

old, worn-out customs and orthodoxes." She tossed her head with a restive movement, while a glow of fervour shone in her eyes. She reminded Guy of a young horse, panting to try its speed, and get free of the harness. "I can't breathe here," she said, "I want to feel free."

"Do you mean you would like the wild life, say, of a sheep-farm? Surely you wouldn't like the way in which they have to rough it?"

"Yes, why not? I should have loved to go out with Jack. It isn't always because they like it, that women sit with their hands on their knees. But there, I am talking nonsense," and she rose as she spoke with a half-impatient gesture. "It is so foolish to dwell on what might have been, or what one longs for. Shall I play to you? Do you like music?"

He would rather have heard her talk a great deal, but he didn't like to say so, remarking instead that he should be delighted.

"You had better make yourself comfortable as Jack does," she said carelessly. "He is fond of music at any time, but he always finds it a great improvement to have his feet off the ground."

"I always did admire Jack's taste," he answered laughing, and disposed of his feet accordingly.

The performance that followed was a great surprise to him, for he had not heard her play before, and had no idea she excelled as a pianist.

Not that he was anything of a judge, but at least he knew, he had never in his life before been able to sit and listen to music for a whole hour without growing weary. Perhaps it was because

her playing was like herself, strange and fitful and fascinating; made up of many phases. Now soft, now fiery, now plaintive and wailing, now weird and harsh and discordant. It held you as her own personality did. You might not quite like it altogether; it might seem eccentric, but for all that you felt drawn towards her, in spite of the faults that persistently repelled you.

When at last tea was announced Guy was amazed to find how quickly the time had flown, and was very loth for her to leave off.

After tea she disappeared, and he did not see her again until about eight o'clock. She was expecting Jack every minute, and he saw by her face she had only come in hopes of finding him.

But time passed, and no Jack appeared, and meanwhile the rain began to fall in torrents.

At ten o'clock it was the general opinion that he was going to remain with his friend for the night, on account of the rain; except with Madge, and she persisted in expecting him every moment, and grew visibly anxious in spite of her efforts to appear unconcerned.

At half-past ten Guy found her at the open door and sought to reassure her.

"It's a good thing he's staying there, such a night," he said, "the old fellow's got a wise head about some things, after all."

It was pitch black and the rain continued to pour in torrents, in spite of the rough wind. It blew it in their faces and Madge shuddered visibly!

"I never knew him stay out for rain before," she said, "and he isn't over fond of Mr. Haines."

"Oh! but he wouldn't think of that on such a night. Don't you think you'd better come away from the door, you're getting quite wet."

She moved away slowly, without replying, and soon after they all retired to bed.

But sleep and rest would not come to Madge, and she lay awake far into the night listening to the wind, as it howled dismally round the house. A superstitious weakness seemed to take possession of her, sending a chill terror through her heart, and to her over-strung nerves the shrieking of the blast was as the cries of a great crowd of human beings in helpless agony. At last, driven almost to distraction with the weight of an indescribable dread, she reached a book and succeeded in reading herself to sleep from sheer weariness.

The next morning very early, as two labourers went to their day's work, they came across a strange object by the roadside. A trap appeared to be overturned in the ditch, and the pony which was harnessed to it had slipped down, and was too entangled in the harness to get up.

They hurried forward and quickly succeeded in cutting the pony free and dragging the trap away.

In the ditch lay a dark object, enshrouded in a large waterproof cape; the form of a man it was, and part of the cape appeared to have got twisted round his head.

With a nameless horror, they unravelled the cloak, and raised the still form; and the cold, dead face that lay upturned to the smiling heavens was the face of Jack Harcourt.

(To be continued.)

SOME NEW MEZZO-SOPRANO SONGS FOR GIRLS.

MANY a little daughter's heart must thrill at the tender feeling of May Hodge's words in "Nobody Else," which is set to music by Herbert Crisp (Keith Prowse). The story is of a deft wee woman who brightened and kept home together because there was,

"Nobody else, you see."

and the air is quite easy and enjoyable to sing. "The Mission of a Rose," by F. Cowen (R. Cocks), is excellent in words and music, and affords good scope for true sentiment and just phrasing. No. 1 key is the most desirable for a mezzo-soprano voice. In a more classic and dramatic style is "The Captive" (La Captive), a posthumous work of Benjamin Godard's (Metzler), suitable to a high mezzo; it requires and repays study, for it contains some lovely passages. The accompaniment seems difficult at first, but after two or three earnest readings it is soon mastered, and the unique and poetic idea of the song is appreciated. An interesting series of sixteen songs with English lyrics by May Gillington (J. Williams), edited and arranged by Dr. Carl Reinecke, is well worth looking through, for some of them are quaint airs of Scarlatti Haydn, Grétry (such as No. 10, "The Prophet of Spring"), &c. No. 14 is J. S. Bach's beautiful "My Heart Now Awake Thee,"

also known under the title of "My Heart Ever Faithful." There is something very appealing in the simplicity and truth of James Whitcomb Riley's verses, "A Life Lesson," the music to which is by Constance Maud (Boosey).

"There, little girl, don't cry!"

is the slight refrain, but to girls of an older growth it contrives to teach a happy lesson.

From grave to gay, a lyric to "Sarah Jane" entitled "The Broken Heart" (Cramer), is most laughable yet refined; the words by R. S. Hichens are so neat and witty and the music so plaintively funny, both exactly matching, that it cannot fail to provoke smiles on the most serious face!

Then there is a very interesting little ditty, though it is not written for the feminine gender, namely, "The Mousmee," by Walter W. Hedgcock (R. Cocks); the singing of it is likely to amuse many a father or brother, so we mention it as being delightfully quaint and fresh. In fact quite a small oasis in the desert of common-place themes is this tale of the sweet little Mousmee.

"In her far-away Japan

With its junks and Fu-ji-san
And its tea-houses and temples and the
smiling riksha-man!"

"A Message from Home" (W. Morley) is a prettily conceived story of Mary Mark Lemon's set to very tuneful and easy music by C. Francis Lloyd. "The Dreamers" by Edith Cooke (Cramer) is distinctly interesting and good in every way, and in a lightsome vein. "The Ivy and the Wall" by Reginald Somerville (Metzler), though slight is pleasing, with a gentle moral.

Lawrence Kellie's "Apple Blossoms" (Metzler) describes delightfully in words and music—

"The colour, beauty, wonder of the spring;"

of the accompaniment (which one certainly yearns to see in C) we say, "learn it and it will repay you tenfold." Another grand original lay is "The Throstle" by Alfred Cellier (Metzler). Herbert W. Wareing has written a charming Sevillana, "The Mule Bells" (Cramer), which is most characteristic throughout in bright bravura style; and lastly, the plantation song, "Piccadilly Mine, Good-night," by H. Trotère (Cramer) is a darkey's remembrance of a lullaby long ago, and the words and music are written with much taste and feeling, making it very attractive for piano or banjo.

MARY AUGUSTA SALMOND.