

erected to the memory of Bellini, at Aci Reale, near Catania, the country of the great composer. There, at the instance of the Count and Countess Vigo, she was escorted to an old palace by a procession of forty carriages and a crowd of 5,000 people. There, too, she was honored with a diploma of the Academy of Fine Arts of Aci Reale. Thence she proceeded to Malta, and with the spirit of industry which has distinguished her whole career, spent eight months in the arduous study of a number of operas. Her fame having extended to England, she was summoned to London by the manager of the Royal Italian Opera, in 1871, but on her arrival, Mr Gye was so struck with her superior talents, that he would not allow her to appear at that advanced stage of the season, lest it might injure her *debut*, which he foresaw would place her at once in the front rank. He engaged her for three years, but advised her to return to Italy and continue to extend her repertory under Lamperti. She did so for several months, when, in the winter of 1872, she appeared at Florence, first at the Theatre Pagliano, and subsequently at La Pergola, where she scored an enthusiastic success in *Mignon*. On her return to London, later in the same season, she made her first grand appearance at Covent Garden in her favourite "Amina." The *Times* of April 3 heralded to the world the rising of a new star, and from that day the fortune of Emma Albani was made. The words of her old master, Lamperti, had come true when he said that "he was sending forth the most accomplished musician and the most finished singer in style that ever left his studio."

From this point it is needless to follow Mlle. Albani step by step in her triumphant march, as that would involve a mere repetition of places and dates. I shall therefore briefly sketch her subsequent career. After winning fresh laurels during the remainder of that London season, she went to Paris in 1872 and made a most successful *debut* in the critical city. The following acrostic will sum up column upon column of appreciation and praise:—

A l'aube elle emprunta son nom si souriant.
L a favorite des bois lui donna son ramage:
B elle à desespérer les horis d'Orient,
A u theatre, au salon, chacun lui rend hommage:
N ilsson, Lucca, Patti, pour votre quatuor
I l vous faut d'Albani la voix au timbre d'or!

The next two seasons were spent in London, where Mlle. Albani extended her repertory and widened her reputation. She also devoted herself to sacred music, and contributed her share, on several occasions, toward enhancing the prestige of the great yearly Festivals. Her genius showed special adaptation to the oratorio. I may mention in this connection that Gould assisted last season at the performance of his "Redemption," and was so impressed with the superiority of Mlle. Albani's interpretation of her part, which she created, that he sought an interview with the artist, during which he promised her that he would write a sacred work expressly for her, to be given within the next three years.

The year 1877 was a notable one for our Canadian nightingale. She then received the second consecration of her talent in Paris, where she held the boards for many weeks amid the most unbounded enthusiasm of the melomane. She sang successively in *La Sonnambula*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Linda di Chamounix*, *Rigoletto*, and *I Puritani*. It is amusing to read the Paris papers of that date, from the staid and stately *Moniteur*, to the lively *Charivari*. The articles on Mlle. Albani seem to have been written by men who had gone mad. Comparisons were freely made with Patti and Nilsson, and not at all to the disadvantage of their younger rival. On the occasion of her singing *Lucia*, Albani received two testimonials of appreciation, which must have been worth to her artistic spirit far more than nosegays of flowers or bracelets of precious stones. No less a man than the great Mario, after hearing her in the mad scene of that opera, went upon the stage and congratulated her in the most effusive language on her extraordinary success. About the same time she received in her camerino another illustrious tenor, her old professor, Duprez, who, forty-two years previous, had created at Naples the rôle of "Edgar" in that same *Lucia*. It will be remembered, indeed, that Donizetti wrote this delicious work for Madame Persiani and Duprez.

The success in Paris opened the doors to every opera house on the Continent. It will, there-

fore, not be a matter of surprise that Mlle. Albani met with the most gracious reception in Russia. According to her custom in travelling, she made herself acquainted with the language of the country, and on the occasion of a grand concert, when she sang a Russian ballad, in the vernacular, in response to a recall, the theatre rocked and roared with a tempest of frantic applause. At an audience of the late Czar, she received from the hands of that monarch, a devoted lover of music, an emerald beryl of 160 karats, set in diamonds. If the reader will turn to the double page of this issue of the News, and look at the central figure, where Mlle. Albani is represented in the costume of "Elsa" of Brabant in *Lohengrin*, he will see this magnificent jewel flashing on the coronet of the artist.

In 1881 Albani took a new departure. Whether through love of the score or for other reasons, she devoted herself to the Music of the Future, and bravely undertook the Herculean task of interpreting Wagner. The two operas that she chose were *Lohengrin* and *Tannhauser*. I am only echoing the judgment of the best London critics when I here set down that she acquitted herself of the task in the most admirable manner. The "Elizabeth" of *Tannhauser*, and the "Elsa" of *Lohengrin*, are mighty rôles, requiring rare capacity of voice and consummate skill in acting, and she is no ordinary artist that can do justice to either. The event is likewise a standing proof of the versatility of Mlle. Albani, who, notwithstanding that she was trained by Lamperti in the Italian method of singing, and had been brought up, as it were, in the Italian school of opera, was nevertheless able to cope successfully with the Wagnerian models of composition. This may be called her second manner, or the second epoch of her artistic life, and it will doubtless exert a marked influence on the remainder of her career. As it is, she finds herself, or, rather, the impresario find her one of the most widely available artists on the stage—thoroughly competent in Italian opera, peculiarly adapted to sacred music, and strong in the interpretation of the German harmonic school. Wagner himself, having heard her in *Lohengrin*, declared that he had never seen his "Elsa" better rendered. That she intends to continue in the latter sphere, is evinced from the fact that she was chosen last year to represent the principal female rôle in Rubenstein's new opera *Nero*. It was only natural that Albani's reputation should now penetrate into Germany, and it will not surprise the reader to learn that she appeared at Berlin, in 1881, winning unanimous plaudits in *Lohengrin*. What added to her acceptance was the fact that she sang the opera in the original German, her own knowledge of the language being supplemented in this instance by that of her sister Cornelia, who resided three years at Stuttgart, where she graduated at the Conservatorium with the diploma of Harmony. The Kaiser was so pleased that he called her to his private box and appointed her "Chanteuse de la cour." The next day the Empress had her to tea, and she was made much of by the Princess Imperial, to whom she had been specially recommended by her Royal Mother, Queen Victoria.

This is not the only token of Her Majesty's favor. The Queen has always testified the highest regard for Mlle. Albani's fine talents, sweet disposition and irreproachable conduct. She has had her to sing at Windsor Castle on several occasions. Several years ago she presented the artist with a cross of pearls and diamonds, and a gold collar for "Distinction." Seven or eight years later, the prima donna was honoured by an invitation to tea with the Queen, and received the Royal portrait, richly framed.

Mlle. Albani is also a favorite of the Princess of Wales, herself a distinguished pianist, whose garden parties she often attends. Having been one of the singers at the Duke of Edinburgh's wedding, she has had the good fortune of retaining the friendship of the Duke and Duchess, both of them intelligent and enthusiastic amateurs. Among other persons of high rank who have displayed their appreciation of the character and ability of Mlle. Albani, I may further mention the Countess of Paris, and Mme de MacMahon, wife of the ex-President of the French Republic, who on one occasion drove her in her own carriage to a fête in the Faubourg St. Germain. This lady likewise presented her with a group of the finest Sevres china. Kalakua, King of the Sandwich Islands, during his visit to

London, awarded her a Cross of Honour, with accompanying diploma. After a brief operatic tour in the United States, Mlle. Emma La-jouenne married, in 1878, Mr. Ernest Gye, proprietor of the Royal Italian Opera, Covent Garden, who has always been a sincere admirer of her talents. Cardinal Manning offered himself to celebrate the marriage, and on the occasion made this complimentary remark—that if there were a dozen Albanis, it would not be dangerous to attend the opera. As a fruit of this union, there is a charming little boy, now three and a half years old. The portrait of Master Frederick is given in the present issue, beside that of his gifted mother, whom he strongly resembles in features. Let us hope that he will also inherit her amiable character and transcendent abilities.

At length, after an absence of over twenty years, crowned with laurels from every stage in Europe, rich in the fruition of her industry and conscientious devotion to art, happy in the merited reward of a felicitous marriage, Madame Albani revisits her native land, where she will be received with universal acclaim. It is a satisfaction to know that her compatriots are going to do the handsome thing by her. The sale of tickets for her two concerts in Montreal reveal this noteworthy fact that, in the estimation of the musical authorities in New York, the proceeds are the largest, in proportion to the number of seats, of any ever given in America, not excepting the phenomenal ones of Jenny Lind. The Queen's Hall, of this city, holds exactly 1,159 seats, and these have brought the enormous figure of over \$12,000. All honor to Montreal, and

VIVE LA CANADIENNE!

PRIMA DONNA ASSOLUTA.

TO MADAME EMMA ALBANI.

O voice! first heard beside the Richelieu,
In cradled childhood's bubbling laughs and moans,
Thou circlest grandly thwart the polytones
Of woman's passion, ever sweet and true!—
Soft as the water lapsing through the weir,
Loud as the chiming of Cathedral bells,
Pure as love's whisper 'mid the asphodels,
And as the peal of clarions strong and clear:
Thou art Amina at the water wheel,
The hapless Gilda, and poor Marguerite,
Mignon distraught upon the village street,
And Lucy dying in a wild appeal:
Now that thou comest in thy prime to me,
O voice divine! I bow and worship thee.

JOHN LESPERANCE.

Montreal, March 27, 1883.

GHOST MUSIC.

Scottish funeral have been known sometimes to assume the air of festivals: the bereaved have been so liberally provided with refreshment, the libations to the departed have been so abundant. It is told that on one of these should-be solemn occasions a certain mourner who had been labouring with considerable success to drown his own personal sorrows in the bowl, suddenly startled the company by calling for a song! There was a pause of deliberation. How was the demand to be met? One of the elders of the party stirred himself, stood erect, and in grave but gentle tones addressed his fellow mourner: "If you'll kindly recollect," he said, "our lamented friend, the late laird, in his lifetime never cared for music. I think we'll not have a song just now. At any other time, I am sure, we shall all be pleased to hear any gentleman that can sing. But for the present it may be as well to humour the late laird's prejudices on the subject."

It may be assumed that the song was not sung, and that what are commonly known as "musical honours" did not disturb the funeral solemnities of the deceased Scot. Particular strains of harmony, however, have maintained association with the fact of dissolution. Requiem and Dead Marches, of course, form part of the religious services for the dead; and in addition to these are the compositions called "ghost melodies." It might almost be argued that in popular opinion music is near to the defunct. In many a ghost story mysterious music plays an important part. Sir Walter Scott has told of the veteran major of Hussars who, while occupying a bedchamber in a certain old castle on the confines of Hungary, was roused from sleep by the solemn singing of three ladies fantastically attired in green. The major begged the ladies to stop—apparently their strains were disagreeable to him as the nocturnal outcries of cats—but the singers sang on. The major began to handle his pistols. The ladies did not desist. At last he gave them fair warning that he regarded their singing as a piece of impertinence, as a trick to frighten him, and promised them that he would give them but five minutes' law, and that if they continued to sing after that interval had elapsed he would assuredly discharge both barrels at them point blank. Still the ladies went on with their song. Presently the major showed himself a man of his word, deliberately cocked his pistols, took aim, and fired. Still the ladies sang. The major was

completely overcome by the obstinacy of his visitors. He was seized, indeed, with a violent illness which endured some weeks. It was afterwards explained—but the worst and feeblest part of a ghost story is usually the explanation of it—that the major had been deceived by the fact that he had seen only the reflection of the choristers who had stood in an adjoining room, while their images had been projected into his chamber with the help of a concave mirror, and presumably, a magic lantern, or by some such means.

The ghost of that Countess of Orlamunde "usually seen every seven years, preceded by the sound of a harp, on which instrument she has been a proficient," was perhaps a more impressive musical apparition. The Countess was a German ghost—Germany is the mother of many ghosts—and in her lifetime had borne two sons to a certain Margrave of Brandenburg who refused to make her his lawful wife, however. In revenge she had administered poison to her children, whereupon to punish her sins the Margrave had bricked her up alive in one of the vaults of the Castle of Neuhaus, in Bohemia. This ghost—who acquired that title of "the White Lady," which has been appropriated in what may be called an "untrade-mannerlike" way by many other spectres—did not confine itself to one particular spot, but haunted generally the castles and palaces belonging to the Royal family of Prussia. The Countess was wont, however, to appear more frequently to children than adults, "as if," says an historian and apologist, "the love she had denied her own offspring in life was now her torment, and she sought a reconciliation with childhood in general." Two young ladies attached to the Court of Prussia related that while occupied with their needlework, and conversing about the diversions of the Court, they suddenly heard the sound of a stringed instrument like a harp, proceeding, as it seemed, from behind the stove which occupied a corner of the room. One of the girls with a yard measure struck the spot when the sound issued; the music ceased, but the yard measure was wrested from her hand. Presently the music was repeated, however; a white figure issued from the neighbourhood of the stove and advanced into the room. The young lady, of course, screamed and fainted. She could hardly be expected to do otherwise in such circumstances. Upon other occasions the White Lady has been heard to speak, and in the Latin tongue, but whether she played upon her harp by way of accompaniment to her location has not been disclosed. It may be added that concerning the identity of this musical apparition much dispute has arisen. While some hold the White Lady to be Countess of Orlamunde, others maintain her to be a certain Princess Bertha von Rosenberg, who flourished and perished in the fifteenth century.

Mrs. Catherine Crowe, a great authority on ghosts, records that she has met with numerous instances "of heavenly music being heard when a death was occurring." In one case beautiful music was audible to a whole family, "including an unbelieving father," in attendance upon a sick child. This music indeed continued during a space of sixteen weeks; sometimes it was like an organ, but more beautiful; at other times there was singing of holy songs, in parts, and the words distinctly heard. Ghost music, however, seems to have been as often secular as sacred. There is a story of a house haunted by the sounds of a military march. "If that doesn't beat the devil," exclaimed an irreverent captain in the army upon hearing the music, and promptly he received from an invisible hand a smart slap on the face. A ghostly drummer beating an incessant tattoo upon his instrument may be described as the hero of Addison's comedy of *The Drummer*.

A manor house in Wiltshire was wont to cherish the tradition of a supernatural visitant who beat the drum, and could be heard to march in certain portions of the building. Sir Walter Scott has told the story of the murdered drummer lad whose ghost haunted his murderer, Pay-Sergeant Jarvis Matcham, on Salisbury Plain, and constrained him to confess his crime. The narrative forms the subject of "The Dead Drummer," one of the most admired of the Ingoldsby Legends.

The stage has long possessed its ghost music. If memory serves, the famous ghost of Richard-son's Show was wont to appear to much simple beating upon a gong or thumping of a drum. That ghost was of a brisk habit, and delighted to startle by the suddenness of its movements: it being an object to all concerned apparently that the performances should be brought to as prompt a conclusion as possible. But other ghosts of the stage have been accustomed to appear, as Goldsmith's bear danced, only "to the very gentlest of tunes." That tremulous, sobbing, and sighing air, known as the "Ghost Melody," which put so much that was thrilling and agitating to the drama of *The Corsican Brothers*, was one of the most popular compositions of its period. And in his "Reminiscences" Michael Kelly tells of an earlier ghostly air he arranged for the production of *The Castle Spectre* at Drury Lane in 1797; it was a *chaconne*, by J. J. J., which had been danced at Stuttgart by Vestris, and was thought by many to be ill-adapted for so solemn an occasion, but the "low but sweet and thrilling harmony" greatly affected the audience. Subsequently, indeed, this ghost music of Jonelli's was converted to the uses of the Church. Attwood, the composer, employed it in the choir service, as the *Response* in the Litany, both in St. Paul's Cathedral and in the Royal Chapel at Windsor."—D. C.