

Dr. Henry Walford Davies, whose elevation to the knighthood was announced by the London correspondent of *The Register* on Monday, is a brother of Professor E. Harold Davies, Mus. Doc., the Director of the Adelaide Conservatorium of Music. He has been prominent in musical circles in London for many years. Sir Henry is 53 years old, and was born in Shropshire (England). He entered the choir at St. George's Chapel Royal, Windsor, in 1882. From 1885 to 1890 he was assistant organist to Sir Walter Parratt, having charge



SIR HENRY WALFORD DAVIES.

for the same period of the choir at Windsor Park Chapel. He has been organist in many large English churches since 1890, and resigned the position of organist of the Temple Church, London, to become Professor of Music at Aberystwyth University, Wales. Sir Henry Walford Davies has composed numerous organ pieces, as well as anthems, and other vocal choruses and solos. One of his compositions was played at Princess Mary's wedding in Westminster Abbey, and others are familiar to Adelaide community singers.

Professor Strong, who was received with applause, said he would speak mainly of the ballads of the 15th century, but his remarks would be divided into three parts. He would deal with the great age of the English ballad, reaching back to the 15th century. The second part would be concerned with the less highly wrought and more domesticated and journalistic writings of the 16th and 17th centuries, which indeed continued down to the 19th century. The third part would deal with modern ballads, which differed materially from those of the other periods.

After referring to a modern reproduction of selections from the collection of Samuel Pepys, the lecturer dealt in detail with the characteristics of the writings of the 16th century. He reminded his audience that several Scottish writers had contributed largely to this class of literature, and pointed out that Burns was only one of a number of fine poets of Scotland. In their earliest form the ballads of Western Europe were composed to be sung in recitative form. That accounted for the recurring choruses. He dealt with the theory of communal improvisation, which had found many advocates in America, and advanced arguments against it. He thought they might assume that there had been an individual author for each ballad which had come down to them from an early age. Of course he did not mean by that that there was a different author for each poem. Probably a great many came from the pen of some single author. Speaking of the theory that the ancient ballad was a degradation of the romance form, Dr. Strong said he did not think the idea could be supported. It was more nearly akin to the old epic poetry. It was related to it by sympathy and many other features. Many of the old ballads existed in two or more forms. Some instances were given in which more modern poets had revised old ballads.

Speaking of the forms of ballads, the lecturer said the most beautiful classes were those in which magic, romance, and the supernatural had a place. Mystery, charm, grace, intensity of vision, and emotion characterised some of these. Several fine examples were quoted of ballads which possessed distinctive features. Amongst these were the works of Thomas the Rhymer, and a number of others. Another theme which had been turned to good account in the composition of ballads was the conflict in the mind of young girls who desired to choose their own lovers, when others wished to make the selection for them. The Robin Hood ballads were also referred to, and some compositions descriptive of the border feuds were instanced. The lecturer spoke in terms of high appreciation of the "Nut Brown Maid." The fine delicate metre, the original grace, and the melodious word music made this idyll of the wild wood one of most charming compositions of the period in which it was composed. In conclusion a tribute was paid to several modern writers. Included in these were Swinburne, Kipling, and Newbolt. The last-named author had written ballads which had much of the charms of those of the best period.

At the instance of Dr. Ramsay Smith and Mrs. Fairweather, the lecturer was cordially thanked.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE.

Examination results for November, Ordinary examination for the Degree of Bachelor of Music.—Pass list (in alphabetical order):

First Year.—Second Class—Robert Dalley-Scahill, Bernice Enid Harvey. Third Class—Henry George Trenerry.

Second Year.—Second Class—Laurel Evelyn Taylor.

Third Year.—Third Class—Faith Fairbank Harvey.

THE GLORY OF HANDEL

"The Messiah."

Christmas—and "The Messiah." The association is familiar and precious. Hosts of music-loving souls, looking forward to the commemoration of the Passion, find in the solemn beauty of Handel's masterpiece what Confucius dreamed all great music might be—a symbol of the harmony between heaven and earth. Do we take the oratorio—and its glories too much for granted? Dr. E. Harold Davies thinks that we do. "I never come back to a rehearsal of 'The Messiah,'" he says, "although I have known it all my life, without being lost in amazement at its expressive possibilities and grandeur. Sinners take it too much for granted. If they would only approach it in the right spirit they would find perpetually a new revelation."

This year the Bach Society, of which, as everybody knows, Dr. E. Harold Davies has always been the ruling spirit will combine with the South Australian Orchestra, under the conductorship of Mr. W. H.



DR. E. HAROLD DAVIES.

Foote, and with the assistance of the Tramways Band, the two fine musical bodies will give on Saturday, November 18, a performance which should mark an epoch in South Australia's musical annals. The Bach Society has another special claim to interest just now—it is approaching its majority. Interviewed by a representative of *The Register*, Dr. Davies smilingly countered an invitation to say something about the Bach Society's work. "One cannot talk about one's own 'child,'" he said, "but the Bach Society has been one of the loves of my life. You know, of course, that we are approaching our twenty-first birthday, and I may just say that we intend next year to give Elgar's 'Dream of Gerontius.' Twelve years ago we gave that oratorio for the first time. What a work it was to give the 'Dream of Gerontius,' when, as in those days, orchestral playing was far less developed among us than it now is."

Referring to the close connection between the traditional English love of choral singing, and the oratorios of Handel, he said:—"It is one of the most interesting features of the study of music to note the reaction upon art, at all times and at all stages of development, of national influences. Handel, with all his musical genius, was an astute man of affairs. Realizing the English love for the choral art, he at once saw the importance of developing his works on the lines of choral display. The result was, of course, that his tremendous genius found, as it were, a new outlet. His monumental choruses are among the greatest of his achievements. The actual story of Handel's deviation to the oratorio form is a further illustration of his opportunistic intelligence. He found himself with a theatre on his hands in the season of Lent, when it was, of course, quite impossible to produce an opera, so he put together some scenes of a masque which he had previously composed, called 'Haman and Mordecai' dished it up as a sacred musical play, and called it an oratorio! It had a most phenomenal success."

"What was the first big work undertaken by the Bach Society?" "The St. Matthew Passion, on May 28, 1903."

"What point of comparison most strikes you," Dr. Davies was asked, "between the St. Matthew Passion and 'The Messiah.'"

"It is interesting to note the extraordinary difference in the mental outlook, and in the style of the two men. Bach's work is always intensely subjective, and for the most part lyric, while Handel is, when in his normal vein, objective and epic. Bach concentrated on the story of the Passion; Handel wrote of the Old Testament heroes, such as Samson and Saul. The Bach ideal was more an act of worship than an oratorio on the conventional epic lines which Handel affected. Much of Handel's style and all of his early vocal tradition were derived from his association with the Italians; while Bach's unconventional and deeply expressive idioms are due to his intense subjectivity and his complete reliance on himself to express in most eloquent terms his own convictions. Every phrase of Bach is sincere and intense; even his recitatives one might almost say that Handel, on the other hand, as at his greatest when he is least like himself. Then he escapes from his conventional style, and becomes absolutely imbued with the spirit of his text. Take the Passion recitatives like 'Thy rebuke hath broken his heart; they are among the most unforgettable things in the whole realm of music."

"The edition of 'Messiah' we use is that compiled by the late Professor Prout from the original Handel score. It is interesting to recall that Dr. Henry Coward, who was here some years ago with the Sheffield Choir, and was at that time engaged in writing his great book on choral technique, sent to me for reading his manuscript chapters on 'The Messiah,' and also a copy of the Prout edition, containing all his own suggestions for the interpretation of 'The Messiah' choruses—the result of a lifetime of study and experience with the Yorkshire Choir. It is curious—and in its way a revelation of the often unrealised possibilities of the work—to note what importance Dr. Coward attached to the necessity for a suitable choral timbre for each chorus. For instance, opposite 'He trusted in God that He would deliver them' is written, 'to be sung in a jeering, nasal tone of voice.'"

"What do you think, Doctor, of the contention of many people that 'The Messiah' should have ended with the Hallelujah Chorus—that anything else must come as an anti-climax?"

"I think they are absolutely wrong. The final chorus, 'Worthy is the Lamb,' and the Amen Chorus, in splendour and dynamic outdistance even the Hallelujah Chorus. But, after all, for the ideal interpretation of the Amen Chorus you would need a chorus of a thousand voices, an immense orchestra, and a great organ. The glory of it all would be a thing to dream of. In point of actual instinct, Handel was unerring when he followed the Hallelujah Chorus with 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.' It is the only thing which could possibly follow it."

Board of Governors
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His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor has announced that the undermentioned constitute the Board of Governors of the Public Library, Museum, and Art Gallery:—Appointed by his Excellency the Governor—Messrs. T. Gill, C.M.G., I.S.O., B. S. Roach, S. T. Smith, Dr. Richard Sanders Rogers, and Mrs. Jeanne F. Young. Elected by the University of Adelaide—Professor G. C. Henderson, and Mr. William James Ibbister, K.C. Elected by the Royal Society—Professor F. Wood Jones. Elected by the Society of Arts—Mr. Edward Davies. Elected by the Royal Geographical Society—Mr. W. B. Wilkinson. Elected by the Adelaide Circulating Library—Mr. C. M. Reid. Elected by the Institutes Association—Messrs. H. D. Gill, S.M., L. H. Sholl, C.M.G., I.S.O., Sir William Sowden.

THE POETRY SOCIETY.

ADDRESS ON ENGLISH BALLADS.

The annual meeting of the Poetry Society was held at the North-terrace Institute on Tuesday evening, when the president (Mr. A. M. Bonython) occupied the chair, and there was a large attendance. At a preliminary business meeting the following officers were elected:—President, Mr. A. M. Bonython; vice-presidents, Mrs. Fairweather, Mr. A. Gask; hon. secretary, Mrs. Treloar; hon. treasurer, Mr. S. D. Kerr; council, Lady Symon, Mrs. J. H. O. Eaton, Miss Seale, Sir William Sowden, Dr. Ramsay Smith, Rabbi Bernstein, Messrs. E. W. Benham, W. W. Godhart, E. S. Hughes, and J. Wilson.

The President, who was accorded a splendid reception, announced the result of the election of officers. He was gratified at the result of the work of the year just closed. They had every reason to be pleased with the excellent addresses which had been delivered. Many of the members took the study of literature seriously, and they had found the meetings stimulating. The attendances had been gratifying. The average had been 66. He would like to see the membership augmented and the attendances larger. The official meetings during the year just entered on would begin at 8 o'clock, but he would like members to meet at 7.30 for social intercourse, and with the object of becoming better acquainted with each other. (Applause.) The activities of the present session would close that night. Professor Strong had consented to address the society on English ballads, a subject in which they were a deeply interested. (Applause.)

Professor Strong
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