

THE DRAMA.

"**T**his love that makes the world go round," sings the poet, and however much this statement may come into contact with our received ideas of gravitation, it is certain that love influences, in a great measure, the fortunes of those who revolve upon and with the earth, as is duly set forth in Sheridan Knowles' beautiful play of "Love,"—in which, last Monday week, we had the pleasure of witnessing Mrs. Lander's charming impersonation of the Countess. The chief feature for admiration in this lady's acting is its finish; not a gesture is out of place, nor is there a step upon the stage, or an expression of her face, for which the attentive spectator is at a loss to account; and, withal, everything is done with such lady-like ease, and seemingly unstudied grace of action, as to show that she possesses, in a high degree, that quality, which above all others, marks the true artist, namely, the art of concealing art. Her countenance, though not strikingly handsome, is full of expression, and during the progress of a play, it is a study to watch it alone, as the various moods of the character she represents, are there set forth, as in an ever changing picture. She modulates her voice very artistically, though it is occasionally dropped to such a low tone (when, for instance, she expresses the subduing power of grief, or the indecisive struggle of contending emotions) as to be almost inaudible, and to require the closest attention in the spectator anxious not to lose one word. In the first act of "Love," she admirably portrayed the hesitating course of the Countess who, by turns, smiles and frowns upon the modest advances of her serf-lover, whom her woman's heart tells her she loves, while her patrician prejudices forbid her to acknowledge it even to herself. An instance of this was the manner in which, at the end of the first act, she announced her intention of going out hawking, when she first invited his presence by saying in a kind tone "I know you like the sport;" and then, seeing his pleased look and fearful of being misunderstood, she drew herself up, and commanded his attendance with, "You may be useful—so come." She acted magnificently in the third act, where Huon the serf, being threatened with death, as the penalty of his refusing to marry the woman his lord had chosen for him, the Countess being left alone with him, cannot refrain from declaring her own love, and receiving the declaration of his long pent-up passion; though, even then, the art of the actress made it apparent that the pride of the Countess was not quite satisfied with the choice of the woman. The interview in the fifth act, with the Empress, whom she believes is about to espouse Huon, he having in the meantime received his freedom and raised himself to greatness, was very impressive. The grief of the woman whose pride had received such a lesson, and her proud bearing in the presence of her, as she thinks, fortunate rival, was in admirable contrast with the quiet joyousness of her manner, as if peace had at last visited her mind, when she discovered that the Empress had really intended Huon should marry the woman who loved him, after all. Mrs. Lander's various costumes were in exquisite keeping with the character; the flowing white drapery and hood of the dress in the last act, told admirably, in a picture point of view. Mr. Carden acted quietly as Huon, and dressed becomingly. Miss G. Reynolds did her best to look dignified as the Empress, but succeeded better in expressing the kindly feeling of one good-hearted woman, sympathising with another. Miss Lizzie Maddern's Catherine was spirited enough, but Mr. Giles made a very lackadaisical Sir Rupert. Mr. S. J. Barth tried to be funny in a part not meant to be so: this gentleman is yet a very uncultivated actor with very crude ideas of his art. His acting in comic pieces is generally mere buffoonery; and he has a manner of keeping himself, as it were, prominently before the audience, that at times is dangerous to the illusion of the scene, and little in keeping with the character he is supposed to represent.

In "Mesalliance," Mrs. Lander, as a poor, noble-

hearted loving girl, married to one above her, in social rank alone, touched all hearts, by her exquisite delineation of a faithful wife, wrongfully suspected of infidelity, and persecuted on every side by her husband's envious and grasping relations. The interview between Leonie and her husband in the prison of the Magdalens, at Paris, was very affecting. Mr. Bowers, as that supposed rarity, an honest lawyer, acted quietly and naturally, and made his audience laugh quite as loudly, as if he had employed any of his usual mannerisms, thereby showing his possession of artistic power. We regret exceedingly being unable to give a lengthened critique of all the characters Mrs. Lander has appeared in. Her Julia, in "The Hunchback," Charlotte Corday, Pauline Deschappelles, and Juliet, in "Rome and Juliet," were all artistic delineations, such as might have been expected from an actress, who has won, during a lifetime on the stage, "golden opinions from all sorts of people." It is little to the credit of Montreal playgoers, that this lady should have met with such comparatively small support; but Art in all its branches meets, however, except from the refined few, but little appreciation in this the chief city of British North America. It is to be hoped that the future will bring forth a better state of things, and that, ere long, intellectual and refined interpreters of the richest dramatic literature in the world, may hope to attract a larger share of public patronage than that, at present, so liberally bestowed upon the black-faced buffoons who occasionally visit our city, and grossly caricature, but do not really imitate negro peculiarities.

JOHN QUILL.

REVIEWS.

PHÉMIE KELLER. By F. G. Trafford, author of "Maxwell Drewitt," "Race for Wealth," &c., &c. New York: Harper & Brothers. Montreal: Dawson Bros.

Captain Stondon, aged fifty-six, but erect in form, firm in step, and looking many years younger, during a solitary excursion into the wilds of Cumberland, wandered into the churchyard of the village of Tordale. It was high noon on a Sunday in August, and, as he sat among the grave stones, he could get from his seat a side view into the church, and could see some of the people as they stood up to sing. It was an old Cameronian hymn, and seemed, in its wildness, in perfect keeping with the desolate grandeur of the neighbourhood. Suddenly a young voice rang out clear and sweet above the village choir, and Captain Stondon rose involuntarily to listen. He entered the church to discover the singer, if possible, and the sexton, as if divining his intentions, obligingly opened the door of the pew she occupied, and signed to Captain Stondon to enter. He stood beside Phemie Keller.

Captain Stondon had never married. He was rich, had served in India, had travelled much; in fact, had been a wanderer upon the face of the earth from his youth. The shadow of a great sorrow had fallen upon him in his early manhood; its memory never left him, and for thirty years he had been a restless, solitary man. Tordale was to be the threshold of a new life, and Phemie Keller the star that was to win him from the gloom that had so long rested over him. Belated among the mountains, and missing the narrow track he was following, Stondon was precipitated into a deep ravine, and seriously hurt. He was discovered by Mr. Aggland, Phemie's uncle—a strange compound of oddity, honesty and good sense—and conveyed to the Hill farm, the residence of the Agglands. It is the old tale; the invalid awakes to consciousness, only to be conscious of the charms of his gentle nurse, and to drink in new life from the new hopes that are springing up in his heart. With recovered health, Captain Stondon is in no hurry to leave the farm, but lingers there for months, until at length Mr. Aggland's consent to his marriage with Phemie is asked.

Phemie was the light of her uncle's household, but her position there was by no means a

pleasant one; Mr. Aggland had been twice married, and, when too late, discovered that his second marriage was a mistake. Mrs. Aggland was a tartar, who envied Phemie her youth, her beauty, her glorious voice, and the charm of her winning disposition. Phemie was not unconscious that she was beautiful, and, thanks to an old servant of her mother's, had dreamed of rich suitors coming to woo her. Captain Stondon was certainly not the hero her imagination had pictured, but aware of his noble qualities, and—shall we say—of the advantages of the match she becomes Mrs. Stondon, resolving to be a dutiful wife, and believing that she could love her husband. With the marriage the development of the plot commences, but we do not think it fair to the reader to pursue it further—our object is simply to direct attention to the work. We may add, however, that in the progress of the story a bitter struggle awaits poor Phemie—that the terrible truth dawns upon her, that her noble and devoted husband does not hold the first place in her heart. Nobly she fights against her guilty love, and is saved, but as by fire.

Although this novel may not possess the absorbing interest of the sensational class, many of the situations are cleverly conceived and worked out. The sketch of the Aggland household, in the earlier chapters, is graphic and lifelike, and the characters of Phemie, Aggland, and Captain Stondon especially, are skillfully drawn. If Phemie Keller does not add new brilliancy to Mr. Trafford's fame as a novel writer, it certainly will not cast a shade over it.

HARPER'S PICTORIAL HISTORY OF THE GREAT REBELLION. Part 1st. New York: Harper & Bros.; Montreal: Dawson Bros.

This work abounds in illustrations, good, bad, and indifferent, and is really, what it purports to be, "A Pictorial History" of the great contest between the North and South. Upon almost every page we meet with maps or plans illustrating military movements, representations of scenes and incidents of the war, or portraits of those who bore an important part in the events described. So far as we can see, from a somewhat hasty glance, Messrs. Guernsey and Alden have performed their portion of the task, so far, with fairness and candour. The history was commenced by them during the agony of the great struggle, and is professedly based throughout upon authentic documents emanating from both Northern and Southern sources. The present volume brings the record of the contest down to the withdrawal of McClellan's army from the Peninsula after the seven days' battle before Richmond, and the authors announce that they hope, within a few months, and in the compass of another volume, to complete the task they have undertaken.

We intend publishing in our next issue the music and words of a new song, by Claribel, entitled "The Old Pink Thorn." Claribel is one of the most popular song-writers of the day, and some of her compositions have gone through twelve to fourteen editions in England. Our musical readers will remember that they are indebted to her for "Maggie's Secret" "I cannot sing the old songs" &c. &c. We believe "The Old Pink Thorn" has not yet found its way into the Montreal music stores.

Prof. Agassiz has recently received a large and important collection of the fishes inhabiting the Paraguay region, made by the Emperor of Brazil when he was carrying on war against that country. In an autograph note to the professor, accompanying the present, the Emperor says: "I have given instructions that the fishes I collected shall be sent to you—for it was with this thought that I collected them. It is a slight homage that I pay to science, and I shall be most happy, if by placing the fishes in your hands, you will make better known the rich nature of my country."

We have received from Messrs. Dawson & Bros., FELIX HOLT THE RADICAL, by George Eliot, author of "Adam Bede," "The Mill on the Floss," &c., &c.