

THE CRITIC'S CORNER. V.

The Musical Service.

The "musical service" in Protestant Churches seems to be a mongrel affair; it is not a service in the ordinary sense, neither is it a "concert." Our Roman Catholic friends, and to some extent, our Anglican brethren, have services that can be made very elaborate and enriched by full choral accompaniment. But the prominence now given to the choir in many Protestant Churches tends to produce a programme that is neither one thing nor the other. If this display was confined to anniversary services one might stand it; but even then, it is often carried to extremes. I attended a special service on a Sunday evening recently to hear a distinguished minister from the Old Land. At one period of the service the organ was ringing in my ears for about twenty minutes, the result was a headache which unfitted me for hearing anything, and the preacher himself felt that he was driven into a small corner. It came about in this way: there was a "voluntary" during the collection, then a long solo, then a long anthem. One felt that the music simply ran away with the service.

In some churches there is a tendency to repeat this kind of thing every Sunday night, on the pretence of drawing the people. Surely the people who are being "drawn" all the week by all kinds of entertainments can be appealed to by something more solid on "the day of rest and gladness." We have not lost faith in quiet, restful worship, and faithful, vigorous preaching. There are many sensible people who prefer that Miss Blank should play her violin solo at some other time and place. There are certainly many openings for the programme without turning the Sunday evening service into a miscellaneous performance. By all means let the choir do its work well; it has a fine function, a glorious opportunity. It is the privilege of the choir to work with the minister in producing an impressive service, making the music to be a servant of God, and a minister to men; thus will "the service of song in the house of the Lord" be harmonious, helpful and enjoyable. The choir that loses itself in the service will find itself and find its highest reward. We maintain, however, that some of the services which are supposed to be specially attractive are poor and tawdry, neither good art nor noble worship. Things are done which rouse the ire of musical critics, and jar upon the nerves of the earnest worshipper. Let all things be done decently and in order. Let us admit that in this age when there is so much sensational frivolity, the Church needs to furnish an atmosphere in which reverence and devotion may flourish.

VERAN.

Do not overlook the opening chapter of "FIONA MIVER," the Highland romance commenced in this issue. It will run for twelve or fourteen weeks, and promises to be of absorbing interest.

According to the report of the British Commission on lunacy, insanity is twice as prevalent among the clergy of the established church, as among dissenting ministers. The Canadian Baptist suggests that the starvation salaries on which the poorer curates attempt to subsist is responsible.

The ladies of Boston have formed an association for the study and solution of the problem of domestic service. There are

too few domestics for the demand, and of those available too few are efficient. This average inefficiency is due to want of proper training, and lack of continuity of service—house-work for wages being regarded by many as less sociably desirable than work in factories, and as only a temporary occupation. There are more places in domestic service than persons willing to fill them; the gap between demand and supply shows no immediate prospect of being lessened. Two or three things might help, such as better wages, and the promotion of less snobbish ideas as to the social status of domestic service. The teaching of cooking and domestic economy in schools cannot be too highly commended. Households with girls in them must perforce do more of their own work; and this, to give room for reading and the necessity and desirability for the simplification as far as possible of our now too often feverish and distracted lives.

Library Table.

THE FAMILY: A NECESSITY OF CIVILIZATION.—By John Robins, M.A., D.D., Toronto: Fleming Revell Company. This book has suggestions for the thoughtful reader. The author who is not an altogether unknown writer, says in his preface: "To make better homes and to secure a truer life has been the purpose of the writer of these pages. The highest civilization demands Christian homes." "If every mother was diligent in training her children, it would mean more than all the political platforms and social distinctions in the year. It would mean hope, confidence, life, character, civilization, and an everlasting kingdom."

CONFESSIONS OF A WIFE, by Mary Adams. Probably no book written within the last few years has roused more interest than *Confessions of a Wife* which has been running through *The Century Magazine* as a serial and has just been published by The Copp, Clark Company, Toronto, neatly bound in bright red linen, with a rather artistic title in white on the cover. One reason for the interest displayed by all who have read the book is that the name Mary Adams is supposed to be a nom de plume and the literary world is most curious to know who the writer is, and whether man or woman. On this point there can hardly be any doubt. The book is essentially the story of a woman's heart, and it is impossible to think that it could have been written by anyone but a woman. The story is told in the form of a diary, with a few letters inserted, and is so intimate, so tender a document that one feels it is almost sacrilege to read it. We enter the "holy of holies" of the heart of a pure and lovable woman, and as we read it seems that Marna Trent must have lived and written "The Accepted Manuscript," and that she did not write it for the world to read, but simply because she could not help expressing her feelings in what was to her the most natural way. The book is the highest art, being so entirely natural.

The only final comfort is God, and he relieves the soul always in its suffering, not from its suffering—nay, He relieves the soul by its suffering, by the new knowledge and possession of Himself which could only come through that atmosphere of pain.—Phillips Brooks.

Much of the charity that begins at home is too weak to travel.—Chicago News.

Literary Notes.

The opening article in the October Studio is on John Savery, called "A Cosmopolitan Painter," with a large number of illustrations of his work. "Designs for Cottages"; some remarks upon the results of "The Studio" competition A XXVIII, and most interesting on account of the plans given. E. B. Havell writes of "Indian Pictorial Art" and Clive Holland of "Student Life in the Quartier Latin, Paris." Other topics of interest are, "The Work of Ann Macbeth" and "An Italian Painter: Gaetano Prevati," while Studio-Talk contains much readable matter. Address, 44 Leicester Square, London, England.

The opening article in the November Table Talk is by Christine Terhune Herrick on "The Child at Table." In "The Financial Side of Housekeeping," a married woman writes of her experience in making ends meet on her husband's salary of \$1,700. Isabel Bates Winslow describes "An Improbable Dinner" and James Buckham discusses "Country Household Help." The usual menus for the month with hints for following them will be of great value to the housekeeper. Table Talk Publishing Company, Philadelphia.

The November Harper's Monthly Magazine opens with a well illustrated article on "Through Siberia and Bering Strait" by Harry de Windt. Other articles are, "Surrey Downs," by Arthur Colton; "Evolution and the Present Age," by (the late) John Fiske; "Ancient People of the Petrified Forest of Arizona," by Walter Hough; "New England Fisher-folk" by Guy Wetmore Carrye, and "Purvis de Chavannes, Caricaturist," with reproductions of Cartoons and Caricatures. A number of short stories make up a varied table of contents. Harper and brothers, New York.

The Ladies Magazine continues to improve as the months go by. The November number contains several excellent short stories, including "His Temporary Grandmother," "Overheard," "The Love of a Princess," and "Taken at His Word." "The Twentieth-Century Wife and Mother" is a thoughtful, well-written article, and Mary E. Boyce's short talk on "The Woman's Club as an ally to Higher Education" is forceful. The departments of dress-making, health and beauty, and recipes are well kept up. The subscription price for this excellent "Canadian Magazine for Canadian Women" is one dollar per year. The Dyas Publishing Co., Toronto.

Topsy Turvy Land: Arabia Pictured for Children, by A.E. and S. M. Zinemer. The preface gives an excellent idea of the work. "This is a book of pictures and stories for big children and small grown-up folks; for all who love Sinbad the sailor and his strange country. It is a topsy-turvy book; there is no order about the chapters; and you can begin and read it anywhere. It is intended to give a bird's-eye view to those who cannot take bird's wings. The stories are not as good as those of the Arabian Nights but the morals are better—and so are the pictures. Moreover the stories are true." The twenty chapters of this book certainly give a great deal of information about Arabia, and give it in a most entertaining way, the illustrations being especially good. The volume is well bound and beautifully printed, and will form a good addition to the library of any child or any Sunday School. Fleming Revell Company, Toronto.