

CHOIRS AND CHORAL MUSIC

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Choirs and choral music by Arthur Mees

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ARTHUR MEES

**CHOIRS AND
CHORAL MUSIC**

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Choirs and Choral Music

By

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With Portraits

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Preface

AS chorus singing is the sphere of public musical activity which now belongs legitimately to amateurs, and choral music the class of music for the performance of which the public is almost entirely dependent on amateurs, the question as to how chorus singing and choral music came to be what they are must be of general interest. To throw light on this subject is the purpose of this book. It is, therefore, not a compendium for the professional, but a book for the amateur which will tell him something about the beginnings and the course of development of chorus singing; something about the origin of choirs, their constitution, and the nature of their activity at different periods; something about the history of the most important choral forms, particularly the Mystery and the Oratorio, about their essential characteristics, and about the first and other notable performances of the best known of

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them. In the chapter devoted to choral culture in America will be found a review of the conditions which led up to the organization of singing societies in this country, and of the circumstances under which the choral institutions that were conspicuously instrumental in elevating the standard of chorus singing were established. The last chapter is devoted to some observations on the qualities necessary to the efficient chorus singer and chorus conductor and on the general principles which, according to recognized authorities, should be observed in order to make choral performances what they ought to be.

If, in addition to giving information not within easy reach, this book—the first of its kind so far as the author knows—should succeed in demonstrating how puissant a factor in shaping the course of musical progress chorus singing has been in the past, and how necessary it is to the dissemination of sound musical taste at the present time, the author's purpose will be fully realized.