

F. Bowden's excellent playing: her broad and sweet tone was worthy of Piatti, and she may be destined to become at no distant day for the violoncello what Lady Hallé and Madame Urso have been for the violin. Mrs. Carter was in excellent voice; Mess. Coster, Lindsay and Ruel, as well as Mrs. Armstrong and Mr. Robinson in their duet, could only have pleased the audience better by repeating their performances. Mr. W. Bowden, after leading an excellent performance of Dancla's Trio, undertook the sometimes thankless office of playing the last piece on the programme. But he was in no danger of suffering from premature exits, and Hollander's "Spinning Song," in his hands, made an effective close to an excellent programme. Last, not least, it is only just to speak of the large share of our organist in the success of the concert. He had at once, in the kindest way, postponed his own annual recital, had been indefatigable in rehearsing, played most of the accompaniments, and gave Chopin's *Polonaise* with that quiet mastery of manner which true judges of music appreciate, while all can enjoy. One criticism on the concert would need utterance, if it were not disarmed by the suddenness of preparation. The Choir, as a whole, had no opportunity of showing that excellence of which we are now justly proud. But our School-room will witness many another concert, and those members of our Choir who then assisted only as spectators, will in their turn display their abilities, and give aid to other causes not less deserving. The proceeds of the concert, after deducting the few necessary expenses, amounted to \$34, which sum was duly handed over to the Relief Committee.

CORRESPONDENCE.

[All communications must be accompanied by the writer's name, while tolerating a "nom de plum;" it is preferred that correspondents permit their names to be published. The Editors do not hold themselves responsible for ideas expressed in this column.]

OUR USHERS.

To the Editors of Parish Notes:

SIR: In the last issue of your paper there appeared a letter urging the pew-holders to notify the ushers of any vacant sittings, for the accommodation of strangers and visitors. This is becoming, every Sunday, a most difficult question. Something must be done to accommodate them in a better manner than that at present in vogue. There seems only two alternatives by which this may be done. The first plan would be, to allow no strangers to enter until the hours of commencing the service, then if the pew-owners are not present, show our visitors into any of the vacant sittings, allowing the tardy church-goers to find a seat where best they can. The second suggestion, and the only one which I believe can truly solve this pew problem, is simply this: "Have free sittings throughout the whole church." To the minds of many, this at first sight may appear a startling proposition, but when we look at it in a fair and Christian-like spirit, and at the same time realizing that the church is a "public place of worship" in which the rich and poor meet together to worship the same God.

If we did honestly realize this fact perhaps the present custom of renting or buying pews would sink into oblivion and be a thing of the past. Until this event does happen, I sincerely believe no community of interest or Christian fellowship in church work will ever be what it should and ought to be. Yours, &c.,
J.

[* * The suggestion of our correspondent, as regards the former of his alternatives, is worthy of attention. It is the practice in many important churches, both in England and the United States, to admit strangers to occupy any vacant seat at a stated point in the beginning of the service. But this is open to the objection that some part of the service is disturbed. As, in our Church, an interval of nearly five minutes is filled by the opening Voluntary, it might surely be possible, if regular pew-holders are in their places at 11 and 7 o'clock, to place the others suitably before the service begins. The question of Free Seats is too large to be adequately discussed in a few lines. We shall hope to recur to it in a later issue. But it is sufficient to state here that, as our Church is at present, with some of the best sittings in the gallery secured as "free seats," and a large portion of the West gallery unoccupied, no moral urgency exists for disturbing the present state of things, and of relinquishing a revenue which it would need great effort to replace. When there is the slightest question of the poor being excluded by our system, we are sure that a change would be speedily decided on.]

ED. PARISH NOTES.]

To the Editors of Parish Notes:

I am a subscriber to PARISH NOTES and congratulate you on the able manner you have brought out your first copy.

I read with much pleasure the remarks of the Chairman of the Ushers' Committee, and as I am an old Usher can also appreciate the difficulties of the position, for I have been in hot water several times. But, enough! What I would like to bring before your readers is this, but first please understand that I do not wish to hurt the feelings of anyone. Ever since I have attended "Stone" Church (I say *stone* because it sounds more familiar than "St. John's") it has been the custom to have the collection plates for the gallery brought in during the service, and as our Sexton goes up one side and down again, across the end, up the other side and back, his heavy tread is heard by all, and wondered at by the stranger. If that stranger happens to come several times, he must simply put it down as part of our service. Now I would suggest that the collection plates for the gallery (there are only two required at present) be placed as follows: One plate be left on each side—on the window next the chancel, and the collectors be notified of the change; also that two or more gentlemen who sit in the gallery be requested to act as substitutes in event of one or both of the regular collectors being absent. I think that the plan suggested is worth a trial. It will do away with an old and unnecessary custom which should never have been allowed in our beloved Church.

Yours sincerely,
Feb. 20, 1891.

W. A. LORDLY.