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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1893.

SOUNDS AND ECHOES.

LEGAL lights are burning brightly once again.

IT is hoped that the cold storage question will not get the cold shoulder.

THE ladies of St. John's excelled all previous occasions in the decorations for the harvest festival this year.

"IS ANY one waiting on you?" asked a polite clerk of a timid maiden in the Stanley House, the other day, "Yes, sir," replied the awkward damsel, pointing to the door and indicating a still more bashful youth. "That's him. He's keeping company with me, but he's afraid to come in."

THAT enterprising business man, Mr. A. B. Erskine, has added to his establishment a department especially for ladies, where they can obtain a drink of cool refreshing water or wash their hands while down town shopping. This is the only store at present fitted up with a place where ladies can retire when in town and rearrange their toilets or get rid of the dust of the streets.

AN OPEN LETTER TO "BY-STANDER."

SIR:—Learning from the first page of last week's HOME JOURNAL that "intelligent, honest and well written criticism, couched in "grammatical and courteous language is always received and given full and fair consideration" by the editor, it was with more than ordinary in-

terest that I turned to an article entitled "Arion Club Concert." On reading this, however, I came to the conclusion that the editor had taken a holiday, for in my humble judgment your curiously inconsequent sentences fulfil few indeed of the editorial conditions.

It is by no means easy reading this article of yours; even now I am uncertain as to whether it was the season or the concert which "was an improvement on last year," to instance only one of many obscurities; but I think I have caught enough of your meaning to entitle me to make a few remarks on the subject matter.

It is the very first duty of a critic to inform himself thoroughly of what he proposes to discuss, and if it is a musical performance, it is usual to make some reference in detail to that performance. It seems to me you have neglected both of these essentials, for to the concert itself there are only the vaguest allusions, while on matters of fact you are egregiously in error. For instance, admission was not by invitation, but by tickets issued to members in return for subscriptions in hand paid, therefore, although "the collective individual called the public" may be upon occasion "remarkably mean," your taunt in this case is quite uncalled for.

Again, you have given yourself a great deal of quite unnecessary concern over the fact that in the audience (and elsewhere) there were "vocal celebrities whose presence on the platform would add very considerably to the club's strength." There were, Mr. By-Stander, there were. There were first of all yourself; then there were, amongst others, two gentlemen whom I fancy do not exactly bless you for the unceremonious introduction of their names in your "criticism" of a private club concert which they attended, one as a member and the other as a guest of a member. One of these gentlemen is an esteemed professional singer, who would be out of place

in a purely amateur organization, and the other is for the present, and only for reasons of his own, quite content to be a listener.

After all, of what concern to a critic is the composition of the club. Is it not his duty to take the performance as it is given, and to criticise that, bestowing praise and blame impartially where either is deserved? Is there any attempt at this in your article? If there is I fail to find it. However, one lives and learns. I now know on your authority the awful truth, which I have hitherto only darkly suspected, that in the club "there is not a man capable of taking a tenor solo that could be listened to with any degree of comfort." But even if this were a fact, why press it upon the attention of an unsuspecting public, and the more so when, as no tenor solo was included in the programme, it is a matter of indifference. First class tenor soloists are not to be found growing on every gooseberry bush, Mr. By-Stander, so the fact that the club had not twelve tenor soloists, but only twelve members capable of worthily sustaining the first and second tenor parts, which was all they were there for, need not be deplored in such lugubrious tones.

I do not wish to exhaust your patience, so I will merely note my relief on finding that, in your opinion, "it was by no means an unpleasant performance," and pass on to express my admiration of the generous and chivalrous way in which you have treated the lady who has just come among us, and who must be most favorably impressed by the manner of your welcome. She has "a very ordinary voice" (how delicate the allusion) and her songs "were very much hackneyed." This is really very, very sad, but it is a comforting reflection that most of the good things of this life are more or less hackneyed. In music such works as the "Messiah" and Beethoven's symphonies are hackneyed in your sense of the word,