

arranged for two more visits, next autumn and next spring. It would be impossible to give an account, however concise, of the endless number of concerts given lately; no less than forty-two were given in June, and twenty-five last month, the most notable of which were those given at St. James Hall, by Mr. Charles Hallé and Madame Norman Neruda, and at Princes' Hall, by Madame Frickenhans and Herr Ludwig.

Sir Arthur Sullivan has been installed grand organist of the Freemasons for the present year; his comic opera *Patience* has been performed with brilliant success in Vienna being received with unanimous favour. Arrangements are being made for the performance of Dr. Mackenzie's *Story of Sayid*, and Sir Arthur Sullivan's *Golden Legend*, during the ensuing winter at Geneva.

Dr. J. F. Bridge and Dr. Mackenzie, have both been commissioned to write new works for the Birmingham Festival next year.

Mr. Dan Godfrey, the eminent leader of the band of the Grenadier Guards has received the rank of *lieutenant*; this is the only honour bestowed on a musician in connection with the Jubilee; whilst no one will gudge him the honour, it would have been gratifying to see some of the representatives of England's rising school of native composers recognized.

The only musical event taking place here this month is the Welsh National Eisteddfod, which commenced on the 9th, at the Royal Albert Hall, the Prince of Wales residing.

There will be a dearth of musical news till October, and therefore very little material for a letter next month, but you shall have what there is.

VARIETIES.

THE AMATEUR QUARTET.

MR. Scroopegg is an enthusiastic fiddler, and, like many others of the large class of amateurs, he is "nothing if not classical." He affects the higher regions of solo-playing, and never appears at the local concerts in anything less pretentious than a concerto by Spohr, or the "Witches' Dance," by Paganini, both of which he "hangs, draws and quarters" until the composers would not know their own offspring. The quartet, however, is his battle-horse, and though he has never maltreated the concert-going public of Boville by forcing one of Beethoven's posthumous quartets down their long-suffering throats, he has his friends at his house once a week for quartet practice.

The *enrôl* of the amateur quartet is always either viola or 'cello, usually the latter. Baggs, the 'cellist of Scroopegg's party, is a man of the old school, though his 'cello (which he draws from a green baize bag as daintily as a mother handles her first baby) is most decidedly modern, and gives forth a harsh metallic tone which can only be described as appalling. When Baggs puts on the whole weight of his heavy bow to produce a *fortissimo*, the fiddlers can only be heard faintly, like the distant hum of a distracted blue-bottle.

"You're late, Baggs," says Scroopegg, looking at his watch as Baggs comes in seven minutes and three-quarters past the appointed hour for the assault on Beethoven. Whiner, the second, and Dolores, the tenor, are seated before their respective stands, bristling with offended dignity as Baggs sits down to tune up, only condescending to give him the smallest nod by way of recognition. Baggs smiles grimly as he resins his bow, as much as to say, "You can't get along without me!"

"Your C string is half a tone flat, Baggs," says the leader, when the awful process of tuning the strident 'cello is over.

"Suppose we begin," says Whiner, timidly, without daring to risk an opinion on the tuning. Whiner is a tailor, and Baggs is one of his best customers, so the C string might be any number of half tones flat before he would remark on the fact.

"We can't begin till that string is in tune," says Scroopegg, flourishing in the ninth position; "Beethoven would turn over in his grave."

Baggs grunts, turns the C peg around both ways, and leaves it, out of sheer spite, just where it was. He knows it is out of tune, but he is not to be taught at his time of

life, how to tune a 'cello, and especially by a young scraper like Scroopegg.

"That's better," says the latter, approvingly. "Now then, one, two, three—"

They are off, considerably off, for at the first pressure of the tenor's bow his G string gives a howl, consisting of a series of notes not down in the copy. His peg has slipped. Another delay of a couple of minutes, during which Scroopegg whistles "Grandfather's Clock" with the air of a true martyr.

"It's all right now," says Dolores, coloring to the temples with vexation.

At length a start is made, and such a start! Now, if ever, is the time for the man of Bonn to turn over in his grave. The Allegro is at last done, very much done; in fact, done brown on all sides.

"Now for the *Sherzo*," says Scroopegg, with a smile that is diabolically complacent. He always says "*sherzo*," and talks of the Doggy of Venice; but then he was never taught German, which of course is not his fault. The "*Sherzo*" goes on until a rapid scale of demi-semis brings him up short, and he finds at a convenient moment that his E string has sunk a bit. Whiner tries to play first fiddle while the mischief is repaired, but fails; Baggs is swinging along in fine style, and seems likely to be first at the winning post, when the tenor gives it up as a bad job, and the whole lot come to a dead stand, just as Haley, Sam and Andy in "Uncle Tom's Cabin" did, when they found a barn built right across the highway.

The Adagio (with a hard g in Scroopegg's classic style of pronunciation) is next assayed.

"This Adagio," he explains, "wants very tender handling," and they begin. But Whiner's false stopping is most painfully apparent in the long drawn chords, and Dolores, who is afflicted with a very sensitive ear, looks at poor Whiner as though he would annihilate him. Baggs plays on with a noble disregard for expression, all p's being f's, and all his f's being fiff's; and his last chord is like the trump of the Archangel.

The final movement is a poser. The semi-quavers in 2-4 time (Key A-flat) put poor Whiner quite out of the running, and he plays a few bars, with only a faint suspicion that he is on the spot. Scroopegg blazes away at a mighty pace, leaving half his notes out in his desire to keep strict time, while Baggs and Dolores grimly resolve to do or die, and not to be outrun by the conceited puppy Scroopegg. Crash—bang, go the final chords, and the quartet is over.

And no member of the party seemed to know that he had been doing a solemn murder!—*The Fiddler*.

A MUSICAL CRITICISM.

A student of human nature who attended a popular concert was filled with joy and wonder by the display of learning made by two ladies sitting behind him. The student did not know a great deal about music, though he felt reasonably sure about telling the difference between a funeral march and a galop, and consequently he drank in with great avidity the free instruction which came from behind him. The conversation began when Mozart's *Magie Flute* overture was half played.

"How funny! Do you hear anything of the flute?"

"Not a thing."

"Well, if I had been writing an overture about a flute I would have made the instrument more prominent."

"So would I; but just look at the fur on that woman's cloak."

"Isn't it lovely?"

"Yes; I wonder how much it cost."

"What, the overture?"

"No, the fur."

"Oh, I mean the music."

"Oh, yes, of course. What are they playing now?"

"Here it is, 'Airs de ballet, Orfee et Eurydice.' It has a dance of the fairies in it. I shouldn't think the fairies would want to dance."

Then there was a lence for a little space. Soon the band played the allegretto from Beethoven's eighth symphony. When it was finished one lady said to the other:

"How sweet and simple."

"Yes, but that wasn't the symphony; a symphony is longer than that I know."

"Well, what was it?"