

SOME NEW SACRED SONGS.

"THE First Steps of Jesus," by Edmond Diet (Metzler), with English and French words, is a legend of singular beauty, recounting how, to rescue a wounded dove our Saviour took his first infant footsteps on earth in the cause of the weak and suffering. The music is sympathetic with the theme, and quaintly descriptive; it suits a mezzo-soprano voice.

Another similar song, very simple and with a touching little story is "The Christ Child," by Francis Thomé (J. Williams): it breathes the same spirit of old French music which possesses a peculiar charm all its own, suggestive of the carillons from antique belfries abroad in days long passed away. The compass is small and any medium voice could sing it.

Again, Benjamin Godard's duet for soprano and mezzo, "The Babe of Bethlehem" (Metzler), is another example, of much beauty and simplicity. "The Wondrous Cross," by Myles B. Foster (Weekes), is really a setting of Dr. Watts's fine hymn "When I survey the wondrous cross" for mezzo-soprano, and the harmonious music (which is thoroughly good but not difficult) is full of reverent feeling, and expressive of that sad "sweet story of old;" the ending is particularly appropriate and telling.

"Pray for Me," words by F. E. Weatherley, music by Gounod, is one of the few sacred songs which unite extreme simplicity with true excellence. It is admirably adapted for home

singing. This applies to another of Gounod's, "Rest in Peace," which though solemn is a calm soothing air for a somewhat heavier voice, compass e to f sharp; and it is easy and short to learn by heart; the words are by Clement Scott. Both these songs are brought out by Metzler.

A theme that will find an echo in all hearts is "The trust of little children," by D'Auvergne Barnard (Osborne). The song is published in four keys with a cello obbligato, and an organ accompaniment. The music presents no difficulties and is very prettily conceived, while the words are of import and exceptional sweetness to old and young alike.

"Make Thine hearts like those of little children
Teach us to put our faith and trust in Thee."

"The Vision Divine," by Joseph H. Adams (Ricordi), is in a more ambitious style; it is narrative and certainly interesting with an effective refrain and a full and not difficult accompaniment; care must however be taken at the beginning of the first and last verses, to play it in a reverent manner or it would be too light for the words. It is published in three keys.

So too is the "City of Rest," by Francis Lloyd (Keith Prowse), and it is excellent for low or high voices; the words and music are

very good and inspiring, and linger in the memory with very happy effect.

Frederick Cowen has written a song in his usual canable way, called "The Watchers" (R. Cocks); it reminds one of "The Better Land," in its very pretty questions and answers of mother and child, "The Heavenly Dream" is one of the popular quasi-sacred songs of Bryceson Trehearne's published by Messrs. Morley, which will be found most useful and pleasing for girls to sing in many home circles.

The same may be said of "Father Eternal," by Hartwell Jones (Phillips and Page); it is impressive and interesting, and it requires little study for voice or fingers; a choice of three keys is given.

For a high mezzo-soprano we have "Cradled so Lowly," a sweet, melodious little song, composed and written to by Frank Moir (Metzler). It is perfectly easy, and the refrain with direct simplicity sums up the vast extent of our Christian benefits:

"He who is able to save you,
He who eternal life gave you,
Suffered, suffered
And took all your sorrows away."

We hope many of these songs may help those of our girl-readers who sing to employ some Sunday or weekday hours happily for the gratification of those around them.

MARY AUGUSTA SALMOND.



HOSPITAL SKETCHES.

By O. H.

BEHIND the scenes in hospital life gives unbounded scope for the study of human nature. One quickly learns (with the philosopher who romanced of the World Unclothed) that the omnipotent tailor, who creates class distinctions, does not confer the hall-mark of greatness with his broadcloth or Court uniforms. For beneath every work-grimed fustian coat beats a human heart, and those who know the "hardy-handed sons of toil" in their hours of weakness can testify how often they are "kings of men."

The pathos of a hospital-ward is rivalled by its humour, but the pathos comes first. Some one is playing "Home, sweet home" on the old harmonium. One of human nature's most vulnerable points is the soft spot of home, the tender name of wife or mother; and there is a peculiar hush as the dear, familiar strains fill the long ward. Is it that "music hath charms" which stills the chattering tongues of those rough diamonds? But no, they are all asleep, the occupants of the long rows of beds, with their heads half smothered in the pillow, or hidden beneath the sheet. Yet

presently nurse becomes painfully aware that they are only feigning sleep. Oh, what is one soft-hearted woman to do, surrounded by great men who are crying? What, even that swearing fellow in No. 10 bed? Yes, even he. But the player, with tact, bursts into martial airs and sailor-songs and triumphal marches quite foreign to the wheezy old harmonium. Some of the men wake up and begin to get interested, and even hum the tunes after a furtive glance round to ascertain that no one knows what fools they have been. But under one counterpane a form is shaking as if with sobs, and nurse steals up to offer her—perhaps futile sympathy.

"Daddy—what is it, daddy?"

Then she draws the screen round (that troublesome leg is always wanting attention), and hidden from view of the others, hears all about it from the rough seaman whose heart is breaking for wife and children far away, and for the honest little home going to ruin with the bread-winner in hospital. "And what shall I be but a poor cripple for the rest of my days?" No doubt he will be as surly and crabby as ever the next time nurse dresses his wound, but she will have more heart to bear

with him now, and at least he has said, "God bless you, dear," with his tears on her hand, and seemed comforted.

Many a touching little scene at different bed-sides shows that the domestic life of the poor is not all wife-beating. Here is an old Darby with trembling fingers smoothing his Joan's hair.

"Don't ye work so hard, my darling; you mustn't leave off some of that there heavy work."

"I've a most done for to-night," she answers cheerily, then whispers aside, "I've got heavy mangle, nurse ma'am, and shan't be done till twelve o'clock, but don't ye tell 'n. Things be looking up, an' only waitin' for ye to come whum again," she adds to old William.

There is an artisan who has found true love run smooth through many years of married life.

"If I haven't slept for pain, I'll be bound her haven't for thinkin' of me." And he's never content unless, under some pretext, his wife comes to see him every day for "a bit of courting." Sometimes only a glimpse through the windows, accompanied with the remark, "Did you ever hear tell of Romeo and Juliet, nurse?" A very erudite fustian, this!