composition—the subject itself itself in twenty different phrases and positions, and a piece of patchwork without meaning or motive. "The Fall of Paris" followed; but is not the "Midnight Review" represented as taking place after "The Fall of Paris"? A single reflection would have made that judicious which was grossly absurd? Moschelles did not play his fantasia well; he has too powerful a finger for one of *Erard's* pianofortes. The only pieces of modern English authorship performed were an arrangement, by Haves, of Rousseau's *Dream* (very cleverly harmonized, by the by), and a piece and a song by the conductor, Mr. Knappert. The piece, however, was only harmonized by him, although his name was ostentatiously attached to it as the composer. It is an Irish air known to all the musical world, by the sweet words of Moore, as "Eileen's Bower." It is the arrangement of an Irish air, as composed, in arrangements of this description that make foreign writers laugh at us. The madrigal, "down in a flowery vale," was charmingly sung; and the composition itself being intricate, but straightforward in melody as well as harmony, it was greatly admired, and enjoyed. The *Soliloquy* of Madame Stockhausen shared the same happy fate; but the second time she gave a different and more pathetic melody. The recitative from Don Giovanni went off heavily. If Phillips be tolerated in Italian, the same cannot be extended to Horncastle and Bellamy.

The second part commenced with the overture to "A Midsummer Night's Dream," by Mendelssohn. It was magnificently played, and most ably led by Loder, who is one of the finest leaders in Europe. The greatest trait of the night was Bramham's "Mad Tom." Long as it is, it was repeated. It is in these descriptive and pathetic pieces that Bramham's great powers are displayed. Phillips gave Haydn's delicious air in a very chaste and manly style. He was never in better voice, and has never been heard to greater advantage than at this festival. Bramham and Phillips laughed so heartily in Martin's merry trio, that Madame Stockhausen could not sing. The trio was encored and highly relished. More of these comic pieces should be introduced in miscellaneous concerts. The hall was again crowded to excess.

satisfactory in "Their hand brought forth frogs." The chorus "But as for his people," contains more shades of expression than most of Handel's concerted pieces. It was on this occasion, given with great force and delicacy. Phillips, in the famous air, "Wave from Wave," was very fine; as was also his part in the duet with Mahou, "The Lord is a man of war." Machin in power has the advantage of him; although as a finished artist he is greatly inferior. The magnificent chorus "The horse and his rider," concluded the performance. It was given with great precision and force, and the variety of shades of expression which it requires was in admirable style.

The fancy ball this evening will conclude one of the most splendid evenings that ever took place in Europe. It is a success in the English musical annals.

SINGULAR DISCOVERY OF A HOMICIDE.

We copy the following extraordinary account from the Kingston (America) *British Whig*:—About sixty years ago, Messrs. —, respectable wine merchants in London, had in their possession a loghead of Madeira, which they had endeavoured, but in vain, to render fit for sale. The ordinary methods used to refine wine had been resorted to, but without success; and as a last resource, the principal dealer directed their cellar man to rack off the wine, whilst the rest were busied upstairs. He who was thus employed proceeded with his work, but had not filled above 12 bottles when he found the cork suddenly cease racking. The corks used for racking are very large, and the man thought to remove the obstruction with his finger, but what was his surprise and horror, when on looking at it he found it to be a piece of a human scalp, with the hair still clinging to it! These who have been to notice the dismal appearance of the place, to which the faint light lends additional effect. The poor fellow who had made such a disgusting and terrifying discovery, almost fainted at the sight; but with a sudden effort he dashed down the bottle which he was filling, and fled up stairs in an agony of alarm and terror. All crowded round him to hear the cause of his fright, which he with difficulty explained to them; and one of the partners, with several of the men, descended into the vault, determined to ascertain the truth of his statement, which they distributed either to drunkenness or a diabolical imagination. Without a moment's hesitation the loghead was varred up, the head taken out, and the wine poured into another vessel, when a frightful spectacle was presented to their view. Within the loghead lay a skeleton, to the bones of which the flesh in some places still clung, while a horrid mass of putridity had settled at the bottom! Shocked at the sight, they replaced the head of the loghead, and information of the discovery was immediately sent off to the Island of Madeira, where an investigation took place, the result of which was the apprehension of a wine cooper there, who confessed that being jealous of his apprentice, he had one day picked a quarrel with the youth, whom he killed by a blow in the side, and that fearing a discovery, he had immediately crammed the boy into a loghead, which was shipped off at once for England. Many instances of retributive justice are on record, but none of them can be considered more remarkable than the one above related.

The *Gazette des Tribunaux* mentions that towards the beginning of November a very singular trial will take place in the Court of Assizes of the department of the Seine. The affair in question is relative to a duel without witnesses. M. Lehoullier, who keeps a *maison de tante*, had an intimate friend M. Vaudebant. Imagining that he had discovered a criminal intercourse between his wife and his friend, he challenged the latter; and, from some unaccountable motive, the husband was desirous that the cause of the death of the individual who should fall should remain unknown. He therefore required that the duel should take place without witnesses; but such of the adversaries was to have a writing in his pocket, stating that the death of the person who might be found lying on the ground was not to be attributed to an assassination. They repaired to the wood of Romajouville; pistols were the chosen weapons, and it was agreed that the two adversaries should walk towards each other, and fire when they thought proper. M. Lehoullier (the husband) states that, having his attention called off by seeing a woman passing on the public road hard by, he stopped suddenly, whilst M. Vaudebant continued to advance, and fired when at a short distance from him. M. Lehoullier fell, and according to his account, he employed the aid of his adversary, but his eyes were fastened to a tree, M. Vaudebant, believing he had killed him, took to flight, carrying off the two pistols. However, the unfortunate husband was not mortally wounded; but as his profile was presented to his adversary when he fired, the ball had carried away both his eyes, but the brain had not been touched. He crawled as well as he could out of the wood, and succeeded at length in gaining the high road, where he met with assistance. When M. Lehoullier was quite cured of his wounds he brought an action against M. Vaudebant, who surrendered voluntarily.

A KING'S RESPECT FOR HIS PEOPLE.—When the Commanche complained to Henry IV. against some of his servants and counsellors, desiring they might be removed, he came into parliament, and there declared openly, "that though he knew nothing against them in particular, yet he was assured that what the Lords and Commons desired of him was for the good and benefit of himself and his kingdom; and therefore he did comply with them;" and banished those four persons from his presence and councils, declaring, at the same time, "that he would do so by any others who should be near his royal person, if they were so unhappy as to fall under the hatred and indignation of the people."

Mrs. KINGSTON SPOONER.—A long story has been going the rounds, that the accomplished lady whose name heads this paragraph was destroyed by a shark while bathing. Such was not the case. True, Mrs. Spooner was seized by a shark while bathing, and her husband's vessel passed on—all hands thinking she was devoured. It appears she cut the shark's throat a mile or so below the surface of the sea—made her escape from his voracious jaws—mounted the back of a whale, and by picking him first on the one side and then on the other, she made him overtake the ship, and was soon in the arms of her husband. *Says the Evening Star*, at any rate.—*American Paper.*

WEEKLY REVIEWS.

(FROM THE DUBLIN SATURDAY.) The United States' government has furnished a valuable addition to our fund of trans-Atlantic Geography. It sent out an expedition to terminate the wars between the Chippewa and Sioux nations the wars between the table land in which the Indians, who inhabit the country whence this river Mississippi has its source. Two years were spent in exploring the country whence this majestic river flows. The results are to be found in the "Narrative of an Expedition through the Upper Mississippi to Inaca Lake, the actual source of this river, under the direction of H. R. Schoolcraft." The account adds much to our knowledge of the geography of those hitherto nearly unknown regions, and of the character of its native inhabitants, with whom the writings of Cooper have been so far acquainted as to excite the fancy with a description of how far the realities of actual life correspond with his animated pictures of the manners of these unlettered tribes. On the former of these points we learn the following particulars of the lake that formed the object and termination of the expedition:—

Inaca Lake, the Lac la Biche of the French, is, in every respect, a beautiful sheet of water, seven or eight miles in extent, lying among hills of diversified formation, surmounted with pines which fringe the distant horizon, and form an agreeable contrast with the greener foliage of its immediate shores. Its greatest length is from south-east to north-west, with a southern prolongation, or bay, which receives a brook. The waters are transparent and bright, and reflect a foliage produced by the elm, lynn, maple, and cherry, together with other species more abundant in northern latitudes. The lake itself is of irregular form; it has a single island, upon which we landed, after an hour's paddling from the spot of our arrival and embarkation. We found here the forest trees above named growing promiscuously with the betula and spruce. The bones of fish and of tortoise found at the locality of former Indian camp fires, indicate the existence of these species in the lake. We observed a deer standing on the margin of the lake; and here, as well as throughout the lakes of the region, found the duck, teal, and loon, in possession of their favourite haunts. Innumerable abells (a species of small bell) were driven up on the head of the island. Other parts of the lake yield small pieces of the snail, which were found strewn the bed of the outlet. The outlet of Inaca Lake is perhaps ten or twelve feet broad, with an apparent depth of twelve to eighteen fathoms. The height of the lake is about 1,500 feet above the Atlantic.

So much for the soil. We will now give an extract characteristic of the manners of these native children of the great forest:—"In more external the Chippewas are not essentially different from other tribes of the Algonquin stock in the western country, and the points in which a different holds, may be supposed to have been, for the most part, the effects of a more ungenial climate. They are, to a less extent than most of the tribes, cultivators of the soil, and more exclusively hunters and warriors. Living in a portion of the continent remarkable for the number of its large and small lakes, they find a common resource in fish, and along with this enjoy the advantage of reaping the wild rice. Their government has been deemed a paradox, at the same time exercising, and too feeble to exercise power. But it is not more paradoxical than all patriarchal governments, which have their life in filial affection, and owe their weakness to venality of opinion. War and other public calamities bring them together, while prosperity drives them apart. They rally on public danger with wonderful facility, and they disperse with equal quickness. All their efforts are of the partisan popular kind; and if these do not succeed they are dispersed. There is nothing in their institutions and resources suited for long-continued, steady exertion. The most striking trait in their moral history is the institution of the Totem—a sign manual, by which the affiliation of families is traced, agreeing more exactly, perhaps, than has been supposed with the numerical bearings of the feudal ages; and this institution is kept up with a feeling of importance which is difficult to account for. An Indian, as is well known, will tell his specific name with reluctance, but his generic or family name, in other words, his Totem, he will declare without hesitation, and with an evident feeling of pride. None of our tribes have proceeded farther than the first rude steps in hieroglyphic writing; and it is a practice in which the Chippewas are peculiarly expert. No part of their country can be visited without bringing this trait into prominent notice. Every path has his blazed and figured trees, conveying intelligence to all who pass, for all can read and understand these signs. They are taught to the young as carefully as our alphabet, with the distinction, however, that hieroglyphic writing is the prerogative of the males. These devices are often traced on sheets of birch bark attached to poles, or are traced on war-clubs, on canoes, paddles, bows, or war-stocks. They are often drawn on skins, particularly those used as back-dresses by warriors. They have also other hieroglyphic modes of communicating information, by poles with knots of grass attached to them, or rings of paint, and often by antlers, or animals' heads suspended by the banks of rivers."

Those lovers of geography who are not inclined to extend their researches to distant regions will find amusement in the delineation of men and manners given in a new work by P. L. Gordon, Esq., author of the "Guide to Italy," entitled "Belgium and Holland, with a Sketch of the Revolution in 1830." The work contains a variety of characteristic sketches; light, it must be confessed, but graphic of the peculiarities of a country that has long attracted historic notice for its struggles for liberty, and is still more an object of interest from the numbers of the residents of the British Islands who are forced by high prices and excessive taxation at home to seek for some cheaper country for their own comfortable domestication, and the cheap education of their families. The following brief extract will give a good idea of the character of the work:—

"Dutch Customs.—We cannot refrain from mentioning a few trifling but characteristic customs. The stranger will seldom walk far in a Dutch town without meeting a man in a long black gown and a low cocked hat, with a black crape depending behind. This is a public officer, the *Clanspreker*. His office is, on the death of any person, to inform all the friends and acquaintances of the melancholy event. The funeral of a Dutchman is expensive according to the time of the day. If the interment is after two o'clock, the charge is 25 florins; after three, 100 florins; and if later

double that sum. The cause of this singular custom we have not been able to learn. Every person who could claim the slightest acquaintance with the deceased follows him to the grave. The ceremony being over, the mourners pay their compliments to the widow or nearest relation, who provides liquor, and the glass circulates three or four times; all then depart, except the near relations and particular friends of the family, who are especially invited to a feast. The nearest akin to the defunct takes the direction of it; bumpers are drunk to the memory of the departed friend, and prosperity to those he has left behind him, until their grief is completely drowned in wine or Scheidam. Songs then succeed; the musicians are called in; the widow leads off the first dance, and the festivities continue until daylight separates the merry mourners! These strange festivities were carried to such excess, that they were expressly forbid in the province of Overysel. When a person is sick, instead of tying up his papers, as in England, a small board is placed before the door, containing, on a written paper, a daily bulletin of the state of the invalid. When there is an accession, the placard is tastefully ornamented with lace. By these logographs expressions the anxious inquiries of the friends of the invalid are satisfied, while the sick person is not troubled, nor the domestics harassed by the rattling rackets of the knocker, or ringing of the bell; and have a refinement on this topic by placing a bit of the board into which inquiries are directed, on the celebration of a marriage, instead of the bridecake, which is distributed to the guests, a customary for the newly married couple to send to their particular friends two bottles of wine, generally the best old hock, spiced and sugared, and decorated with a profusion of ribbons by two hand-knots."

Mr. Hood has at length favoured the world with his long promised novel of "The Jew." It is, as might be expected from the author's qualifications of the author, very elegant, very quaint, and very correct, abounding with jokes and good-by witticisms, newly "minted" for instance, a Methodist preacher struck a pious woman on the road—

"He accosted her in the same style that he had used to Trigg."

"Stay, woman! I have a message untold! I come with glad tidings."

"Say on then, said the woman; such tidings have long been strange to these ears."

"You're a cursed rook," shouted the sexton, as usual beating time with his stick; "there's a place prepared for you, in the bottomless pit, along with the Devil and his angels."

Hood's fault is the driving his jokes too far. They become wearisome from too much repetition.

TURNING OF AN ICEBERG.

I never shall forget the turning of an iceberg during the dreadful gale which lasted for a week and three days. "I don't know what that name, Sir." "Why, you must know, Jacob, that the bergs are all fresh water, and are supposed to have been detached from the land by the force of the weather and other causes. Now, although in fact, yet it floats deep, that is, if an iceberg is five hundred feet high above the water, it is generally six times as deep below the water; do you understand?" "Perfectly, Sir." "Now, Jacob, the water is much warmer than the ice, and consequently the ice under the water melts very much faster; so that if an iceberg has long been floating, at last the part that is below is not so heavy as that which is above; and it is then, that is, it upsets and floats in another position." "I understand you, Sir." "Well, we were out to an iceberg, which was to the windward of us; a very tall one indeed; and we reckoned that we should get clear of it, for we were carrying a good deal of sail to effect it. Still all hands were busy watching the iceberg, as it came down very fast before the storm. All of a sudden it blew itself as hard as before; and then one of the men shouted out, 'Turning, turning!' and sure enough it was. There was its towering summit gradually bowing towards us, until it almost appeared to be crushed as into atoms. We all fell on our knees, praying mentally, and watching its awful descent; yet the man at the helm did the same, although he did not let go the spokes of the wheel. It fell nearly half turned over, right for us, when it below being heavier on one side than the other, gave it a more slanting impetus; and shifting the direction of its fall, it plunged into the sea about a cable's length astern of us, throwing up the water to the heaven's foam, and blinding us all with its violence which it was dashed into foam. For a minute the run of the waves was checked, and the sea appeared to boil and dance, throwing up peaked pointed masses of water in all directions, one sinking, another rising; the ship rolled and reeled as if she were drunk; even the current of the gale was checked for a moment, and the heavy sails flapped and cleared themselves by their leeches; then all was over. The iceberg was an iceberg of another shape, and the gale commenced, the waves sprang up as before; and we felt the return of the gale as usual as it was, as a reprieve."—*Jacob Hood.*

A PREDICTORIAL DISCOURSE.

When Father Goutlier was preaching in the town of France, he possessed the following sermon, his Majesty was accompanied, and in presence of the Marchioness de Varsailles, making a tour in the King, in the hope of discommodating the King. Henry was, at length, excited; he was so excited; when the preacher, who had just claimed from the pulpit, "Hue, hue, hue, hue, you violate the sanctity of the Holy Scriptures, coming to church to hear his holy preaching, and by a seraglio!" Madame de Varsailles, who was seated by the side of the King, was so excited, she persuaded the King to consign the preacher to the dungeons of the Bastille. St. Henry satisfied himself by sending for the preacher, and shaking him by his just rebuke, and that, for the future, his expostulations might be more private.

The office of Physician-General and Surgeon-General to the Forces is dispensed with by the Irish establishment; but the staff of Assistant Surgeons is augmented.

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