
"THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS."

BERLIN, Dec. 19.

I have received from my correspondent at Düsseldorf the following account of the first performance in Germany of Dr. Edward Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*, which was produced in that city this evening under the direction of Professor Julius Butts, who is also the translator of Cardinal Newman's poem :—

"Dr. Edward Elgar's *Traum des Gerontius* was produced for the first time in Germany this evening at Düsseldorf by the *Städtischer Musikverein*, under Professor Julius Butts, and in the presence of the composer. The original and beautiful work received a most excellent interpretation by an orchestra of 85, a choir of 300, and the soloists Fräulein Antonie Beel, Dr. Franz Wüllner, and Herr Metzmacher. The chorus had mastered their difficult task splendidly; whether the serenity of the choirs of angelicals or the terrific force of the demons' sullen howls had to be interpreted, they were equally successful. The orchestra produced a series of glowing tone pictures; the *Vorspiel* especially sounded, wonderfully fine in the Kaisersaal of the municipal Tonhalle, which is acoustically one of the best concert rooms in the world. Dr. Wüllner's reading of the part of Gerontius was one of the most artistic and impressive things imaginable. His voice is not remarkable for either beauty or power, but his interpretative gifts are of the highest order. In fact, a better exponent of the difficult rôle it would be difficult to find. His expression of anguished suffering and fervid prayer, of heavenly peace and sublime ecstasy, was quite masterly and moved the large audience deeply. A considerable number of German musicians had come to Düsseldorf specially to hear a new work by the composer whose 'Enigma' variations have lately been performed in Berlin, Wiesbaden, Mayence, and Brussels, and discussed in the German Press. Dr. Elgar was enthusiastically called for after the first part, and at the end he was received with a storm of applause, in which the chorus and orchestra joined as well as the huge audience. The orchestra greeted the happy composer with the inspiring cacophony called a 'Thuck' (flourish), and a splendid laurel wreath of enormous size was presented to him. The greatest impression I received was from the singing of the chorus, which proved the absurdity of the charge frequently made against the composer after the Birmingham performance of 1900 that his work was impossible to render. To Professor Butts, who worked with the rarest enthusiasm and energy, the thanks of English musicians are due and should be ungrudgingly given."—*Our Own Correspondent.*
