

CROQUET v. LAWN TENNIS.

THERE are signs of a croquet revival. Lawn tennis is not altogether doomed, but young ladies are beginning to see that it is a game for men. If played by girls it should be played without corsets. Against a young fellow in flannels a girl in stays and a dress weighted with the cumbersome protuberances which are now in fashion has no chance. If she bestirs herself so much in striking at the ball, her movements are not only ungraceful but injurious to health; if she cultivates grace, waiting in pretty attitudes for the ball till it comes within her reach, then there is no game. The proper tennis costume for a girl would be a Garibaldi shirt and a plain skirt, as light as possible, but girls do not really care enough for tennis to make any sacrifice of personal adornment for its sake. What they like is the open air and the company of men (four girls playing at tennis with no man looking on is a very rare sight); but croquet offers these attractions with additional possibilities in the way of talk. At croquet the fair player may wear what she pleases, strike picturesque attitudes, go through the game without hurry, and hold sweet confidential chat between the hits. At tennis there is no confidential chatting. Croquet is certainly slower than tennis to good players of the last game, but not slower than tennis as played by some young ladies, who only send the ball over the net once out of five tries. It might have been expected that the earnestness of some young men in their practice of tennis would prove fatal to the game as a sociable pastime. Enthusiasts of the racket play too well for their sisters and sisters' friends; and it is really no great fun after all to "field out" while a proficient in flannels amuses himself by cutting balls in so dexterous a style that they scarcely rebound, and must always be missed, even when a girl tires herself out in straining after them.

THE *London Graphic* says:—There are many less pleasant and lucrative businesses than the giving of spiritualistic or thought-reading seances: If the performer does not make money directly, he does so indirectly, and he will become the pet of a circle of fashionable feather-heads. But to accomplish this successfully he must be decently educated, wear a good coat on his back, and mix in "Society." We do not recommend him to live in such an unfashionable region as Ocean Street, Stepney, and charge only sixpence a-head for his revelations. If he does he may find himself brought into unpleasant contact with a code of laws based on the celebrated text in Leviticus: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." In these humane days he will not be hanged or burnt, but he may be sent to work the treadmill as a rogue and vagabond. The fact is that our laws are rather of the grandmotherly sort, both about betting and fortune-telling. The petty offenders are punished, the big offenders are not interfered with. The excuse, of course, is that the poor in such matters require more protection than the rich. But why should not poor people be allowed to have their fortunes told if they please? Surely it is of more importance to know what sort of a person your future husband or wife will be, than to know where a pin is hidden away. If the fortune-teller is a humbug (and this is the legal excuse for punishing him), the consultee is the only person wronged. *Bona-fide* visitors never put the law in force against fortune-tellers; such prosecutions are always got up by informers. These fortune-tellers rarely claim supernatural powers, but they do claim to have a peculiar gift. This is just what is said by the thought-readers, whom Society runs after. What does the law know about the invisible world that it should brand a man as a "fraud" because he puts forth such pretensions? But, in any case, let us have fair play. Let all these preternaturalists, East End or West End, be punished, or, (which we prefer) let them all be left alone.

MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

CHURCH MUSIC.

From Palestrina to Bach and Handel.

THE history of Music up to near the time of Palestrina is, except in a limited degree, in no way separate from the history of Church Music, all the composers of distinction having devoted their best energies to the production of works for religious purposes. It has been thought by some writers, that this was due exclusively to the religious tendencies and feelings of the composers. Without depreciation of the motives which called into existence the sublime works which the old classical masters gave to the Church, the fact must not be overlooked that the Church, recognising the power of music as a factor in her ritual, offered superior inducements in the way of lucrative posts and positions, thereby creating a demand, which by the well established law of supply and demand, developed from the many who strove to gain those positions some master minds who, towering above the others, left their impress upon the art of music. The wonderful architecture of the mediæval Cathedrals, Abbeys, and Monasteries had perhaps never existed but for the demand of the Church for structures typical of the glory of the New Jerusalem. But as Josquin des Prés, Morales, Cyprian de Rore, Orlandus Lassus, Willaert, Palestrini, and a host of other composers, had never been written. The Church created the want, and with the want came the men. Side by side with the development of church music, grew another branch of musical art. The "folk song," or melody of the people. Not dependent for its foundation upon the fixed laws of the ecclesiastical keys of St. Ambrose and St. Gregory, its form was less trammelled. Its melodies were less formal, but more spontaneous, less artificial but more natural. Its harmonic

structure, resting upon the tonic and dominant of the scale, was the foundation of the modern school of tonal harmony.

The last great composer of the Netherlands, who left a large number of important works for the Church, was Orlando di Lasso, 1520. After filling several positions of importance in Italy, in 1557 he was appointed Chapel Master of Albert V., at Munich, where he remained until his death, which occurred in 1594. With the death of this composer, whose genius in its universality more closely resembled that of the great Handel than perhaps did any other composer, vanished sacred musical art in the Netherlands, and from that period until the beginning of the present century, Italy stood foremost as the birth-place and school, of a long line of great composers for the Church.

The Modern Oratorio, the noblest form of sacred music, had its origin in the mysteries and moralities, or miracle plays. These (in their turn descending from the Greeks and Romans, whose natural tendencies were to theatrical representations) were improved by the early teachers of the Christian religion, as a means to give symbolic form to the doctrines of the Church, and thus to reach the mind through the medium of the senses. Subjects from both Old and New Testaments, or from the lives of the Saints were dramatised, and priests (in appropriate costumes, representing, according to the subject, God the Father, Christ, the angels, and Mary) were the actors. Many historical facts go to prove that these mysteries or miracle plays, in which music held an important part, made a great impression upon the pious audiences who were assembled for instruction. In course of time these plays, degenerating from their primitive state of purity, and becoming, more and more, the favourite entertainment of the people, the churches, in which edifices heretofore they had been given, were not sufficiently large to give room to the eager audiences. To accommodate these, immense stages were erected in the streets or market-places, and even in cemeteries. Passing gradually out of the hands of the priesthood, the miracle plays soon lost every vestige of sacredness, and descended to the grossest buffoonery; impudent street songs took the place of sacred hymns; vulgar and silly jokes degraded the most holy rites of religious ceremonies. From these miracle plays and mysteries, sprang the Oratorio and the Opera—"the richest, and in an artistic as well as in a poetical sense, the highest of modern musical art forms" (*Ritter*). The origin of the name "Oratorio" is as follows:—St. Philip Neri, born 1515, in Florence, and in 1561 consecrated as a priest at Rome, founded a congregation of priests, and in order to draw youths from baneful secular amusements, and interest and instruct them in the teachings of the Church, he caused spiritual songs to be alternated with his readings and teachings, and in addition to these hymns he dramatized, in a simple form, sacred stories and events from the Scriptures. These were written in verse and set to music; Palestrina himself composed the music for some of them. These early lyrical dramas called "Azioni sacre," were performed in a hall or room adjoining the church, called an "oratory," in Italian *Oratorio*, hence the origin of that form of musical art. Gaining wider and more perfectly developed form, the first Oratorio, which, from a modern standpoint, may fairly be regarded as such, was composed and performed in Rome, 1600, its author is Emilio del Cavaliere, its name "L'Anima è Corpo." Among the Italian composers whose genius contributed at this time most to the advancement of the sacred musical drama, and especially of the Oratorio, was Carissimi, born about 1640, in Marino near Rome. To this composer the credit belongs of having invented the sacred cantata. Among the oratorios which he composed are "Jephtha," "Solomon's Judgment," "Job," "Abraham and Isaac," etc. Other Italian composers of merit who lived about this time and who gave to religion and the church many a fine oratorio were Stradella, Sgarbi, Caldara, and Colonna.

Although to the Italians belongs the credit of originating both the form and name of the oratorio, it yet remained for the great German Protestant composers, Handel and Bach, to bring that art form to the high state of perfection which stamps that species of musical composition as the ideal to which all composers strive to attain. Side by side with the oratorio flourished still another species of musical art form, in some respects resembling, and in other differing from, the oratorio. The "Passion Oratorio" owes its origin to the custom which existed of representing, during Passion week, in an epic, dramatic form, the passion of Christ. The dramatic element in the Passion Oratorio appears in a very subordinate way. The oldest known passion-music by a Protestant composer is to be found in a hymn book, published 1573. Recitative issued for the soliloquy and short choruses for the people. A similar specimen is that in Selencæ's hymn-book, published 1587. But the composer whose works are of greater artistic importance, was Henry Scheutz. He studied at Venice, and returning to Germany, settled at Dresden, where his sphere of action was of the greatest influence on the development of German musical art. He wrote several passion oratorios of great strength and beauty, and although Handel was not born when Scheutz died (1672), the effective manner in which his choruses are written already anticipates, in a marked manner, the works of the great master.

Many other composers wrote Passion Oratorios of merit, notably one John Sebastiani. This composer was the first to set, and artistically harmonize for different parts, Protestant choral melodies, a peculiarity which Sebastian Bach afterwards carried to such perfection in his passion oratorios and cantatas.

High above all other composers who wrote church music stands John Sebastian Bach and George Frederic Handel, by a strange coincidence born in the same year (1685). In these two great composers the art of classical religious music seems to have reached its highest plane of excellence. Other great composers of church music since their time have left