

if the principle of letting so much old matter remain, with revision or additions, is the wisest. A fourth edition, when it comes (say in the 'forties), will need still more drastic surgical treatment.

I am disappointed that not enough has been done, throughout the volume, to aid quick reference. I thought that side- and cross-headings were to be more freely used. Many of the long articles are really books, and as such should be indexed, or fully paragraphed. Paragraphing, as in Vaughan Williams' article on Conducting, should have been more widely adopted. This article, by the way, is chatty, but some of it has a curious simple-mindedness. We scarcely look to *Grove* for elementary remarks. Bach is well done by Sanford Terry. There is a valuable article on Copyright by the Secretary of the Society of Authors, and one on Braille music by Mr. Watson, of the National Institute for the Blind. The pictures are admirable—one of the new *Grove's* best features. The coloured ones are especially fine. The lists of compositions have been brought up-to-date and tabulated—a considerable boon; and the bibliographies are much improved. Someone may attempt to give the prices of books, in the Utopian dictionary. The lack of them is a drawback. Even a few prices would be better than none.

The music lover who does not feel able to spend thirty shillings on this splendid volume (which is really extremely cheap) should at least make sure that his local public library gets it; and music clubs (gramophone societies, for instance) might well add it to their library, for it contains an immense amount of matter that will appeal to all who take an interest in the growth of music or in the lives and ways of composers.

K. K.



BAND RECORDS

At the outset this month I must express my indebtedness to the Managing Editor of our American cousin, *The Phonograph Monthly Review*. A short time ago the first record by **Creator's Band** was issued in England and my praise of this remarkable record of excerpts from *Aida* elicited a very kind and appreciative letter from Mr. Axel B. Johnson and prompted him to send me three Victor records by this band. This act of goodwill and generous appreciation is characteristic of both Mr. Johnson and his staff, as I can testify from previous experience, and is a real reward for the often ungrateful task of record reviewing. These records contain selections from *Pagliacci* and *La Traviata* respectively and *Semiramide Overture*, each of which occupies both sides of a 12-in. disc. As I could only describe the *Aida* selection by the lavish use of superlatives, what can I say about these three records? **Creator** is a highly temperamental "virtuoso" conductor, and as a natural corollary his interpretations will not please everyone alike. For this reason, and this reason alone, of the two operatic selections I prefer that from *La Traviata*. The quality of the recording is equally good in both these discs and is better than in the *Aida* selection. *Semiramide Overture* I have left until last because it is even better than its companions. The playing is unsurpassable, the interpretation is such as to give fresh life to this old war-horse, while the recording is unequalled in any band record I have ever heard. The only record I can think of to compare with it is the recently issued *Rienzi Overture* played by the Philadelphia orchestra. Opinions on military band transcriptions may vary, but this, from every point of view, is the *only* record of *Semiramide*. I hope sincerely that H.M.V. will issue it in England without delay.

What a poor lot my month's batch of records seem by comparison, though to be quite fair they are, as a whole, distinctly below the recent average standards. Perhaps the best is *Chal Romano Overture* (H.M.V. B.2508), played by the **Coldstream Guards Band**. I like this the best of all Mr. Ketelbey's music that I know, and I like this military band arrangement better than the original orchestral version. This overture, by the way, achieved extraordinary success everywhere it was played during a recent tour of holiday resorts made by the composer. He did not take an orchestra with him but directed concerts of his own compositions by the local municipal orchestras at many places.

Equally good from the points of view of playing and recording is the amusing *Midget and Hippopotamus* and the aptly named *Marche Pompeuse* played by the **Grenadier Guards Band** (Col. 4455). The tone of the piccolo and bassoon soloists in the former is excellent, while the march is played in such a way as to make one realise that attention to detail is worth while, even in such a straightforward composition as a march.

A 10-inch double sided record of a selection from *La Bohème*, played by the **Beltona Military Band**, is good value for money (Beltona 1262). There is nothing outstanding, either in playing or recording, but neither is there much to criticise. Another serviceable operatic selection of the same description is that from *Maritana* played by Capt. Stretton's **Royal Artillery Band** (Winner 4637). In my copy the intonation of the solo cornet is very imperfect, but this is probably due to the fact that the record is a bad "swinger," for I cannot believe that so good a musician as Capt. Stretton would have passed the test record otherwise.

The Winner people afford an opportunity of comparing the playing of two good bands by publishing simultaneously records of marches by the **Scots Guards Band** and the **Royal Artillery Band** (Nos. 4635 and 4693 respectively). The tone of the former band is noticeably bigger and brighter, the latter band affecting—mistakenly, in my opinion—a tone nearer that of an orchestra. The former record contains *With Sword and Lance*, one of my favourite marches, and *Steadfast and True*, and the latter contains *Fall in* and *Return to Barracks*.

The Regal Company continue their series of Fantasias of National airs by issuing *The Shamrock*, played by the **Silver Stars Band**. This is a good record, the only faults being that the brass is a shade too strong in places and that the tone sounds a bit throttled here and there. Excellent technical features are the fine recording of a side-drum roll at the beginning and of a kettle-drum roll at the end.

The last military band record to be considered is by **Black Diamonds Band** (Zono. 2985). *Sans Souci* march has quite a good swing, but the instrumentation is very threadbare and commonplace. *Mercatel* march is much better constructed and therefore more interesting. The recording is quite good.

The race for the earliest publication of a record of the new Crystal Palace test piece has been won this year by the Winner Company. *The White Rider*, by Denis Wright, is programme music and deals with Kralyvitich Marko, one of the heroes of past ages in Serbian history, and the legend that Marko lies asleep in a cavern in the mountains, his sword driven into a rock and his horse beside him. Some day, the legend runs, the sword will fall to the floor of the cave and awaken Marko, who will mount his horse and ride forth to lead the Serbian people to a victorious battle against their enemies. The composer expressly denies any attempt actually to illustrate the details of the story with his music, the connection being more one of mood. This work, while not as interesting or as difficult as some of its predecessors, is worth many of the operatic selections that used to serve as test pieces. The recording of this first issue is rather thin and reedy, but good enough to make one wonder that the fine playing of **Black Dyke Band** did not earn for them a higher place than eighth at the contest.

W. A. C.