

Society Notes.

We are glad to see that the *Critic* has taken up the question of the best night for concerts, giving Tuesday the preference. It certainly is impossible for a Friday paper to do anything like justice to a Thursday night concert, and we have hitherto been at great inconvenience, keeping a space open for the insertion of the report late Thursday night. Now a good critique of a good concert should be written quietly and calmly; we have heard of wonderful things being knocked off after midnight with the printer's devil waiting at the door, but men were giants in those days. Wednesday would be the night for us, without a doubt, but there are so many services, etc., to interfere with that, so the choice practically lies between Tuesday and Thursday, and the only objection to the former day is that the news is already pretty stale by the time we get into circulation. In fact, we are prepared to adapt ourselves either to do the best we can late on Thursday night, or to give more carefully worked-out reports of Tuesday concerts at the risk of their falling flat on their appearance 3 days after the event. It was on behalf of the public generally that our suggestion to fix a night was originally made, and we hope the feelings of the weeklies will influence the authorities to fix one convenient to them also, for their voice is heard in the quiet of Saturday and Sunday, when men have time to think.

We have just finished a little book called "Charles Franklyn,"* written by Captain Stewart of the Gordon Highlanders, eldest son of Col. Stewart of Halifax. The book is characteristic of a soldier, and of an all-round man of the world. While there is no pretence at an elaborate literary style, the story is told well with a good sprinkling of terse and forcible little sketches of very various sides of life,—in the drawing-room, on active (occasionally very active) service, and even in the hospital. The main part of the book treats of the fall of Kartoum, of which the author makes his hero an eye-witness. The general course of the war, the state of the country, and the policy of the Mahdi are sketched with a light yet firm hand. In fact, this part of the book is a soldier-story, pure and simple. As the author remarks in concluding, "to some poor beggar in Wadi Halfa, Korosko, Souakin or Assuan, it may give a few hours' amusement; if it accomplishes this it will have achieved the end for which it was written, by one who shared their battles, their bivouacs and their bottle, and whose spirit is always with them in the far black country." We fancy the book has achieved this end, and at the same time has whiled away many a weary hour for some poor beggar dying of ennui at his own unromantic fireside. The author is evidently as much at home in the ball-room as in the battle-field, and has a more than superficial knowledge of the fair sex. Take for example the following description of Lady Jane Belgrave, the heroine:—"She was a tall, striking-looking girl, almost beautiful at times, I am told, but to the general observer she was what one calls handsome. She was a lady, too, a Right Honourable lady, none of your ready-made ones from America or Bayswater, or other strange places, but a real, genuine, duke's daughter. She was a good girl, too, not exactly young—about five-and-twenty, not fast nor slangy, did no *risqué* things, and never tried to compete with married women. She never drove down Piccadilly with a Sister of Mercy in a pony phaeton, for instance, or went for clandestine walks in the park in the morning," and so on. One last quotation, which will appeal more to the men, and we have done:—"Good fellows, brother officers; you can't beat them, reader, if they are of a good regiment. Who are your best friends, your most chosen confidants? Who, when times are bad, money short, favourites running bad seconds, and trumps unkind, "come to time" like your comrades? What relation will put his name behind a bill with as much confidence as your brother subal-

tern? Through the mist that spreads over all happy memories, when gout or when liver hold their deadly sway over the retired soldier, to what does he look back among all those merry, happy, or stirring scenes? It is perhaps to one dear face well remembered; not a wife, nor a woman, for these are weak and fickle creatures, but a brother in arms, clad in the same red coat, or killed in the same tartan."

It is rather the fashion now-a-days for soldiers to amuse themselves writing books, and we have got a bit tired of tales of the barrack-room, but this little book of Capt. Stewart's is fresh and original, and well worth reading:—the more so because it is written by one we all know.

If there is any reliance in newspapers, Mr. Lytell is a very distinguished and skillful evader of the law; the reports of his wonderful escapes from the bailiffs are so minute that we can hardly refuse to believe them. *Progress* has had his knife into Lytell all along, for some reason or other; and the *Montreal Star* has devoted half a column at a time to accounts of his exploits, fairly laughing at Halifax for giving him so good a reception. Take this as an example:—

The Company toured through the Maritime Provinces as the "W. H. Lytell Company," and in Halifax Mr. Lytell was tendered a benefit "Under the distinguished patronage of General Sir John Ross, and officers of the garrison, His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, His Worship the Mayor and members of the City Council," so the bills read. Mr. Lytell is very well known in Canada, and especially in Montreal. He is a Toronto boy, familiarly known as "Billy" Lytell. He ran a stock company in Montreal some years ago, and when the company went to pieces "Billy" skipped with the spoils. He also engaged in the real estate business in Toronto, but did not succeed at that. Miss West's place in the "Hauls Across the Sea" company is filled by Miss Plowden, and Miss West has returned to New York, where she hopes to renew her acquaintance with Mr. Lytell.

We should very much like to know exactly how much truth there is in all this: but whatever the result, Mr. Lytell seems to have behaved well enough during his stay here, and he is certainly a better actor than the average of our visitors; so altogether we shall be inclined to welcome him back again if ever he puts in an appearance with anything like a decent company.

It is a pity to let a literary genius be buried in the columns of a daily paper, even of so good a daily as the *Mail*. Such a production, for instance, as the account of Miss Laine's recital, by a *Stranger*—evidently an American—should be rescued at once by the weeklies, and bound in half-calf, to be studied at leisure in the quiet of Sunday afternoon. The letter is too long to quote in extenso, but we would not be doing our duty if we omitted the two following paragraphs:

"From Miss Laine's opening song until her last sweet and still fresh notes had faded on the air, she carried her audience with her in sympathy and sentiment by the sheer power of a voice naturally sweet and pure and cultivated to a very high degree, and evidently under the very

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* Charles Franklyn of the Camel Corps, by *Illustrations*. Published by Smith, Elder & Co., London, 1890.]