

THE *Contemporary* for May has an appreciative article on "Francis Parkman and his Works," by F. H. Underwood, LL.D. "Parkman's works fulfil one condition indispensable for success: they are always attractive, often brilliant, and have a continuity of interest that holds the reader as under the spell of a great historical novel. . . . Readers will notice the many graphic pictures of scenery in these books. The author is at home in aboriginal woods, by the banks of rivers, and on the shores of sylvan lakes. He seems to know every tree and bush, every wild animal, fish and bird."

"THE Defencelessness of London," by General Sir Edward Hamley, M.P., is the first article in the *Nineteenth Century*, for May. Lord Thring criticises the Local Government Bill; Lord Lymington has a paper on "Tinkering the House of Lords"; Captain Lord Charles Beresford, M.P., expresses his opinions about the way the Royal Navy is managed; the Right Hon. Hugh Childers, M.P., writes about Niederbronn, an Alsatian town, giving a great deal of information not to be found in the guide books; and Mr. Gladstone reviews a novel, *Robert Elsemere*, making it the text for a characteristic defence of Christian belief.

THE frontispiece of the June *Harper's* is a portrait of Mrs. Craik. The "counterfeit presentment" of an author is sometimes disappointing, but this portrait though taken from a photograph, clearly indicates the bright intelligence, womanly grace, and placid thoughtfulness that characterized the literary work of the author of *John Halifax*. The second paper on "London as a Literary Centre," sketches the novelists with portraits of the most eminent. The personal comments are made in a proper spirit and with excellent judgment. They cannot offend those who are the subjects of them, and yet they satisfy the reasonable curiosity that most readers feel about the personal characteristics of the authors whose works they have read and enjoyed.

THE June *Forum* contains a number of articles treating of subjects of more than ordinary interest by distinguished contributors. The opening paper on "The Next American University," by Andrew D. White, deals with some important questions connected with higher education. Senator Wade Hampton discusses negro supremacy in the South; "Remedies for Railway Troubles" are suggested by Professor Arthur T. Hadley; "The Haste to be Rich" is deprecated in a very timely and thoughtful paper by Chancellor Howard Crosby; and Professor F. A. March in "A Universal Language" sets forth the claims of English to become the speech of the world. These are only a few of the articles in an exceptionally good number.

"PLAINS and Prisons of Western Siberia," is the first and probably the most important paper in the June *Century*, but many readers will turn with keener interest to other contributions not embellished with photographic illustrations. Indeed it seems to us that the *Century* and other magazines of its class rely too much on the camera for their pictures. The literary qualities of the number are quite up to the average. John Burroughs very temperately criticises the late Matthew Arnold's criticism on American Civilization; Julian Hawthorne, Henry James, T. W. Higginson, Edward Eggleston, Brander Matthews are other contributors. Prof. C. G. D. Roberts has a stirring poem in a manner he does not often use, entitled "How the Mohawks Set Out for Medoctec."

It will probably be a matter of surprise to many persons to learn that in the City of New York overcrowding exists to a very much greater extent than in London. According to Dr. R. Stracey, the Registrar of Records, overcrowding in New York—to the extent of 16.37 persons to a dwelling in 1880, as compared with 7.8 in London—is such as to render it very improbable that the death-rate of New York can ever be reduced so low as that of our metropolis. In accounting for this, the difference of climate, which Dr. Stracey considers is much more trying in New York, must also be taken into consideration. We have no deaths from sunstroke to record, and registration below zero is almost unheard of in London.—*Medical Press*.

A GREAT and noble woman died in Rome, December, 1722,—a woman whose force and intellect, calm judgment, and statesmanlike ability surpassed that of any uncrowned ruler of her sex in history. So unprecedented is her place in story that historians have sometimes preferred to doubt the part she played in the War of the Spanish Succession. No memorial of the Princess des Ursins exists in Madrid, the city which was saved and restored under her rule. Her last act before leaving Spain was to establish an institution like the French Academy. Madame des Ursins lifted Spain from the dust; she placed a weak and vacillating monarch upon his throne among a foreign race; and assailed by all the powers of Europe, she supported the sovereignty of Philip V. by measures of constitutional right almost unknown to the governed of that day. Madame de Maintenon's tactics were as inferior to those of the power behind the Spanish throne as her aims were baser and her self-seeking more undisguised. But Madame de Maintenon was the obedient servant of the Church, in its most narrow sense; it became the object of that Church's ministers to uphold her power in France. Madame des Ursins, with broader, more enlightened views, opposed the Inquisition and the greed, vice, and hypocrisy of the priests and monks, and she sealed her doom. She had weaknesses, else she had never had those winning traits which made the thralldom of the governed a willing bondage. But no act of injustice, cruelty, or tyranny can be ascribed to her during her ten years of rule. She drank the bitter cup of royal ingratitude to the dregs,—that winter's drive was like the retrospection of the judgment day; but if her heart affirmed the accusation of Wolsey, her lips refused to publicly proclaim it.—*Atlantic Monthly*.

## MUSIC.

### THE CHORAL SOCIETY'S CONCERT.

THE concert with which the Toronto Choral Society closed its labours for the season 1887-8, on the 29th ult., was in many respects a memorable one. As far as at present determined upon, it is the last concert in which the Society will appear as a choral body, it being intended that any future efforts shall be confined to coöperation in the proposed Musical Festival of 1889. This decision will meet with general regret, as the Society is admittedly a powerful and effective organization, and every lover of music and its influences would like to see its efficiency survive the proposed loss of its conductor. Another feature which distinguished this concert was the friendly coöperation of Signor d'Auria and of Messrs. Torrington and Haslam, each of whom wielded the baton in recognition of Mr. Edward Fisher's worth and attainments. While the work allotted to the chorus was not as exacting as the first performance of a consecutive work would have been, it was generally conceded that it never sang better than on that Tuesday evening. It exhibited a splendid tone, well balanced and true, and sang with faultless precision and certainty under the exceptionally trying condition of a kaleidoscopic succession of conductors, all of whom have characteristic qualities of style, differing sufficiently to confuse the best trained chorus. The brilliant performance of the chorus speaks volumes for the faithful study which Mr. Fisher gave his society. Another event of note was the performance of two orchestral *morceaux* composed by a resident of the city. Signor d'Auria, in these two selections, showed himself a past master of the art of orchestration and of conducting, if he did not display great originality of creation, and the performance of his pieces by the band was one of the most agreeable features of the evening. The vocalists were all taken from the ranks of the Society, and gave most creditable renderings of the parts allotted to them. Mme. d'Auria's spirited singing of the "Inflammatus" shared the honour with the performance of the Jewel Song, from "Faust," by Miss Buntun. The latter lady has a very pretty voice, of light and pleasing quality. Mr. Blight, also, was very happy in his singing of "Why do the Nations." Mr. Boucher's violin solo was an excellent demonstration of executive capacity, though his tone was somewhat light. Altogether the last concert of the Choral Society was one of the best it has ever given.

### THE GILMORE CONCERTS.

GILMORE's celebrated band gave three concerts to crowded houses at the Pavilion this week. The fame of this band leads one to look for almost superlative excellence, and in many respects this aspiration is fulfilled. As a band it is well nigh perfect, and when it plays good legitimate music the critic is lost in the admirer; but when pieces are put on the programme for no other reason than that they are curiosities in the shape of band arrangements of well-known piano pieces, and when the hearer is amused at the ingenuity of the arrangement rather than pleased with the music, it is time to say that there is humbug in music, just as there is in other matters. The performance of three standard overtures and other legitimate band music was delightful, and the transition from this to the booming of cannon with the National Anthem was sufficiently gradual to leave some other tid-bits for the musician before the groundlings had their innings. Of the soloists, Mme. Annie Louise Tanner and Sig. Tagliapietra easily bore off the honours, with Sig. Liberati in the instrumental section. Tagliapietra is well-known as a good baritone, and Mme. Tanner is deservedly a favourite here, her gentle manner and exquisite voice having long ago determined her position. Mr. Torrington's assistance with his chorus did much to elevate the tone of the entertainments.

### MR. H. M. FIELD'S RECITAL.

CONSIDERABLE interest was felt in this young gentleman, who, before his departure to Germany, had already achieved quite a celebrity in Toronto musical circles. Since his return he has avoided public appearances until the evening of Wednesday of last week, and to this delay we may largely attribute the comparatively small house which was assembled to hear him. It was much to be regretted that the recital was not more generally attended, as it was one of the most enjoyable entertainments that we have had this season. Mr. Field is a charming pianist, in matters both of technique and taste. He has a facile, sure touch, rather round than brilliant, and rather broad and soft than strong. His general interpretation is perhaps too inconsecutive to those who are accustomed to admire the symmetry of a Carreno's performance, or the strict equilibrium of the rendition of an Aus der Ohe. It is in this dreamy tendency to meander that his interpretive weakness consists, but this is atoned for by a fine, thoughtful phrasing, and a well-digested conception of the piece under treatment. He is by no means devoid of force or breadth and fire, and a general opinion that his playing lacked force was due more to the selection of pieces on his programme than to any defect in his playing of those chosen. This was abundantly shown in the Liszt numbers with which the evening closed. In the "Polonaise" Mr. Field was full of delightful dash and force, while in the "Petrarch" sonnet he surprised all by the poetic, passionate fire with which he adorned it.

Miss Huntington, as the vocalist, added to her many triumphs in Toronto. She has never appeared to better advantage than on this occasion. A broad, even tone—whether *forte* or *mezza voce*,—an exquisite soft tone, and a rare artistic delivery, made her songs among the most charming ever heard in Toronto.