

A SABBATH CALM.

A PEACE surpassing utterance fills each place ;
 No glad bird flutes a joyous morning song ;
 The warm sun streams its steady light and strong,
 No cloud destroys the glory of its face.
 The winds have gone to rest. There is no trace
 Of toil or anger, or the maddening throng.
 The cruel mills, that with harsh throats prolong
 The workmen's knell, have ceased a little space.

A godlike joy swells through all earthly things,
 A joy whose source is Universal Love,
 That wells in every heart, in every flower ;
 To fevered brains and wearied limbs it brings
 A restful calm, that lifts the soul above
 Earth's cares, and fills it with new power.

Stratford, Ont.

T. G. MARQUIS.

LITERATURE AND MUSIC.

And books, we know,
 Are a substantial world, both pure and good :
 Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
 Our pastime and our happiness will grow.

—Wordsworth: *Personal Talk*.

THE age in which we live has been described as one that seeks to amuse itself. Whether this be true—whether we can no longer be accused of “taking our pleasure sadly”—or not, it is evident that Pleasure holds to-day a higher place in the estimation of the thoughtful than she occupied fifty years ago. Her votaries then were the avowedly frivolous; now, the gravest are ready to admit that a life from which she is entirely excluded fails of complete development—is stunted on one side of its growth. It may be that no one accords to her the entire devotion she once could claim; but, on the other hand, many who formerly regarded her as merely the fit companion of folly, now treat her with respect, and even own themselves her debtors.

We often hear it said that life has become so complex as to make living a harder matter to us than it was to our grandfathers; that the strings of the bow of our endeavour have often to be stretched to a tension so painful that, if they are not to snap and become altogether useless, they must be frequently relaxed—relaxed by Pleasure's aid.

There are those who, failing to avoid “the dangerous falsehood of extremes,” accord to Pleasure a higher place still—and do not hesitate to assign to her the work of regenerating society; and both Mr. Walter Besant and Mr. Bellamy have written very pleasing descriptions of an imaginary millennium, brought about mainly by her influence.

But, without exalting her to this pinnacle, we may admit that some part of every life should be devoted to her. Of course in this matter of choosing the form our relaxation is to take, as in everything, a wise economy is needed. Since Pleasure can pitch for us only the wayside tents into which we turn for brief shelter from the noon-day heat, and is not concerned in the building of that palace which is our journey's goal—since in her wells we find indeed the wine that cheers, but not the pure water essential to life—since she can only, as it were, embroider and make fair the robes that shelter us from the storms of life, but cannot give to us the robes themselves—let us exercise discretion in our choice. We cannot spare—the majority of us—much time for these excursions into her domains. Work—life itself—claims too much from us. We should, then, each one, choose from among her treasures that which is most suited to our own individual needs.

And, to speak practically, is this what we are doing? Doing for ourselves—doing for our children? Is the system under which they are being educated such as shall not only fit them to do their work in the world, not only develop their faculties, but also give them a right judgment in all things—even in this matter of choosing wisely and well their pleasures. Until this question can be answered, and answered confidently, in the affirmative, our educational system can hardly be called a complete success.

What are the great sources of pleasure to the majority of us? Avoiding both extremes—not taking into account either the noble joy which is the reward of those rare souls who are content “to scorn delights and live laborious days,” or the sensual pleasures of the base—we may reply: sculpture, painting, music, literature. These are not the only ones, but they are the springs of more lasting and assured delights than any others.

The next question that presents itself is, are these four of equal merit? Or can any one of them claim to have more power of pleasing than the rest? Probably no one will deny that the number of those who can be gratified by looking at a statue is exceeded by the sum total of those who can derive extreme pleasure from gazing at a picture. Or that music and literature delight a much larger proportion still. It yet remains to be decided which of the two latter shall have the preference.

There can be no question that, for many years past, Music has held the first place in our educational system—that is to say, in that part of the educational system which affects women. To descend to quite practical details, it is a fact that in most private schools girls devote every day a period of from one to three hours to music. When singing is studied, or the knowledge of a second instrument is added to the list of musical accomplishments, this period is

extended to four or even, occasionally, to five hours a day. During the week, then, in the majority of private schools the majority of the pupils give up from six to twenty-four hours to the study of music; while the time given to literature rarely, if ever, exceeds two or three hours.

Is it true that Music can do so much more than literature to brighten and cheer our lives, that she deserves this prominent place in our schools? And do we receive so little pleasure from Literature that we act justly in thus relegating her to the background? Let us examine the relative merits of these two claimants for our time and labour—let us see what each can do for us, and then place the results side by side that we may compare them:—

Consider, first, the pleasure conferred upon us by music. She has one advantage over literature. She can charm us in two ways—actively and passively. We can be delighted by hearing music by merely listening, and we can be pleased also by performing. We learn that a great artiste—a Patti or a Paderewski—is coming. We have many pleasant anticipations of the musical feast in store. We go to the concert. We are entranced. We experience pleasure that is, in degree and in quality, superior to the pleasure any author has given us on any of those preceding evenings when we sat at home and read; and we say quite justly that we owe some of the happiest moments of our life to music. But these stars visit us rarely, and we must compare the delight they afford us, not to the pleasure one evening with Shakespeare or Milton, with Dante or Virgil, with Byron or Thackeray, with Scott or Dickens, can give, but to the enjoyment derived from many such evenings.

Again, all the pleasure of that eventful night to which we looked forward so longingly, and at which we gaze backward so lovingly, was not given by music—the change from the ordinary routine of life—the drive to the concert-room itself—the consciousness of wearing a becoming dress—even the lower gratification of being seen among the audience, and the satisfaction of one's curiosity concerning those who formed it—all these are contributions to the sum of that evening's pleasure which did not result from the love of music—with which music, in fact, had nothing whatever to do. That amount of gratification which we should have received if the songstress or the pianist had come to us in the privacy of our rooms, and then played and sung—no other in the world knowing that she or he came—that only, ought justly to be weighed in the scales against the enjoyment given by not one, but many, evenings spent in the society of “the chosen, the mighty, of every place and time.”

With regard to the active side of musical enjoyment—that derived from playing and singing—from whatever these can give should be subtracted all that is not really due to music—all thirst for praise—all delight in applause—all gratification in excelling. When this is done, music will be found to have a smaller share in the pleasure than is usually attributed to her.

And for the pleasure that the performance of an ordinary talented and skilled amateur can give is that so great, after all, as to be really worth the years of labour that it costs? In a social evening, a song, indeed, is listened to with interest, and applauded with warmth; but the number of those who really prefer good instrumental music to the gossip which precedes is very small.

Contrast, then, these results—not, indeed, with those that Literature has achieved, but with what she could accomplish if she had the chance—and, in estimating all that she has power to do, let the lowest type of pleasure she can give—in the ordinary sensational novel—be subtracted from the total, as all the adventitious aids to enjoyment that music had claimed as belonging to herself were put aside. Let the kind and quality of delight afforded by the appreciative study of the works of the great master-minds by the contemplation of Shakespeare's thrilling scenes, and the companionship of his noblest characters; by the accompanying of Dante on his awful pilgrimage; by the winging, with Milton, of his heavenward flight; by the learning to look at Nature with Ruskin's eyes—to love it with Wordsworth's soul; by the looking at man with Browning's vision; by living, loving, suffering, rejoicing with the deathless creatures of the great fiction-writers. Let this be measured with what music has done for us, and shall we find it to be so very inferior, in kind or in degree?

Literature does, indeed, require an apprenticeship, but a far less arduous one than music exacts. Comparatively little training is required to enable us to draw from books a deep, a real, an unceasing delight—to find in them a perennial spring of joy. And the longer we serve her the more gracious are her smiles—the more unspeakably precious the gifts she bestows, until she leads us—if we will—onward and upward to the sunlit mountain heights whereon “divine philosophy” spreads for us

A perpetual feast of nectared sweets
 Where no crude surfeit reigns.

Again, to reap the benefits that music confers, so many externals are required—a cumbrous instrument, a special place, an appointed time. Literature can put her choicest offerings in a compass so small that we can have some of them always with us. Moreover, her treasures can be stored in the mind until it expands into a vast hall, peopled with lofty and beautiful forms—the hours of solitude and sickness can be lightened and strengthened and cheered with images drawn by the handmaid Memory from this store. One effort of the will, and all past ages live again for us.

“We are a part of all that we have seen,” and read, far more than we are a part of all that we have heard. What we have read—and learnt—becomes absolutely a part of us, is incorporated into our very being—ours—long after the singer's sweet strains or the organ's grand chords are things of the past—things of the past, whose haunting, subtle, shadowy memories alone remain. Sweet, indeed, they are—loth would we be to lose them—still they are *but* shadows—while whatever we have appropriated from Literature's vast store-house of gifts—little or much, good in positive or superlative degree, according to the measure of our capacities of choosing wisely, and assimilating well—are ours forever, in actual reality—ours more, and not less, as the years roll on—and

The lengthening shadow that the sun doth cast,
 Emblems our span of life—so nearly past.

LEE WYNDHAM.

A MAY SYMPHONY.

OF all the months of the changeable year, May has the most distinctive character of its own. October, which is the next most individualized month, frequently takes on the seeming of September or of November, but a day in May can scarcely be mistaken for a day in any other month, unless it be just on the borderland when April shades into May, or May into June. But May seems full of inarticulate voices of opening buds and swift-growing plants, besides the more articulate music of the busy, joyous birds—all blending into an exquisite symphony which no musician has yet rendered, as he that hath ears to hear can catch it for himself. The soft flutter of the tender foliage of early-leaving shrubs, the gentle waving of the faint russet touches of light made by the bursting buds amid the sombre, grey tones of the woodland, the rustling of slender grasses and sprouting ferns—all seem to make the most exquisite *piano* accompaniment, too delicate for any earthly instrument save the reed of Pan, against which rises and falls a blended melody of carol and chirp and twitter, into which break, at intervals, the liquid *alto* of the robin, pathetic in its sweet monotony; the clear and definite *allegretto* “phrase” of the song-sparrow, delivered with a cheerful assurance; the tender love-notes of the Baltimore oriole; the emphatic interludes of the catbird, varying between his bewitching *potpourri* of bird-melodies, and the sharp asperity of his feline protest; and the gruff bass of the crow, whose sententious harshness seems to accentuate the sweetness of the rest of the woodland choir. The little wren occasionally interposes one of her graceful little *chansons*, and the humming-bird strikes in now and then, as if he were tuning up a tiny violoncello, while a woodpecker drums out a quick march somewhere in the background. Then, as the closing shades of eventide gradually hush most of the notes of this varied *concerto*, the shrill tremolo of the frogs, and the plaintive refrain of the whip-poor-will, seem to round in the symphony and prolong it far into the dewy night of May.

May is, indeed, a generous minister to all the senses at once. Her witchery is so complex that no poet or painter or musician could hope to disentangle or reproduce it. At most, each can but supply some hint or suggestion, from which the imagination can evolve for itself some portion of the beauty of bursting and abounding life that eludes, in its multiformity and complexity, every attempt to chain it within the bounds of art. Then, everything seems not only so exuberantly fresh, but also so exquisitely perfect at this wonderful season. The poorest specimen of what we call a “weed” assumes such wonderful delicacy of texture, such exquisite contour of form and tenderness of colouring, that it seems like a brutal vandalism, ruthlessly to uproot such lovely things. The commonest thicket of “underbrush” is a marvel of exquisite beauty—a centre of wandering fragrances that fill all the delicious air. The woodland ways are all carpeted with the delicate blue violet,—fair and sweet, though inferior to her English sister in intensity of hue and ineffable sweetness of odour. Here and there a late, shy hepatica lingers in a shady nook, while the stately trillium—our Canadian “Queen o' the May”—nods her graceful head above her rich clustered green leaves, and the scarlet and gold of the airy Columbine touches the old grey rocks with a fairy grace unmatched in all the woodland band beside, and well beloved of the droning bee, which finds in it so rich a supply of honey that we recognize the fitness to *fact* of the botanically incorrect name of honeysuckle, which the children insist in giving it. But it seems as if the bee might suck honey from everything, great and small, so sweet does the world seem at this delicious season!

It is little wonder that the poets have always loved “May month,” with all her uncertain ways, her changeable caprices, her rains and mists and chills that intervene betwixt sweet and sunny days, too heavenly to last. For she is full of the charm of contrast and movements and life; full of the nameless delights of hope and promise, and that perpetual vital change that alone makes beauty immortal. She is the perpetually renewed youth of nature, in which the sympathetic observer can feel his own youth return for a season, and his own life assume the sweetness of the life around him. It is the season, of all others, for the full enjoyment of nature in the fields and woods; and they who cannot enjoy them at this season, lose a pleasure that no words can fully describe.

But even to the dweller in the city, May still brings her message of delight. Even there the trees bud and blossom, and the garden borders fill the air with exquisite