

## LONDON CONCERTS.

### RACHMANINOFF.

The programme of Mr. Rachmaninoff's second (and last) recital at Queen's Hall yesterday afternoon showed us many facets of his commanding art, and ranged from Bach—three movements from the English Suite in A—to a brilliant Godowsky arrangement of one of Johann Strauss's waltzes. To say that there were times when the pianist challenged criticism in respect of certain details of interpretation—such moments occurred, for instance, in his reading of the "Appassionata"—is merely to repeat that Mr. Rachmaninoff, like almost every interpreter capable of stamping his own individuality upon the performance of music that everyone knows, prefers sometimes to go his own way rather than be tied to the way—or ways—that others have gone. That hidebound creature, the musical purist, may object to any such procedure, and, from his own standpoint in these matters, he may argue persuasively enough. But that anyone with ears to hear should discover in the playing of Mr. Rachmaninoff, as happened the other day, so much of reticence as to make it incapable of yielding up any definite impression at all—well, that is a view which surely cannot have been held by the great majority of those who attended yesterday's recital and heard him play the Bach, the Variations sérieuses of Mendelssohn—a masterly performance, in our opinion—the Beethoven Sonata, and the rest. Moments provocative of discussion there may have been, as already hinted, in the work last-mentioned, and to some of the player's points of emphasis and occasionally rather assertive contrasts of tone objection may have been taken by a few of his hearers. But, after all, is not the Appassionata a great dramatic poem, and who will be found to declare that a great dramatic poem admits of one style of reading only, as a thing cut and dried, and unsusceptible to any personal note in the utterance? In the second part of his programme the distinguished recitalist enabled one to hear Liszt's now seldom-played "Funérailles," and played it with both poetic feeling and magnificent virility. Some pieces of his own followed, to the audience's manifest delight. And Mr. Rachmaninoff, when he becomes his own interpreter, is at least safe from the hard-and-fast purist, and may reasonably claim that his word is law.