

## MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

IN a short, but pungent letter, addressed to the editor of the *Era*, Mr. Robert Buchanan replies to the criticisms of Mr. George Moore in the *Fortnightly*, and he points out that the motive for that gentleman's attack is not far to seek. "He (Mr. Moore) has offered to translate *Sophia* for the Continental market; he has offered his services to the author of *The Middleman*; a blank verse play of his has been politely, but firmly, declined by Mr. Irving. In short, neither his services nor his plays were wanted."

THE brilliant reception and breakfast given in honour of Dr. Amelia B. Edwards, by the New England Woman's Press Association, at the Parker House, Boston, on Friday, takes rank among the leading social events of the season. The menus in delicate shades of pale blue, rose pink, lavender, canary and Nile green, bore upon the upper leaf a fine portrait of the guest of honour, and the date of the reception and breakfast. Upon the under leaf was printed the menu, many neat little touches being given in the selection of the viands, among them being salmon a la Princesse, Sorbe Egyptienne, Gelee de la Cairo, and other delicacies appropriate to the gastronomic delight of Egyptian explorers. At Miss Edwards's plate was laid a menu quite different from the rest, having been designed and painted expressly for her by Mrs. Emily Selinger. It was composed of cream-colored satin, and bore a tiny landscape in which the Pyramids and the Sphinx appeared, while across the page was thrown the buds and blossoms of the lotos flower. At Miss Edwards's plate was also placed a tiny bunch of English primroses. Miss Edwards made a delightful speech, and as she finished the orchestra played "God Save the Queen." The whole company rose and remained standing until the strains had died away, joining with voice and heart in the national anthem of our mother country.—*Boston Gazette*.

MONDAY evening last witnessed the opening of the new organ built by Messrs. Warren of this city, and placed by the Conservatory of Music, in Association Hall. The building was well filled by an appreciative public who listened with much pleasure to the playing of the four organists, Miss Dallas, Mr. Edward Fisher, Mr. J. W. F. Harrison and Mr. E. W. Phillips. The organ is located in the spacious chamber directly over the platform and appears to much advantage as a symmetrical erection of great beauty, lifting brown and golden pipes to the roof and supported by woodwork of unusual taste. The tone is round and rich, and the favourite stops will assuredly be the Clarinette, Aeoline and Viol di Gamba. While all the performers command high powers as interpreters of the organ, it was felt that a different choice of pieces might have resulted in displaying more fully to a mixed audience the beauty and variety of the stops. However, Merkel's "Pastorale" and a pleasing "Impromptu" gave a very clear idea of the delicacy, as "Lohengrin" and Lemmens' "Storm," of the power of the new and handsome instrument. Songs were contributed by Signor D'Auria's pupils, the accompaniment furnished by Mr. Dinelli, in whose hands the organ became particularly agreeable. The Conservatory of Music would appear to be unusually strong in its Organ Faculty, and the possession of the fine Concert Organ will no doubt attract crowds of larger pupils, as well as prove of incalculable benefit in the way of affording recitals and organ illustrated lectures to the public.

THE Sarasate-D'Albert concert in Music Hall, on Wednesday evening, was listened to by a very large audience, in spite of the unfavourable weather and the exorbitant price charged for seats in the lower part of the house. The piano playing of Herr Eugen D'Albert is not easy to describe. His technique is simply marvellous but if this were all, consideration of his performances might be brief in a day when fine technique has become a matter of course, and when the thought has arisen that there may even be too much technique. Still it is impossible not to wonder at the immensity of D'Albert's finger gymnastics, his iron wrist and his fingers of steel, the amazing vitality of his touch, the unerring certainty with which he accomplishes what he sets out to do. This is all admirable enough; but in addition, he is an artist through and through, a little over fiery, perhaps, at times, when in his fervour he uses a force that is more exciting than productive of the most desirable effect. However, this occasional lapse into noise is condoned by the exquisite beauty of his work as a whole, and is almost forgotten in the charm and truth of the sentiment that characterises his interpretations. Chopin's concerto in E minor was magnificently real and played by him in the exacting Tausig version. Nothing warmer, more poetic and more refined can be imagined than was his performance of the Romanza; it was a masterly triumph in respect to both style and technique, and was especially impressive in the tender yet noble dignity that pervaded it. Senor de Sarasate shared with Herr D'Albert the enthusiasm of the evening, playing Mendelssohn's violin concerto, and a fantasia of his own on airs from "Carmen." He brings from his violin a tone of exquisite beauty; not a large tone, but one of rare purity and sweetness, and his playing is marked by delicious grace and elegance of style. His intonation, unfortunately, is not always immaculate, and his reading of the Mendelssohn concerto, though fluent and brilliant, is scarcely to be commended for breadth or largeness, while his tendency to pause capriciously on the off-note of a phrase is often disturbing to an ear sensitive to rhythm; but at his best he was always the finished ar-

tist, and it was impossible to resist the fascinating quality of his tone, the beauty of his phrasing, and the spirituality of the sentiment that coloured his work. At the end of the concerto he was recalled again and again, and at last responded with his own transcription of Chopin's nocturne in E-flat, which he gave with delightful feeling; but he was heard to greatest advantage in the "Carmen" fantasia, in which his virtuosity revelled in difficulties of every description, and in which both bow and fingers were wonderfully agile.—*Boston Gazette*.

## OUR LIBRARY TABLE.

THE KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH. By George Rawlinson, M.A. \$1. New York: Anson D. F. Randolph and Co.; Toronto: Williamson and Co.

This is an excellent addition to the series of books on "Men of the Bible." It would not be reasonable to expect the same unity and interest here which are found in the volumes devoted to individual men, like that on Isaiah, or Jeremiah, or Canon Rawlinson's own monograph on Moses; but it would be difficult to give a more complete and readable account of all these kings than is found in the volume before us; and it would perhaps be impossible to find any one better qualified for the task than Canon Rawlinson. The special interest of the present work is that the author has not been contented to give a summary and harmony of the contents of the two great parallel histories of the two kingdoms, contained in the Books of Kings and Chronicles. He has supplemented these, especially in the later history, by contributions from the writings of the prophets; so that he furnishes us not only with a very useful help to the reading of the historical books, but also gives us a much needed aid to the understanding of the prophetic writings of the Old Testament. To the ordinary readers of the Bible this will certainly be of the greatest service. Many persons abstain from the reading of these books, especially those of the minor prophets, from their inability to give them a historical setting. They will find what they want in this volume of quite moderate compass. We should add that Canon Rawlinson also makes use of contemporary notices in the monuments of Egypt and Assyria, by means of which considerable light is thrown upon the history of some of the kings.

POLISH BLOOD. A Romance. By Nataly, Baroness von Eschstruth; translated by Cora Louise Turner. New York: John B. Alden.

One of the most popular of recent writers in Germany is the author of "Polish Blood." She is the daughter of an officer of high rank in the German army, her early youth having been spent amid the gaiety of military life in Hesse Castle; residing now in Berlin, a maid of honour in the royal household, she is intimately acquainted with court life, from which some of her characters are drawn. Though only twenty-seven years of age, she has already distinguished herself as a novelist, poetess and dramatist (her plays having been presented at Jena and in the Royal Theatre of New Strelitz), her versatility being something remarkable. "Polish Blood," the first of her books to appear in America in the present authorized and excellent translation, is distinguished for its sharp delineation of character, poetic description, bright humour and deep sentiment.

TWO DAUGHTERS OF ONE RACE. By W. Heimburg. Translated by Mrs. D. M. Lowrey. With Photogravure illustrations. New York: Worthington Co.

An exceedingly fine and brilliant novel of German high life, characterized by the literary skill this author possesses in such an eminent degree. It is a romantic tale of love, passion, and marriage. The latter, however, is looked upon by the relatives of the noble husband as a *mesalliance* and entails suffering and trials. By the death of the elder brother during the Franco-German war the husband becomes a reigning prince, and state reasons compel him to seek a divorce.

THE STORY OF MUSIC. By W. J. Henderson. New York: Longmans Green and Co.

A pretty dedication to H. C. Bunner upon the inner flyleaf is signed W. J. H. The author of both poem and prose is fairly equipped to present in an interesting and superior manner a succinct account of the development of modern music as an art, endeavouring to avoid encumbering the book with details of the lives of the composers. He tells us—what we can very readily believe—that in order to present this much-needed work "he has flitted from Rome to Venice, and from Paris to Vienna, whenever it was necessary to show what was going on in all those places at the same time." A chronological table begins with St. Ambrose, born A. D. 333, and ends with the production of Verdi's "Otello" in 1887. It is of course unavoidable in the compass of a work numbering only two hundred and twelve pages, that many important names and dates and facts should not appear. Fortunately Mr. Henderson has chosen, when he had to choose, only the great landmarks of the art, and the great pioneers in composition and dramatic construction. The concluding chapter on "Wagner and The Opera of Our Future" will be held by all thoughtful musicians to be a true statement of the destiny of the opera. The author's estimate of Richard Wagner is singularly just and accurate, although it will not tally with all that is claimed for the great composer by ultra-Wagnerites.

L. PRANG AND COMPANY, of Boston have again issued a very varied, expensive and elaborate line of dainty paper and satin Christmas and New Year Cards and novelties, including elegant Calendars for the table, the desk, the mantel, the wall and the pocket. Fine art pictures and a large assortment of art books and booklets. The designs are artistically conceived, and the whole series has a special interest in being, from beginning to end, the work of American artists.

THE December *Century* opens with the illustrated selection of the Duke of Wellington letters which have been so eagerly awaited. They are characterized by old-time simplicity and candour, attest to a never-failing chivalry and politeness, and breathe a warm and genuine domestic spirit. The portrait by Haydon gives a softer outline of the familiar aquiline face than we are accustomed to associate with the Iron Duke. The confessions and reminiscences of Joseph Jefferson are continued, to the great amusement of thousands. The "New Croton Aqueduct" is profusely illustrated, and will find many curious and interested readers. The one purely Christmas instalment is a poem by Constantina Brooks. Is it not a pity to make so little of the hallowed season? Thoughts fly back to the Christmas numbers of the past. A fascinating portrait by Fortuny, of a Spanish beauty, accompanied by one of Edmund Clarence Stedman's poems, is by far the most charming item in this month's table of contents. "Friend Olivia" promises some powerful situations, and the appearance of the humorous aristocrat in Stockton's "Merry Chanter" is a happy idea. "Lord Crabstairs" is a creation worthy of W. S. Gilbert. Quite a remarkable paper is that upon "The Paris Panorama of the Nineteenth Century," signed by Alfred Stevens and Henri Gervex, well known as Parisian artists of celebrity. There is plenty of other excellent matter, including a letter from Mrs. Van Rensselaer on phases of the late Exposition.

## LITERARY AND PERSONAL GOSSIP.

THE Marquis of Lorne has written "A Canadian Love Tale" for the Tillotson Syndicate.

"DODO AND I," is the name of a new novel by a new Haggard—Capt. Andrew, brother of the redoubtable Rider. It is said to contain vivid descriptions of scenes in the last Abyssinian war.

CHARLES WELLS MOULTON, who projected *The Magazine of Poetry*, is about to establish *The Magazine of Musical History*, to be published in Buffalo, quarterly, beginning with the new year.

THE death is noted of J. J. Thomas, author of "Froudeacy," a reply to the West Indian history of Mr. Froude. Mr. Thomas was an African of Trinidad, a schoolmaster, and author of a "Creole Grammar."

THE WEEK of Dec. 27 will contain in addition to the regular departments special poems and papers, contributed by the best talent in the Dominion. Mr. Archibald Lampman and Miss Louisa Murray are among the contributors.

MR. Gosse will publish this month a selection from his early poems, under the title "On Viol and Flute." The volume, which will be uniform with "Firdusi in Exile," will be issued by Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., and will have a frontispiece by Mr. Thornycroft.

ABBOTSFORD has recently been leased, and now Ashestiel, in Selkirkshire, the home of Sir Walter Scott during the ten years preceding his migration to Abbotsford, is advertised as to let. Ashestiel is on the bank of the Tweed, near the mouth of the Caddow.

AN autograph lately sold in London was a note from Tennyson, reading thus: "I have many thousands of these applications, and rather make a point of neglecting them; for why should I flatter the madness of the people? Nevertheless, as the request comes from an old friend, behold an autograph!"

THE article by Mr. Grant Allen, "Plain Words on the Woman Question," which attracted considerable attention when it appeared a short time ago, in the *Fortnightly Review*, is reprinted in the December number of the *Popular Science Monthly*. Mr. Garrick Mallery concludes his paper on "Israelite and Indian" in the same number.

MR. BLACKMORE, the author of "Lorna Doone," has prosecuted his head gardener for stealing \$25 worth of pears from the estate and selling them to a fruiterer. The fruiterer will also be prosecuted for receiving the pears knowing them to have been stolen. The gardener pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to three months' imprisonment at hard labour. The fruiterer was committed for trial.

THE *Revue des Deux Mondes* has been publishing a very interesting series of articles on the Paris Exposition by the Vicomte de Vogué, the well-known member of the French Academy. The closing one of the series appears in the latest number of the review, in the shape of an attempt to point out the moral and intellectual significance of the Exposition as a commemoration of the Revolution of 1789.

SIR CHARLES DILKE has all but completed the larger portion of his forthcoming "Problems of Great Britain," and in addition to the political chapters on India, Indian defence and the crown Colonies, he has now dealt with the social problems of "Great Britain," such as labour, wages, cost of living, co-operation, "sweating," friendly societies, and State provisions for the poor. The book will be published in January.