

Taking a "vest" from a "naked man" is like the old-time saying of stealing the breeks from a Highlander. Shakspeare makes Hamlet commit a Bull when he speaks of that

"Undiscover'd country from whose bourn no traveller returns,"

just as he has met his father piping hot from purgatory. Horace Walpole's "I hate that woman, for she changed me at nurse" is another example of the Bull out of Ireland.

But the Irish Bull is *sui generis*. A "strong wakeness," and "the wather is dhry in the well" are to the manor born. So is this from a ghost story,—*"That deadly sound is going on again as lively as ever"*—and this, *"The only way to prevent what is past, is to put a stop to it before it happens."* An Irish writer described drops of rain as varying in size *"from a shilling to eighteenpence,"* and another, *"There I sat, expecting that every moment would be my next."*

Even France contributes to the list. An old French soldier, on being presented with a sword of honor remarked, *"Ce sabre est le plus beau jour de ma vie."* In the land of the Sultan, Bulls are not unknown. A new market-man purchased eggs at a shilling a dozen and sold them at tenpence. When his friends remonstrated with him on the absurdity of his behaviour, he replied: *"There is a loss on the profit, but some business is done."* The Bull has not been wanting in apologists. A writer in the London *Spectator* describes it as being the results of an attempt to emulate Sir Boyle Roche's bird, which *"could be in two places at the same time."* It is rather a sign of mental activity than of mental weakness, *"a heroic effort to sit upon two stools at once, to reconcile two contradictory propositions."*

SOME GREAT PAINTINGS.

THE Transfiguration, Raphael's last work, is usually considered the masterpiece of modern painting. The original is in the Vatican at Rome, but there is a fair copy in the beautiful new chapel, behind the altar of the Parish Church of Notre Dame, Place d'Armes, Montreal.

The Sistine Madonna, in Dresden, Germany, is another of Raphael's great works and by many considered the finest painting in the world. It was painted in 1518 for the monastery of San Sisto, Piacenza, Italy, whence its name. It was purchased by King Augustus III of Saxony for \$45,000. Wilkie said of it that *"the head of the Madonna is perhaps nearer the perfection of female beauty and elegance than anything in painting."* Kugler said, *"Never has the loveliness of childhood been blended so marvellously with a solemn consciousness of a high calling as in the features and countenance of this Child."* There are six figures in the picture. The two enchanting angel boys, leaning on the lower division of the picture, give the last touch of beauty to this magnificent work. We purpose giving a half-tone engraving of this marvellously beautiful painting in an early number of the ANTIDOTE, from a large photograph taken direct in 1890.

The price paid for the Ansdei Madonna, from the brush of the same great master, now in the National Gallery, London, is probably the largest sum ever given for any painting. It belonged for many years to the Marlborough family. From their collection it was bought by the nation four or five years ago for \$350,000.

Miss Houghton, whose painting *"Le Soir de la Vie,"* attracted so much attention in the Paris Salon of 1890, is engaged on a picture of her uncle, Sir John J. C. Abbott.

London papers see an improvement in the average quality of the new landscape pictures in the Royal Academy.

The Princess Louise and Alma Tadema both chose the same subject, the pianist Paderewski (Punch's "Paddy Rooskie") for their contribution to the New Gallery this season. Both portraits are highly praised.

MUSIC.

THE ability to appreciate music may be termed a "sense;" and somewhat as those who are sightless cannot understand what we mean by color, so persons who do not possess a musical ear cannot understand the pleasure of listening to music. To those so deprived, music is a "continuous noise" in which the rhythm is more or less pleasing, for everybody knows of persons who, though not at all musical, are yet excellent dancers. Such people will admit—and some even insist—that they "enjoy" music, just as those of no musical training or culture will try to persuade their friends and themselves that they enjoy a half hour of Wagner's Parsifal or Lohengrin, or even the admirable oratorical efforts of our own Philharmonic Society. The good service being rendered by Mr. Joseph Gould, of this city—largely a labor of love—with his excellent Mendelssohn Choir, has not failed of much appreciation; but with all this, the musical taste must be cultivated in the home before even the church choir can begin to be a means of development. We are reminded here of the reply of a military officer of the old school, when a newly introduced young man remarked on the sweetness of the music being rendered by the band of the Prince Consort's Own Rifle Brigade in one of our public gardens—"Yes: very fine music of course; but it makes such a—of a noise!" The colonel, it is needless to say, was a man of education; he had a keen eye for the beauties of life and of color, a critical palate, a Wellington nose and a warm heart, but he had also what are known to musicians as "leather ears."

Some of the finest pianos ever turned out of the factories of New York, Boston, Guelph, Toronto, &c., are to be found in our Montreal drawing rooms, and we may fairly claim as finished and independent players as may be heard in the best circles of Schonbrunn or Munich. Many of the fair performers, too often contrary to custom, keep up their musical performances, notwithstanding the presence of numerous olive branches. Happy the man of musical taste in such a home. Among our young ladies may be found some of the best players on the continent; but of these more anon. But there are also here and there those who, with ears like the colonel aforesaid will persist in torturing a fine instrument and the sensitive ears of their friends and neighbors by tinkling and drumming away for hours every day, in the belief that they can become finished musicians.

One of the few fine Cremona violins in Canada is owned by a Toronto banker, himself no mean performer. A list of the owners of fine violins will appear later on.

Verdi's new opera—being prepared for next season—is said to distance all his former works.

The proper bowing of strathspeys is rarely acquired out of Scotland. It is almost impossible to express it by notation; and the phrasing of some of Chopin's compositions is