

MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

MODERN CHURCH MUSIC.

THE era of the Reformation gave rise to a variety of sects. The first great divisions were the Episcopal Church of England, the Lutheran Church of Germany, and the Presbyterians or Calvinists, of France and Scotland. The former gave birth to the Choral Service as still preserved in the cathedrals of England; the Lutherans developed a plain though impressive style of church music; while the Calvinists forbade all attempts at an artistic musical service, even to the extent of excluding part singing of any description. From these three great divisions again sprang a number of sects known under the general name of Dissenters, each of whom adopted in some form, or discarded altogether, the art of music in their services. Thus in the Episcopal Church, when some intelligent rector, acting in conformity with the Rubric of the Church to which he belongs, makes the laudable endeavour to place the musical service on a footing worthy its position in the ceremony of the Church, a cry of "no Popery" is at once raised by a number of the congregation, who, if they were not entirely ignorant of the fact, would see that the Choral Service of the Church of England had its birth in, and is a direct out-growth of, the Reformation, as contradistinct to Romanism.

But there is another thing much more to be regretted on the part of many of the clergy, and that is their total ignorance of music as an art. They may possibly have read something of the grand old services of the Roman Church before they became vitiated, or of the noble cathedral services of the Church of England, as still maintained in London, Exeter, Winchester, Canterbury, and other cathedral cities and towns of England. Desirous of emulating them, they incontinently get together a number of boys, undisciplined, and musically untrained, put them in surplices, and attempt a choral service. Of course the effect is absurd to every one who has ever heard a full choral service properly performed, while to those who have not, the whole performance has the appearance of a farce. There can be no doubt that the choral service, when properly performed, is most solemn and impressive, but it must be remembered that the service had its origin in thoroughly trained and gifted musicians, men versed in the traditions and practices of their art; that these services call into play executive ability of a highly trained order, and that, therefore, the baker's assistant, or the grocer's clerk who as amateurs have amused themselves in the leisure of their evenings on the melodeon, are not fitted to instruct and lead a choir, any more than is a choir so instructed and led fitted to perform the beautiful choral service of the Church of England. In olden times men of ability were sought to fill the positions of importance in the church, but now it not infrequently happens that a man's ability is a bar to his preference. Churchwardens of narrow and presumptuous minds, ignorant of all musical traditions of the Church, know full well that such men will not debase either themselves or their art at dictation, so pass them by and appoint more pliant tools. Thus some ambitious amateur rushes in "where angels fear to tread," and the results we well know. The rector, if he be able, may render some valuable assistance as a check to extravagance, in which case he becomes virtually the choir-master; but, if he have not the executive ability or the requisite knowledge to train and instruct the choir, he does one of two things: he either ignorantly meddles, or else he takes not the slightest interest at all, holding the musical part of the service as something he is obliged to tolerate, but not regard with favour—either of which is equally ruinous to all hopes of good results from the choir.

The cry of the many is "congregational singing." By all means congregational; but if music be an art, if there is good and bad music, solemn and sacred, giddy and frivolous, let us at least choose the good, the solemn and sacred, and eschew the trashy and frivolous. There can be no question as to the relative merits for sacred purposes, for instance, of the noble hymn known as "Martin Luther's Hymn" and "Hold the Fort." The one is quite as easily learnt as the other; why then choose the trash? The study of grammar, rhetoric, and logic, are considered necessary to prepare men for the ministry. The art of architecture and church decoration is considered of importance in places of worship. The churches are not built as play-houses, nor decorated as circuses. Why, then, should music, alone of all the arts which are employed in the service of God, be so neglected and abused as to have the rules of her art ignored? Ah! says the advocate of congregational singing, "We do not want our church music like that of a concert or a play-house." Alas! that is just what they are getting. Tunes of the Moody and Sankey type have not the first element of sacredness in them. They bear about the same relation to the art of sacred music as a sermon in doggerel rhyme would to serious prose. The difficult art of music was not given to man to remain uncultivated, nor is it proper to offer to God the gleanings of the vineyard, but the first, full, ripe fruit thereof. As early as the fourth century St. Ambrose found it necessary to cull out the weeds which even then threatened to choke to death the true sacred music of the Church. Two hundred years later St. Gregory found it necessary to repeat the operation. Again at the Council of Trent (1562) Church music underwent a reform. The Reformation, as we have seen, affected Church music in various ways for good and for evil. On account of the number of sects, and the great diversity of opinion which is entertained by them as to what constitutes sacred music, it is not probable that there will ever again be any marked reform in Church music. We have the models always before us as standards, and our approach to, or recedence from, them will, in a measure, depend upon the musical advancement of the nation at large and the individual congregations in particular. To a large number, anything with sound or tune is music, just as with a great many "a picture is a picture," whether it be a print off

a tea-chest or a Turner. An intelligent understanding of art of any kind can only be acquired by education, and while self-sufficient and ignorant amateurs are appointed to the positions of organists and choir-masters, and while the education of young men for the ministry of all sects provides no means of acquiring the necessary musical knowledge, we cannot hope for a better state of things. Water will not rise higher than its source. Nor will the music as performed in so many of our modern churches ever rise above the intelligence of the congregation which appoints and permits the services of the untrained amateur. J. DAVENPORT KERRISON.

BOOK NOTICES.

WAIFS IN VERSE. By G. W. Wicksteed, Q.C., Law Clerk, House of Commons of Canada.

The author of this collection has pleasantly relieved the dryness of his official work as Law Clerk of the House of Commons by the occasional composition of poetry, mainly social or playful. He is eighty-four years old, and in the course of his long life has seen file before him a long train of public characters, whose names and the events connected with them are often recalled in these pages. The following lines, for example, from a New Year's Address for 1849, revive many memories of the past:—

The Session that's coming shall ever be blest,
As the longest, the wisest, the greatest, the best:
Mr. Baldwin shall make all our Colleges flourish,—
LaFontaine shall justice and equity nourish,—
Mr. Drummond all crimes shall detect and repress,—
Mr. Blake all abuses expose and redress,—
Mr. Morin shall charm us with eloquent words,—
Mr. Caron shall do the same thing in the Lords,—
Mr. Leslie shall answer all questions and calls,—
Mr. Merritt shall give all kinds of canawls,—
Messrs. Cameron and Taché make bridges and roads,
In all sorts of places, and all sorts of modes,—
Mr. Viger shall lessen our national debt—
A thing that no Tory has ever done yet,—
Mr. Hincks shall make perfect our Representation,
Shall get us Free Trade, too, and Free Navigation,—
Shall the duties impose in so charming a way,
'Twill be bliss to receive them and pleasure to pay,—
With such exquisite tact he the tariff shall fill,
It shall gladden John Glass and please Peter M'Gill;—
He shall issue Debentures (a marvellous thing)
That shall pay themselves off with the profit they bring;—
Libel law shall amend that the Press may be free,—
And that men may write truth without fear of Guee:—
He shall make us all rich:—but, if thus we run on
In fortelling his deeds, we shall never have done.
If you know what is good for our country, you know
What he'll think, say, and do, and—Amen, be it so!

AN INLAND VOYAGE. By Robert Louis Stevenson. Boston: Roberts Bros. Toronto: William Briggs.

A charmingly-written account of what two canoeists saw in a paddle from Antwerp down the Ouse to Havre. Mr. Stevenson is possessed of a conversational style which is infinitely refreshing when applied to an interesting jaunt such as is described in "An Inland Voyage." The book is admirably calculated for holiday reading.

LITERARY GOSSIP.

J. B. ALDEN has now ready for delivery complete sets of Guizot's "France," in eight volumes.

MR. SWINBURNE has written an essay on Charles Reade's novels, which will appear in one of the magazines. Mr. Swinburne's wide knowledge of English and French fiction ought to make the essay specially interesting.

THE use of the editorial "we" still largely prevails in the Southern States of America, as will be seen by a remark in a Tennessee paper: "If we escape the hog cholera this year, there will be a large surplus of pork this winter."

MR. MILLAIS is engaged upon a new portrait of Mr. Gladstone, this time painting him in his robes. It is said to be an excellent likeness, even better than that in the possession of the Duke of Westminster, from which the well-known engraving is taken.

A PAPER descriptive of a cooking school for young girls in New York City has been prepared by Charles Barnard for the September *St. Nicholas*. It is written in the form of a story and is fully illustrated from designs by Mrs. Jessie Curtis Shepherd.

THE REV. NEWMAN SMITH will contribute an article to the forthcoming *Century* on "The Late Dr. Dorner and the 'New Theology.'" It will give a sketch of his life and of his theological method, and will contain some personal reminiscences by the writer.

A CONVENTION of the St. Georges' Societies of the United States and Canada is being held at Chicago. The Toronto Society is represented by the President, Mr. R. W. Elliot, and a deputation including Mr. Goldwin Smith, who, after the convention, goes on to the North-West.

"THE ARNOLD BIRTHDAY BOOK" is announced by D. Lothrop & Co. It is to consist of excerpts from the verses of Edwin Arnold, edited by his daughter, together with new introductory poems for each month. The same house advertises the first account of the rescue of the Greely party.