

Instead of breaking in on my meditations, it served as a connecting link between them, blending them together as in a maze. My eyes, however, were fixed upon the player. But the sight of her, instead of producing worldly or sensuous thoughts, only heightened my feelings of reverential awe. The time, the place, the occupation, served to idealize her in some sort, and to my bewildered fancy she seemed not an earthly maiden fingering cold ivory keys, but a being of the spirit world whose soul was transfusing itself into sacred melody. The girl, however, did not appear conscious that she was playing so well. Having consented, as I afterwards learned, at the pastor's solicitation, to be the organist of the parish, in the absence of any professional performer, she had the habit of practising on Sunday afternoons, after the congregation had departed, and even on week days when she found it convenient. On the present occasion she had fallen on a selection of pieces which accorded strangely with the mood I was in when I entered the church. The abstruse and almost painfully pathetic creations of Beethoven are not appreciated because not comprehended by the majority of lovers of music, but many of his disciples have popularized the mysticism of his school and thus rendered it generally enjoyable. Chief among these is Mendelssohn. The organist was precisely practising some of his delightful *lieder ohne worte*, songs without words! And she played them with marvellous effect. The instrument became vocal under her touch. It seemed transformed into one grand multiple voice. It filled the whole temple with a presence and a power. The light autumn air of the darkened aisle palpitated with its infinite echoes. Now there was a sound of thunder like the rush of high winds, then a lull like the murmur of the breeze. Every passion and emotion was articulated—grief and joy, triumph and despair, peace and calm content. And throughout the whole performance not a jaggle was heard, not a harsh note, nothing that could recall the material—all was spiritualized, the instrument and the performer. The creative thought of the author was fully seized, and in that gush of inspiration the listener was wafted into the ideal.

I stood leaning against the pillar, thoroughly absorbed in the wonderful music. For a long time my eyes were fixed on the grained ceiling while my thoughts were far away in the infinite spaces of fancy or unconsciously analyzing the feelings that welled up unbidden within me, responsive to the touches of the master's harmony. Gradually, however, I awoke out of my stupor and looked around. Darkness had now filled the vast area, but there was sufficient light to enable me to see the aged priest in the chancel. He had risen from his knees and taken a seat in an arm-chair near the altar. His misal was closed on his lap, his hands were tightly clasped upon the book and his serene white face was upturned toward the organ with a rapid expression of intense thought. It was evident that the music had proved a prayer for the holy man and borne his soul on its wings beyond the narrowness of this temple built with hands. I then turned to the player, and saw that, having stopped a moment, she remained unmoved before the instrument, as if overwhelmed by the language which she had made it speak. Her fingers still lay on the edge of the keys and her head was bent down. A long ray of sunshine broke into the organ-loft, shot down along the great pipes and rested like a halo on her abundant brown hair.

Just then a low vibration as if the tall spire were rocking on its base was felt inside the church and the bells pealed out the *Angelus*. The old priest fell upon his knees; the player started from her seat. It was all over now. The spell was broken.

I hastened out of the church and returned to the farm-house for supper. On the way, a singular change came over my mind. The calm I had enjoyed in the church was succeeded by an undefined trouble. One of the *lieder*, which I had just heard, kept recurring to my memory and to its plaintive chords I attached words of my own. These words were full of dole. Melancholy is at times so oppressive that we have to use physical means to shake it off. I tossed my head, swung my arms, hastened my pace into a run. But all was useless. The burdensome feeling returned. I lapsed again into the monody. Seeing which I changed my tactics and boldly plunged into the analysis of my mood. I am naturally no believer in presentiments, longings, dreams, phantasies or spiritual surprises of any kind, being convinced that the material and psychical worlds are governed by organic laws whose beauty consists precisely in their simplicity. But on this evening my scepticism was on its trial. So far as I could make out, the feeling which beset me was a certain dread that just at the moment when I was enjoying myself, others whom I loved were suffering, and that on my return to my lodgings I would be met by some unwelcome intelligence. Impatient to come at the truth, whatever it might be, I reached the farm-house with redoubled speed. My first inquiry was whether the postilion had arrived. The answer was that a large parcel of mail-matter lay on my table.

IV.

AHEAD OF THE MAIL.

I spread out the papers and letters to assure myself by a preliminary glance whether there was a misadventure from a strange hand among them.

My eye fell on a large, straggling writing, which I recognized at once as M. Paladine's. It was the first time he had written during my absence. There must be something wrong.

I reflected. A struggle arose within me. Should I break that large red wafer—which looked so like a blood-stain—at once, or wait till later? I decided to wait. I would read my other letters and all my newspapers first. If M. Paladine's letter contained good news it could keep for an hour or two longer. If it conveyed bad news, that could always be learned soon enough. So I placed it out of reach in a corner of the looking-glass. I then opened my other letters, one by one, going over each with studied slowness. They were mostly business communications from persons who demanded my return home to confide professional work to me. I went through my newspapers with the same leisure, forcing myself to take interest in political intelligence, foreign and domestic, of which I knew little, and for which I cared still less.

My reading had been twice interrupted by the maid summoning me to tea. I had put her off on both occasions. But when, at length, my mail was exhausted, I had no resource left me but to go down to the supper room. I there found my companions lingering over the scraps of their meal. The deputy noticed that I was pale and taciturn. He kindly inquired whether the post-boy had brought me bad news. Upon my negative answer he informed me that there was the chance of a conveyance for two of our party that night which would enable them to catch the upward-bound steamer at the landing at eight next morning. If I was ready to start, and did not object to drive in the dark, I might take that carriage, the deputy himself being willing to await the next day's stage, as he had still some remnants of work to do. I eagerly accepted the proposal. I preferred the distraction and excitement of a night ride to tossing on an anxious pillow, and, besides, there was a clean gain of twenty-four hours.

Returning to my room, I completed my last preparations. There remained but one thing to do and that was to read M. Paladine's letter. Further hesitation appeared puerile. I took it from the looking-glass, and with trembling fingers burst the seal. There were only a few lines written hurriedly and almost illegibly. I read them all at once, with dimmed eyes, yet so keenly that every word was stamped upon my brain. Ah! yes. There was gloom at The Quarries, while all had been sunshine with me. She had sunk under the long, terrible strain on her energies. I ought to have known that she could not resist forever. My presence alone could have averted the blow, and here I had been away eight weeks, unconscious, forgetful of the struggle in which she was left single-handed to engage. Would I return soon? asked M. Paladine. Would I write at once to say when I might be expected?

I thrust the letter into my pocket, seized my portmanteau, put my instrument box under my arm and rushed down the stair.

"Ready?" I asked of the driver who was lazily spread in a chair, with his legs on the bar of the gallery, high above his head.

"An hour yet, sir," he answered. "We don't leave till ten."

"Five dollars extra if you start immediately," I exclaimed.

"All right. The horses won't mind for once being cut off from their oats. They're rested, that's the chief thing. I'll give them a double allowance in the morning when we get to the river."

Within five minutes we were off. We reached the landing by sunrise. True to her schedule the packet touched the wharf at eight, delivered her mails, let out and took in passengers, and then under a full head of steam bore on for St. Louis.

(To be continued.)

NORDHEIMER'S HALL.

Since the opening of this elegant and commodious hall, than which there is none better adapted in Montreal for musical entertainments, owing to its acoustic properties, Mr. DeZouche, who has ever been foremost in placing before us the best musical and vocal talent which has appeared in this city, has been striving hard to sustain his reputation. As we go to press, the Mendelssohn Quintette Club is performing in our midst, accompanied by Mrs. J. W. Weston. On Thursday 16th, and Friday, 17th of this month, the intelligent and polished humourist, De Cordova, will lecture on the "Pipley Family in Europe" and "The Dog next door." On the 20th inst., will appear for one week, the best "Pinafore" troupe which has so far visited our city, and if the American press is to be credited, the best that has been in the United States, we mean "Murphy's Miniature Opera Company."

THE CONCERT of the Mendelssohn Quintette was on Monday night thoroughly appreciated. Mr. Thos. Ryan, viola and clarinette, and Mr. Gustav Dannreuther are the only two remaining members of the old association, but the new comers will, as they showed by their playing, worthily uphold the reputation of that classical club. Mr. Heimendahl was excellent in his interpretation of Sarasate's solo; although young, he has on this, as well as on the other side of the Atlantic, acquired a reputation, possessing, as he does, a complete mastery over

his instrument, which seems to sympathize with the player. Mr. Giese's cello playing is the boldest, and most graceful withal, that has been heard in Montreal in connection with any musical association. Messrs. Dannreuther and Ryan are old favourites all over Canada, and need no further commendation. Mr. Shade won golden opinions from our dilettanti for his soft and musical flute-playing. To hear Mrs. Weston's ever fresh and finished voice was indeed a treat. She captivated her audience, which testified to its pleasure by repeated and hearty applause. Our going to press prevents our noticing the second concert, but we can only repeat that the Mendelssohn Quintette Club still holds its own.

DICKENS IN THE PRESS.

It has been the lot of more than one great writer to furnish material for a literature in which he had little interest, and to be quoted as an authority in matters quite beyond the scope of his genius. We read in recent French papers how the extreme Democrats, who have read the Pope's recommendation of St. Thomas, have been quoting the Angelic Doctor as an authority in favor of radicalism, rebellion, and the dethronement of kings. St. Paul is perhaps as ill-used a man as any of the great writers, for since he furnishes a good deal of material for discussion; a very large number of people habitually quote him as supporting views which they would hardly have courage to bring forward in his presence. The transition from these great theologians to one who was no theologian at all is very great. Nevertheless it is not unnatural, since the incongruity between the writings of Dickens and the use that is habitually made of them is as great as an incongruity could be. The political aspect of Dickens' books is not, for instance, strongly marked; yet few modern writers are more frequently made use of by writers on political affairs. Curiously enough the practice of utilizing Dickens in political discussion is more general on this side of the Atlantic than on the other. We greatly fear that the reason of this is too plain and too unflattering. The English press is contributed to by men usually of wide reading and enlarged and liberal culture, who do not find themselves confined for qualifications or similitudes to one popular writer. Moreover the political discussions of the English press are as a rule conducted with a seriousness which may be a little oppressive, but is nevertheless very creditable and very effective on public opinion. On this side of the Atlantic, even in the great cities of America, the press is too often conducted by men with whom smartness supplies the want of solidity, and to whose minds the ludicrous side of a question too quickly presents itself. In Canada the want of culture in the press is, we fear, too marked as a rule; and "base hound" is supposed, on high authority, to dispose of an opponent and demolish his arguments without question or appeal. In the absence of any wide range of reading, men of ready wit find in the books of Dickens the materials for satire and humor ready-made to their hands. Mr. Pecksniff, for instance, has become the common property of newspaper writers as an example of pompous hypocrisy. Having once accomplished an understanding of the various "points" of Mr. Pecksniff, the papers as a rule cling to him with a truly filial affection. All other eminently hypocritical characters in history and literature pale before the popularity of Pecksniff. He is so easily understood. He requires no introduction. The public knows him at sight. He has made his own reputation. And when a political opponent is called "Pecksniffian" it is felt, on one side at least, that said opponent is doubled up and done for generally; although the victim himself may be labouring under the impression that he has seen that phrase before. "Mr. Dick," too, is one of the familiar friends of the newspapers. Mr. Dick's inability to write anything without mentioning King Charles's head, is a fine and effective illustration of "our contemporary's" inability to write anything without having a fling at our own favorite statesman, or policy or measure. The legal profession were shabbily treated by Mr. Dickens. "Dodson and Fogg" form the mental picture which the million have of the average attorney. And to the newspapers Dodson and Fogg are invaluable. If "the press" is sued for libel, it is "Dodson and Fogg" who are supposed to have issued the writs "on spec." If "our respected representative" happens to have an awkward and untimely protest entered against his return to Parliament, it is almost invariably "Dodson and Fogg" who are said in the local paper to have formed the base conspiracy. Mr. Chadband is utilized as the newspaper writer's idea of a specious parson. Uriah Heep is the only newspaper representative of extreme "unbleness." Codden and Short form the newspaper's only idea of rival claimants to a nation's gratitude—even the London papers, which seldom quote anything, still stick to Codden and Short. Mrs. Gamp still forms the popular newspaper idea of a monthly nurse, although the race of Gamps is largely extinct. Mr. Gradgrind is the only exemplar, for the press, of the passion for "facts." Mr. Wegg still continues to "drop into poetry in a friendly way" for our friends of the newspapers. And at the kindest season of the year, Tony Tim drops from every newspaper writer's pen on to the paper before the inevitable and perhaps well meant "God bless us every one." In fact but for Dickens the daily press on this side of the Atlantic would lack a

good deal of its humor, a good deal of its illustration of each other's manners and a good deal of its representative character. The fact is that the dead master so made his characters live and move and talk, and so made them reflect, truthfully, so many phases of manners and character, that his books are exhaustless funds for the seeker of his humorous similitudes. And in the press of writing and reading it is no wonder that a storehouse of familiar illustration open to one's hand, should be freely used, particularly when it is understood that the public will relish the similitudes all the more that they are familiar. It would be better perhaps if the daily papers as a rule showed a wider range of reading; but since that does not exist, the substitute is the best that could be made. There are things we never get tired of. Don't we go to laugh at our old comedies, and be scared by our tragedies year after year? Don't we enjoy our dear friends' old jokes the older they get? We should miss them out of their proper places. And so we get to rather like to see our Dickens well quoted; it shows us at least that our public teacher knows one thing well.

Ottawa.

M. J. G.

THE GLEANER.

A PRINCE or princess of Edinburgh is expected early in December.

The BRITISH penny postage stamp is to be changed. It has been in use for forty years.

PRINCE LEOPOLD is at present visiting some places of interest on the north coast of Ireland.

A PROJECT for holding an international exhibition at Madrid is at present under the consideration of the Spanish Government.

THE International Exhibition at Sydney, New South Wales, is a great success. America has 150 industrial exhibits.

EVERY theatre in Chicago is now open on Sunday evenings, and usually they have larger audiences on that night than on any other.

MR. RENVY, late general manager of the Consolidated Bank, Montreal, has taken up his residence at St. Paul, Minnesota.

It is probable that the Empress Eugenie will go to Abergeldie early in October, the Queen having placed it for a time at her disposal.

THE house in which Milton was born was burned in the great London fire of 1666, but its exact counterpart was built on the site, and is occupied as a lace factory.

PROBABLY no magazine was ever floated with so little capital as the *Dublin University*. It was started by six collegians, of whom Charles Lever was one, who each subscribed £10.

IN Paris, thirty-five years ago, stores of all kinds were open on Sunday morning. Now large establishments are closed, and only a few of the smaller ones are open.

ADMIRAL INGELFIELD, Commander-in-Chief of the British North American Station, and General Sir Fenwick Williams, were the guests of the Governor-General at Ottawa last week.

THE appointment of Mr. Charles F. Smithers, of New York, as the successor of Mr. Angus to the important position of General Manager of the Bank of Montreal, gives general satisfaction throughout the Dominion.

It appears that 500 laurel wreaths and several thousand violet bouquets for the Prince Imperial's funeral were manufactured at Munich, neither the Paris nor London artificial flower makers being able to undertake the work in the time allowed.

A CHICAGO paper says: "Farmers find that 87 cents a bushel for wheat bring them in better returns now than \$1.50 did in 1861. On the gold basis the 1864 wheat was worth only about 62 cents, and the 1869 wheat is worth penny for penny for what it brings."

RUMOR has it that Falkland Palace, the old Royal residence, is to be purchased for the Queen, to be re-transformed into its ancient state. It was last occupied as a palace by Charles II. of England, in 1651, when on his way to Scone to be crowned King of the Scots.

A CARD.

To all who are suffering from the errors and indiscretions of youth, nervous weakness, early decay, loss of manhood, &c., I will send a receipt that will cure you, FREE OF CHARGE. This great remedy was discovered by a missionary in South America. Send a self-addressed envelope to the REV. JOSEPH T. ISMAN, *Stat on D, N. Y. City*.

CONSUMPTION CURED.

An old physician, retired from practice, having had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy, for the speedy and permanent cure of consumption, bronchitis, catarrh, asthma, and all throat and lung affections, also a positive and radical cure for nervous debility and all nervous complaints, after having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, has felt it his duty to make it known to his suffering fellows. Actuated by this motive, and a desire to relieve human suffering, I will send, free of charge, to all who desire it, this recipe, with full directions for preparing and using, in German, French, or English. Sent by mail by addressing with stamp, naming this paper, W. W. Sherar, 149 Powers' Block, Rochester, N. Y.