

a degree of tone is arrived at. A fine old picture, a mirror, an oak-panelled wall forms a strong setting for his group of gay idlers frivolling over a cup of tea. His "still-life" is admirably clever. A strong incisive stroke characterises all his drawings, and they give all the more pleasure to the spectator for looking as though they had been easily done. With a swift sureness of touch he passes rapidly from figure to figure. He does not wait, like Du Maurier, to elaborate the pattern of the lace or embroidery, but, with a few strokes he indicates the dominating lines and larger masses and folds of the dress. He suggests the character and action of a hand, but he does not count the fingers. In short he is just as great a master of the noble art of omission as he is of realization.

E. WYLY GRIER.

Music and the Drama.

MISS ELLEN BEACH YAW, soprano, supported by Mr. Maximilian Dick, violinist, and Miss Georgiella Lay, pianist, appeared before a Toronto audience for the second time last Friday evening. Miss Yaw has but recently returned from a sojourn in Europe—for rest and study—so that more detailed comment on her singing would seem to be necessary than would otherwise have been the case considering the comparatively short time that has elapsed since her first appearance in the city. Her voice is certainly phenomenal; not merely because such exceptionally high notes are reached but because at the same time low tones are also produced—tones of fair power and excellent quality. The compass actually displayed at the concert was nearly three octaves in extent, from B (below the treble staff) upwards, and throughout all this range the tone produced was uniformly mellow and sweet, not becoming shrill even on the highest notes. Miss Yaw has her voice under excellent control, the clearness and rapidity of her execution being remarkable, while her delicate portamento is an unusual delight. In regard to the limitations of such a voice little need be said. One who considers the matter with due deliberation realizes that there are certain styles of music in which so light a voice would be unsatisfactory. But since we are not accustomed to find fault with a rose because it lacks rugged grandeur or to complain that a child's laugh is wanting in pathos, why should we expect a single voice to possess all possible attributes? The music of the evening was carefully chosen, but even had it been otherwise it would have been a very difficult matter for a critic to retain throughout the concert that calm, judicial attitude which is necessary for the proper observation of defects. There is something so ingenuous and winning in Miss Yaw's manner and in the expression of her finely modelled face that almost anyone would have fallen under the spell in her first number, even without such a bias as the mind of the writer had previously received during a short conversation with the charming vocalist. Perhaps some aged cynic, especially if he were a bachelor or were living separated from his wife, might have been able to resist the combined influences; but for any man who is still taking Father Time's favourite prescription of eight hours three times a day for the cure of a chronic attack of youth—verily for such an one there was no escape. An unconditional surrender was inevitable. Miss Yaw responded generously to the demands of the audience for encores. Mr. Dick was also recalled after two of his numbers, as a tribute to his spirited playing; and Miss Lay proved herself thoroughly efficient in her double capacity as soloist and accompanist.

Owing to the unavoidable absence from the concert given on the 16th inst. by the choir of the West Presbyterian Church (W. J. McNally, conductor), assisted by several soloists from outside, I am unable to give many details in regard to the performance. A competent musician, however, informs me that the choruses were sung with precision and such expression as showed that their spirit was properly felt, and that the work of the soloists was also good. Considering that the choir was organized only last autumn and contains no paid soloists and that no choir music was ever permitted in the church until four months ago, Mr. McNally has good reason to feel gratified at the substantial progress which has been made. The success of the concert will, no doubt, prove a healthy stimulus to the choir.

C. E. SAUNDERS.

Letters to the Editor.

NORTH-WEST IMMIGRATION.

SIR,—As we have been favoured through the columns of THE WEEK with several theoretical articles on the subject of immigration I beg leave to make a few observations from the practical standpoint of an actual settler with fourteen years experience in the ups and downs of pioneer life in the North-West.

Our public-spirited men who propose to develop an active immigration policy might profitably give some of their attention to the present depopulation of the Province of Alberta. It has been too much the fashion to ascribe the decrease in population of the Province to the few bad years the farmers have had, but there are other causes far more potent to drive settlers from the Province. Let me give you an example: An intending settler came to Alberta in 1890, purchased a quarter section (160 acres) from the Railway Company at four dollars per acre, on the ten year payment system, but through failure of crops was unable to make his payments. In the meantime he has improved the place to the value of \$1,000 by fencing, cultivating, and building, etc. The Railway Company, not being a band of philanthropists, now steps in with their policy of my bond or pound of flesh, and the unfortunate settler must abandon his land and home, representing years of hard labour and seek elsewhere for a location. This is but one out of hundreds of similar cases of actual experience.

The average North-West settler is frugal and industrious, and I believe could, if allowed to do so, make comfortable homes and build up the country on a sound economical basis. In all new countries there are adverse natural conditions for the pioneer to contend against, but experience in other countries proves that man adapts himself to those conditions and ultimately prospers. But too often, as in the case of the North-West settler, he is handicapped by artificial conditions, such as exorbitant railway rates making more than the bare necessary articles of life unattainable. Land companies who do business on strict business principles, or rather according to the system of Shylock & Co., charging so high for land along the railway that, to a man of small means, the acquiring of a title to land near a market is an impossibility; also no markets, no local markets through lack of public works, mining enterprises, etc., no distant markets through high railway rates.

When the above adverse conditions are added to those which nature provides we must cease to wonder why the intending emigrant does not gladly avail himself of the good things of this great country. For this is a great country and no doubt has a great future before it.

Thousands of emigrants are prevented from coming here every year by discouraging letters from disappointed settlers. There is a growing feeling that something is wrong with a land policy which burdens a pioneer with a land debt at the outset of his career, leaving him, after the labour of years, unable to acquire the deed of his land, and discouraged from trying again to take a home in the country.

We are all interested in populating the broad square miles of the North-West, however much we may differ as to the means used to attain that end. The plan of assisted immigration has been tried and found wanting, much public moneys have been spent to start a few thousand pioneers, with the result that those pioneers now hinder immigration by discouraging friends from coming to the country.

I would suggest that those connected with the development of a new immigration policy should spend their energies making the condition of the present population of the North-West more prosperous, by lowering rates on railways and also lowering the prices of lands in the vicinity of the railways. After all the best immigration agent is a prosperous and successful pioneer for he brings others in his train.

ALBERTA RANCHER.

Calgary, N.W.T., April 8th, 1896.

HOW TO GET RID OF THE MANITOBA SCHOOL QUESTION.

SIR,—You have several times lately expressed an earnest desire to see the Manitoba School Question disappear from Canadian politics, and in this wish most Canadians will heartily join. To-day it is unfortunately the greatest of all political issues, made so by the course which the Government has taken, and it will continue so to the exclusion of other