

THE LAST ARRIVAL.

There came to port, last Sunday night,
The queerest little craft,
Without an inch of rigging on.
I looked and looked—and laughed!
It seemed so curious that she
Should cross the unknown water
And moor herself within my room—
My daughter! Oh, my daughter!

Yet by these presents witness all
She's welcome fifty times,
And comes consigned in Hope and Love
And common-metre rhymes.
She has no manifest but this;
No flag floats o'er the water;
She's rather new for my marine—
My daughter! Oh, my daughter!

Ring out, wild bells—and tame ones, too!
Ring out the lover's moon!
Ring in the little worsted socks!
Ring in the bib and spoon!
Ring out the muse! Ring in the nurse!
Ring in the milk-and-water!
Away with paper, pen and ink!—
My daughter! Oh! my daughter!

PEOPLE WHO WRITE TO THE EDITOR.

Looking at the matter from the editor's point of view—we are not speaking of this journal, or of any journal in particular—there can be no doubt that a great many people who write to him ought never to write to him at all. In an age when dictionaries, directories, gazetteers, and encyclopædias abound it is scarcely fair to write to that long-suffering gentleman and request information on such topics as the following:—The causes which led to the Peloponnesian War; the date of the celebrated prize-fight between Heenan and Sayers; the Christian names, exact ages, and personal characteristics of her Majesty's children and grandchildren; a reliable recipe for the removal of superfluous hairs; a summary of the most salient points in the law of landlord and tenant; Mr. Charles Mathew's birthday; or the decision of a wager pending among a few gentlemen assembled at the Coomassie Arms, Camberwell, as to whether every seventeenth person in London has red hair. Such queries as these should be addressed to those journals which keep a column specially open for answers to correspondents, and whose editors, judging from the multiplicity of the subjects with which they deal, are practically omniscient. Next there are the people whose letters are reasonable enough in themselves, but who persist in writing to the wrong department. They send stamps for next week's number; they want to know why they didn't receive last week's number; they wish to be informed if a certain back number is still procurable; they would like to learn what would be the lowest charge for inserting the advertisement enclosed herewith; and they ask the unlucky editor to respond to all this, which is purely the publisher's business. Then there are the correspondents who have suggestions or comments to make. When they sign their real names and addresses, their observations are often sensible, and usually innocuous; but when they hide themselves under the cloak of anonymity, they are sometimes offensive, as thus:—

"DEAR MR. EDITOR.—Who is that braying ass, who wrote so-and-so last week? Sack him by all manner of means, or you will lose a good few of your "CONSTANT SUBSCRIBERS."

Or thus (still more truculent):—

"MISTER ED.—There is a cad on your staff whom I wish to kick (I mean the writer of so-and-so). If you will send him to-morrow, at five P.M., to Hanover Square, by Pilly Pitt's statue, I will make him acquainted with the length of my "WELLINGTON BOOT."

Next, and most numerous of all, are the correspondents who desire to contribute to your journal. They may be divided under several heads, according to the point of view from which you regard them. For example, those who will be content with the honour and glory of appearing in print, and those who expect to be paid for their endeavours; those who write prose and those who write verse; those who send stamps for the return of their MSS. and those who don't. Of this species of correspondence the supply is, in the editor's opinion, always in excess of the demand. Literary composition, to beginners at any rate, is a very delightful pursuit, and then there are so many men and women whose lives are passed in monotonous employments, and who would fain add to their slender incomes by the exercise of this talent which they fondly believe they possess. And of course some of them do possess this talent, or else the race of authors and journalists would cease to exist, for all authors, and almost all journalists, were amateurs once, and passed through the same unpleasant ordeal of expectation, followed by frequent rejection, which these would-be contributors pass through now. The recollection of this fact, namely, that he was once what they are now, ought sometimes to soften the editor's flinty heart, but in many cases he has no option but to reject the matter submitted to him, not because it is wanting in merit, but because he is already provided with a competent staff. A contribution from an unknown hand ought to possess some exceptionally good qualities in order to attract an editor's attention, and even then there is always an unpleasant suspicion (warranted by the occasional detection of such frauds) that the MS. may be copied from some unacknowledged source. In any case we recommend the would-be contributor to send a proper provision of postage stamps (a stamped and directed envelope is best) to ensure the return of his MS. This act of what is nothing more than common justice, especially if accompanied by exceedingly legible penmanship, sometimes just turns the decision of a hesitating editor in the contributor's favour. Conceivably, on the contrary, if you can, the feelings of the editor upon receiving a bulky manuscript, perhaps in a very illegible hand, and unaccompanied by any postage stamps. If the weather should happen to be cold I fear it is with malevolent glee that he casts the manuscript in question upon the coals in his grate, and as the ruddy blaze bursts forth he exclaims in the words of the prophet, "Aha! I am warm. I have seen the fire."

As for the poetical contributors they are so numerous that they deserve a fresh paragraph all to themselves. Few English editors probably possess that intimate acquaintance with the personal peculiarities of their correspondents, which induced an American editor to write thus of a certain fair one who

bored him with her rhymes:—"Mary C.—Darn your stockings and your poetry also." Possibly this two-edged reproof is applicable in the United Kingdom, as well as in the United States. At any rate, all those who have sat for a few years at the editorial desk will admit that the verse power of this country is enormous, and if it was all concentrated in a few heads we might manage to turn out an extra set of Tennysons, Brownings, and Swinburnes. Being diluted, it is comparatively worthless, and one often regrets that its professors do not direct their enthusiasm to some more useful craft, say, for example, the production of eggs and the hatching of chickens. If all the would-be poets of the United Kingdom were to effect this diversion of their energies, a stale egg at breakfast might become an exceptionally rare phenomenon. This verse-power, be it observed, of the country at large is fitful in its operations. It is called into special activity by some event which interest everybody. Such objects as the wreck of the *Northwest*, the Ashantee Expedition, and perhaps, more than all, the arrival of the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh, rouse unnumbered poets from their temporary torpor. Editors are overwhelmed with contributions, but they know too well that the chaff will far exceed the wheat, for these are just the sort of subjects about which it is extremely difficult to say anything striking and original. It is a remarkable fact about the Tichborne case, considering the immense space which it occupied in the public attention, that it has been the cause of very little verse. Perhaps, while the trial was in progress, the poets, like other people, were afraid of being pulled up for contempt of court. Anyhow, we may here take the opportunity of thanking them heartily for their self-control.—*Graphic*.

WITH THE COMPOSER OF "MARTHA."

No opera has ever been more popular than Flotow's "Martha." Since 1849, when it first appeared, it has been performed upward of one thousand times, at all the great theatres of the world; and it still is a perfect gold-mine for its composer, who derives from it alone, aside from his other operas, an income of at least twenty thousand florins a year.

Frederick von Flotow has always been a favourite child of fortune. Although nothing more than an amateur in 1845, and, in effect, a mere stripling, his first operatic venture, "Alessandro Stradella," proved so thorough a success that his name was at once ranked among the foremost operatic composers of Europe. At the age of twenty-three he was hailed as a peer by Meyerbeer, Auber, and Rossini, and his beautiful opera rapidly made the tour of the world.

His next composition, "Martha," made him the most popular of his brethren among the operatic composers of Europe. It had two hundred successive representations at the Opera Comique, in Paris, and soon became a favourite with the opera-goers of all civilized nations. A younger son of a Mecklenburg nobleman, whose patrimony consisted of a few sterile acres, saw suddenly flowing into his coffers *tantidmes* such as had not been even paid to the renowned composers of "Robert le Diable" and "William Tell." Airs from "Martha" were played at every concert; they were drummed and sung by young boarding-house misses, and whistled by the street boys in all great cities of the world.

I remember seeing Flotow, at the first performance of "Martha," in his native city of Rostock, in Mecklenburg-Schwerin. He was then a handsome youth, looking younger, indeed, than he really was. The applause bestowed upon him by his fellow-citizens evidently delighted him beyond measure. He blushed to the roots of his hair when the enthusiastic audience called him, at the end of the performance, before the curtain.

A few days ago I saw him again. It was at his beautiful château Prienitz, near Lins, in Austria. I was startled at the change which twenty-four years had produced in his appearance. He looked like an old, broken-down man, although he is but little over fifty. His hair was entirely white, and he was bent down like an octogenarian.

He recognized me by my Mecklenburg dialect, and, as soon as I had seated myself by his side, told me that he regretted nothing so much as that he had left his dear native country and settled among strangers.

"Why do you not return to Mecklenburg?" I ventured to ask. "I am sure everybody there will receive you with open arms."

"No, no," he replied, firmly, "you do not know what would happen. Look at this" (and he produced a ponderous epistle); "this is a letter from the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg, Frederick Francis, who withdraws from me the appointment of grand-ducal *maître de chapelle*, because I married the sister of my divorced wife! Oh, the hypocrisy of these fellows on their petty thrones!"

I durst not say anything on this painful subject. For ten years past this unfortunate event has cast a gloom over Flotow's life. He has been most severely censured for his second marriage. But what are the facts? When scarcely old enough to know his own mind, Frederick von Flotow was induced by his parents to marry a young girl who was secretly affianced to another. Their wedded life was wretched in the extreme. They parted by mutual consent. Flotow's present wife idolizes her gifted husband, and he is happy with her. Nevertheless, he is ostracised in aristocratic circles.

He knit his massive brow as he continued complaining of how people had recently treated him. "I have led," he said, "my whole life long a most laborious existence. If I have won successes, they were due, above all things, to hard work, to unremitting toil. The score of 'Martha' I rewrote four times before I allowed it to be played; and I have been still more painstaking with my subsequent operas. And what has been the result? Peculiarly, I have no reason to complain; for, although I am not rich, I am comfortably situated, and certainly richer than any of my ancestors have been for many years past. But what a life of disappointments I have recently had to lead! Will you believe that the Parisians, who were once my most ardent admirers, have completely ostracized me? I have my new opera, 'Haida,' ready for the stage. I am free to say it is quite equal to any of my previous productions. And yet not a manager in Paris dares to perform it, because I am a German. It is tabooed in Berlin, because my Grand Duke of Mecklenburg hates me; and, in Vienna, because the Emperor of Germany will not permit its performance in Berlin. Has any modern composer ever been so unfortunate?"

"Why not start your new opera in London?" I interrupted. "No, no, my friend," replied Herr von Flotow, "you don't understand that. A new opera, to succeed in London, must first have been given in Paris. Listen," he added, going to the

open piano in his room, "and tell me what you think of these melodies."

And he began to run his fingers over the ivory keys with wonderful mastery, playing new and delightful airs.

"Are these melodies pretty?" he asked.

"Pretty," I replied, "they are enchanting! Better than 'Martha'!"

And yet he cannot get this opera performed! Such are conventional and national prejudices.

Herr von Flotow has three children by his second wife, who herself is an eminent pianist. He leads at Prienitz the life of a hermit, going but rarely to Vienna. His tenants are greatly attached to him, on account of his kindness toward them.

During my long conversation with him, I heard Herr von Flotow pass some curious opinions on the other great composers of the day.

"Meyerbeer," he said, "was incomparably the greatest of them all. Rossini ruined himself by writing too much. Bellini was a musical confectioner, producing excellent sweetmeats. Donizetti would have been very great had he not been an Italian. Wagner is grand, but often too terrible. Verdi was very promising, but had deteriorated of late. Ambroise Thomas was an imitator of Adams. Gounod had made a great mistake to write anything after 'Faust.' He should have taken warning by Auber's example."

All this was well said, extremely caustic, but not always just. Herr von Flotow had evidently been soured by what he considers his bitter disappointments. He is a spoiled child of Dame Fortune. The slightest mishaps make him angry.

Upon leaving the château, I caught a glimpse of Frau von Flotow. She is a portly, good-looking lady of forty. Her serene face does not indicate in any way that she is conscious of the trouble she has caused her illustrious husband. And yet he is smarting under it, and to me it seems more than probable that his days are numbered. He looks certainly very old and broken down.

For Everybody.

Regular Habits.

M. Rouher, one of France's ablest men, rises daily at 5 A. M., and spends the early hours in close study. At eight he takes a cup of coffee, and receives the visits of Bonapartists and others. At twelve, breakfast; then to Versailles, to spend the day in the Assembly. After dinner he plays *bisnique*, and chats with the visitors who crowd his parlors. At ten, to bed. This is the daily routine of the champion and chief representative of the Second Empire.

Telegraph.

At length the telegraph has been successfully introduced into the main portion of the Chinese empire by the Great Northern Telegraphic Company. A line has been established between Shanghai and Woosung. Twenty words are sent for a dollar. Hitherto the Chinese people have been violently opposed to the introduction of the telegraph, and have cut the wires and destroyed the poles; but they are becoming more reconciled to the progress of scientific improvements in their midst.

Singular.

A philosopher seems anxious about the fulfilment of a great social omission, for he has recently written—"It is among the curious things connected with princes that they do not commit suicide. In the whole range of modern history, commencing, say, from the year 1600, no prince has selected that mode of exit from the world, and we scarcely remember, in all the memoirs, secret histories, and books of anecdote, one of whom suicide might not have been predicted as a method of getting rid of a weary life."

Territorial Statistics.

The British Empire now possesses 7,760,449 square miles of territory. The United Kingdom, 121,608 square miles; the Colonies, 6,688,021; India and Ceylon, 962,820. There are 38 persons to a square mile in the Empire; 260 in the United Kingdom, 201 in India, and 1.41 in the Colonies. In some parts of India the density of population more than equals that of England. The Queen rules over 234,762,593 souls; her people dwell in 44,142,651 houses; and the area of the lands they inhabit is not less than 7,769,449 square miles.

Detectives.

Mr. "Macaulay," the clever New York correspondent of the *Bochester Democrat and Chronicle*, says that most of the detectives of New York not only know the thieves, but are on good terms with them. One of the best detectives in New York is said to know 1800 thieves and bad characters. The detectives do not follow up any moderate robbery! It must be a large one to secure their attention. When traced, they usually recommend the victims to compromise, and the rewards and emoluments go to the thieves and detectives together, and in fat proportions. Such, at least, is the common belief.

Cool.

A few weeks ago, at a theatre in the provinces, a young actor who was playing the part of an old porter had his false bald crown mischievously pulled off at the moment of his appearing before the foot-lights. After a moment of quickly repressed astonishment at the sight of his thick black locks, his fellow-actor on the stage said, with the utmost *sang-froid*, "I did not call you, my good fellow; I called your father. Tell him I want him directly." And a few seconds afterwards the young man, with his proper head-gear, re-appeared before the public, who had not discovered any thing amiss.

Change.

Five years ago a gentleman in Portland scratched his name on a nickel cent and sent it on its travels. Eighteen months after, this came into the possession of a Lowell acquaintance, who marked his name upon it. Two years after it left the pocket of the Lowell man it turned up in Pennsylvania, and came into the hands of a former chum of the Portlander. Recognizing the name, he inscribed his also on the coin. Last week the man who started the cent on its travels was making a purchase at Lowell, when the identical nickel which left his pocket five years ago was handed to him in change.

Annotating.

A singular action has just been tried in Lanarkshire. Mr. Page Hopps, a Unitarian minister of Glasgow, some time since published a book, "The Life of Jesus, re-written for Young