

In "Morte d'Arthur," again, we find Sir Bedivere, meditating on the wonders of Excalibur, and wrestling with his temptation to conceal the sword, while walking by the mere's edge,—

Counting the dewy pebbles, fixed in thought.

While speaking of such things as these, mention may be made of that gentle form of tyranny to which no one, perhaps, is wholly a stranger—the tyranny of trifles, as it may be called. Thus, in "Elaine" (and here, again, we find words perfectly in keeping with those in the letter quoted in this paper) it is said:—

As when we dwell upon a word we know,  
Repeating, till the word we know so well  
Becomes a wonder, and we know not why;  
So dwelt the father on her face, and thought  
"Is this Elaine?"

In "Aylmer's Field," again the weird passage occurs:—

Star to star vibrates light: may soul to soul  
Strike through a finer element of her own?  
So—from afar—touch as at once? or why  
That night, that moment, when she named his name,  
Did the keen shriek, "Yes, love, yes, Edith, yes,"  
Shrill, till the comrade of his chambers woke.

These odd experiences, which seem to live on a borderland between this and another life—adequately to depict which requires, as it were, the impossible marriage between the vision of the one life and the language of the other—are, wherever found, necessarily associated with a certain sensitiveness to touch, and indisposition to declare themselves. They come and go, fitfully, unmasked; but their visits are like those of the angels, in the too well-authenticated matters of shortness and paucity. They but reveal openings: what lies beyond is never reached. For the faculty of vision is dim; yet not so much dim as short lived. The result, however, is much the same. The picture is inadequate, fragmentary, abrupt in its beginnings, shadowy in its outlines. The thing seen recoils from reproduction, as does a sensitive plant from the touch, because—in the Laureate's words—

Because all words, though culled with choicest art,  
Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,  
Wither beneath the palate, and the heart  
Faints, faded by its heat.

Ulysses-like, the poet may say of himself in such connections:—

I am a part of all that I have met:  
Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough  
Gleams that untravelling world whose margin fades  
For ever and for ever when I move.

That these illustrations may, in the mind of some, seem not a little separate from each other, one may not pretend to disbelieve. Yet have they not all, without exception, underground connections? They are at least part and parcel of the life that lies beyond deliberate choice. More than this, they are, to some minds, doubtless not without a very real kind of witness-bearing to what we call the supernatural; not on the side of revelation of any kind, it may be, but rather by way of untroubled and not always quiet insistence of the fact of incompleteness, which demands from us a larger theory of life than the material one can afford:—

A deep below the deep,  
And a height beyond the height  
Our hearing is not hearing,  
And our seeing is not sight.

It may be, that could we but see aright, we should find that this subtle presence—this power, to borrow a phrase from Emerson, "which trifles with time and space"—that ever and anon stings our dull souls into recognition of its nearness to us, is none other than that over which, with pauseless, and in measure, irresponsible activity, flows the current of our outer life; is that, indeed, which, alike unacknowledged and unconditioned, gives to that very life much of its form, its very mystery of colour, and its hints of ideal significance.—*London Spectator.*

## JANE AUSTEN AND CHARLOTTE BRONTË.

In fact, humour would at all times have been the poorest excuse to offer to Miss Brontë for any form of moral dereliction, for it was the one quality she lacked herself, and failed to tolerate it in others. Sam Weller was apparently as obnoxious to her as was Falstaff, for she would not even consent to meet Dickens, when she was being lionized in London society—a degree of abstemiousness on her part which it is disheartening to contemplate. It does not seem too much to say that every short-coming in Charlotte Brontë's admirable work, every limitation of her splendid genius, arose primarily from her want of humour. Her severities of judgment—and who more severe than she?—were due to the same melancholy cause; for humour is the kindest thing alive. Compare the harshness with which she handles her hapless curates, and the comparative cruelty of her treatment, with the surpassing lightness of Miss Austen's touch as she rounds and completes her immortal clerical portraits. Miss Brontë tells us, in one of her letters, that she regarded all curates as "highly uninteresting, narrow, and unattractive specimens of the coarser sex," just as she found all the Belgian school-girls "cold, selfish, animal, and inferior." But to Miss Austen's keen and friendly eye the narrowest of clergymen was not wholly uninteresting, the most inferior of school-girls not without some claim to our consideration; even the coarseness of the male sex was far from vexing her maidenly serenity, probably because she was unacquainted with the Rochester type. Mr. Elton is certainly narrow, Mary Bennet extremely inferior; but their authoress only laughs at them softly, with a quiet tolerance and a good-natured

sense of amusement at their follies. It was little wonder that Charlotte Brontë, who had at all times the courage of her convictions, could not and would not read Jane Austen's novels. "They have not got story enough for me," she boldly affirmed. "I don't want my blood curdled, but I like to have it stirred. Miss Austen strikes me as milk-and-watery, and, to say truth, as dull." Of course she did! How was a woman, whose ideas of after-dinner conversation are embodied in the amazing language of Baroness Ingram and her titled friends, to appreciate the delicious, sleepy small talk, in *Sense and Sensibility*, about the respective heights of the respective grandchildren? It is to Miss Brontë's abiding lack of humour that we owe such stately caricatures as Blanche Ingram, and all the high-born, ill-bred company who gather in Thornfield Hall, like a group fresh from Madame Tussaud's ingenious workshop, and against whose waxen unreality Jane Eyre and Rochester, alive to their very finger-tips, contrast like twin sparks of fire. It was her lack of humour, too, which beguiled her into asserting that the forty "wicked, sophisticated, and immoral French novels" which found their way down to lonely Haworth gave her "a thorough idea of France and Paris,"—alas, poor misjudged France!—and which made her think Thackeray very nearly as wicked, sophisticated, and immoral as the French novels. Even her dislike for children was probably due to the same irremediable misfortune; for the humours of children are the only redeeming points amid their general naughtiness and vexing misbehaviour. Mr. Swinburne, guiltless himself of any jocose tendencies, has made the unique discovery that Charlotte Brontë strongly resembles Cervantes, and that Paul Emanuel is a modern counterpart of Don Quixote; and well it is for our poet that the irascible little professor never heard him hint at such a similarity. Surely, to use one of Mr. Swinburne's own incomparable expressions, the parallel is no better than a "sublimous absurdity."—*Atlantic Monthly.*

## MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

### THE GRAND OPERA HOUSE.

It is not often that a young lady with auburn locks has the strong mind that will allow her to look upon that gift as a means of furthering her temporal welfare, yet such an one was Miss Minnie Maddern, if report be true; for the newspapers say that she had the hardihood to go out driving and enjoying our fine, bracing, Canadian climate behind a distinctly white horse, thus emphasizing the modern saw that a red-haired girl and a white horse are always seen together. Whether the horse was a particularly good or fast animal was not specially mentioned, and a reasonable inference would be that the fair comedienne knew the value of having the town talk about the inevitable association of auburn locks and Messenger stock, to the advantage finally of the theatrical treasury. Be this as it may, Miss Maddern had a successful though short season at the Grand last week.

This week opened with Mr. Robert Buchanan's comedy drama of "Fascination," in which Miss Cora Tanner played the part of *Lady Madge Slashton*, an impulsive, generous-hearted girl, who is made jealous of her lover, *Lord Islay*—not without good reason—by the machinations of the stage villain, *Count la Grange*. She dons male attire, and, under the protection of her brother, follows *Islay* to the luxurious rooms of a St. John's Wood beauty, *Mrs. Delamere*, and some pretty complications ensue, only to be finally cleared up, as a matter of course. Either Mr. Buchanan or the management wisely forestall criticism by calling the play "improbable" in the bills, for it is very unlikely that a gently-nurtured English lady would commit such a venturesome act as that of *Lady Madge*, and still more unlikely that a sensible brother would permit such a wild and reprehensible action. The un-English air of all the actors, as well as their decidedly American pronunciation of the English supposed to be spoken by titled personages heightens the improbability, and makes the play appear more a satire upon the society of the Mother Country than a portrayal of its life.

A detail, slight though it may be, which shows the pseudo-Anglicism of this representation, is the fact that the gentlemen when in evening dress carry shiny and carefully brushed high hats instead of the opera hat in vogue for such purposes. An exception to this American-English must be recorded in the person of Mr. Charles Coote, whose *Rev. Mr. Colley* was a splendid bit of comedy, and very like a good many young clergymen we have seen here. Miss Tanner herself developed no strength, as she might have done in the scenes delineating her disappointment in her too susceptible lover, but was only a commonplace woman, and a commonplace woman would never have worn a man's costume and departed on such a quest. As *Charles Marlow*, the young Jamaican, she was probably true to the picture the New York *Anglophobists* love to draw of the *jeunesse dorée* of Great Britain, but I regret to say the result was just a trifle vulgar. Miss Eleanor Carey as the adventuress was in the main satisfactory, and her French accomplice, with *Islay* and *Lord Sam Slashton*, occasionally showed strength, but it was melodramatic rather than dramatic strength.

### SAMSON.

The Philharmonic Society on Tuesday evening gave the first of its regular concerts of this season, when Handel's *Samson* was sung. While lacking the inspiration offered by the great subject of the *Messiah*, there is a human as well as a dramatic interest in *Samson* that makes

its action and movement more easily understood by the multitude, and there is also a richness in its music that is not heard in the severely classical lines of the *Messiah*. The soloists represent people with human hearts and feelings and wrongs, and the choruses represent alternately the worship of the Israelites and that of the Philistines. In this performance the chorus sang well. It was weak in tenors; and the small but devoted band of these gentlemen evidently tired of the demands made upon them, for the excellence with which they commenced faded into decided weakness of intonation towards the end. Generally speaking the attacks were good and certain in all voices, and the solidity of tone throughout was most praiseworthy, the sopranos and basses especially being clear and distinct beyond the ordinary criterion. The orchestra was principally distinguished by a decidedly thick, woolly tone in the strings and by indecision in the wind parts. In some places, such as the short interludes in the choruses, the band seemed to take a nervous fit on being deprived of the support of the voices and played very timidly. In the minuet of the introduction there was a total absence of accentuation, so that it was nearly concluded before it became evident that the band was playing in triple time. Still as the orchestra was mainly composed of the ladies and gentlemen who constitute Mr. Torrington's orchestra, the standard of judgment must not be set up too high, and considering this fact many little faults must be condoned, and a feeling of congratulation should rise uppermost because we have a budding orchestra in our midst, which can present so creditable an assistance in so massive a work as *Samson*. Mr. Torrington's efforts to keep his forces under control were so evident that no one can deny him the praise due to a thorough understanding of his subject, and to his striving after a correct and proper performance of it, and to-day, as always, the pride of the Philharmonic Society must be its splendid chorus, on which most of his work and effort is lavished.

The soloists were not at all equal in their excellence. First must come Mr. D. M. Babcock, whose splendid singing delighted every one, and whose full, large voice was a pleasure to all who heard it. But even he showed signs of weariness in his "Honour and Arms" before it was finished. Next, I think, should be ranked Mlle. Adele Strauss, whose earnest singing and excellent vocalization showed that oratorio is a congenial field of effort for her. Her voice is full and strong, and her training showed to better advantage than in any previous public effort. In her last solo the minor strains seemed to cause a slight uncertainty of intonation, but beyond this her performance was all that could be desired. Miss Hortense Pierse, a young lady of splendid appearance, was the soprano. She has a voice of most agreeable timbre, well trained and always certain in its intonation, and she knew her music thoroughly and sang it faithfully. Her florid work was fluent and easy in its performance, and, if not great, Miss Pierse was certainly excellent. The only drawback about her singing was its level character and the absence of any attempt at dramatic representation. Mr. Warrington well upheld the credit of Toronto's vocalists, though I have heard him sing with greater fulness and solidity of tone. The part of *Manoah* gave him an excellent opportunity to show feeling and pathos, and he made full use of it. Mr. Charles A. Rice, the tenor, was a decided disappointment. His voice is small, light and not disagreeable, but his style lacks finish and is absolutely devoid of dignity. Besides this, he did not know his music, made frequent mistakes and caused the dissolution of the duet with *Delilah*, which had to be commenced over again. A new voice, that of Mr. A. E. Dent, was presented to sing the part of the *Messenger*, and the young gentleman sang it very creditably.

MR. FREDERIC ARCHER was in Toronto again last week and played at St. Basil's Church on Thursday evening, and at the College of Music on Saturday evening. At the former he was assisted by Mons. Boucher, Miss Bolster, Miss Ormsby, Mrs. C. Smith, and Messrs. Kirk and Kelly.

ON Friday of last week the organ in the New Richmond Methodist Church was opened by Mr. G. H. Rider, its builder, and Mr. A. S. Vogt, with Mrs. C. W. Harrison, Mrs. Galloway, and Messrs. Warrington, Coates, and Huestis as vocalists.

NEXT week will see *The Twelve Temptations* at the Grand Opera House, a spectacular extravaganza with handsome scenery and clever mechanical effects. A ballet will be an evidence, and an amusing and enjoyable departure from the later attractions offered by Manager Sheppard may be anticipated.

ON Thursday evening next the Canadian Order of Foresters will offer a programme of musical excellence. In addition to Mlle. Adele Strauss, Mrs. Mackelcan, Mr. E. W. Schuch, Master Georgie Fox, Mr. J. Fax, and Mr. H. L. Clarke of local fame, Mr. S. E. Walt, a Boston tenor, has been engaged, together with Miss Maud Morgan, of New York, a harpist of great celebrity.

MR. GEORG HENSCHEL and Madame Henschel may be expected to give one of their song recitals in Toronto soon. These entertainments are spoken of as being of the highest artistic value, and have been very popular in London, England.

MONDAY next will see the great Levy with a company to support him, of whom good things are said. The *Cincinnati Commercial Gazette*, October 1st, 1888, says: The magnificent playing of Levy is a great card and attracts crowds to the Exposition. He is the great cornetist of the world, and was never in better form than at present.