

ART NOTES.

It is somewhat strange that M. Alfred Stevens should occupy a place midway between the cold, stern purity of the Holbeinesque art of Baron Leys and the soft, voluptuous realism of Gustavus Wappers; strange, because the late François Navez was his teacher, and Navez was the follower and friend of Louis David, the painter of classic themes in a moribund classic style. It was to Leys and Wappers, then, not to Navez and David, that Alfred Stevens really sent his talents to school. From both Stevens borrowed what he liked best, and the result of this borrowing was a new kind of *genre* painting, singularly rich and delicate in colour, singularly free, smooth and fluent in execution. As early as 1867 the Parisian artists began "to medal his little pictures," and from that day to the present he has never once really changed his style. He still possesses the technical skill, the knowledge of colour and the iconoclastic hatred of a pretty face, which he admired as a youth in the reproductive art of Leys; he still shows in the smooth and sensuous treatment of his draperies, dresses and stuffs the lasting influence of the too luscious realism of Wappers. In a word, Alfred Stevens' is an acquired art, rich in technique and exquisite in colour; but alas! it is lacking—with an exception here and there—in human tenderness and human passion. It skims too lingeringly and lovingly along the surface of things, and buries its best gifts too often in textures.—*Magazine of Art for January.*

THE *Art Amateur* tells how Mr. Spitzer, at the beginning of his career, made a brilliant stroke against the Baroness James de Rothschild, herself an expert in objects of art, who loved to hunt about the bric-a-brac shops. One day the Baroness found a marvellous cup which greatly pleased her. But she could never make up her mind to buy any object for the price asked; she liked to bargain. A few days afterward she returned to the shop, accompanied by the Baron James, and discussed the price with the dealer. No arrangement was arrived at and the Baroness went away. But she wanted the cup badly, and came back two or three times hoping that the dealer would yield. In the meantime Spitzer saw it and at once knew its value. "How much do you ask for that cup?" he said to the dealer. "I have refused to sell it to the Baroness de Rothschild for thirty thousand francs. She wants it very much, but she will not pay my price. I am tired of haggling with her, and will let you have it for thirty-five thousand, just to give her a lesson." "I'll take it," replied Spitzer, scarcely able to conceal his joy, and he carried the cup away with him. A few days afterward he sold it to Lord Beresford for three hundred thousand francs, or \$60,000. It is what has since been known as the Beresford Cup. When the Baroness again returned to the bric-a-brac shop, this time having decided to make the purchase, and found that the treasure had slipped through her hands, she was terribly disappointed; but her disappointment was still greater when she heard of the bargain that had been concluded at London. However, the lesson was not lost—neither for her nor for the Baron James. Struck with the cleverness of Mr. Spitzer, they made him their adviser in all their art purchases. "The Beresford Cup" thus became the source of his fortune.

MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES.

NEARLY every church in this city of churches put forth its best effort to welcome the coming of the great festival of the Christian Church. More especially may this be said of the Catholic and Protestant Episcopal churches, whose ritual permits a greater display of musical ornamentation. The Church of the Redeemer choir rendered a beautiful anthem, and the service throughout was appropriate and well carried out. St. Peter's Church choir assayed a fairly effective rendering of Marsh's Festival, Te Deum, the anthem and remainder of the service befitting the occasion. At St. James' Cathedral the Psalms for the day and the Responses were, for some inexplicable reason, sung painfully below the pitch of the organ, especially in the softer passages. The "Hallelujah Chorus" from the "Messiah" showed off to better advantage, the choir of some sixty voices, a large number being ladies, singing it in a spirited manner. Not many of the congregations were up to their numerical standard.

THE GRUENFELDS.

ALFRED GRUENFELD was a boy of only twelve when he gave his first concert in his native city of Prague, playing Bach's prelude and fugue in C sharp minor, and works by Liszt and Mendelssohn, the immediate result being storms of applause, the boy earning the name of "Wunderkind." Since, he has studied and played himself into the proud positions of "Court Pianist both to the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia." Heinrich Gruenfeld is a cellist of the first rank, the late Count von Moltke having honoured him with his personal friendship. A paper-weight, bearing the following inscription, stands on this artist's desk: "In friendly remembrance of the late field-marshal, the Moltke family presents this paper-weight to the sincere friend of the deceased." These talented brothers are to give one of their artistically enjoyable evenings in the Pavilion on January 7. The plan is open at Gourlay, Winter and Leeming's piano rooms, Yonge Street, near Queen.

THE GARCIAS.

At the recent restoration and enlargement of the organ in the once famous chapel in the historical palace at Versailles, France, Alexander Guilmant, the renowned composer and organist, presided. Amongst other attractions Mr. Paul Viardot, son of Madame Viardot Garcia, the best known teacher of the voice in Paris, and nephew of the eminent singing master, Manuel Garcia, of London, played Gounod's "Visione de Jean D'Arc" on the violin. He is one of the foremost violinists in Paris, sustaining thereby the musical traditions of the Garcias.

ITALIAN OPERA.

THE artists who, during the last few weeks, have been ventilating their voices in the Windy City on Lake Michigan, have one and all made very successful appearances in New York, under managers Abbey and Grau. Miss Eames and the De Reske brothers were the chief novelties. Jean de Reske, the grand basso, seems to have more especially impressed the New Yorkers with his superb talent. The audiences are credited by the local press as listening with keener attention than the German operatic performances received last season, although prices were higher.

A NEW MUSICAL DEPARTURE.

THE Waterford and Limerick Railway Company have added a luxury, extending even into third-class carriages, in the shape of an orchestra to help while away the weary hours on board their trains. The musicians play *ensemble* and in small groups; when they board a train a violinist, a cornetist and a bassoonist will enter one compartment and proceed to work; other groups entering other compartments, emulating, no doubt, the music of the spheres below (the wheels), that of the elements above and quite recently also that of the lusty electioneering element surrounding them. A wonder as well as a hope might be indulged in, as to whether "God Save the Queen" would be admitted to a place on these curiously numerous programmes.

ATTENTION may well be called to a suggestive lecture on the "Glee" delivered by Mr. J. Edward Street, the president of the Caterham Choral Society, in connection with the performance by the association of some glees, madrigals and part-songs last week. Mr. Street laments the decay of glee-singing, and there is none better able to speak on this matter than the learned president, who is also honorary secretary of the famous old "Madrigal Society." There is no need to describe and dwell upon the features of this peculiar type of music; the glee is English in its origin and has never been imitated with success abroad. A long line of illustrious native musicians—not the least of whom was Sir John Goss—have written some of these gems of melody and rich pieces of delicious harmony, which, when well sung, cannot but be heard with delight. It does seem a thousand pities that glee-singing is decaying, but we are afraid it is so. Many causes go to account for this; perhaps the most important factor is the change that has taken place in our social habits, when it was a common custom for those loving music to repair in the evening to their various glee clubs, and enjoy the singing of a body of trained vocalists, who rendered to perfection these beautiful melodious glees; and at the same time they worshipped Bacchus and enjoyed the fragrant weed. The praises of Bacchus formed a very considerable item in the words of many of these old glees; the merry, merry god quite disputed the mastery with Cupid, and the tone of these pieces was mostly of an amorous and vinous character. However, the catalogues of words by Clark, Oliphant and Rimbault show that other subjects than the adoration of the fair, and the praise of the gods of wine and war, were often selected by the old composers for musical illustration. There are comparatively few glees written for female voices, and those with a soprano part were usually sung by boys. In cathedral towns the glee club was an important institution, and though these societies still exist (indeed there are many in London), the old zeal which inspired the members has to a great extent departed. And more's the pity, for anything more exquisite than a fine glee sung by those who understand how to render the music does not exist. Let those who still value the type reflect on this matter, and endeavour to give encouragement to glee writers, and to an art in which we English are supreme, and indeed stand alone.—*Musical News.*

It is said that a French soldier, stationed at a picture-gallery, had strict orders to allow no one to pass without first depositing his walking-stick. A gentleman came with his hands in his pockets. The soldier, taking him by the arm, said: "Citizen, where is your stick?" "I have no stick!" "Then you will have to go back and get one before I can allow you to pass."

THE late Archbishop Tait, of Canterbury, once made an effective use of a sermon. Driving down Holloway Hill he was confronted by a runaway horse, with a heavy dray, making straight for his carriage. He threw a sermon in his face. The horse was so bewildered by the fluttering of the leaves that it swerved and paused, the driver regained control, the sermon was picked up and the bishop proceeded on his way. "I don't know," he said to his companion, the present Archbishop of York, "whether my sermon did any good to the congregation, but it was of considerable service to me."

OUR LIBRARY TABLE.

THE BANKER'S DAUGHTER: Her First and Last Ball. A novel. By J. Shinnick. Montreal: Gazette Printing Company. 1891.

The writer of this story has a good deal of ability of which something more may be made in time by diligent work. Some portions of the narrative are excellent, although every now and then we come upon awkward bits of English. Moreover, the jointing needs to be done a little more carefully. We mean these remarks to be encouraging; and we confidently expect still better work from the author in the future.

A HARD LESSON. By E. Lovett Cameron. New York: John A. Taylor and Company.

This is a novel much of the usual type, in which the heroine goes through the usual troubles, and comes into the usual harbour. The "hard lesson" seems to be that riches are not everything; very true, but it was promulgated some years ago by a man named Solomon. Perhaps the best thing in the book is the naturalness and femininity of the plots against the heroine's peace by the two cruel women of the story. It is a simple enough story with a common enough moral.

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL LAYMAN'S HANDBOOK. By an Ex-churchwarden. Toronto: Hart and Company. 1891.

Writing not as theologians, but as critics, we should say—concerning the handsome volume before us, which at least does credit to printer and publisher—that the author has diligently read up his facts, especially those which make for his own side, and that he has a certain power of presenting them as an advocate. But his partisanship is too conspicuous; and the result will be that he will persuade no one who is not already on his own side. He professes to explain "the innovations of the last half century"; but, in point of fact, he attacks the contents of the Prayer Book itself. This, therefore, is a plea for prayer book revision, and not for loyalty.

THE RUDDER GRANGERS ABROAD: And other Stories. By Frank R. Stockton. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

The author of "Rudder Grange" has done well to give to the public this admirable selection from his shorter stories. The fine qualities possessed by Mr. Frank Stockton are apparent in all of them. They have the same flavour of genial and gentle humour which sheds its sunny brightness over the pages of this talented and popular writer of American fiction. The tales comprised in this neat and carefully-printed volume are "Euphemia among the Pelicans," "The Rudder Grangers in England," "Pomona's Daughter," "Derelict," "The Baker of Barnbury," and "The Water Devil." It would be a singularly constituted individual who would rise disappointed from the reading of "The Rudder Grangers Abroad."

THE BACHELOR OF SALAMANCA. By René Le Sage (Rose Library). Price 50 cents. New York: Worthington; Toronto: P. C. Allen. 1891.

Quite recently we noticed an edition of Le Sage's first work, "Asmodeus." We now have published in the same series one of his last works. His greatest, "Gil Blas," lies between. We confess that we prefer the "Bachelor of Salamanca" to "Asmodeus," if we cannot rank it nearly so high as "Gil Blas." When we remember that it was written in France early in the eighteenth century, we shall not expect its moral tone to be very high, and it is scarcely a book to be commended *virginibus puerisque*; but it is a clever book, as at this time of day need hardly be said; and students of literature must know something of the works of Le Sage.

THE HIGH TOP SWEETING, and other Poems. By Elizabeth Akers. Price \$1.25. New York: Scribners; Toronto: W. Briggs. 1891.

This is a very pretty volume, and its contents show that the writer has a fine vein of poetry in her composition. Not only is the language in which they are expressed melodious and expressive, but the thoughts embodied show a genuine love of nature and a sympathy with all its moods, as well as a real insight into humanity. The first part of the title, as our readers may know, is the name of an apple tree. From this poem we give one stanza:—

Lovely it was when its blossoms came
To answer the blue-bird's greeting;
They were dainty and white as a maiden's fame,
And pink as the flush of tender shame
That lights her cheek at her lover's name;
And the place was bright with the rosy flame
Of the beautiful high-top sweeting.

Here again are two sweet strains from a little poem on Rest:—

Why weep for those who happily forget
Life's tedious wear and fret,
Who lay aside, with joy, the loads of ill
Which cramp us still?

Wash not, O tears, these white and quiet feet
Which, clean from dust and heat,
Shall climb through all the round of coming days
No more rough ways.