to be played during the "Present" when the Kaiser passes down in front of the troops. This was played by the Kaiser's orders at a banquet in the casino of the territorial battalions. The Kaiser also sent for the youth, and strongly recommended him to try his hand at grand opera. "It would give me great pleasure," said the monarch, "to attend the performance of a Garnier opera."

Melbourne University Dramatic Club are to do next week J. M. Barrie's "Alice-sit-by-the-fire." Their last production was Galsworthy's "The Silver Box."

Latest London joke.—Big fat eighteen stone Pelissier—king of that delightful troupe of satirists, "The Follies," is now masquerading as Maude Allan in a Salome dance. The burlesque is said to be the funniest thing on record.

"Via Wireless — C.Q.D." ("Come Quickly, Danger!") has not been produced in London. It was staged last month in Glasgow and is to be given in the metropolis later.

The harp is one of the oldest musical instruments, and in ancient times and during the Middle Ages played an important part in the history of music. As an orchestral instrument it was much used by Berlioz and other notable modern composers, while as a solo instrument it was in vogue up to the early part of last century. Within recent times interest in harp playing seems to have revived.

From the New York "Evening Post": What does Puccini think of Wagner's "Tristan and Isolde?" The answer to this question was given the other day to Dr. Halperson by Mr Gatti-Casazza. Nine years ago "Tristan" had its first Italian performance at the Scala in Milan, of which Mr Gatti-Casazza was the manager, and Mr Toscanini the conductor. The best Italian singers had been engaged, and there was much enthusiasm after each curtain. There were unbelievers, however, and one of these said to Puccini: "What horrible music! It is really barbarous? How I look forward to the next performance of your 'Boheme,' which will be a real joy after this impossible music." But Puccini exploded like a bomb. "Sir!" he exclaimed, "are you trying to make fun of me? You surely cannot utter such nonsense seriously. Do you not know that we have just heard the greatest musical masterwork of all time? And you dare to mention my 'Boheme' in the same breath with this wonderful score!"

The famous Besses o' the Barn band reached Plymouth last month on the White Star liner "Runic," after a seventeen months' tour, during which they have travelled 46,000 miles, visited 173 towns, and given 526 concerts. The tour embraced South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Tasmania. The band went out thirty-three strong and returned three short of that number. Bandmaster Smith remained in Adelaide to take charge of the city tramways band; Mr Byers, one of the solo horn players, also secured an engagement in Adelaide; and Mr Ryder, a cornet soloist, received an appointment at Melbourne.

It will be news to most people that the air of the classic ditty, "We won't go home till morning"—which is, of course, a variation of "For he's a jolly good fellow"—was originally the music of a pathetic French folk song. It will be a surprise also to learn that "The Marseillaise" was composed by a German at Strassburg in 1792. The music of the "Star Spangled Banner" was originally Stafford Smith's glee to "Anacreon in Heaven," so that America's principal patriotic air was set to the music of an English composer. Our own national anthem was evolved from a musical manuscript discovered in 1822 by a Dr. John Bull.

At the first concert of the season of the Sydney Amateur Orchestral Society a performance of Mr. Alfred Hill's song "Tangi" was given. Speaking of the occasion the "Telegraph" says:—"Mr. Alfred Hill's reputation as a composer is so well known that those present were not surprised to discover melodic charm and spirit in his song, "A tangi," a Maori lament over the dead body of a chief. Mr. Hill has caught the real spirit of the mourners as they sing the praises of the dead, and the change from the dirge-like character of the music to the impetuous defiance of the words, "Once he waved his mere on high," where the singer chants the war song, "Ake, ake, kia kaha!" was thoroughly dramatic. Mr. Arthur Appleby sang the solo artistically, while, with Mr. H. Staell as leader, the orchestral score, in which Mr. Hill has made very effective use of the woodwind and brass, was admirably played. Mr. Hill, who conducted, was revalled with Mr. Appleby."

The Songs of S. Coleridge-Taylor.

AN INTERESTING REVIEW.

By GEORGE LOWE.

THE work of such a composer as S. Coleridge-Taylor is always welcome, for it rarely fails to be original and exhilarating, and as Hazlitt has said: "Originality is nothing but nature and feeling working in the mind. A man does not affect to be original; he is so because he cannot help it, and often without knowing it."

The instantaneous popularity of the composer's "Song of Hiawatha" has rather overshadowed the claims to popularity of much of his other work, and yet, as the years pass by, it is evident that there are no signs of atrophy in his genius. If he has occasionally put forth a weak work, he has redeemed himself shortly afterwards by issuing a strong one. There are critics who say that Coleridge-Taylor has never written anything of any very serious import since the "Song of Hiawatha," and I cannot help feeling that this opinion is quite unjustifiable. I would grant that he has never written anything since quite so picturesque, for poems such as that of Longfellow are great rarities. The fine Finnish poem, "Kalevala," is, perhaps, the nearest approach to it. At all events, Coleridge-Taylor has, since writing his magnum opus, been somewhat unfortunate in his choice of subjects for musical illustration, and if he has not satisfied all critics, it must be remembered that few composers can hope to obtain the full diapason of applause.

His incidental music to some of Stephen Phillips' dramas, however, I think, is particularly noticeable for its expressive appropriateness. Then, too, his songs are always fresh and melodious, and often very beautiful.

His earliest published songs are the "Southern Love Songs," Op. 12. With the exception of the first of these, "My Love," these songs show few indications of the composer's budding genius. "The African Romances," Op. 17, however, began to show that there was a new mind at work in music. The rhythmic originality of them was incontestable, whilst most of them showed great promise in their harmonic framework. In such songs as "An African Love Song," "A Starry Night," and "Ballad," for instance, the composer appears to pitch his little musical phrases at one, and the insistence with which they make their appearance produces quite an exhilarating effect, even if they do not touch any great depths of feeling. Interesting and melodious, too, are some of the other numbers of the set, such as "Dawn," "Over the Hills," and "How Shall I Woo Thee?" Similar and equally effective and original is the separately issued song, "A Corn Song."

Of the three numbers forming "In Memoriam," the second, "Substitution," is distinctly the best. The third, "Weep Not, Beloved Friends," is also worthy of attention, the accompaniment being based upon a descending progression of chromatic chords. All three of these songs aimed at more intense expression than the composer had attempted before in his vocal music, and the experiment was justified by its success.

The six songs of Op. 37 contain some of the composer's best song-writing work. The "Canoe Song" has a charming melody, and has a different accompaniment to each of its three verses, the contrapuntal accompaniment to the second verse being especially deft and poetical in its effect. "Sweet Evenings Come and Go, Love," is also a song of the greatest charm with the same melody allotted to each verse, the first verse being in the major key, the second in the minor, the third in the relative major of that minor key, and the third in the original key. The figure of the accompaniment, too, is highly effective. In total contrast is the dramatic song, "A Blood-Red Ring Hung Round the Moon," and in Mr. Coleridge-Taylor's hands it becomes a weird, gruesome thing that haunts one long afterwards. The change from the major to the minor key in each verse shows a true touch of genius, and it is the best setting of the powerful poem that I have met. "Is the Moon's Soft Splendour" is in waltz rhythm, though it is redeemed from monotony by the effective guitar-like accompaniment. The song "Eleanore" is another song of the dramatic order, in which the passion is unforced, and whose big chord accompaniment in this case lends no little aid to the general effect.

The set of "American Lyrics" are also interesting. The best of them are: "O Praise Me Not," "Her Love" (with its rippling accompaniment), "O Ship That Sailest Slowly On," and "The Dark Eye Has Left Us." The last of these is a most impressive and mournful lament, the change from the minor to the major key, though simply effected, being strikingly arresting. Of the other two songs, "O Thou Mine Other Stronger Part" is dramatic, though in somewhat ostentatious manner; whilst "Beat, Beat, Drums," to words of Walt Whitman, is sturdy and vigorous, though not among the best of the songs.

The book of "Sorrow Songs," Op. 57, to words of Christina Rossetti, however, are excellent. The setting of the famous poem, "When I Am Dead, My Dearest," is the best that I know, simple and true. Exquisite, too, is the song "Unmindful of the Roses," with its accompaniment of descending chords. "Oh, Roses for the Flush of Youth," too, has much to recommend it, whilst the curious rhythm of "She Sat and Sang Alway," quickly claims the attention. The whole volume, however, contains some of the best work of the clever composer.

The book of "Five Fairy Ballads" is a collection of songs rather different to what the composer has written before. They are half of a childlike and half of a semi-like nature, and are simple both to sing and play. The best are "Sweet Baby Butterfly," "Big Lady Moon," and "Fairy Roses," though "Alone With Mother" and "The Stars" are good of their kind, and all display the composer's gift of melody, if here, at times, it is somewhat reminiscent.

"Sons of the Sea" is a fine vigorous song that in the hands of a good baritone should prove highly popular. In "A Lament" we meet with one of the most beautiful of all Coleridge-Taylor's songs. It is simply written as are so many of the finest songs of the more classical writers, but the sorrow is naturally and truly expressed in a manner such as only a richly endowed musical and poetical mind could have expressed it.

Among the songs included in the incidental music to certain dramas of Stephen Phillips, the drinking song, "Great Is He Who Faced the Night," from "Ulysses," and "Sleep, Sleep, O King," from "Herod," are noticeable.

First of Modern French Composers.

An Interesting Interview with Debussy.

I DON'T know how I compose; really, I don't," said Claude Debussy in Paris to an interviewer for the New York "Times." "At the piano? No, I can't say I do. I don't know how to explain it exactly. It always seems to me that we musicians are only instruments, very complicated ones, it is true, but instruments which merely reproduce the harmonies which spring up within us. I don't think any composer knows how he does it. Of course, in the first place, I must have a subject. Then I concentrate on that subject, as it were—no, not musically, in an ordinary way, just as anybody would think of a subject. Then gradually, after these thoughts have simmered for a certain length of time, music begins to centre around them, and I feel that I must give expression to the harmonies which haunt me. And then I work unceasingly. There are days and weeks and often months that no ideas come to me. No matter how much I try, I cannot produce work that I am satisfied with. They say some composers can write, regularly, so much music a day; I admit I cannot comprehend it. Of course, I can work out the instrumentation of a piece of music at almost any time, but as for getting the theme itself—that I cannot do. I have tried it. I have forced myself to work when I felt least like it, and I have done things which did not seem so bad at the time. I would let those compositions lie for a couple of days. Then I would find they were only fit for the waste basket. No," turning to another subject, "I have never been in America. In fact, I never go to any place where my work is being performed. I never go to hear my own work. I can't. It is to terrible for me. The interpretation is always so different from what I mean it to be; not in the singers, but in the general interpretation. An opera is not like a drama. In a drama the words go directly to the spectator's brain or to his heart, as the case may be. At any rate, he understands them. But in music it is so different. In the first place, how many persons really understand music? Of course most people are fond of some form of it. I mean they like to hear it, but how many think in music? How many associate music with ideas? While the dramatist's words may not always reach the spectator's heart, they at least reach his brain, and thus the dramatist stands a much greater chance of being understood than the musician, who has to work with what is an unknown quantity to most of the audience. In the second place, the dramatist makes his words felt directly. He does not have to have a third person interpret them. A composer's works have to pass through a conductor. If the conductor is at all good, even though he may try to render the composer's idea, he will put in his own soul, and the moment the conductor puts in his soul the composer is already in the background. So it pains me to hear my own work. I cannot bear to have my work interpreted just the contrary of the way I want it. Yes, I was always fond of music," he continued in answer to a question. "What kind of music? All kinds. Here you hit upon what I think is the greatest mistake of the present day—the desire to classify all music. How can you do that? You speak of German music, Italian music, impressionistic music, and various other kinds. What is the difference? I mean, if you are speaking of a work of art, you cannot say definitely that it belongs to any great group. It is a work of art, and that is enough. There is no vital difference between French music and German music, for instance. There is a difference between the temperaments of the various composers, that is all. Of course, as a rule, we French people have a love of clearness of expression and of harmony (which we are losing, by the way), which the Germans do not have to such a great extent. Italian music may have more melody, you say. Yes—in a way. I really don't know. What do I think of it? That all depends upon the humour I am in. I may go to hear a Verdi opera when in a pleasant state of mind, and I find it admirable; I go another day less well disposed, and I find it abominable. Italian music commonplace? I don't know. You say it is like a woman who is beautiful, but has no intelligence. But beauty is a great deal—a very great deal, indeed, and not everybody can have that. See how people are carried away by Italian music. It touches a chord in their hearts. Beauty in a woman—and in music—is a great deal, a very great deal."

A PROVIDENT PRINCE.

"I think," said the foreign heir-apparent, "that I will add music and dancing to my accomplishments."

"Aren't they rather fight?"

"They may seem so to you, but they will be very handy if a revolution occurs, and I have to go on the music-hall stage."