

## REFLECTION.

How gradually we leave off play,—  
We can't recall the *final* day  
We played with childish glee.  
We cannot tell when girlhood slips  
Away from us, with laughing lips;  
We only know that we  
Awake one day; and waking *know*  
That womanhood sits upon our brow.

Montreal.

FERRARS.

## MUSIC.

As we go to press the magical name of Patti is in every mouth. A suspension of the ordinary business and social relations of life appears to dominate all classes, and on the eventful evening of Friday, 31st March, the fever of curiosity, speculation, admiration, and enthusiasm will be at its height. Such it is to be a *prima donna*—the first lady not only of an arbitrary institution like Italian opera, but, next to the various crowned heads of foreign and home countries, one of the first ladies in the world.

With the decline of Italian opera is also contemporaneous the decline of the star system—so we are told—and the gradual waning of the brilliant light cast by those operatic luminaries. Yet the *prima donna* of to-day is very nearly as important as she was a hundred years ago, if we may judge by the enormous prices daily asked and daily given—wages everywhere the true value of work. And one reason of this unquestionable popularity of the *prima donna* is the fact that no great new singers appear to be rising up to take the place of such artists as Patti, Nilsson, and Tietjens. The days when a Malibran and a Jenny Lind composed and sung their own cadenzas are over. In the graceful form, the dark, expressive eyes, and the pure and flexible voice of an Adelina Patti, the world still recognises the genius that in a still more exalted type lived and moved and had its outward habitation in such women as Catalani, Pasta, Grisi, Sontag, Malibran, and Alboni. Of Catalani it was said that her voice was of a most uncommon quality, and capable of exertions almost supernatural. Born in 1779, the daughter of a small tradesman, she enjoyed the full measure of a successful artistic life for thirty-five years. Her husband, Valebrègues, a stupid, ignorant soldier, addicted to gambling and kindred vices, yet knew enough to appreciate his wife's magnificent singing. "Ma femme, et quatre ou cinq poupées,—voilà tout ce qu'il faut," he used to say. Madame Grisi, who made her *début* at the age of seventeen, was one of the most original and powerful "dramatic" sopranos that the world has ever seen. Impulsive, eccentric, but always good-hearted and candid, the beautiful Giulia Grisi was for years the idol of the London summer season and the Paris winter one. Her style was grand, open, robust, magnificent, and included exceptional dramatic gifts. The famous quartet, consisting of Grisi, Rubini, Tamburini and Lablache, is the most memorable operatic quartet Europe has yet known. Rubini was replaced by Mario after a while, and the Mario Quartet became as famous as the Rubini had been until 1846, when it dwindled to a trio, Grisi, Mario, and Tamburini, *sans* Lablache. Then Tamburini left, but still Grisi and Mario sang on, the "rose and nightingale" of Heine's Parisian letters. Heine heard her in 1840, and "liked her very much." Discriminating Heine! On the other hand, Nathaniel Parker Willis heard her in 1834, and "did not like her at all." Was the judgment of the celebrated American at fault, or had six years of intense hard work and application to her art made such a difference, not only in her incomparable voice, but in her method as well? Of Pasta it may be said that she had literally no successor. A declaimer as well as a singer, perhaps, the lamented *Mdlle.* Tietjens approached her most nearly in true broad excellence of style and a certain masculine grandeur of method. Neither were bravura singers. In this latter style, no one ever approached the brilliant Marietta Malibran. Her whims, her caprices, her enthusiasms, her friendships, her adventures, her travels, her mode of living and her method of singing, all point to her having been a person of unusual and remarkable genius, dazzling, original, and gifted. Malibran spoke, acted, and sang, in six languages. Her acting was exquisitely natural, and full of a delicate tact and discrimination.

"The actions of this fiery existence," says M. Castil Blaze, "would appear fabulous if we had not seen her amongst us, fulfilling her engagements at the theatre, resisting all the fatigue of the rehearsals, of the representations, after galloping morning and evening in the Bois de Boulogne, so as to tire out two horses. She used to breakfast during the rehearsals on the stage. She starts for Sinigaglia during the heat of July, in man's clothes, takes her seat on the box of the carriage, drives the horses. Scorched by an Italian sun, covered with dust, she arrives, jumps into the sea, swims like a dolphin, and then goes to the hotel to dress. She leaves Brussels for London, comes back to Paris, travels about in Brie, and returns to London, not like a courier, but like a dove on the wing." We all know what the life of a singer is in the capital of England—the life of a dramatic singer of the highest talent. After a rehearsal at the opera, she may have three or four *matinées* to attend; and when the curtain falls, and she can escape from the theatre, there are *soirées* which last till daybreak.

SERANUS.

It is understood that Mrs. Forsyth Grant, daughter of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, has consented, at the urgent solicitation of friends, to prepare two or three papers from the diary of her visit some years ago to the Sandwich Islands. Those who have seen portions of the work say that it is marked by a charming simplicity of manner, with an easy flow of narrative and a keen eye for the scenes and incidents described.

## LITERARY GOSSIP.

MR. JOHN MORLEY's recent address on Literature contains a fine definition of what it is and wherein its charm lies. Here is a passage from his eloquent discourse: "Literature consists of all the books (and they are not so many) where moral truth and human passion are touched with a certain largeness, variety, and attraction of form; and my notion of the literary student is one who, through books, explores the strange voyages of man's moral reason, the impulses of the human heart, the chances and changes that have overtaken human ideals of virtue and happiness, of conduct and manners, and the shifting fortunes of great conceptions of truth and virtue. Poets, dramatists, humourists, satirists, masters of fiction, the great preachers, the character writers, the maxim writers, the great political orators,—they are all literature in so far as they teach us to know man and to know human nature."

As a rule, one finds American authors ready and willing almost at all times to talk of their own works, or chat with you as to their literary opinions. An exception to the rule is found in Miss Sarah Orne Jewett. Modest of the fame and success her stories have brought her, it is difficult to induce her to talk about herself or her works. It was perhaps this knowledge that makes one more desirous of learning something of the methods of work pursued by her. Miss Jewett's summers are spent in the village of South Berwick, Me., the country which she has made so pleasantly familiar to us through her stories. As winter approaches, however, she moves to Boston, and in the home of Mrs. James T. Fields, on Charles Street, she finds a most congenial abode. It would be difficult, perhaps, to find an author whose personality is so strongly marked in her books. She is a lady possessed of the most winning manners, and her deportment is in perfect harmony with her appearance—refined, genial, and unassuming. Her figure is tall, slender and supple, and a pair of dark eyes give her face a wonderfully cordial and frank expression.

THE first of the much talked about bundle of unpublished Thackeray letters will form an important feature of the April number of *Scribner's Magazine*. The first installment will consist of letters written in 1847 and the few years following. Most of the letters were addressed to Mrs. Brookfield, of England, and to her husband, the late Rev. W. H. Brookfield, who enjoyed much of Thackeray's confidence, and was a warm friend of the novelist. Mrs. Brookfield adds a brief introduction to the letters, and states that they are made public with the full authority and approbation of Mrs. Ritchie, Thackeray's daughter. The letters, although they are not connected, are continuous, a simple chronological order having been followed rather than their relative importance. Frequent pen and ink sketches by Thackeray occur in the letters, and these will be reproduced in *fac simile*. These sketches and drawings, for the main part, illustrate places and incidents mentioned therein, while others are humorous in their character—all of them cleverly done. In the same number ex-Minister E. B. Washburne's reminiscences of the Commune of Paris will come to a conclusion.

MR. ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON's popularity has stimulated him to undertake a quantity of literary work that might daze an ordinary man. He has no sooner issued his latest collection of stories, "The Merry Men," when we are told that he has not less than three other important plans in view. The most ambitious of these is perhaps the early publication of a collection of "Essays," in two volumes, to consist of personal and literary papers, partly reprinted from his "Virginibus Puerisque," now out of print, and a number of new essays never before published. His second forthcoming book will be a volume of poems, entitled "Underwood," to be divided into two parts, one devoted to English and the other to Scotch verses. Mr. Stevenson will also be represented in the forthcoming memorial volume of Professor Fleming Jenkins, to which he has contributed a full biographical memoir. Beside these, he has under way a serial story, to appear in *Scribner's Magazine*, which, it is said, will be entirely unlike any of his previous tales, and has contracted for not less than seven short stories for early publication in different magazines in this country and England.

MR. LAURENCE OLIPHANT's important work on Palestine is now ready for publication by the Harpers, who will issue it during the present week. The title chosen for the book is "Haifa; or, Life in Modern Palestine." The papers comprising the volume were originally published in the New York *Sun*, and deal with the life, habits, and festivals of the Syrians and the Druses. Descriptions are also given of various points of Biblical interest in the Palestine land and Jerusalem. Additional value is given the work by an introduction from the pen of Mr. Charles A. Dana, who says:

"The chapters which compose this volume originally formed a series of letters, all of which passed through my hands. I prepared them for their first appearance in print, and corrected the proofs afterward. Finally, it was at my suggestion and advice that they were gathered together in a book."

The deep interest which the land of Palestine possesses for every thoughtful mind makes us all greedy for fresh and truthful information alike concerning its present condition and the discoveries which new researches add to our knowledge of the past. From this point of view many of the pages which follow are of exceeding importance. Every Christian will read with deep attention the author's description of the present state of places connected with momentous events of New Testament history, and when, as in the present instance, the traveller and investigator is one whose judgment and whose accuracy may be entirely relied upon, the value of the report surpasses every careless estimate. It is with this feeling that I have urged my friend to complete his work for publication, and with this feeling I earnestly commend it to the reader. Nor is its interest confined to historical and Biblical questions alone; the ethnologist, examining the races of modern Syria, and the philosopher, contemplating the marvellous process of Asiatic transformation, will also find here material which will repay their most careful study.

ATTACHED to the publication of many of the most successful books published, there are frequently interesting stories that only at rare intervals reach the public. This appears to be the fact with Mr. Justin McCarthy's successful "History of Our Own Times," as incidentally learned from a member of the firm of Chatto & Windus, the English publishers of the work. Mr. McCarthy's original idea for the book, it seems, was that it should be an historical narrative, and for which he had chosen the title of "The Victorian Era." Upon the completion of the work, a friend introduced him to a well-known English publishing firm, with whom he finally agreed to sell the work for £600, or about \$3,000 in our money. After a little while the publishers, learning that Mr. McCarthy was a home ruler, if not a Parnellite—they did not even know, it appears, that he was an Irishman—asked to be allowed to withdraw from the contract. Mr. McCarthy, who was greatly annoyed at the suggestion that he might mutilate history to suit his own private or political views, demanded compensation, and the publishers referred the settlement to the friend who had introduced the author to them. Then Mr. McCarthy came to his present publishers, who at once agreed to publish the work for him on a basis of mutual profits. It was suggested, however, that, instead of "The Victorian Era," he should call the book "The History of Our Own Times." In the interval, the other publishers reconsidered the situation, and asked to be allowed to revive the lapsed contract. It was too late. The work had been placed in the printer's hands by the second firm to whom the author had submitted the manuscript, and considerable of the proof read by Mr. McCarthy. The book was successful from the start, and proved a boom to publishers and author alike, the latter having, up to the present time, received nearly \$28,000 on account of his profits on the work.