

the community. "A happy new year" "no thank you," or, "thanks, I remember a curiously pleasant compound which gratified my palate last new year's day" were the expressed sentiments of nine-tenths of the visiting part of the population. Punch, wine, curacao, and Bishop (untainted by Colensoism is still, thank goodness, strictly orthodox) were freely offered to the visitor. A bright sun without and cheerful welcome within rendered the whole business pleasant to all concerned. This custom of New Year visiting is on the whole a very good one. It may become tedious to some who have repeated the operation for many consecutive years, but we hope that it will never be allowed to die out in Halifax. One of its great advantages is the opportunity which it offers for the blotting out of little coolnesses which may have sprung up during the past year. Mrs. A. may have omitted Mrs. B's name in her list of invitations to a small party. Mr. C. may have disagreed with Mr. D. about the regulation of the City finance, but all the sores of the past year are buried in the warmth of mutual well wishes for the next. It is after all much the same kind of merriment as that which made the 23rd, 24th, and 25th of December the great feast days amongst our Norse ancestors. They rejoiced that the shortest day was passed and that the days once more began to lengthen. We have changed the time of our New Year's Day from theirs but the same feelings prevail amongst us. They burnt the Yule log, and made merry on the occasion of their New Year. We pay friendly visits and wish good wishes to all on the advent of our new year. So may it ever be. Let the dead year bury its dead, let the old year bury its rotting cankers, its little social sores, its little family squabbles and everything else little and mean which it brought into existence. Well, well, we are beginning to moralize which we had no intention of doing when we started. We said that the day was pleasant to all, and it is rather a difficult thing to imagine which enjoyed it most, the stay-at-home ladies or the fly-about gentlemen. Each party commiserated the other. "You must be so tired of sitting up," say the visitors. "Not half so weary as you walking about all day," retort the ladies. We will not attempt to decide this question. It appears to us that the advantages on both sides are fairly balanced. The walk-about get fresh air and know who they are going to see. The stay-at-homes don't get fresh air, but have the great charm of ignorance as to who may turn up next. "Will Mr. B. call?" "Has Mr. C. got over his little huff?" All this gives excitement to their afternoon. Messrs. B. and C. have no such amusement, for if once they make up their minds to call at a doubtful house, a ready welcome is certain. And here lies the great charm of the New Year's visiting. It opens an escape from the little estrangements of the past year. Bygones are bygones, and a new social year is commenced with good will to all, and a hope that good fellowship may prevail until the beginning of the next year. So may it be.

QUEENS OF SONG.

BY ELLEN C. CLAYTON. Z. S. HALL.

The author of this charming work truly observes that "Love of an art creates love of the artist. We cannot be moved, excited, transported by the poetry of Shakspeare, and yet take no interest in himself. We desire to know all about him that can be known, and eagerly receive every scrap of information that can be gathered as to the life and fortunes, the character, habits, manners, and domestic relations of the man whose writings we so dearly cherish. Akin to the interest we take in the great dramatic poet is that which we take in the great dramatic musician. We

feel for a Mozart as we do for a Shakspeare. And not less lively is our personal sympathy with the professors of that beautiful art which interprets and embellishes—which realizes and brings before our senses—the grand and beautiful conceptions of the dramatic poet and composer."

This is undeniable. Who that has listened to the glorious music of Mozart, Bellini, Meyerbeer, Rossini, Auber, Gluck, &c., as rendered by Mario, Grisi, Lablache, Braham, Alboni, Lind, Gardoni, &c. can help feeling something akin to friendship for those upon whose sweet accents we have so often hung with rapturous delight. None that have seen Jenny Lind in *La Figlia del Reggimento* can help taking an interest in everything connected with a lady who might have made a fortune as an actress no less than as a singer. Who can recall Mario as *Raul*, Grisi as *Norma*, Lablache as *Leporello*, Alboni as *Arsace*, or Tietjens as *Alice*, without wishing to know all about those who have so often ministered to our pleasure while elevating our taste? Well, in the volume before us we find short, but well written and most interesting biographies, of all the "Queens of Song," from Gabrielli to Piccolomini,—from Lavinia Fenton (the first Polly Peachum), afterwards Duchess of Bolton, to the graceful and gifted Catharine Hayes (rightly termed the "Irish Lind") whose early death is still fresh in our minds. To us, whose good fortune it has been to know several of these gifted "Queens of Song" in their private as in their public life, the work under consideration is full of interest, and we feel assured that an almost equal interest will be felt by all who peruse Mrs. Clayton's valuable addition to the literature of her country.

To Mrs. Clayton's research we are indebted for some interesting information regarding that admirable production, *The Beggar's Opera*, which more than aught else has perpetuated the memory of Gay, as an ill used poet, and successful political satirist. *The Beggar's Opera*, although now rarely put upon the stage, will be remembered so long as the name of Wilkes is quoted in connection with a Parliamentary lack of wisdom, but we believe Gay still gets credit for many songs not his own. Speaking of Gay's opera, Mrs. Clayton says: "one or two of the songs were written by other persons; the first, 'The moles of the Court,' being written, according to the Dowager Lady Townsend, by Lord Chesterfield; 'Virgins are like the fair flower,' by Sir Charles Williams; 'When you censure the age,' by Swift; and 'Gamblers and Lawyers are jugglers alike,' was supposed to be written by Mr. Fortescue, the Master of the Rolls. The political 'hits' were thoroughly appreciated and enjoyed. Lockit's song, 'When you censure the age,' was instantly felt to apply to Sir Robert Walpole, and was loudly encored. Sir Robert, with ready wit, parried the thrust, at the repetition of the song, by calling out, in a sonorous voice, 'Encore!' which produced a general cheer."

The following passage is instructive, as regards the use actors occasionally make of "one touch of nature." Mr. Kelly was performing with Mrs. Crouch in John Kemble's translation of *Lodoiska*:—

"Mrs. Crouch was the Princess *Lodoiska*, Kelly personated *Floreski*. * * The last scene was heightened by an unexpected and fine effect from an accident which happened to Mrs. Crouch. When she was in the blazing castle, the wind blew the flames close to her; but she had sufficient fortitude and presence of mind not to move from her painful situation, although she remained at the hazard of her life. Kelly, seeing her danger, ran up the bridge, which was at a great height from the ground, toward the tower to rescue her, when, just as he was quitting the plat-