

times; "Elijah," sixteen; "The Damnation of Faust," fifteen; the "Ninth Symphony," thirteen; Bach's "St. Matthew," Passion-music, twelve; and "The Creation," eleven times. The present president is Mr. Andrew Carnegie, to whom it owes, as does the Symphony Society, an interest which led to erecting the superb hall on Fifty-seventh Street.

The four concerts of last week included as their chief matters Dr. Leopold Damrosch's pretty biblical cantata "Sulamith," "The Damnation of Faust," "Elijah," and the first performance of "St. Christopher," a new dramatic oratorio by Prof. Horatio W. Parker, of Yale College. The evenings for the familiar works may be dismissed with a general expression of praise for the Society's trusty chorus, and for the excellent work of the capable soloists, which included Mmes. Gadski, Juch, Patrick-Walker and Stein; and the Messrs. Williams, Heinrich, Frangcon Davies, Bushnell, Distlehurst and Hallam. As to Mr. Parker's fine score it will not be fair to slight that with a fragmentary analysis now. It will be better to defer its detailed explanation entirely. At present let us say merely that "St. Christopher" is—as we expected—a strong, rich, *modern oratorio*, excellently planned, and carried out musically by a master-hand. It advances, in episodes, as a choral work on the composer's "Hora Novissima." It is highly melodious. Its choral writing is extremely elaborate, solid and effective. The instrumental score is confident, full, and essentially *modern*. It draws energetically on the orchestra's coloring, as we understand it to-day. The subject of "St. Christopher" and the text of the book of words are sufficiently dramatic—as will be clear to those who recall the old legend of the proud giant Offerus who served, successively, King Oriens, the Devil, and Christ the Lord. The simple story has been enhanced by the libretto. The work is at its best in the passages of more ecclesiastical spirit; but it is throughout, rich and interesting. The new oratorio's popular elements, too, should give it a vogue with the English-singing societies; and it is an important novelty in its field by an American composer of eminent parts. It will doubtless soon be heard again, and then we shall be able to do its traits better justice than our space now allows.

## Music.

### The Oratorio Society's Jubilee: "St. Christopher."

TWENTY-FIVE years is a long time for any choral society to last under the same name as that one chosen when it began work; to maintain fairly clearly its original policy and standards; and to have vitality enough to be useful as well as respected merely for seniority. The Oratorio Society of New York celebrated last week, with four dignified and interesting "festival" concerts, its jubilee of such a quarter-century. The old Society deserves affection and gratitude here. It has, to be sure, waxed perfunctory, and has shown a weakness to give itself over to "The Messiah," and to a facile, familiar repertory for several seasons. Its sins of omission recently have been grievous and many. The conservatism and apathy of the public are partly to blame. The Society has been and still abides a valuable and conscientious force of singers—our largest one. To-day its choir is capable of noble performances. Doubtless it has many before it, albeit the present time of jubilation is one of rigorous measures—for new material and energetic influences. Choral societies that have sung for nearly a human generation are apt to need to call loudly on Jupiter, and to be particularly sure of their wagoner's shoulder as well.

It was in 1873 that Dr. Leopold Damrosch united a choir of about fifty singers in a first public concert by the new choir. It was the direct and indirect successor of the old Sacred Music Society (1823-1849), the Harmonic Society, the Mendelssohn Society, the Church Music Association—and their tributaries. It prospered, and soon took the leading choral place in the community. Its chorus to-day includes about four hundred and fifty voices—and, by the by, eleven of them were heard in the first concert in 1873. It has presented fifty-seven works, standard or new, by twenty-eight composers. It has given two hundred and forty-eight performances. It is of interest to note that of these "The Messiah" has been sung fifty-three