

CLEVELAND STEELWORKS SILVER PRIZE BAND.

The Cleveland Steel Works Band has been in existence about ten years, and during that time have had many ups and downs, like the majority of bands. When first organised it was composed of brass and reed instruments, supplied by Messrs. Boosey and Co., of London. About 6 years ago they decided to substitute brass in place of the reed instruments, and prepare for trying their abilities on the contest platform. As a result of this, the band made its first attempt at Darlington about 4 years ago, under the baton of Mr. Thomas Winter, and succeeded in dividing third prize with Eston Miners' Old Band. They also attended Hutton Rudby and Eston Contests in the same year, and succeeded in winning first for Quickstep and second for Selection at both places.

Since the commencement, as a contesting band, they have acquitted themselves in a very creditable manner, seeing that the band is only able to get a full band practice once a week, this being on a Sunday morning, owing to the men working alternative shafts.

The band is now in possession of a full set of Besson's first-class silver-plated instruments, which have given every satisfaction. In December, 1896, the services of Mr. A. Blackburn, late bandmaster of Farnley Ironworks, were secured. In the following year (1897), the band attended five contests, and succeeded in winning one first and two third prizes, with "Meyerbeer's Works."

During the season of 1898 the band attended 12 contests, and succeeded in winning six firsts, two seconds, two thirds, and one fourth, also two prizes for best Trombone player. The above prizes are for selections alone, which included Mr. A. Owen's beautiful selection "Rossini."

They also secured five seconds for Quickstep. The band has won about seventy pounds in cash prizes this year. They attended both contests held in connection with the Cleveland and South Durham Brass Band League, and succeeded in winning first prize at each.

The band could not attend the Cup Competition at Tynemouth in October last, owing to several of the members being ill. Had they been able to attend, they feel quite confident that they could have secured the cup, seeing that they have gained premier honours at two contests out of three at

which the present cup-holders competed.

The band's prizes this year have been won under ten different judges, which speaks for itself. The inhabitants of Grangetown are naturally very proud of their band, and always accord them a hearty reception upon their return home from a contest. The band has just secured another of Mr. A. Owen's famous selections ("Faust"), and intend to go in for a hard winter's practice, and thereby uphold the reputation they have already obtained.

This sketch would not be complete without reference to Mr. A. Blackburn, their bandmaster, who is a native of Rothwell. He commenced his musical career with Rothwell Old Band, playing third Cornet. After leaving the above band, he joined the Temperance band, and played Solo Cornet for 5 years. At the end of this period he was elected bandmaster under Mr. A. Owen, and the late Mr. G. F. Birkenshaw. On leaving Rothwell Temperance, he was elected conductor of Castleford Old, Castleford Temperance, Methley, and Farnley Temperance Bands. On leaving Farnley Temperance in 1896, he was appointed bandmaster of Cleveland Steelworks Band, and the manner in which he has brought them on during the time he has been with them shows that he possesses good musical qualities, while a more gentlemanly conductor never wielded a baton.

LIST OF PRIZES FOR 1898.

Contest	Selection.	Prize.
Howden-le-Wear	A. Owen's "Rossini."	1st
Stockton (League)	"La Favorita."	1st
Spennymoor	A. Owen's "Rossini."	1st
Eston	"Memories of Mozart."	3rd
Pickering	A. Owen's "Rossini."	2nd
North Ormsby	A. Owen's "Rossini."	2nd
Thornaby	A. Owen's "Rossini."	1st
Shildon	"Scotland."	4th
(Also Trombone Prize.)		
Middleton-in-Teesdale	A. Owen's "Rossini."	3rd
Rise Carr, Darlington	A. Owen's "Rossini."	div. 1st & 2nd
Grangetown	"Songs of the Sea."	1st
(Also Trombone Medal.)		

Also five seconds for Quicksteps as follows:—Howden, Spennymoor, Pickering, North Ormsby, and Grangetown.