

MACKENZIE'S "JUBILEE ODE."

THIS work, upon which Dr. Mackenzie has been engaged for some time past, is now complete, and sent to several distant parts of the Empire, where arrangements are made to perform it in celebration of the Jubilee. Primarily, as our readers know, the Ode was intended for the Crystal Palace only, but it will be given also in Canada, Australia, Trinidad, Cape Colony, etc.; thus standing out from all its fellows as, in some sort, an Imperial work.

Without anticipating the criticism which will follow upon performance, we may here give some idea of the scope and character of the Ode. Mr. Joseph Bennett, the writer of the words, has kept strictly in view the exigencies of music setting. He has obviously prepared, not a short poem for readers, but one for musical hearers. Hence a variety of rhythm and structure which, otherwise, would certainly not have been ventured upon. From the same cause arises also the manner in which the subject is laid out, with a view to contrast of musical effect. We may indicate the nature of this arrangement. In the first vocal number, a chorus, the news of the Jubilee is proclaimed and its diffusion throughout the Empire called for. The second number, a tenor solo, conveys to the Queen the affectionate greetings of her home lands, declaring that, to keep the feast with unanimity, all weapons of party warfare are laid aside. In the third number the Colonies and Dependencies pay their homage, the idea worked out being that of a procession passing before the throne. First comes the Dominion, followed by Australia, the smaller Colonies and Islands, and, lastly, by India. Each of these divisions has a section of the chorus to itself. The fifth number, a soprano solo, dwells upon the personal virtues of the Sovereign, while the sixth, and last, opening with a choral prayer for the Empire continues with lines leading to the National Anthem, for which a new second verse has been written. How far the writer has been guided by consideration for musical opportunities need not, after this outline sketch, be indicated. The spirit in which Mr. Bennett has approached his theme best appears, perhaps, in the opening verses:—

For fifty years our Queen!
Victoria! hail!

Take up the cry, glad voices,
And pass the strain
O'er hill and plain,

Peaceful hamlet, roaring city, flowing river,
Till all the land rejoices,
Wild clanging bells and thund'rous cannon
With your loudest shock the air, and make it quiver
From Dee to Tamar, Thames to Shannon.

For fifty years our Queen!
Victoria! hail!

Take up the cry, old Ocean,
And hoarsely shout
The words about—

British ships and world-wide British lands will cheer them—
Rouse an Empire's full devotion,
O blowing Wind, come hither bearing
Answering voices, loud acclaiming,
Hark! we hear them,
They our loyal pride are sharing.

In setting the words to music, Dr. Mackenzie has necessarily to consider the place of performance, and the number of performers. This, however, was an amiable and fortunate obligation, since the result

has been to give us a work built upon broad lines, and marked by plainness of structure to an extent unusual with that composer. We think that the music will be found to have a true festive ring, and a majestic solidity befitting the occasion. In the solos, with their more subdued expression, Dr. Mackenzie has kept contrast in view, without sacrifice of simplicity; but it is in the choruses that he best shows himself a master of bold and striking effects. Every bar goes straight to the point, while avoiding the common-places that naturally suggest themselves in the writing of festive music. The procession chorus is, in this respect, most noteworthy of all, and may be found no mean rival of that in the *Rose of Sharon*.—*Musical Times*.

MUSICAL CULTURE IN CANADA—A FEW WORDS ABOUT AMATEURS.

ANY one with cultivated musical taste cannot fail to be impressed with the fact that our amateur music in Canada requires much renovation. I do not mean to say that plenty of *sound* is not heard almost everywhere, but *quality* and not *quantity* is what is so greatly needed in order to raise the present musical standard.

Why should this dearth of really good amateur music exist in a country which has made such rapid strides in other directions? Twenty or thirty years ago, there was perhaps, some excuse. Music teachers were scarce, and indeed, in many places, not to be obtained at all. Now, however, there are but few Canadian towns of any importance which do not overflow with teachers, and surely there must be thousands of intelligent young people, willing and able to take full advantage of musical instruction. Yet, what awful trash do we constantly hear! What wild scamperings across the long-suffering piano! What silly, sentimental stuff is wailed forth by some of our "very musical" young ladies! I cannot blame them, for how can you expect people who have never, perhaps, heard one note of good music in all their lives, to perform and appreciate what they cannot understand? There are many, of course, who possess that natural refinement of ear which instinctively separates the gold from the dross in music, as a painter's eye distinguishes the true from the false coloring; but these are the exceptions, and I speak of the average. Who, then, is to blame? *Chiefly the teachers*. Not that class of know-nothings who flood the country (and about whom I shall write at a future time)—but those who *do* know what is right, and yet do not insist upon their pupils discarding at once all the wretched apologies for music to which they have been accustomed, and endeavour to inculcate in them a taste for pure art. *These* are the teachers who are to blame—and that heavily. There are, I am fully aware many painstaking music teachers in Canada who have done, and are still doing much to create this pure musical taste. I know others, however, who do not strive for this good end. Teachers who are really competent, but who do not care to take the trouble.

Teachers have much to contend with, I grant. In many instances bad habits have already been formed—often past all redemption. Young ladies come for "a quarters' lessons—just to finish!" when in reality,