

SOUTHAMPTON LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

LECTURE ON "STERNDALE BENNETT."

The members of the Southampton Literary and Philosophical Society held the second meeting of the 1916-17 session at the King Edward VI. Grammar School on Monday, when a very instructive paper on Sir Wm. Sterndale Bennett was read by Mrs. J. D. Haysom. The President of the Society, Dr. Alex. Hill, M.A., F.R.C.S., in his introductory remarks, reminded his hearers that music was not literature, and it was not philosophy, though it was of very little less importance than the natural sciences.

Mrs. Haysom described the subject of her paper as an English composer, who had attained a distinct style and individuality of his own, and whose works could be reckoned amongst the classics. He was born in Sheffield in 1815, where his father was organist of the parish church, and both his parents died when he was very young. He then went to his grandfather's home at Cambridge, where his musical education was well cared for, and he was placed as a student in the Royal Academy of Music. On his grandfather's wish he took the violin as his principal study, but his exquisite touch on the pianoforte manifested itself, and he afterwards gave that instrument his chief attention. At the age of 12 he appeared as a pianist at an Academy concert. Sterndale Bennett's "Concerto in D Minor," written in 1832, was one of his earliest compositions, and possessed great merit. He was summoned to Windsor to play before King William IV. and Queen Adelaide in 1833, and created a great impression. When he had attained the age of 19 he had already written a number of works, his compositions being essentially refined and beautiful, and with an exquisite grace. In 1836 he was present at the great musical festival at Dusseldorf, and the same year went to Leipzig, where Mendelssohn welcomed him, and introduced him to Schumann.

In 1842 the composer spent his Easter HOLIDAYS IN SOUTHAMPTON, where he visited his fiancée, Miss Mary Wood, and was married at All Saints' Church, Southampton, on Easter Tuesday, April 9th. In 1849 he inaugurated the Bach Society, the year previous having written his best-known work, "The May Queen," for the first Leeds festival. He was knighted by Queen Victoria in 1871, and less than four years after died, on February 1st, 1875, in his 59th year. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, in the north aisle, known as "the musicians' aisle."

The lecture was illustrated with examples of the composer's works by Mrs. H. E. Cox, Miss Alice Lacey, Messrs. F. Good year, H. B. Lankester, and J. A. S. Curtis. These examples were the part-songs "Come live with me," "With a laugh as we go round" ("The May Queen"), the tri "The Hawthorn in the Glade" ("The May Queen"), the piano solos "Three Sketches" (the lake, the mill stream and the fountain), the Barcarolle from the 4th Concerto, "Rondino" and his songs, "Whoever drinketh of this water" and "His Salvation is nigh them that fear Him" (from "The Woman of Samaria" and "May Dew"). The illustrations were received with loud applause. On the proposition of the President, the gathering accorded a hearty vote of thanks to Mrs. Haysom.