

SOME NEW SACRED SONGS.

"THE First Steps of Jesus," by Edmond Diet (Metzler), with English and French words, is a legend of singular beauty, recounting how, that to rescue a wounded dove our Saviour took his first infant footsteps on earth in the cause of the weak and suffering. The music is sympathetic with the theme, and quaintly descriptive; it suits a mezzo-soprano voice.

Another similar song, very simple and with a touching little story is "The Christ Child," by Francis Thomé (J. Williams): it breathes the same spirit of old French music which possesses a peculiar charm all its own, suggestive of the carillons from antique belfries abroad in days long passed away. The compass is small and any medium voice could sing it.

Again, Benjamin Godard's duet for soprano and mezzo, "The Babe of Bethlehem" (Metzler), is another example, of much beauty and simplicity. "The Wondrous Cross," by Myles B. Foster (Weekes), is really a setting of Dr. Watts's fine hymn "When I survey the wondrous cross" for mezzo-soprano, and the harmonious music (which is thoroughly good but not difficult) is full of reverent feeling, and expressive of that sad "sweet story of old;" the ending is particularly appropriate and telling.

"Pray for Me," words by F. E. Weatherley, music by Gounod, is one of the few sacred songs which unite extreme simplicity with true excellence. It is admirably adapted for home

singing. This applies to another of Gounod's, "Rest in Peace," which though solemn is a calm soothing air for a somewhat heavier voice, compass e to f sharp; and it is easy and short to learn by heart; the words are by Clement Scott. Both these songs are brought out by Metzler.

A theme that will find an echo in all hearts is "The trust of little children," by D'Auvergne Barnard (Osborne). The song is published in four keys with a 'cello obbligato, and an organ accompaniment. The music presents no difficulties and is very prettily conceived, while the words are of import and exceptional sweetness to old and young alike.

"Make Thou our hearts like those of little children
Teach us to put our faith and trust in Thee."

"The Vision Divine," by Joseph H. Adams (Ricordi), is in a more ambitious style; it is narrative and certainly interesting with an effective refrain and a full and not difficult accompaniment; care must however be taken at the beginning of the first and last verses, to play it in a reverent manner or it would be too light for the words. It is published in three keys.

So too is the "City of Rest," by Francis Lloyd (Keith Prowse), and it is excellent for low or high voices; the words and music are

very good and inspiring, and linger in the memory with very happy effect.

Frederick Cowen has written a song in his usual capable way, called "The Watchers" (R. Cocks): it reminds one of "The Better Land," in its very pretty questions and answers of mother and child. "The Heavenly Dream" is one of the popular quasi-sacred songs of Bryceson Treharne's published by Messrs. Morley, which will be found most useful and pleasing for girls to sing in many home circles.

The same may be said of "Father Eternal," by Hartwell Jones (Phillips and Page); it is impressive and interesting, and it requires little study for voice or fingers; a choice of three keys is given.

For a high mezzo-soprano we have "Cradled so Lowly," a sweet, melodious little song, composed and written too by Frank Moir (Metzler). It is perfectly easy, and the refrain with direct simplicity sums up the vast extent of our Christian benefits:

"He who is able to save you,
He who eternal life gave you,
Suffered, suffered
And took all your sorrows away."

We hope many of these songs may help those of our girl-readers who sing to employ some Sunday or weekday hours happily for the gratification of those around them.

MARY AUGUSTA SALMOND.



HOSPITAL SKETCHES.

By O. H.

BEHIND the scenes in hospital life gives unbounded scope for the study of human nature. One quickly learns (with the philosopher who romanced of the World Unclothed) that the omnipotent tailor, who creates class distinctions, does not confer the hall-mark of greatness with his broadcloth or Court uniforms. For beneath every work-grimed fustian coat beats a human heart, and those who know the "hardy-handed sons of toil" in their hours of weakness can testify how often they are "kings of men."

The pathos of a hospital-ward is rivalled by its humour, but the pathos comes first. Some one is playing "Home, sweet home" on the old harmonium. One of human nature's most vulnerable points is the soft spot of home, the tender name of wife or mother; and there is a peculiar hush as the dear, familiar strains fill the long ward. Is it that "music hath charms" which stills the chattering tongues of those rough diamonds? But no, they are all asleep, the occupants of the long rows of beds, with their heads half smothered in the pillow, or hidden beneath the sheet. Yet

presently nurse becomes painfully aware that they are only feigning sleep. Oh, what is one soft-hearted woman to do, surrounded by great men who are crying? What, even that swearing fellow in No. 10 bed? Yes, even he. But the player, with tact, bursts into martial airs and sailor-songs and triumphal marches quite foreign to the wheezy old harmonium. Some of the men wake up and begin to get interested, and even hum the tunes after a furtive glance round to ascertain that no one knows what fools they have been. But under one counterpane a form is shaking as if with sobs, and nurse steals up to offer her—perhaps futile sympathy.

"Daddy—what is it, daddy?"

Then she draws the screen round (that troublesome leg is always wanting attention), and hidden from view of the others, hears all about it from the rough seaman whose heart is breaking for wife and children far away, and for the honest little home going to ruin with the bread-winner in hospital. "And what shall I be but a poor cripple for the rest of my days?" No doubt he will be as surly and crabby as ever the next time nurse dresses his wound, but she will have more heart to bear

with him now, and at least he has said, "God bless you, dear," with his tears on her hand, and seemed comforted.

Many a touching little scene at different bedsides shows that the domestic life of the poor is not all wife-beating. Here is an old Darby with trembling fingers smoothing his Joan's hair.

"Don' ye work so hard, my darling; you must leff' off some of that there heavy work."

"I've a'most done for to-night," she answers cheerily, then whispers aside, "I've got heavy mangling, nurse ma'am, and shan' be done till twelve o'clock, but don' ye tell 'n. Things be looking up, an' only waitin' for ye to come whum again," she adds to old William.

There is an artisan who has found true love run smooth through many years of married life.

"If I haven't slept for pain, I'll be bound her haven't for thinkin' of me." And he's never content unless, under some pretext, his wife comes to see him every day for "a bit of courting." Sometimes only a glimpse through the windows, accompanied with the remark, "Did you ever hear tell of Romeo and Juliet, nurse?" A very erudite fustian, this!

In the corner is a Welshman who dreams every night of his "angel bride," and lives on her daily letters, written in Welsh, with a grateful postscript in childish English to the nurse. The love between these simple couples lasts on till they can sing together, "John Anderson, my jo, John," or compete for the fitch of bacon. Listen to this old pensioner.

"Have you had a happy afternoon, daddy?"
"Ay, a nice long court to-day, nurse," and his face flushes beneath his silver hair as his "missus" comes into the ward on visiting-days. And she, dear old lady, is far from being jealous when he says to his nurse, "Oh, my dear, you'm enough to charm the heart of a snail!"

Just now the comic characters of the ward are two men who are convalescing from severe operations, and they pace the ward together, nicknamed "The Comedians," for Nature was in a humorous vein when she moulded the quaint figure of the old bachelor, and the crinkled face of the young one. The young comedian is a coachman by trade, and it is his boast that he is going "to drive nurse to her wedding, white ribbons and a'," though in sadder moments, looking at his arms in splints, he puckers his absurdly childish face and meditates, "I'll be a poor hand at the ribbons after all!" The other comedian is an old fox-hunting butcher, with a face like a nursery rhyme. He has fallen from the opulence of butcherdom and the proud possession of a hunting hack to abject poverty, but nothing can quench his inborn drollery. He assumes a courtliness, too, that is very funny.

"Pretty well this morning, nurse?" he asks deferentially. "Well and pretty, nurse, well and pretty." Indeed, he is something of a gallant altogether, and romances of the old times when he was "trigged up in Sunday best with a flower in his buttonhole. And many's the mile I've been courting, in the happy old days, down country lanes." He makes a great affair of his daily toilette, carefully brushing the patched, blue tail-coat and threadbare velvet collar, as if he were getting himself up in pink for the chase. He shuffles about the ward in the old slippers, which have a little spring left in them, as if they still were dancing-pumps, and it is his great ambition "to dance a hornpipe with nurse." Unfortunately, that is not commensurate with nurse's idea of professional dignity, though sometimes, in mad moments, she can imagine herself skimming the polished

floor between the beds, keeping step with this agile, old-world comedian.

Oh, God bless you, dear, honest, great-hearted simple fustians!

II.

It is night without. In the children's ward the firelight flickers on the folded cots. A little group is gathered round the fire by a baby wailing faintly. The dying infant lies on the nurse's knee, its little head moving from side to side in pain. Beside it kneels the fair little Sister, trying to coax the pet of the ward with spoonfuls of brandy and milk, and the young doctor leaning against the nursery-guard with grave face and professional air, is concentrating all attention on the wee, wailing baby.

It is one of the poor little "not wanted" lives; but if medical skill and nursing care can save it, it shall be saved.

Then the mother is sent for from the work-house, not far away. She looks a wild Irish girl as she, too, comes into the glow of the firelight. She is picturesque, in spite of her roughness, in a big blue apron, and shawl pinned across her breast, ruffled black hair, and head unbonneted. Her words are careless enough.

"S'pose I should feel it, first going off," she says, alluding to her baby's death; yet, with a mother's heart within her, she passionately kissed the little one, then sits rocking herself to and fro, her head buried in her apron.

Ah, bright-eyed Jessie! Poor, unkempt, erring Jessie! In you culminates the sigh of pitiful, perplexed humanity!

The house-surgeon turned back as he left the ward to say to the Sister—

"Send for the chaplain if the baby is not christened. It will not live till morning."

III.

CHRISTMAS in the wards, undeniably Christmas, kept up as Christmas used to be.

First, Christmas Eve, the good, old-fashioned Christmas smell of holly; and a very old-fashioned litter of decorations in new-fashioned, germless, aseptic wards. Every patient hangs a stocking to the bed-head, even such old souls as are dubbed "Grannie" and "Daddie," with all the expectant glee of children. Later, "in the stilly watches of the night," a nurse, or, it may be, an impersonated Santa Claus, steals round with presents labelled for each patient

according to their age and tastes, but spied by a wakeful patient here and there. For instance, Grannie, whispering delightedly—

"I see'd ye, my dear; ye can't catch Grannie napping. Oh, my! What a Christmassing to be sure! Never haven't hed such encouragements and indulgences ever since I was a—barn." And she looks round benignantly on the lofty ward, "like a fairy palace, zure," hung with flags and ivies, the firelight reddening the holly-berries, and casting mischievous lights on the mistletoe bough.

Except in children's nurseries, Christmas is nowhere so ideal as in the wards. "Good-will" certainly abounds; the sick forget their sickness in the general gaiety, and the querulous their plaints. It is the nurses' delight to add in every way to the festivities, and their spirits are exuberant, hospital discipline being relaxed. At the Christmas Day dinner the steaming turkeys and the flaming puddings are followed by dessert and crackers and songs. No wonder such unwonted feasting draws from the Welsh lad "Taffy" the remark—

"It's my seventeenth Christmas, nurse, and the nicest I've ever had yet."

And an Irish sailor chimes in—

"I'm coming back next year with the wife and all the family, and if ye put me out at the door, I'll come in to the window."

"Christmassing" does not end with the feast of the nativity; concerts last through the week, and the spirit of festivity dies hard. Boxing night is devoted to carol-singing (the whole day having been a sort of expanded grin after Christmas fare). There is an unusually fragrant aroma in the male wards, where the patients are propped up in bed smoking long pipes; this unwonted privilege is more prized than all the rest of the season's good things. Presently the wide doors open, and a whole orchestra of nurses, in their spotless uniforms, troops in. Lights are lowered and windows opened, and the sound of carols fills the ward, the echoes floating to the street outside (where many passers-by, to whom Christmas has brought no joy, pause to listen to the sweet singing, and feel it would be no hardship to be within those great walls, cared for and "tended" in a little hospital bed). The men hum in unison with the nurses' singing, or click their pipes to the quaint tunes.

But they knock out the ashes and listen reverently to a hymn which recalls the Christmases of childhood—

"O come all ye faithful."
(To be concluded.)

WHAT TO COOK, AND HOW TO COOK IT.

PRESERVING AND CONSERVING. AROMATIC HERBS AND SPICES.

By L. H. YATES.

"But happy they, thrice happy, who possess The art to mix these sweets with due address."—*W. Hone.*



In England "to preserve" means, five times out of six, to boil our fruit to a jam or jelly. Even in large factories only a small proportion of the stock of fruit used is set aside for bottling or canning. In America the opposite is the rule; to can and bottle is quite a matter-of-course with the American housewife—jellies and jams with her are a luxury. To sterilise or can fruit, they say, retains its flavour far more perfectly than any other mode, and

this process is both less troublesome and more economical than the "old-fashioned" method of preserving fruit pound for pound with sugar.

This may be true, but it is also true that in England we cling to our old fashions, however much others may decry them, and we are loth to give up our beloved sweet, even if it is troublesome and costly. We might, however, with advantage keep our jellies and jams for table use only, making them extra good on this account, and use more "canned" fruit for cooking purposes. (By canned fruit we mean also bottled fruit).

Fruits may be canned (or bottled) with or without sugar, but as the sugar, unless it is previously boiled to a syrup, has no preserving quality, and as the fruit itself retains its fresh-

ness and flavour better without sweetening, it is best to leave it out.

To have a supply of bottled fruit in store enables us to indulge in tarts and compotes in winter that are but little inferior to those we enjoy in summer; but we find the indulgence to be a luxury if we have to buy the bottled fruit, as partly on account of the initial expense of the bottle and canning apparatus, and partly because this kind of stock is of a bulky and perishable nature, grocers and others charge more for them in proportion than for jams.

For home purposes, however, once the bottles with their screw tops have been purchased, there is no great expense afterwards. Large-mouthed glass jars should alone be used. If rubber rings are fitted to these as well as screw tops, see that the former are in

was the friend of her childhood, David Russell, bronzed, it was true, and looking years older, but there was no mistaking the kind eyes and the firm, clear-cut mouth. He instantly became absorbed in the tableau before him, the crowning beauty of the evening—Marie Antoinette on her way to execution. He caught his breath and broke into an involuntary exclamation of recognition. Years had failed to efface the memory of Monica Laing, and the girl who sat by his side saw that he knew Monica again in a moment through all her disguise of powdered hair and fancy dress. Would he know her too, she wondered; but her thoughts took a new channel, for the Professor was signalling to her to come up to the stage. The tableaux were ended and it was time for her recitation.

She took up her position in the middle of the stage, a tall slim girl in a white frock, and introduced her recitation with a brief explanation of the scene she was about to recite. In a moment the Professor saw that she would command the attention of her audience. The scene

was so present to the girl's mind, that she could not fail to bring it before her hearers, and presently there was a ripple of laughter from one end of the room to the other. Pyramus was there, and Thisbe, the wall Deborah represented by making a chink in her fingers. The whole thing was life-like, down to the lion who roared so sweetly. All—the least intellectual of the party—recognised that the reciter was clever, and some murmured that in so young a girl it was genius, and there was a perfect roar of applause as the girl ended and quietly stepped off the platform. She had forgotten David's presence for the time being, but again wondered vaguely at the end of her recitation if he would recognise her as the little girl to whom he had given the doll. Yes, clearly he did remember her, for he was pushing his way eagerly towards the front of the room. Her lips parted in a half smile as he came near her, and then a great lump of disappointment rose in her throat, for he brushed straight by her, making his way to Miss Laing, who stood just behind.

"I wonder if I may introduce myself to you? Have you forgotten me? Don't you remember we met five, six years ago, was it, at Boscombe Hall?"

His voice was trembling with impatience, and Monica accorded him a smile, and held out her hand.

"I did not recognise you at first. It's Mr. Russell, isn't it?" and then, with a slight gesture, she signed to him to seat himself at her side, and Deborah withdrew into a window seat, feeling how great was the gift of beauty, and what power it gave you in the world.

Presently Monica caught a glimpse of the little woe-begone face, and good-naturedly motioned to her to join them. Deborah reluctantly obeyed the summons.

"Here is another friend of earlier days," said Monica to David. "A very faithful friend she is of yours. Have you forgotten Deborah Menzies?"

"Oh, don't you remember the doll?" questioned Deborah, with a bursting heart.

(To be continued.)

HOSPITAL SKETCHES.

By O. H.

IV.

A "SNAP-SHOT" would show a little spring-cart, jolting along a country lane in the evening light, with three people squashed in the narrow seat only "made for two." An old farmer is driving, with his hat on one side, and his face a beam of proud satisfaction. For have not Sister Elisabeth and Nurse Frances been to tea with him and his missus? And didn't they praise his rich clotted cream! And are they not sitting by him now, making merry over the drive, and admiring his Dartmoor pony?

"Aye," he says, "paid up twenty pounds for the hoss—if you'm wanting to buy, and t'other folk b'ain't willing to sell, you've got to pay fancy price. 'Tis like a young chap courting a young wumman; nothing ain't too much to give for her."

A red harvest moon burnishes the river, and shines on the odd trio in the cart. Elegant Sister Elisabeth is not accustomed to carts, sprung or springless, and her long veil floats in mild protest. The little nurse, squeezed in the middle, is struck with the humour of the situation, but it wouldn't do to laugh, as the host continues his stories in broad Devonshire, or discourses of the late "powering rains," or of his sons "gone furrin'."

"Your son had fever abroad, daddy?"

"Aye, he had all of it." (Is that every disease that flesh is heir to?) "Reckon you've a-bin furrin', too, nurse? And what countries have ye bin to, might mek so bold?" And so the conversation jerks along with the jolting cart till the station is reached, and the nurses travel back to the great hospital town, and the old patient turns his horse's head towards his remote farm once more, waving a farewell to his guests.

"Thank ye, zure, for the honour to my missus, an' so long to ye, my dears. 'Tis like the soldiers, 'love ye and leave ye.'"

The little nurse had learnt the vernacular, and knew it expressed true sentiments more genially than "town-talk," so she called her good-bye through the carriage window as the train started—

"So long to you, daddy, so long!"

V.

A WILD night of storm: the hurricane blowing up from the sea, and the savage winds shaking the hospital wings as a wild animal shakes his helpless prey before he kills it. As the rain lashes the windows with fury, and the sound of the fog-horn comes up through the darkness, those who watch through the night, and those wakened by the storm, can but pray "for those in peril on the sea."

In the early morning nurse is bustling about making the beds, and the women talking to each other.

"What, grannie, a-crying!" says one.

"A-thinkin' o' they I've lost to sea," sobs the old lady.

"An' my boy a sailor, too. Pray God he ain't aboard to-night," a mother says.

"An' even our nurse—bless her!—ain't laughin' and singin' this mornin'."

"Maybe her've a lover over seas."

But nurse is busy consoling a poor young wife whose husband sailed yesterday for a three years' voyage. It would have made the hardest heart ache to see that parting by the hospital bed.

Another little tragedy unbosomed to her in the night would have enriched the pages of a theosophic society. An inexplicable, yet simple, true story—and how shall we say the supernatural does not exist?

A little old maid had been reminded (but she never forgot) by the storm, of that cruel night when her lover was drowned "years agone." "I'd always feel down-hearted a-Sunday—for 'twas on a Sunday, nurse, as my Herder went down, and just such a night as this. An' I was writing a bit of a letter to'n, for all that I was so frightened of thinking of 'n in the storm. An' then I heard a great crash—just ten minutes to eleven, it wor—an' I looked up, an' a glass candlestick on the mantelshelf was shivered in two, like as if 't'ad had a shock. An' then I see'd my Herder standing beside me, in his macintosh an' sea boots, an' all the water streamin' off of 'n. An' landlady, her called up over-stair—

"'F I didn't know Miss Smith's sweet-heart was to sea, I should declare I see'd 'n in th' passage now a minute sin'."

An' two days after the news come. They tried to keep' it from me, but I knowed.

"An' ten minutes to eleven that night it wor that the ship foundered, an' he went down."

VI.

A PICTURE which an artist might well have painted—an artist who loves beautiful dead Elaines. Or a study of the poet's threnody "In quiet she reposes."

"Strew on her roses, roses,
But never a spray of yew."

This is a case of "kind death, beautiful death," when he comes as an angel, stilling pain; as a sculptor, chiselling features in marble perfection; as a young god, kissing maidenhood. And she lies there in her "young moon of beauty," the pathetic eyes closed, the black hair lying loose around the whiteness of her face. She had been playfully called "the Lady of Shalott" in life, and now she looks more than ever like the doomed and lovely lady lying in her boat, and floating down to Camelot, with mournful face turned to the stars, and her dead hands clasped.

But to those who have loved and nursed her, she is more than a picture or a poem, and they kiss the fair form fondly, and strew the little hospital bed with flowers.

And death again in more awful guise—death an avenger, death an inevitable doom. One may be familiar with the coming of death, but he never loses his terrors, and his shuddering, awful awe and mystery. A nurse, with professional calm and outward unemotion, is quietly doing all that is necessary for the already discoloured body; but inwardly her soul is shivering with awe, and her nature quailing at the horror of it. Whether unavailing or not, her prayers rise for the poor creature who had never learnt to pray for himself. And she knows that of all the insoluble mysteries in this so mysterious life, the most unfathomable and fearful is death.

What would be our condition if we did not know that?

"For as in Adam all die
E'en so in Christ shall all be made alive!"