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**HANDEL'S ORATORIO:
 THE MESSIAH.**

The oratorio has its origin in man's dramatic instinct, which has manifested itself in some form or other from the earliest times. It has been a means of inculcating vital truths, a fact that educators are beginning to recognize and to use in the training of youth. The Mysteries, Moralities, and Miracle Plays which were so popular throughout Europe in the 13th and 14th centuries did much to instruct the masses in the important facts related in the Scriptures. Like these, the oratorio presents Scriptural subjects in a dramatic manner, but with the addition of music to be rendered by solos, chorus, and orchestra, and without scenery, costumes, or action.

It was in Rome, during the 16th century, that St. Philip of Neri unconsciously aided the development of this form. It seems that religious teachers of those days, as of these, were obliged to exercise the utmost discretion in presenting moral truths to the youthful mind. The low standards that prevailed as to secular plays was endangering the public morals, so the good St. Philip made an effort to provide wholesome attraction for the young. Songs and psalms were given in the chapel, and soon after, he enlisted the services of good composers in setting to music the most entertaining stories of the Bible. An ancient writer tells that "such curiosity was excited by the performance of the first part that there was no danger during the sermon that any of the hearers would retire before they had heard the second." It is thought that these biblical music-dramas were called oratorios because they were given in the chapel or oratory.

From this time on, gifted composers devoted at least a part of their energy to the production of oratorio. In 1739, Handel began the wonderful series of oratorios, the most remarkable of which is the "Messiah." It holds audiences spell-bound today, just as it did at its first performance in Dublin in 1742. The proceeds at that time amounting to 925 guineas, were devoted to charity; it seems fitting that the "Messiah" has ever since been one of the most potent means of raising money for such purposes.

This great work consists of three parts. The first part contains prophecies of the coming Christ, implied in the text, "Comfort ye, my people;" "Every valley shall be exalted," "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed." The rejection of Christ is suggested by the words: "For behold, darkness shall cover the earth;" the chorus, "For unto us a child is born," in which ring out the names, "Wonderful," "Coun-

selor," "The Mighty God," "The Everlasting Father," "The Prince of Peace," is the climax of the first part.

Impressive and majestic as is the first part, the marvelous genius of the composer soars higher in the second, which treats of Christ's appearance upon the earth as the Savior of men. In this part occurs the sublime Hallelujah chorus, which to hear is to saher Handel's own feeling while composing it: "I did think I did see all heaven before me and the great God Himself." It was this chorus which so moved King George II. that he reverently rose to his feet, a mark of respect which has become a universal custom ever since.

The third part is shorter and more serene than the first two; it expresses truths regarding "the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting." The "Amen Chorus" is thought by many musicians to reach the highest point ever attained in choral music.

HENRY CLAY SOCIETY NOTES.

The meeting of December 10 was well attended and the exercises were both interesting and instructive. A new field of literary work has recently been entered as a supplement to the usual programme. This is a lecture each week, usually by an upper classman, on some important topic in which he is particular interested. At this meeting Blaylock spoke on the subject of "Chemistry, the Utilization of Waste Products."

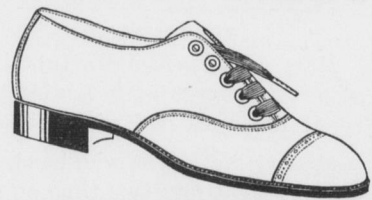
The Society elected the following men to speak in its annual oratorical contest to be held next spring: R. L. Newlin, E. A. Moore, Robt. Thayer, W. Mitchell, I. Valentine and E. B. Carroll.

At the meeting on December 17 much interest was manifested.

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