

yet we believe they will freely acknowledge their indebtedness to him when they rise from a perusal of these works. Perhaps no work so little understood is so often stigmatized with opprobrious epithets as the *Encyclopædia*. Morley gives an interesting account of the gigantic enterprise from the first—the accident, to which it owed its inception, the difficulties it had to encounter from the fickle temper of the Government, the hostility of Jesuit and Jansenist, the defection of Rousseau, the imprudent publication, by Helvétius, of his work *De L'Esprit*, and finally the perfidy of the publisher, Le Breton. Through all these difficulties, Diderot struggled, even after D'Alembert had abandoned the work in despair. Mr. Morley admits that Diderot not only admitted but also wrote articles in which he did not believe. That on Jesus Christ was “obviously a mere piece of common form,” and more than one passage in his article on *Christianisme* are undoubtedly insincere. So in his “more careful article, *Providence*,” we find it impossible to extract from it a body of coherent propositions of

which we could confidently say that they represented his own creed or the creed that he desired his readers to bear away in their minds.” How far Diderot's disingenuousness may be defended in consideration of the perils by which he was environed is a delicate question in casuistry each reader must answer for himself.

The Conservative Government has won the hearts of the Trade Unionists by its Master and Servants' and Criminal Law Amendment Acts, and if a General Election were to take place just now, the Home Secretary's work would probably secure the triumph of his Government in spite of its many sins of omission; Mr. Henry Compton's paper on the “Workman's Victory,” will be exceedingly welcome to Mr. Cross. It is laudatory throughout, yet a gentle hint is thrown out that something more is wanting to secure the complete adhesion of the artisans. A strong contrast is drawn between the sneering utterances of Mr. Bruce and Sir George Jessel and the substantial work done for them by the Tories.

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## MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

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IN the October number of last year, we took the opportunity, presented by the opening of Mrs. Morrison's “Grand Opera House,” of initiating a new department of this Magazine—that of “Music and the Drama.” In that issue we took occasion to preface our notices of the local stage by a few words upon the functions of the theatre, and of that art which brings its lovers into that conscious pleasureableness, and that intelligent sympathy with each other, which none other can so effectively and universally create. On the present occasion, and at the re-opening of the Opera House for the new season, it may not seem out of place, if we say a word or two further on the theme which a year ago occupied our pen, more particularly with reference to those higher influences of the drama, as a recreative art and an entertaining educator, which may be made to emanate from the stage, and which may win for its future in our midst an existence fruitful in the moral and intellectual culture of its patrons. The play, when instinct with healthy life, and when under the direction of one whose taste is refined, and whose efforts are based upon the best traditions of the stage, is emphatically a source of innocent delight, and a means of agreeable instruction. In the delineation of character, in the play of motive and action, in the presentation of every gift of speech, every grace of ac-

tion and deportment, every impulse to lofty thought and feeling, the acted drama presents a scope for their exercise and display, such as the art of neither novelist, poet, nor painter can give, and which may embody the highest efforts of each, and be a satisfying substitute for the deprivation of any, or all of them. As an antidote, moreover, to the over-slavish, and mercenary, commercial spirit of the age, and as a means of relieving the biting tedium of a period of business stagnation and money stringency, such as exists in the country at present, and of qualifying the otherwise objectionable results of over-carefulness for the “morrow of this life,” it is an effective, happy, and legitimate factor. Still, as an important means in achieving these results, and as an entertainment which all can indulge in without regret, it is charged that it comes short of satisfying even the most well-disposed criticism, and fails in allaying the most rational and reasonable of scruples. Rare are the performances, it is said, that can attract an intelligent play-goer to witness them more than once, and that only at great intervals. Even where the best of plays are put upon the boards, there is that in their representation that offends the critical eye and ear, and presses home upon the spectator the impression, that his night at the play is a mis-spent evening. Faults in mounting, crudities in acting, defi-