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MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

AT your request, Mr. Editor, I attended the First Presbyterian Church, last Wednesday evening, to hear the choir of the church in their rendition of Sterndale Bennett's cantata, "The May Queen." Having been privileged to hear this work performed both in the country and in Old England by chorist societies of good standing, I was curious to know how an ordinary church choir in the far west would render a work of this class. Possessing myself of a copy of the cantata and securing a good seat by going early, I followed the rendition of the various numbers with the closest attention, and, on the whole, a more faithful sticking to the composer I have seldom listened to. The rate of tempos might have been more strictly adhered to in the choruses, but, no doubt, the conductor knew the capabilities of his choristers and did not try them too much, and, in this, he was a wise leader, as the general result justified. Less attention was paid to expression and phrasing, but the attack was vigorous and with the baton and, as a rule, throughout the evening the chorus was quick to respond. The best of the choruses were "Wake With a Smile," "With a Laugh as We Go Round," "Oh Melancholy Plight" and "Ill-fated Boy, Begone." The others were wanting in everything that goes to make chorus singing enjoyable; in fact, an evident want of confidence in themselves, betraying lack of knowledge, was all too plainly apparent in the choruses "Hark, Hark" and "The Cloud Has Passed Away," except, perhaps, in the last portion of the latter, when they were gathered together by the exertions of the conductor, and redeemed themselves by singing a very fine finale. With regard to the soloists, I must say I was agreeably surprised to find such voices as are possessed by Mrs. McCandless, Miss Wilson, Mr. Firth and Mr. Brown. Mr. Firth, in his opening recitative, sang most effectively, his phrasing being all that could be desired. In the aria, "Oh Meadow, Glad in Early Green," a most trying solo, he also sang very well, although at times his voice appeared a trifle strained, yet bringing out many of the beauties of the lovely ballad like an artist. Mrs. McCandless' solo, "With the Carol in the Tree," at once showed the trained vocalist. Her enunciation and expression were beyond criticism, and her rich soprano suited the part admirably. Both Mrs. McCandless and Mr. Firth, in the recitatives that followed and throughout the work, were markedly deficient in declamation. It is not enough to phrase properly and have good enunciation. In recitative work, emphasis or declamation must also be used to a