

SOME NEW GUITAR MUSIC.

Now that the guitar has again become a favourite and fashionable instrument, many girls are searching out and bringing to light guitars which their mothers, aye, and even their grandmothers, played on in days gone by, and they endeavour once more to awake the long silent strings (if any survive) with more or less musical and unmusical results. Presuming that our readers have learnt the rudiments from their master or mistress, or even if they have found them out themselves from such clear tutors as De Marescot's (Metzler), or Madame Sidney Pratten's (Boosey), they will find themselves soon able to undertake the accompaniments in a collection of twelve songs arranged for the guitar with much taste and discrimination in albuma form (1s. 6d.), by Lily Montagu (J. Williams). These include Schubert's "Who is Sylvia," Godard's "Song of Florian;" songs by

Cowen, Cellier and A. Horrocks, who sets Charles Kingsley's wistful lines:—

"I once had a sweet little doll, dears."

The poor damsel was lost in the heath one day, and, after bitter lamentation, she was found a terrible wreck long after by her faithful mistress, to whom

" . . . for old sake's sake, she is still, dears,
The prettiest doll in the world."

Most of us have gone through the triste era of our girl-life, when we were obliged to confess to ourselves that we had "grown too big for dolls."

Vol. I. of Alfred Scott Gatty's well-known plantation songs (Boosey) are now published for guitar, and they "go" capitally.

There are some duets for two guitars by Madame Pratten, and their effect is quite charming; we think too that Messrs. Schott still have the old but delightful Opus 87, by Joseph Küffner, namely, twelve (short) duos for two guitars for the use of beginners.

To those who wish to add the many Spanish graces there are to their guitar playing, we thoroughly recommend a really clever little 3s. book, particularly dealing with this difficult subject for description. It is entitled "Brilliant Effects on the Guitar," by Edith Feilden (J. Blockley). Most teaching photographs show the hands in different positions on the guitar, and its dainty exterior is so gaily and well coloured by a representation of the Spanish flag, that it is attractive for a gift book. It is to be obtained of Miss Feilden, Feniscowles House, Scarborough.

MARY AUGUSTA SALMOND.

A VICE-REGAL DINNER-PARTY.

By A MAJOR'S DAUGHTER.

It was not because I am a major's daughter that an invitation came to me one bright autumn morning, but because I was the curate's wife. We were seated at breakfast when the "command" to meet their Excellencies was handed up. Just like the proverbial curate's family we were laying in a foundation of stirabout, only *our* porridge was swimming in thick yellow cream, and was daintily served. On the table, besides, was the purest heather honey, a few golden peaches, and hot rolls of crispy bread.

"Thank goodness! a clergyman is always in full dress!" quoth the dear curate, as he pulled down his silk M.B. waistcoat. "But you, my dear Eileen, had better meditate on chiffons."

And meditate I did, until I was fairly puzzled. There was the white silk, and the pink one, the yellow brocade, with its beautiful train, and the simple muslin. I was very young at the time, and dearly loved finery.

The real vital question of suitability turned on what the invitation meant. Were Lord and Lady L— coming as royalty, or simply as themselves? The duchess alone could interpret her card, and so to the duchess I went.

"Did you not notice that R.S.V.P. was omitted? Put on feathers and veils, and your best bib and tuckers," said the dear old hostess. "'Tis as King and Queen their Excellencies come."

So, of course, the yellow brocade it had to be, with its low neck, and short topaz-trimmed sleeves.

Now, though the curate's wife was fairly well-to-do in the world, the curate would keep no carriage. It was quite out of the question to drive in a pony-trap to the Castle, so the duchess "loaned" one of her own state chariots! She did more, a few hours before dinner-time a square box was handed in at the Clergy House, containing a mass of copper-coloured William Allen Richardsons, arranged in the newest mode by the duchess's head-gardener.

Most of the house-party were assembled in the huge drawing-room when Mr. Giles, accompanied by his attendant satellites, threw open the door and announced—

"The Reverend and Mrs. Smith."

It was blazing, too, with electric light, and sweet with perfume as I walked forward, to be encouragingly greeted by my dear old friend and patron.

"Their Excellencies are not down yet," she said kindly; "but you are just in time—"

With this, the door was suddenly flung

open again, and everyone stood up, whilst something like a cannon-ball plunged into the room! It was the Lord-Lieutenant! I found out, during the course of the evening, that this was his way of hurrying in, in order that the company might re-take their seats as soon as possible. A few more seconds, then a vision of loveliness in white satin and crystal, and a whole stomacher of magnificent pearls, walked in. It was sweet Lady L—. There were no introductions, and every usual order of procession into the dining-room was reversed. For the duchess went in first, leaning on the Lord-Lieutenant's arm, immediately followed by the Duke, leading her Excellency. The rest of the company—thirteen couples—followed in stately order, the curate's wife being last with some insignificant honourable.

But she had her revenge! Her husband was the first to speak, as he was called upon by a rap to say grace, and she found herself on Lord L—'s right hand. In order to show why she was there, I must explain that the royal chairs were placed in the centre of the long table, not at each end, and that their Excellencies and our hosts occupied the middle of the room. In a few minutes I had time to notice that their own footmen stood behind the regal party, but that the rest of us were served by the duke's servants.

What a sight was that whole party! Every earl wore his star, and every countess her coronet. Jewels galore glittered everywhere. All the same, the most striking-looking man there was the curate, in his plain black dress, with his beautiful face just as usual—calm and radiant and *spirituelle*.

I do not think that dinner was quite a success, though a *chef* had been engaged to cook it and two others at a fee of £100. The game was burned, and the ice-puddings were in lumps. There were long pauses between the *relèves*, and an ominous wait before all the twelve courses were handed round. I was so much taken up with the scene that I frequently laid down my knife and fork, even before I had tasted the morsels set before me, and found everything whisked away in a second.

Nearly two hours that dinner occupied. Then, from behind a palm, our hostess nodded to the other end of the table, and his Excellency stood up. For this moment I had waited in fear and trembling. I knew we had to make the tour of that long table, then back out of the room, for royalty must never see behind the scenes.

I had practised a sweeping curtsey before

the pier-glass at home. I had gracefully backed from before it over and over again, but when my turn came I grew the colour of my copper roses, and nearly tumbled over my train.

Nobody seemed to notice, however, not even James Giles, the major-domo, so I was fairly cool by the time the duchess took me by the arm to introduce me to her Excellency.

"It is as good as a presentation at Court, my dear," she whispered, "and will give you the *entrée*."

I had often rehearsed this scene, and in imagination had seen Lady L— standing up stately, and receiving the curate's wife very frigidly. Behold the contrary.

Seated on a stool before the blazing fire, with all her lovely dress crumpled up under her, Lady L— was "roasting her bones," as she said. She jumped up like a girl when the duchess led me towards her; and I really think she admired the yellow brocade.

"I hope I shall soon see you at Court," she said pleasantly, as I kissed her hand. "And your husband too. The brave stand made by the Church of— in all her difficulties makes us value every one of her clergy and their wives, even if they are bits of girls like yourself."

Then she laughed, and I laughed, and we found out we had each a beautiful home-ruler at home about the same age, who ruled us with a rod of iron. So we had a pleasant chat until I forgot I was the curate's wife and she her Excellency.

Suddenly the cannon-ball shot in again, in a great hurry, and we rose to our feet. A few presentations had been made to him in the dining-room, and soon everyone was chatting like ordinary folk over coffee cups and cream. About eleven o'clock cards were got out, and the curate and "his reverence's honoured lady" left. I nearly backed into Mr. Giles as I did so, and he very nearly laughed, but not quite. I never saw Giles laugh.

As we were driving home under the big elms and pines, we kept silence awhile. The first remark came, of course, from me.

"I'm very hungry," in a plaintive voice.

"And I'm starving," was the response, as the curate slipped his arm round his little wife's yellow brocade waist.

"American crackers and apples?" I suggested.

"And a big fire," said his reverence, drawing my furs closer round me. "You are frozen."

So, over a blazing fire in our bedroom, we ate crackers and apples to fill the vacuum left by curiosity even after a vice-regal dinner-party.