

imitate. And if the ability to read well were one of the requisites for admission to the ministry, there would be some inducement to our teachers to try to produce good readers.

VII. *Quality is more valuable than quantity.*—At present one of the greatest obstacles to progress is the rage for new music. The consequence is that much valuable time is wasted over the veriest trash, simply because it is new. It is strange that it should be so, because everything is new to us which we have not met before, no matter how old it may otherwise be, and we know from experience that nothing survives for any length of time unless it contains some intrinsic merit. The best music is not always the most difficult, nor is easy music always inferior. But generally speaking that which requires the greatest amount of labour to master gives the greatest satisfaction when mastered, and can bear the greatest number of repetitions. And this is one reason why so little really good music is learned. Beginners are easily captivated with what is attractive and easy, and they will not take upon trust the opinions of those who have had more experience. If they could hear good music oftener, they might be induced to spend their time upon a higher, but less attractive class of music. Their stock of pieces might be smaller, but it would be better calculated to improve the taste, and to afford enjoyment to both performer and listener.

The comparison holds good with respect to literature. The general idea seems to be that the best authors are dry and dull. But those who have had an opportunity of testing the matter admit that there is more solid satisfaction in reading and re-reading a good author than in devouring whole libraries of inferior writings.

One of the first requisites of vocal music is that the words shall be dis-

tinctly pronounced. Solo singing is better adapted for a clear enunciation of the words than a chorus. Compositions in which one note is assigned to each syllable are better than those in which two or more notes are slurred. The chant is for this purpose superior to the ordinary tune. Anthems and similar compositions written specially for particular words, are better than tunes which may be sung to several stanzas or to various sets of words. An instrumental accompaniment, while it helps the singer, often mars the force of the words, especially if it be too elaborate or too loud. But, whatever the character of the music, much more depends on the care and ability of the singers. The prima-donna may receive the applause of the audience, but should you be puzzled to tell whether the version is French, Italian or Spanish, and finally conclude that it is meant for English, the effect cannot be satisfactory. A moderate speed is necessary for clear articulation. The undue haste with which tunes and chants are now rendered is as detrimental to the words as the almost discarded drawl. The singers of comic songs are alive to the importance of making the words plain, and in this they are generally successful. The consequence is that the worst class of music is generally rendered in the best possible style, while the best music is often delivered in the worst manner.

A person who reads for his own information has this advantage, that if he fails to understand anything he can read it over again. But if he listens to another's reading, he may catch the meaning of the writer, or he may not, according to the skill, the care, or the luck of the reader. Many persons spoil the effect, when reading aloud without preparation, by introducing modulations of voice and inflections which are only intended to be used where ample time has been