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They get tired of any novelist who never gives them a gentleman or a lady.

It comes to this, then, in the novel and on the stage: we want good company and we want mirth. We want fun and we want it pure. The theater thinks that the Church is hard upon it. There was a time when the novel-writer thought the Church was hard upon him; but the Church now not only reads novels but uses them in the propagation of religious ideas and religious living. The theater, for many years, has had itself to blame for the attitude of the Church toward it. People are visiting the good ship *Pinafore* now who never entered a theater before, and this simply because it ministers to their need of amusement without offending their sensibilities by coarseness, or their eyes by exhibitions that are only at home in a vulgar dance-house.

Church Music.

THERE are great varieties and contrarieties of opinion on church music, as well among pastors as congregations. It begins with the hymns. There are those who believe that theology should be taught by hymns, that appeals to heart and conscience should be made in hymns, that all phases of religious experience and feeling may legitimately be addressed through hymns. There are others who reject this theory, and would confine hymns to the expression of penitence or praise to God. They feel that a hymn, publicly sung, should be an address of the human heart to the great father heart, and not an address of man to man, and that chiefly this expression should be confined to praise and thanksgiving. When Mr. Sankey was here, he was inquired of concerning this point, and his answer, very definitely given, was that he regarded singing as possessing two different offices in the public services of the church—one of address to God, and another to man. Mr. Sankey would not stand very high as an authority on such a matter, but his idea is practically adopted in every hymn-book with which we are acquainted.

Now, to us, there is something almost ridiculous in the hymns which undertake the offices of teaching, preaching and exhortation. Think of a congregation wailing out to the old tune "China" the words:

"Why do ye mourn departing friends
Or shake at death's alarms?"

Or to some other tune:

"Think gently of the erring one,
And let us not forget
However darkly stained by sin,
He is our brother yet."

Or this, to old "Amsterdam":

"Time is winging us away
To our eternal home;
Life is but a winter's day—
A journey to the tomb."

Or this:

"Behold the day is come,
The righteous Judge is near;
And sinners trembling at their doom,
Shall soon their sentence hear."

Or this exhortation:

"Why will ye waste on trifling cares
That life which God's compassion spares?"

Or this statement and inquiry:

"What various hindrances we meet
In coming to a mercy seat!
Yet who that knows the worth of prayer
But wishes to be often there?"

We take all the above extracts from the very best hymn-book with which we are acquainted, and we submit that to stand up and sing them is an absurd performance, especially when it takes place in public. Some of them are utterly unsingable when regarded with relation to any natural impulse, or any gracious impulse, for that matter. We laugh at the absurdities of the opera,—at a man who straddles around the stage, yelling his love or his defiance to a tune, and our laugh is perfectly justifiable. But for the reverence with which we regard everything that has been even remotely associated with the house and worship of God, we should say that the singing of such songs as these would be equally laughable. Still, Mr. Sankey and those who agree with him will keep on singing these songs, we suppose. It gives us great pleasure, however, to notice that they are growing fewer and fewer from year to year and from generation to generation, in new collections, and that the hymns that are sung are addressed more and more to God, while to the voice in the pulpit are left the various offices to which song has hitherto been, as we think, illegitimately subjected.

Leaving the hymns, we come to the question of music. What office has music in the public services of the church? Let us say right here that we have not objected to the hymns belonging to the class from which we have quoted, because we do not think that man's sensibilities should not be appealed to through music. We have objected to them mainly because they are unnaturally wedded to music. We do not naturally sing about the judgment day, or about death, or about our erring brother, or about the rapid passage of time. The wedding of things like these to music is an absurdity. So we recur to the question—"What office has music in the public services of the church?" It has two. The first and foremost is to give a natural expression of the feelings of the soul toward the object of its worship. The second is to elevate the spirit and bring it into the mood of worship and the contemplation of high and holy things. It has an office quite independent of any words with which it may be associated. Music itself is a language which many religious hearts understand, and by which they are led into and through a multitude of religious thoughts and emotional exercises. The voluntary upon the

organ, played by a reverent man, is perfectly legitimate sacred music, to be executed and listened to at leisure.

Nobody, we presume, will question what we say about this, yet in practice there is the widest difference among pastors and churches. One pastor or church demands the highest grade of music to be performed by a thoroughly drilled quartette or choir; another subordinates the choir, or discards it altogether, and will have nothing but congregational singing. The former make very much of the musical element, and do a great deal to act upon the sensibilities of the worshipers through it. The latter make little or nothing of the musical element, and think that nothing is genuine public praise but that which is engaged in by a whole congregation. Now, it is quite easy to overdo the music of a church. That has been done in this city, in many notable instances, but we very much prefer a mistake in that direction to one in the other. There are some ministers who forget that a choir may just as legitimately lead the praise of a congregation, as any one of them may lead its prayer, and that a choir has a sacred office and function in the church quite independent of themselves. If a preacher may be followed in his petition by his congregation, certainly a choir may be followed in its expression of thanksgiving.

For ourselves, we are very much afraid of the movement toward congregational music. The tendency thus far has been to depreciate not only the quality of music, in the churches, but the importance of it, and to make public worship very much less attractive to the great world which it is the church's duty and policy to attract and to influence. The churches are full, as a rule, where the music is excellent. This fact may not be very flattering to preachers, but it is a fact, and it is quite a legitimate question whether a church has a right to surrender any attraction that will give it a hold upon the attention of the world, especially if that attraction is an elevating one, and in the direct line of Christian influence. Congregational singing is well enough in its place and proportions, but very little of the inspiration of music comes through it. It is, indeed, more of a torture than a pleasure to many musical and devout people. The ideal arrangement, as it seems to us, is a first class quartette, made up of soloists, who take a prominent part in the public service, with a single choral in each service given to the congregation to sing. In this way, the two offices of music in public religious assemblies seem to be secured more surely and satisfactorily than in any other.

Art Criticism.

ART criticism, in this country, has reached about as low a level as it can find, without becoming execrable. It is so at war with itself, that it has ceased to have any authority, and so capricious and so apparently under the influence of unworthy motives, that it has become contemptible. We may instance the late exhibition of water colors in this city, and the kind and variety of criticism it called forth, as an illustration of what we mean. It has been absolutely impossible for the public to get any adequate idea of this exhibition through the revelations and discussions of the public press. What one man has praised without stint, another has condemned without mercy. All sorts of theories and comments and considerations have been offered, and if the public mind is not in a muddle over the whole matter, it is not the fault of the men who have written about it.

Now there are just two objects that furnish an apology for a man to publish his opinions on an art exhibition, viz., the information of the public, and the improvement of the artists. Of course, it is an impertinence for any man to assume the rôle of the art critic who does not understand what he is talking about, and who is not free enough from partisanships and hobbies to write with candor. The great end of criticism is popular and professional improvement, and in order that this double end may be secured, there must be popular and professional confidence in the sources of the criticism. We believe it to be notorious that, among the painters of New York, there is not a particle of confidence in the critics who write upon art. They do not, in any instance, expect to be fairly and ably treated. They have no faith in the competency of the newspaper writers on art to teach them. They have no faith in their candor. When they put up a picture for exhibition, they regard the whole matter of newspaper notice as a chance in a lottery. They are thankful if somebody praises it, and if nobody abuses it, because that will help to sell it, but beyond that they have no interest. They do not in the slightest degree acknowledge the competency of these writers to teach them, and they have the utmost contempt for their general theories and their special judgments. Under these circumstances, one of the principal offices of criticism is rendered useless.

The public has come to pretty much the same conclusion as the painters. They have learned that these writers have no guiding principles, that they agree in nothing, and that each man writes from the stand-point of his own private tastes, or his own private prejudices and partisanships. They find the pictures of a certain man condemned as utter and irredeemable failures, and they go to see the failures, finding them the best pictures in the exhibition. They find the pictures of another man praised as profoundly worthy, and they go to see them, and find them unconscionable daubs that would disgrace the walls of any parlor in New York, —really, for any pleasure-giving power that they possess, not worth the white paper they have spoiled. Moreover, what one critic praises another one condemns, and *vice versâ*. Indeed, there are some men among these writers whose judgments have been so capricious, and whimsical, and unfair, and so notoriously fallacious, that their praise of a picture arouses suspicions against it and really damages its market value.

Now criticism, to be valuable, must be based in principle. If there are any such things as sound principles of art, gentlemen, show them to us, and

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right to manufacture silver dollars, and refused to sell them to the public for anything less than the price of gold dollars. Having asserted its own right in the premises, it has never yet exercised it. It continues to pay its debts in gold or gold value. Whenever it shall exercise the right to pay its bonds, interest, pensions, and current obligations at anything less than gold value, the question of honesty will come up afresh. At the present time it is not important. The only other right which the Government assumed in the silver act was to take two million dollars per month from the tax-payers to pay for silver bullion to be stamped with the figure of a spread eagle, and laid back in the earth from whence it came. Although the question of honesty is not of immediate importance, the $24,000,000 per annum of public money spent upon silversmithing is of real consequence to those who foot the bills.

Is the silver dollar expedient? This again depends upon another question — viz., how many silver dollars are meant? One silver dollar would be expedient as a matter of curiosity. A few millions would be expedient for small payments, although the superiority of whole ones over halves for this purpose is not apparent. Fifty or sixty millions would be expedient if all notes smaller than five dollars were withdrawn, and the gold quarter eagle stricken from the coinage. Finally, it appears that under our very cramped and rigid national banking law and the operation of rapid debt paying and bond cancellation, room has been discovered for the circulation and use of ninety-nine millions of silver certificates — these being the only form of paper currency which could be obtained in haste in any desired quantity, of denominations as low as ten dollars. No virtue need be attributed to silver for all this, since it is gold, or gold value, which is invariably deposited at the Treasury in exchange for silver certificates. An equal number of new greenbacks would have circulated as readily, there being a real demand for them arising from the country's growth. An equal number of new national bank notes would have been provided, if bonds had been plentiful and the price not too high. It happened shortly after the silver certificates were authorized that a great development of agricultural and mining industry took place in the West and Southwest, and a heavy stream of immigration set in from foreign countries. This Western development called for a new supply of paper currency, and the silver certificates were the only available source. They were taken out for want of anything better. They are not legal tender except at the custom house and the tax office, but being received there they answer the purposes of currency. Copper or iron certificates under like conditions would answer as well.

Taking things as they are, however, and pursuing the inquiry *how many* silver dollars are expedient, we may admit that of the whole amount coined up to this time, viz. $158,000,000, all except $39,000,000 are in use somehow either as coin or as certificates: $39,000,000 remain in the Treasury, an altogether dead invest-
-nt, representing at 3 per cent. $1,170,000 of annual
-t lost to the tax-payers; and this stock is in-
-t the rate of $2,000,000 per month. It is
show that the services rendered by the
' the silver certificates might be much
-ously secured in other ways, but for the sake of argument we will assume that about 119,000,000 of such dollars are expedient. The only question open to intelligent discussion is, whether it is expedient to go on manufacturing a particular coin after the limit of its circulation, either in its original or its representative character, has been reached and passed. Upon this question Mr. Grier throws no light. He does not seem even to apprehend it.

Never before in the world's history has any government charged itself with the duty of making metallic money, either gold or silver, beyond the needs of itself or its people. The United States alone furnish this example of wasteful and ridiculous excess. The solecism, it is well known, came about in the way of a compromise between two sections or factions of the "friends of silver" in Congress, one of which desired unlimited coinage, while the other desired limited coinage. It would be nearer the truth to say that one side desired to give everybody the privilege of scaling his debts ten per cent., while the other side desired to confine it to the Government. The result of the compromise was a limitation of the monthly coinage, but no limitation of the total. The arrangement was based upon no principles of finance. It was a mere "back fire" started against the Bland bill. It had the effect of stopping Mr. Bland's fire, but is itself still burning. What it may destroy hereafter is a matter of conjecture, but it is certainly consuming two million dollars per month of the public taxes, and serving no purpose except to steady the price of silver for mine owners in all parts of the world, and still more for the treasury and trade of British India, for which service we have as yet received no thanks.

The question, "Is the silver dollar expedient?" has no significance except as an inquiry whether the continued coinage of two millions per month, after all demands for silver dollars have been more than satisfied, is expedient. It must, of course, be answered in the negative.

Horace White.

Artistic Help in Divine Service.

It was thought to be of sufficient interest to the public to be stated in the reports of the meeting of the American Board at Detroit, last autumn, that at the beginning of the first service the hymn, "Joy to the world, the Lord is come," was sung "as usual." Of course, most of us understand that the tune always employed is "Antioch." It is worth the inquiry, as a curious little speculation, whether the third verse was produced with the reduplication of those expressive syllables "Far as," according to the music requirement, "Far as the curse is found, Far as the curse is found, Far *a-as* — Far *a-a-as* the curse is found"; and also whether the fourth verse is still loaded with the singular division which makes the people say: "And wonders of His love, And wonders of His love, And *wo-on* — And *wo-o-on*-ders of His love." That is the way it used to be in Monthly Concert.

It is difficult to conduct a sober discussion on the special point to which I have long been wanting to draw attention, as one of the singing multitude, without seeming to be in fun instead of in dead earnest. The simple statement of our embarrassment makes people laugh. Now above is the example: I want to insist

modestly that even the authority of Lowell Mason is not enough to fasten on the churches such an awkwardness as this, which is plain the moment it is mentioned; though it looks like a joke to show it up. Lately the attempt has been made to slur over the whole strain, and that is certainly an improvement. But one must be pardoned if in candor he asks whether a hymn shall be travestied forever in order to carry out what a composer calls his "musical thought."

Such a question is far-reaching in principle. Which is it that singing is to follow, the words or the tune? What is the real purpose of the American Board, or of any one of our churches, in the act of singing in divine services? Is it to render a "musical thought" adequately, or to give a poetic sentiment fitting expression? Take another case: Once when I was preaching in a church beside the Hudson River, in May, the busiest month of the fishing season, I gave out the hymn, "Jesus, lover of my soul." The leader set it to a tune which, for the sake of some man's "musical thought," repeated half of the final line. When I heard the first verse, I shrank with consternation in frightful prospect of the second; for the movement ran thus: "Oh, receive — Oh, receive — Oh, receive my soul at last." That did no harm, it was simply unnecessary. But the next was awful. When I repeat it, it will be supposed a joke, although I am writing in sad earnest of a fact which almost destroyed my service: "Cover my defenseless head — With the *shad* — with the *shad* — with the *shad*-ow of thy wing." The whole congregation stirred with irrepressible laughter. Must we all be forced to stand this?

Somebody will have to give in, and it is dangerous for a modern clergyman to criticise his choir. A good man in New Jersey last year came very near losing his charge for saying that he did not agree with his quartette in their adoration of the Virgin Mary, which they had been singing just for the sake of a piece of music. Frequently the worship is fashioned in order to admit of what are deemed artistic effects. Once in the city of Boston I had taken my place to begin; there had been presented to me a printed programme as I reached the vestry, the whole of which was filled in except the place for the closing hymn: it was issued by the choir as they had arranged it. While the organ was playing, up the pulpit stairs came a stranger; taking his seat by me on the sofa, he announced that he was the leader of the music, "basso." He purposed to sing for the anthem that morning a solo from "The Creation," and he desired me to read as the lesson the first chapter of Genesis, as "the most appropriate introduction." I meekly replied that if this was customary in that congregation, I had nothing to say. So I agreed to read the chapter, but I added that I trusted it would not be considered an innovation if I should put in afterward a few verses from the New Testament which I had selected. He bowed assent gravely as he left the desk. But when the moment arrived for the genesis of my perturbation to begin, once more I was favored with a visit, this time from the sexton, who only came to hand me a piece of a fly-leaf from a music-book, on which was written the gracious information that the leader of the choir, "basso," had concluded not to sing the solo, and I might feel at liberty to read what I pleased. How much of that sort of artistic help is an educated minister, of a religious turn of mind, expected to endure?

It is of no interest to me to make issue with such willful vanity and outrageous conceit as this manifests; the man apparently assuming that the order of worship was to be constructed or modified to bring his voice into a proper orchestral setting. My troubles have come oftener from such sources as that intimated in the outset, than from the mere carelessness which grows out of a misconception. One of the older philosophers has said, "Incongruity is the soul of wit." This suggests a reason why we are not heard in stating our grievances; the cases have so much of incongruity in them, that our complaint is laughed out of court. We are supposed to be telling witty stories, when we are trying desperately to put an end to the dreadful incongruities in the divine service which destroy the worship we seek to conduct.

I wish to make this distinct point, and I never was more anxiously sober in argument in my life: I think that our choirs choose their "opening pieces" and their anthems with a view to the musical necessity of the voices or the day or the position, as they see it, and with no proper regard to the needs or wishes of those who have come to worship God. I do not assert that all do it, nor that any do it always; but I insist that this is the rule, and anything else is the exception.

Years ago, when I sought to hold our first Thanksgiving service in the Paris Chapel, it may readily be conceived by every New England heart how I was thrilled with eagerness of anticipation. My enthusiasm swept the people swiftly on with me. The leader wished me a hundred congratulations; he was full of joy; oh, he would give me such a grand anthem; but would I only let him put it in the place of the second hymn just before the sermon, after the congregation should all have come in and become still? I suffered it; and that was not all I suffered either. When the time came, the piece rolled out, "Bow down thine ear, O Lord." Ah me! you should have heard that splendid bass voice saying, "Thy will, O God, be done — *thy-ee* will, O God, be done!" Thus, there in the strange land, we hung our harps on the willows that Thanksgiving day; we had to send our cheerful gratitude aloft in the subdued strains of the most plaintive submission imaginable, for the entire choir were vying with each other in a chase to say best and most: "Thy-ee will, O God, be done!"

These things are among the commonest of all mistakes which try our patience. We started once last year upon an anniversary celebration; we planned to awake ourselves with a song. The pulpit shone with flowers; the Sunday-schools were trained in; the air quivered with sweet bright sunshine, hearts were alive, and memories full of exhilaration. The choir opened with a set piece, slow and hushed in tone, to which were adapted the words which they whirled over and over as they pushed on before them the involutions of an intricate fugue: "I will both lay me down in peace, and *sleep;* for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety." I am not willing to call that artistic; I consider it nothing more than provoking; it was inartistic inappropriateness. The piece was chosen, I presume, because the music pleased somebody; no possible reference to the use to which it was to be put could have been had. I cannot argue

about an awkward destruction of the service like that; there was no sense in such a song then. If singers cannot see the point when the picture is before them, logic is useless—as useless as Simon Peter found it on the day of Pentecost, after he had told the multitude that men did not usually get drunken before the third hour of the day. We do not want our congregations to lay themselves down in peace and *sleep* in the morning of an anniversary day.

Then there is a most unphilosophical way of dividing up the verses in hymns which are personal and experimental. It is as much as congregations can do to sing such things at all with four parts in the music; but traditional use helps us a little. The moment, however, that the attempt is made to present them in the so-called "artistic" form of distribution among the performers, a challenge is forced, and we have to accept the office of critical estimate thrust upon us unawares. When a choir in effect says, "See how we will do it," we try to see. For example, it is not dramatic, nor artistic, nor philosophical, to divide the hymn, "Lead, kindly light," so that a bass voice of a man should say, "The night is dark, and I am far from home, Lead thou *me* on"; and then an alto voice should say with a woman's register of pathos, "I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou shouldst lead *me* on." For that inevitably suggests two of them in trouble, and the illusion is destroyed; we have no distinct conception of a soul struggling with an individual experience; if we have any conception at all, it is of a quartette of souls comparing experiences in different octaves.

Let me show what I mean exactly: some things are not perfectly clear unless they become melodramatic and exaggerated. Once in Brooklyn our tenor began thus, "Jesus, lover of *my* soul"; then the alto said, "Let *me* to thy bosom fly"; then the soprano said, "While the billows near *me* roll"; and the next line slid off on the bass, who added, "And the tempest still is high." So the organ proceeded to conduct the tempest to a successful issue with tremendous stops, which shook the glass overhead in the windows. Now, what a common man would like to know is, how many vocalists at a time were engaged in that prayer. This sending an individual experience all around the choir to supply singers with words for "musical thoughts" is of no sort of edification to churches — of no sort of comfort to preachers.

It is not quite fair to assert that outsiders do not know the difficulties which composers and leaders and managers of music-people have to contend with. But let me say, modestly, that for one I have been told with great pathos, and that more than once, during the past twenty years. The conductor of our choir, the one we had long ago, said frankly, on the sad occasion when I had what New England people call a "to-do" with him for cause, that, after a most extensive experience in leading, he had found it impossible to keep the peace in his gallery unless he would apportion the solos carefully among the performers from Sabbath to Sabbath, so that each should have a chance; hence, he often chose for the sake of a voice, or two voices, a composition the rendering of which would bring down praise from "the house."

Now, just for a moment, I should like to quote from "Aurora Leigh":

> "The artist's part is both to be and do,
> Transfixing with a special, central power
> The flat experience of the common man,
> And turning outward, with a sudden wrench,
> Half agony, half ecstasy, the thing
> He feels the inmost."

After this fine burst of enthusiasm, Mrs. Browning explains and guards her meaning:

> "Art's a service, mark!
> A silver key is given to thy clasp;
> And thou shalt stand unwearied, night and day,
> And fix it in the hard, slow-turning wards,
> And open, *so*, that intermediate door
> Betwixt the different planes of sensuous form
> And form insensuous, that inferior men
> May learn to feel on still through these to those,
> And bless thy ministration."

Is art a "service"? Does the exercise of it in divine worship partake of the spirit of the inspired counsel, "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant"? This thrusting forward of a personality of display does not look like it. Once our alto asked me, as I was entering the pulpit, whether I had any objections to changing the closing hymn, for she was expecting some friends that evening, and they could not come till late, and she wanted to sing a solo. And once, at a week-day funeral, our tenor crowded me even to my embarrassment with a request that he might be permitted to precede the arrival of the train of mourners with a vocal piece in the gallery, for he had just heard that two members of the music-committee of another congregation would be present, and he wished them to hear him, as he desired to secure the place of conductor there.

"Art's a service, mark!" But does it take the place of the rest of the service also? This entire discussion turns at once upon the answer to the question whether the choir, the organ, the tune-book, and the blower are for the sake of helping God's people worship Him, or whether the public assemblies of Christians are for the sake of an artistic regalement of listeners, the personal exhibition of musicians, or the advertisement of professional soloists who are competing for a salary.

In our travels, some of us have seen the old organ in a remote village of Germany on the case of which are carved in the ruggedness of Teutonic characters three mottoes: if they could be rendered from their terse poetry into English they would do valiant service in our times for all the singers and players together. Across the top of the key-board is this: "Thou playest here not for thyself, thou playest for the congregation; so the playing should elevate the heart, should be simple, earnest, and pure." Across above the right-hand row of stops is this: "The organ-tone must ever be adapted to the subject of the song; it is for thee, therefore, to read the hymn entirely through so as to catch its true spirit." Across above the left-hand stops is this: "In order that thy playing shall not bring the singing into confusion, it is becoming that thou listen sometimes, and as thou hearest thou wilt be likelier to play as God's people sing."

Charles S. Robinson.

Fielding.

WITHIN the past few months, a bust of Fielding has been placed in the vestibule of the shire hall at Taunton, Somersetshire. Both Old and New England may

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"The American Copyright League."

"THE American Copyright League is an association organized by American authors, the object of which is to urge a reform of American copyright law, and, primarily, the abolition, so far as possible, of all discriminations between the American and the foreign author."

The above is the brief but satisfactory platform of what we believe to be the largest association of American writers yet formed in furtherance of the principle of international copyright. It will be remembered that Dr. Edward Eggleston, in an article on "The Blessings of Piracy," in THE CENTURY for April, 1882, wrote: "If the present movement should fail, the next will probably be a far more comprehensive one, made by men of letters themselves, who are the real principals in the case. It is hard to organize authors as such; there are too many questions of literary position involved. But we can readily organize, on a business basis, an association of producers of literary property."

The prophesied movement of "producers of literary property" has begun. American authors, in demanding justice for the pillaged foreigner, are incidentally asserting their own rights at home and abroad in the products of their brains. Through its executive committee, the American Copyright League is now besieging both Congress and the State Department. All writers and others who wish to help on this good cause are requested to write to their representatives in both branches of Congress, and also to send their names to the secretary of the Executive Council, Mr. G. P. Lathrop, The Benedick, 80 Washington Square, New York.

OPEN LETTERS.

Organs and Orchestras in Church.

GAVAZZI is reported as having once said: "The best music in the world is in Scotland, and without embarrassment of organs." Now, this deliverance of the great orator would not of itself establish the fact it seems to assert; for taste does not always bend to logic, and never yields to the authority of a mere opinion. As an offset to such a remark of the old patriot, which was forced to play a conspicuous part in the rather tumultuous discussions of the recent anti-organ convention at Allegheny City, it is amusing to recall a remark of one of our tourist party in 1877, a typical Scotchman in every feature of his enthusiasm. He was sitting with us to listen to a congregation of the Free Italian Church in Genoa,—the body of Christians whose cause Father Gavazzi pleads,—and while they sang, with the accompaniment of an organ, "Safe in the arms of Jesus," to our American tune, his emotion kept gathering head, until, when the pathetic strain ceased, he wiped the tears from his eyes and exclaimed, "That is the most effective music I ever heard in any church. How finely Italians sing; what sweet melodies they have!"

It is evident that a prejudice is growing up on both sides of this question concerning the use of organs and orchestras in the public services of the Lord's Day. The debate is sometimes too violent for edification. A party in the Scotch churches is fairly determined to bring in the despised "chests of whistles" to help in the rendering of even Rouse's psalms. There are some also who are not in such a religious connection, but dwelling among others who tolerate instruments clear to the verge of uttermost charity, who wish the trustees had the money back which, in the early days, they paid for the swell and the pedal, the great diapason, the vox humana, and the bells.

Now, most musical people like organs; some like other combinations of instrumental helps in the singing. One would imagine the cornet had become a means of grace. When I was only a boy of seventeen, I myself became a member of a village group of players, which sat for years in what we appropriately called the *orchestra* of the church. We had two flutes, two violins, a bass-viol, a double-bass, a tenor trombone, and an ophicleide. It would not be of any use at this late day for artists to laugh at that kind of accompaniment in divine service; the sounds we made were well enough in their way, and most of those musicians are out of reach of criticism long ago. The beloved conductor of the volunteer choir was the leader of a military band to which some of us belonged, and was no mean musician for those simple-hearted times; but he had weaknesses. He often composed our piece of music during "the long prayer," and handed it around in penciled parts for us to render at the regular time for the hymns. Of course, we, by instinct, kept all this part of the service as far as possible away from the congregation; for they were likely to interfere with what we considered artistic if they should try to sing. When I recall this impertinent wickedness,—I recognize it now, we did not know it then,—it seems to me I can understand why some of those devout people in the recent convention hated instruments so violently: they felt in danger of being deprived of their rights. So they spoke out in terms unmistakable: "We must withhold fellowship from those who use organs; if organs come in, we must go out." They gave what they considered reasons for a conclusion so revolutionary. "We charge that the use of instruments is at the expense of spirituality," so said one of the speakers, according to the printed report of the proceedings. "If I can make or find a church of a better kind, I will not stay in a church that sanctions instrumental music," so said another, with equal frankness and force.

These Christian men were in earnest. Is there any ground for the sober apprehensions with which they regard instruments in church? It is of no use to argue the case; taste is out of the reach of ordinary logic; this is a question of fact, and of taste too. Let us draw upon the experience of those who are ac-

quainted with music as it is now managed in modern congregations. How does this plan of ours work? Do organs destroy spirituality in worship?

Everybody would have some story to tell, if he had a chance to ease his feelings on this point. I have many to choose from. Once I preached on exchange for a neighboring minister. In that congregation the organist was the leader of the choir, and hence was responsible for the music altogether; and he had ordinarily his way. The opening piece occupied, by the time-piece directly fronting me on the organ case, seventeen minutes. During this performance we all sat and patiently listened, or watched each other impatiently; we had nothing to do with selecting it, with singing it, or with understanding it. Then I was at liberty to commence divine worship with the customary prayers of the people. After this a hymn was offered to the congregation, the verses of which were driven hopelessly apart by an interlude of wonderful construction on the instrument. The organist paused deliberately after each stanza, leaving us to stand and watch him, while in leisurely silence he contemplated the position, decided what, under the circumstances, he would do, then pulled out such stops as he deemed the fittest for his present venturous undertaking, and, when he got ready, went on to play a strain of interlude as far away as perverse ingenuity could invent from the chosen music which was printed before us in the book. When he came home from his wandering, he quirked up a little sharp note, to start the choir out of inattention, and gave us another verse. So the hymn was jerked through eight minutes of ups and downs and offs and ons. By and by I gave out the second one, which was to be sung by the quartet alone. I shortened it to four stanzas, in a sort of trepidation; but they spent twelve minutes on it, and I never heard such full ranges of a church organ before. Those singers waited at each vacancy until their leader had, by every imaginable dexterity on the keyboard, settled the Sunday-school question, "Oh, what can little hands do?" Then a finale of orchestral intricacy wound up the performances, and the stillness gave us a season of peace. At the close of the services I used the Doxology, as the safest relief to my apprehensions; and then we were stunned out of church with nothing less than violence.

This is no caricature. I am not ashamed to say I felt indignant; I was hindered, embarrassed, annoyed. It seemed to me as if the congregation would be destroyed by such a parade of amazing and insufferable conceit. Does any one imagine that that man had the least reference conceivable to the wants and purposes of the worshiping assembly by whom he was trusted? I was truly saddened to see how he betrayed them in order to display himself. And now I have to add that the next day I received a letter early in the morning from this very organist. He said he would be pleased to secure an engagement as leader in our church; for although some particulars pleased him in the place he was filling, he desired a position where he "could have more liberty"! With such a reminiscence in my mind, I think I can understand why an exasperated president of a college should exclaim in the convention: "We are commanded to sing with the spirit and with the understanding; and an organ is incapable of either."

It is of no use to try to break the force of the argument in this illustration by asserting that this person was positively an exception in the profession. It is to be admitted in all charity that he combined more of the offensive characteristics of modern organists in his own person than any man of his class who ever came within my observation. But he was representative of possibilities which our Scotch friends have reason to dread. In the utter disregard of the congregation, both in the choice and rendering of the music; in the interminable prolongation of the services for the sake of personal display; in the hopeless heartlessness of the whole performance as a mockery of what was put forward as the worship of God; in these things that choir-leader was a representative of many, many, in his profession.

There are other infelicities more common still. Not long ago I was walking out of a neighboring church, into which, in one of my rare chances of worshiping without officiating, I had found my way. A gentleman whom I met there was speaking to me kindly, giving me cordial welcome. I tried to listen, but the roar of the organ drowned his voice. "Oh, I wish you would stop the awful noise up there!" I said; for the racket of tubes shook a chandelier over our heads, and rattled the glass in the windows. And my friend answered: "Well, he is in one of his loud moods now, that is a fact; but he is a splendid player. He is a little funny sometimes when he sends us home good-natured; very adroit and careful, but he makes me laugh now and then. He will begin an opera air, and go on with it half a dozen notes, until you are scared a little; he just touches it and leaves it, and, before he gets caught, away he goes off into something else. He is at 'Lohengrin' now, he will be in 'Lucia' in a minute, and will end up in some solemn old oratorio; and the elders never seem aware of what he is giving the congregation!"

Unfortunately, some of them do know it by the smirk which they see on the faces of the ribald ones who laugh at their innocence; and the minister knows it also; but what can they do? The chief trouble is not in the tubes and the reeds, nor even in the whistles, but in the living human being who sits responsibly in the throne to manage them, and is himself unmanageable.

Here, again, we are interrupted by the asseveration that a man who will do such things is a charlatan; he ought to be cashiered; the profession are not responsible for him. Let us see. The question is concerning voluntaries with which to open or to close the services, concerning choice of tunes for singing, and concerning interludes between the stanzas. Charles Fox used to say, "Great authorities are arguments." It may be helpful to quote from Mr. Richard Storrs Willis, to whom the musical profession have been accustomed to look with deference:

"The artist has his own sphere,— an art-sphere,— into which neither clergyman nor people have any right to intrude. For instance, the question of a voluntary being decided, and its length, if you will, no one has a right to dictate what the quality or style of that voluntary shall be. If the musical taste of the artist do not suit the society, let them dismiss him, and get another; he is master in his own field, and is right in rebelling against all dictation as to the manner

of managing an organ. When a society engage an artist they run this musical risk. And thus, after the number of hymns is decided, the number of verses to be sung, and where the hymns are to be introduced, no one has a right to dictate what music shall be sung, or how it shall be sung. Here, again, the artist is master in his own field. The only proper redress for dissatisfaction is dismissal. Again, the question of interludes being decided,— how many and of what length,— the quality and style of those interludes are solely at the discretion of the artist; and he may stun with sub-bass; he may torture with fancy-stops; he may rattle on without the slightest reference to the sense of the preceding or succeeding verse; and no one in the church has any official right to interfere. If the music committee have hired so crude an organist, it devolves upon them and the society patiently to bear with the same, until they can procure a better. It is as well to have this subject understood; for nothing, perhaps, has been the cause of so much dissonant feeling in the church as the church's harmony — generally arising from trespass on the one part or the other."

Let us assume, therefore, that the subject is at last "understood." Some of us have understood a good deal of it for quite a long time; but let us put our information into form. An organist may construct his voluntaries out of operatic snatches in the slyest sort of way, he may choose his tunes from unfamiliar collections or compose them in prayer-time, and in his interludes he is specially to be allowed to "stun," to "torture," and to "rattle on without the slightest reference to sense." And all we can do to relieve so excruciating a position is to give him warning of dismissal at the end of his fiscal year, or wait for him to lose his health. We cannot even arrest him by the police, as we could any other disturber of divine worship. If we interfere before his time is out, he will sue the church in a justice's court for heavy damages for dues and defamation; we had better bear patiently, and not trespass on his rights.

Well, "Art is long; life is short." But it strikes ordinary thinkers, especially Scotchmen, that art is getting too long, slightly tedious, perhaps; and life is vanishing swiftly amid so much stunning and torturing and rattling clear down to the end of the twelvemonth — which is the shortest engagement that even a "crude" organist will make with a modern music committee. If these be the acknowledged principles upon which the "artist" proceeds, who is to say that the profession is not responsible for much of what oppresses the worshiping people of God? Can any one blame the gentlemanly Christian pastor who in the convention said: "If my brother insists that I must part with my convictions, I must part from him."

Is this declaration of Mr. Willis the "common law" of the musicians? This utterance which I have quoted was published as admirable and authoritative in one of the chief musical periodicals; and it now stands at the conclusion of an argument in the volume, "Our Church Music: a Book for Pastors and People," long before the public under his name. If it has ever been challenged, I do not know it, and I am perfectly sure no modern organist ever dreamed it ought to be; why should he?

I would like to state two facts, however, before I leave the point; I think I shall feel easier afterward: A church which I have served as pastor once turned a drunken organist out of his seat before the end of the year, and the earth did not give signs of woe that all was lost; and once afterward they dismissed an organist who grew disagreeable, and paid him his salary to the end of the engagement. It is not always necessary, therefore, to endure tortures and stunnings and rattlings still in possible reserve.

Up to this stage of discussion, I confess all appears to be melancholy, and looks unfair. But why do not the noble men and true, who are Christian worshipers themselves, and serve God with highest acceptableness in praise with their instruments, come forth and restate the doctrine of relations between people and players? There are organists who preach as well as a minister, in their own way and according to their chances. Not one of them doubts the confidence and affection with which we in the pulpits turn to them for their aid and guidance. At the funeral of our dear old friend George B. Bacon, there was one organist who took the service into his own hands, while the minister was content to be silent for a space. William Mason made that dumb instrument speak as (so it seemed to me, and not to me alone) no articulate voice could have spoken. Some hearts which heard that dirge, that comfort, that triumph, that celestial song from the keys, forgot the player, and the playing, and the instrument, only to recall them afterward — as I do now — with a wondering, grateful, glad sense of help in an hour of trial. Sometimes clear, sweet, gentle music, all alone, can lift mourners' sadness better than words. It is a pity that cheats and charlatans should prejudice a profession which has its promised place even in God's sanctuary above: "the players on instruments shall be there."

George Macdonald, in one of his best stories, makes David Elginbrod say: "I always think that if I could hear Milton playing on his organ, it would be more like the sound of many waters than anything else I can think of." It would seem as if an instrument which, if properly managed, could prove itself so capable for good, ought to receive a brighter welcome and a more charitable judgment than is implied in those closing resolutions of the convention to which we have referred so pleasantly: "According to the standards of our church, the use of instrumental music is unlawful." Pity 'tis, 'tis true. Madame de Staël suffers her Corinne to say, what has been actually supposed to be the fact by many of the most devout people that ever lived: "Among all arts music alone can be purely religious."

There was once such fear of mere æsthetic feeling in divine worship, that at the Council of Trent it was fiercely debated whether any music, other than the simplest Gregorian chants, should be permitted in the house of God. It is curious to note that the next religious convention to discuss a similar prohibition is a denomination of Protestant Christians in the nineteenth century.

If the vexation proceeds from the man who manages the instrument, would it not be better to suppress the vexation than to banish the instrument he abuses? If helps hinder, is it an impossible thing to hinder the helps from hindering?

Charles S. Robinson.

C1884A

OPEN LETTERS.

Worshiping by Proxy.

If there be any hope of reaching an agreement in the discussion of such vexed questions as those concerning the musical performances in our modern churches, it is evident there ought to be settled at once some point of departure or some point of approach. What *purpose* is expected to be served by singing as a stated exercise in the service of the house of God? The answer, which is ready on the instant, is that it is part of divine worship. But do we adhere to that in our further argument?

They tell a story hereabouts, for the first part of which I can, as usual with my illustrations on these themes, vouch as a fact; but I am not sure whether I rehearse the conversation that follows with exactness in choice of terms, though accurately enough, I presume, for all needs. A clergyman gave out his morning selection from the hymn-book, as was customary, for the congregation to sing. The organist-leader peremptorily and perversely changed the music, and set the words to a tune of unfamiliar and highly artistic character, through which the willing quartette, with due sense of the fun, wound their intricate way on to the end. Then the minister calmly rose, and with proper dignity said: "We will now commence divine worship by singing the same hymn I gave before, and we will use the tune which is very appropriately set to it for our help." And without even a moment's pause he started the strain himself with his clear tenor voice, before the choir had recovered from their positive consternation. As if by instinct, the people rose on their feet, showing that they comprehended the posture of affairs, and unaccompanied joined in the song.

When the services were over, the chorister descended from the gallery, and marched up the aisle to the pulpit platform, where the preacher was waiting. He was angry to the supreme verge of impertinence. "What do you mean, sir?" he asked. "If you will attend to your end of the church, I will attend to mine!" Quietly enough the clergyman replied: "You make me think of an old story my father used to tell when I was a child. A mate was frightened at the ship's nearness to a rocky shore, and went aft to inform the captain that he thought the course should be changed. 'You attend to your end of the ship, and I will attend to mine,' was the answer. The mate went back to his place, but in five minutes more the captain heard the rattle of a chain, and the splash of iron in the water. 'What are you doing?' he thundered; and the mate said: 'Only what you told me, sir. I have anchored my end of the vessel; you may do as you please with yours.' And so," continued the undisturbed pastor, "I have anchored my end of the church, as you call it, *in the worship of Almighty God*, which is what we came here for. What do you propose to do with yours?"

It would astonish many quite belligerent disputants in ordinary congregations to observe how quietly a vessel of discussion rides, the moment the anchorage of a definition is attained. All this cant about "good music" and "artistic execution" and "soprano solos" would be banished into thin air, if agreement were reached that the worship of God was the purpose to be served by the performances in the gallery. It is not unkind or ungracious to inform many of our musical friends that the usual assemblies of religious people do not have any sympathy with artists in their rivalries for place or emolument. They come to the house of prayer for other reasons than to listen to trills of a voice or tremolos of an organ. They do not converse about the merits of the performers half so much as some suppose. For many years it has been deemed quite witty to fasten upon clergymen the brunt of a well-remembered couplet; but the facts point to another application. Bononcini was a fierce rival of Handel in the city of London. Dean Swift sided with the former, which of course made Handel angry, and he cut Dean Swift in the public street; and then Swift wrote his now-famous epigram:

> "Some say that Signor Bononcini,
> Compared to Handel, is a ninny;
> While others vow that to him Handel
> Is hardly fit to hold a candle.
> Strange such a difference should be
> 'Twixt tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee."

Very quickly also would this consideration settle the worrying differences about worshiping by proxy. One of our preachers has lately declared that he would as soon accept four people to write his love-letters for him as to do his singing for him in the house of God. But suppose one should accept the four ready-writers, not being up in penmanship, or in good form, you know, and then discover afterward that his damsel adored was only being mocked by those who were competing for custom, and his affection was not in the epistles at all: what then? A bass singer, who knows the facts if they can be known, himself an artist of the highest character, told me frankly five years ago that the relations of quartette choirs to congregations were, in the majority of cases, purely mercenary. Sweet tones, and finished execution, and wonderful compass, all may be bought for money, no doubt, but can we buy worship from ungodly and mercenary people? And if one proposes to worship by proxy, does he imagine God is ignorant of the difference between æsthetics and devotion? A friend of mine, perfectly trustworthy as to facts, told me that while he was in one of the churches of New York City the book lay in the rack before him, and he took it up mechanically, as he was wont at home. Finding the hymn, and noticing that the music was familiar, he began to sing quietly with the voices he heard, when suddenly the sexton tapped him on the shoulder, and deftly whispered, "It is expected that the singing in this congregation will be performed by the choir."

It might be to edification sometimes to look up the proxies when off duty during the sermon or prayers. A few years ago we had a soprano who used to spend

the spare time in the lecture-room, where her husband kept his tobacco for a smoke. Once a German among the bass went regularly off for lager for months, to our discredit, for he always kept looking at the clock so as to get back before the doxology, and the topers knew he was doing a job of "worship" over at the church for us. Close by us, in a neighboring congregation, the choir used to have lemons or lemonade behind the curtains, in the intervals of worship. Once the bass, handing a slice to the alto, overset the pitcher upon the floor, and the desecration became known to the rector by an awkward trickling down of wetness on his surplice. Is it harsh for me to go on with these stories? Believe me, I have preferred to keep within the limits of what might be considered playful, rather than tragic; most of us could speak more to the point in sterner facts, if we were not ashamed of our arraignment. For all this goes to show that in many instances, our music committees are to blame as well as the hired creatures under them.

The principle which vitiates all this form of service is found in the acceptance of mere tones of one's voice as church music, and of swift and delicate execution of syllables as intelligent psalmody. This betrays our committees into indiscretion; they listen only to sounds, and care less for characters, for behaviors, and for devotion, than they do for flats, sharps, and *un*-naturals. So some churches are betrayed into most embarrassing complications by the headlong enthusiasm of a few musical men who never professed to have much worship to let out into the hands of the proxies whom they engage prematurely.

There was once a congregation in Albany whose pastor felt himself obliged to clear the gallery of a choir which was turning his Sabbath services into a young people's visiting resort. Just so a church in New York, whose committee hired a choir for twenty thousand dollars a year. Eight singers gave an entertainment in the sanctuary for six months, which was the talk of the town as the wonder of excellence. The chief soprano received four thousand dollars; one of the bassos traveled from Boston every week. But the religious authorities were constrained to interfere in the middle of the engagement: they dismissed the whole train during the summer vacation. They paid the remaining ten thousand dollars without a grimace rather than worship by proxy in such a concert-room style clear on to the end of the year.

In this subordination of sense to sound, this grading of musical effects above intelligent worship, is found the reason why choirs claim the liberty of reconstructing hymns for their own convenience. A chorister once told me without any hesitation, as if it had been a matter of perfectly accepted principle between his profession and the public: "We always shorten or lengthen the number of stanzas according to the necessities of the music. How could we do otherwise? If the tune is double, we can sing but four verses." But when I inquired how such frightful cases as three stanzas could be managed, he answered, as if he took me in dead earnest, and deemed me rather sympathetic on the whole: "Oh, repeat the last one; that is easy enough! Indeed, we always give them four verses; that is all they need." I once called the attention of another leader to the fact that the hymn I gave out was not the same in the sheet-music he had been singing from as it was in the hymn-book which the people had before them in their hands. He was not surprised, but rather pleased, I conjectured, at the chance I gave him to say that the words were always softer in properly prepared music, for "a true artist liked them liquid and flowing"; and he added gently that he wished all the hymns were in Italian or Latin.

That is to say, the purpose of singing in church is simply ignored; we drag our anchor the moment we begin to discuss. But common law speaks of "congregations for *public worship*" in the provisions of the statutes; and presidents' proclamations are addressed to the "assemblies for *the worship of God.*" What do we come together for, unless it is for the purpose of worship? And is all this artistic parade of style the worship of God?

Now, I am exceedingly anxious, in bringing these "open letters" to a close, to show the friends to whom I am writing them how amiable I am in the discussion. I cannot deny that I have had serious thoughts all along in my mind. But I desire to leave off in good humor; and I think I see the way out, if I may be allowed to mention one particular more.

It is this, likewise, which introduces so many Germans and Italians into our organ-lofts. These people are declared to be the natural singers of the world, and so are engaged as musical performers. It is not rare that members of the opera troupes and attachés of the minstrel companies are put into our churches to order the worship of God's pious people. It is enough to speak at present about the effect of their poor knowledge of intelligible English pronunciation. Once a choir-leader asked me as a favor if I would criticise the singing at his rehearsal. I willingly consented, and gave my whole patient attention to the two anthems which the choir practiced. I was obliged in candor to tell him that, though I was somewhat well acquainted with ordinary canticles, and might perhaps be permitted to say I could recognize a song of the Psalter if I could get a little started in on it, I had not been able to guess or surmise what these two "opening pieces" were about; I had no clew whatsoever. Not one in a score of our trained singers can be understood through a verse in the hymns which are travestied just to get sounds to suit taste. And, generally speaking, I think it will be found that professional "artists" pride themselves upon the success achieved when their consonants are not suffered to be heard.

Here comes in another incident in my observation; I would rather not name the church in which it occurred. Glorious Easter was at hand and great preparations were made in the rural parish for its celebration; boughs were twined in the arches of the building; flowers swung in wreaths overhead and shone in beautiful baskets among the aisles; children had been rehearsing carols. All the town came in on that notable morning. It was a scene never to be forgotten. The minister was radiant; his eyes beamed with delight. But a thought struck him: this audience, so happy, so generous, so enthusiastic, — would they not hear him a moment for a stroke of business? After the invocation and the first song, he surprised them with a proposition to bring "Easter offerings" now at once to God's altar, and lift the dear old church out of debt: oh, then there would be a

resurrection! The congregation would come up from under its great stone into a new life, if they would roll it away! Then the plates went their course, and hearts were touched, and purses were emptied, and the heaps of money lay before the moistened eyes of the relieved pastor as he tremulously thanked a good God for his people's fidelity in response. "The money is here, I am sure it is," he exclaimed. "If there be a little in arrears, it can be made up in a day, and now we are ready heartily to go on with the worship of our risen Lord." So the fixed programme proceeded. A little German had been procured from the metropolis for an annex to the tenor; his solo came in at this exact crisis of grateful emotion; he rendered it with a fresh aplomb, though the consonants were awkward: "An' de *det* sall be raised — de *det* sall be raised — an' de *det*— an' de *det*— sall be raised— sall be raised— in de twinkling of an ay-ee!"

Now it is quite safe to say that after the congregation went home, the theme of the day was dissipated, and the two events uppermost in everybody's mind were the surprise which the eager minister had sprung upon the people, and the ridiculous appropriateness of the declamatory solo which followed it. On general principles, we have no objection to the collection of money to discharge religious obligation, even in divine service; but it does seem a pity that a humorous episode should be the chief reminiscence of such a solemn occasion.

Charles S. Robinson.

"Music in America."

SOME two or three years ago, a much-respected musician, whom I had seen very rarely during an acquaintance which dated from my boyhood, came to me with the proposal that I should write a history of music in America. He urged this upon me, and kindly offered me all the help that he could give. My reply was that, although I should probably write something in regard to the art in which I had been so much interested, and with the professors of which I had been more or less acquainted all my life, I could not undertake a history of music in America; and for these reasons: First, that I was already committed to the assertion that there is no such thing as American music, nor, indeed, such a thing as English music since the days of Henry Purcell*; and second and last, that there were no efforts in musical composition and no public performances here worthy of historical record or critical examination until the beginning of this century; since which time what has been done here publicly is mere repetition of what had been done before in Europe, the performers as well as the music being in both cases European. The subject must necessarily prove somewhat like that of the snakes in Ireland. To write a history of music — of that which is worthy to be called music — in America would be mostly to record the performance here, from time to time, and here or there, giving dates and places, of music written in Europe by artists born and bred in Europe,— a sort of literary work for which I had little liking. To this the rejoinder was that the thing would surely be done, and that I ought to do it, because, in the first place (as my visitor insisted), I was the only man of letters who was a musician and who had the requisite knowledge of the facts and of the country; and next, because another man who was quite incompetent to the task was about to undertake it, and would do so unless some one "headed him off." This office I was obliged to decline undertaking: partly for the considerations I have already mentioned; and partly because the office was not to my taste. However, I promised my earnest and urgent friend that I would as soon as possible do something of the sort that he desired; and thereupon we parted.

A few weeks after this unexpected interview, I received from the conductors of THE CENTURY an equally unexpected proposal to write a History of the Opera in New York. They were entirely ignorant of the suggestion which had already been made to me, and, indeed, knew not of the existence of the maker. The result was the series of articles on this subject which appeared in THE CENTURY in March, April, May, and June, 1882. I was able to prepare them so quickly, because I had most of the requisite material at command, either in contemporary records which had in one way or another come into my possession, or in the recollections of friends of an elder generation, or in the memory of my own personal experience. No inaccuracy or omission of moment has been pointed out in these articles; and the conductors of THE CENTURY and the writer personally have received from long-retired artists and from competent critics, public and private, in Europe as well as in America, testimony, tinged with surprise, to their remarkable accuracy,— surprise for which there was really little occasion; for the writer simply related what he knew upon the best evidence.

A day or two ago I bought Professor Frédéric Louis Ritter's "Music in England" and "Music in America," recently published, but announced some months ago. Passing quickly over his long discussions, in the latter volume, of New England psalm-singing and of psalm-book makers and country singing-school teachers, which seemed to me about as much in place in the history of musical art as a critical discussion of the whooping of Indians would be, or as a description of the battles of kites and crows in a history of the art of war (not because their labors were simple and unpretentious, but because they were the development of no germ, and themselves produced no fruit, except some chorus material), I reached the pages where true music begins to receive the writer's attention. Dipping into his book, back and forth, I found here and there inaccuracy, erroneous statement, and evidence both of ignorance and of insufficient and perfunctorily acquired information; and some of this it was my purpose to correct, not publicly, but, as I have done before in such cases, by letter to the writer, that he himself might set himself right. Soon, however, I came upon a misstatement of such a character that it changed at once my point of view and my purpose. I read it with mingled wonder and resentment,— wonder and resentment which were enhanced by the fact that, even if it had not been a misstatement, an elaborate and carefully made misstatement, it was entirely superfluous, supererogatory, of not the slightest importance or interest to any intelligent reader of Professor Ritter's book, and having for its only pos-

* See "National Hymns," 1861; Part II.

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Deum is, perhaps, the greatest composition in the world; yet I never in my life heard Handel but I could think of something else at the same time. There is a kind of music that will not allow this. Dr. Worgan has so touched the organ at St. John's that I have been turning backward and forward over the Prayer Book for the first lesson in Isaiah, and wondered that I could not find Isaiah there! The musician and orator fall short of the full power of their science, if the hearer is left in possession of himself."

It is evident from this, therefore, that even "the good Cecil," as he was affectionately called, perceived his own exposure to peril in the reach and strength of his enthusiasm for music; and it is not impossible to believe that he may have put away his temptation in the violent way the story suggests It is enough here to say that art is a servant; and when it begins to act as master, devotion disdains even its proffered help.

Charles S. Robinson.

In Re Church Music.

THE expression "worshiping by proxy," as applied by Dr. Robinson to church music, emphasizes, in a certain way, a habit of thought which is harmful to the highest usefulness of music in the public service. Of course, Dr. Robinson does not really object to "singing by proxy" any more than to "praying by proxy," but the readiness with which the phrase comes to hand indicates the extent to which this habit of thought has grown upon us. Do we not often allow our attention to be called away from what is being sung to who is singing and how it is being performed? Have we not allowed ourselves to look upon the singing as a "performance" and not an act of worship. And, as we settle ourselves in our pews to "listen to the voluntary," do we, as a general thing, endeavor to understand the thought of the composer (supposing the music to be properly selected), or do we rather, criticise the singers and spend all our thought upon the execution of the "selection"? It is this latter habit which gives point to the expression "by proxy," and not that it is another's voice that sings.

We go to church, it may be, to be lifted up, to be inspired, to be carried away out of ourselves to something better and above us, and beyond what we can understand from the level monotone and discord of daily life. As we come away from the morning service at Trinity, perhaps, where we have listened to the boys' clear voices rising through and over the full tones of the men, and with the organ, under and above all, filling the vast spaces with an ecstasy of song and praise; where we have heard deep calling unto deep, and angel voices telling unutterable things which only the inner ear at such times can hear and partly understand,— must we be told at the door as we come away, "down from the mountain," that we have been "singing by proxy," because, forsooth, the boys laughed amongst themselves during the sermon? Must we lose the inspiration of the morning because our soprano's good honest voice, in "I know that my Redeemer liveth," must be compared with Patti's? Or must we lose it entirely because we must not sing by proxy, and we certainly cannot sing it ourselves? The trouble is not so much in our singers as in our worshipers. We find what we seek.

One word, not in defense, about singing in a "foreign tongue," or, what amounts to the same thing, singing so that the words cannot be understood. In the first place, do we not sing many hymns to one tune? It is the tune and not the words that we care most for. Again, some of us may have listened to high mass in some grand cathedral, where every word was in a foreign tongue; shall we ever forget the emotions, the exaltations, the utter self-forgetfulness? Did we not, indeed, "bow down and worship," although we knew no word of what was being said? True, the words might have been assistants at the first, but once in that higher atmosphere and words do not avail,— it is "the worship of song."

W. H. S.

An Ideal Church.

PERHAPS I cannot place my view of this whole question of "Artistic Help in Divine Service" more clearly before those I want to reach than by telling them of an ideal church I have in mind. In that church the clergyman, the choir-leader, and the organist are a committee, meeting regularly to arrange for each service. The clergyman sets the tone of the service; and the organist and choir-master adapt themselves thereto, choosing music bright or sad, as is best, but always *the best*. In the choir gallery of that church are the best voices obtainable, and the choristers are ladies and gentlemen. The clergyman has confidence that his sermon will be supplemented by a service of praise which will heighten its effect, and the members of the congregation know that they will be given opportunities for joining audibly in the service of praise, and of worshiping by proxy through the medium of devotional music so sung and played that it will certainly call their minds from the contemplation of earthly to heavenly things.

Is that ideal church impossible of realization? I should like to have all concerned make strenuous efforts toward that end.

Fred. W. Wodell.

The Study of Acting in Paris.

ONE day, in Paris, in a conversation about the stage, Monsieur Régnier said to me: "I have many applications from Americans for private lessons and for admission to the Conservatoire; the number of such students is constantly increasing. Why is it that they do not study at home?"

I answered: "In America, acting is considered a trade rather than an art, save by very few; and the few, being forced to live like the wandering tribes of Israel in order to live at all, cannot teach. The opinion is often expressed by our actors that the quality of a dramatic performance is a matter solely of individual feeling; that it is, therefore, impossible to establish a standard of acting; that, moreover, no man can give another any valuable aid in learning to act."

"But you teach your young painters to see, although every human being looks through his especial pair of eyes; you have so-called 'art schools,' have you not?"

"Yes, many. We train our young lawyers, our young preachers, our young authors, all whose professional worth depends upon knowledge of human

nature — all save those that are to personate humanity. They are supposed to have intuitions that are superior to education."

"And what is the result? You have a great number of theaters, I am told: are all that enter your companies gifted with genius, and does untrained genius give satisfactory performances?"

"Not always. It happens, sometimes, that Shakspere is misinterpreted on our stage. I have seen ladies and gentlemen, royalty itself, represented by persons ignorant of the grammar of their own language, and having the articulation and manner of cowboys and kitchen-maids; diplomatists and scholars by men whose faces expressed scarcely enough intelligence to sell shoe-strings. I have heard a French nobleman speak with a hideous Irish brogue, and that in a serious drama on the stage of a first-class theater. I have seen 'Hamlet' played in New York when the King of Denmark appeared more like a tramp than a king. These performances were given by actors for whom 'experience, the only teacher,' had done its utmost. Many, even of these, have the power of exciting emotion in themselves and in their equals, and emotion is generally accepted as a sufficient substitute for intellectual conception and execution. The truth is that the conditions of an actor's life in America are such that the wonder is, not that so many performances are bad, but that any are good. Attracted by the publicity that seems so like renown, or the promised gratification of frivolous desires, a great many young men and women that lack stability enough to ground themselves in the common fields are drawn into the rapids of theatrical life. Every season a multitude of companies leave New York with every kind of play — tragedy, comedy, drama, melodrama, spectacle, burlesque, farce, and their indescribable hybrid offspring. No examination is necessary to an engagement, even for a novice. First engagements are dependent upon circumstances more or less relevant, personal appearance being the most weighty consideration, amount of salary desired the next. The result is obvious. In one company, whose members should work together like the parts of an organized body, may be found elements so antagonistic that their fusion is impossible. Each individual is an autocrat, resentful of criticism when it is offered, which is seldom. Following blindly his own impulses, he uses his rôles as so many means to exhibit his own personality, instead of looking upon himself as the shapeless clay from which he is to mold many and varied forms. Too many, even of our celebrated actors, are noted because of some peculiarity that marks, appropriately or otherwise, every character they assume. It is seldom that a company travels with a *répertoire*. An actor plays a part during an entire season, often during several. Having learned his lines and spoken them to his own satisfaction, his work is done; he repeats the performance and draws his salary during the run of the piece, which may be for months, or even years. His life is spent in cars or hotels; his social life is the gossip-parties of the company. He may have begun his career full of enthusiasm, but, having so few incentives, he is apt to lose inclination to improve. He finds that his reputation depends upon caprice; he perceives the injustice of judgments, and how little advancement is affected by desert. His enthusiasm dies of inanition, and his last performance is no more meritorious than his first. Owing to greater delicacy of organization, all these results are intensified in the actress, with the added evil of nerves weakened by fatigue, exposure to cold and dampness in theaters and hotels, and irregular habits. Of one hundred who enter this terrible school of experience, five may possess genius, may be unconquered, even benefited; but the ninety-five do not retire. They go on giving performances that lack any merit, and ruining themselves mentally and physically. There is no one to tell them that they are mistakes; experience does not render them capable of measuring themselves. They are quite as likely to prosper financially as the five."

Régnier smiled at my long speech and said:

"I have been told much of this before. The things of which you speak could not happen on our stage. We believe that our actors are not different from other human beings, and need the same conditions for healthy growth. We think, too, that we have not the right to ask money of the public for the crude work of students in any art. Authors expect to be interpreted, not slandered; the public would not submit to caricatures of itself."

Through the kindness of Monsieur Régnier I had the privilege of attending the classes at the Conservatoire. In our theaters there are many young people feeling the need of authoritative instruction, failing to find it at home, and deterred from seeking it elsewhere by the uncertainty of such an undertaking. To such, and to all that enjoy the theater, or are desirous for its improvement, I am sure that a sketch of the method pursued in Paris with students of acting will be welcome.

The Conservatoire is an institution supported by the Government for the training of musicians and actors. It is called the "Conservatoire de Musique," the dramatic classes having been an afterthought.

The professors of acting are elected from the *Société* of the Théâtre-Français, and are given a sufficient recompense for their services. Established for life in their theater, it is possible for those that have proved great to give the benefit of their experience to the young. They do not feel humiliated by coming out of the mystery of their fame and telling students, in simple words, how that fame was won; to them it is a joy to teach, because they love their art better than themselves. No fee is asked of candidates for admission; they are required only to recite a poem or to act a scene from a play, and, if judged worthy of instruction, are assigned to the class of one of the professors. Many that fail in their first examination enter as listeners, and make another trial the next year.

The pupils assemble in the parquet of a little theater. In the center, beside a table, sits the professor. The listeners occupy a narrow gallery, that corresponds to our dress circle. There is a stage, draped at the back, furnished with tables and chairs, and reached by steps from the parquet.

Roll is called; then, at a sign from — we will say Delaunay, a young man mounts to the stage. He is studying *Gustave de Grignon*, in "La Bataille de Dames." One of the ladies volunteers to represent the *Countess*, and "give him the reply." They act a scene, with no comment save the observations of the other pupils, in undertone.

This talking is never allowed to become obtrusive, but a stranger wonders that it should be permitted at all. A remark made one day by Monsieur Got explains it. A young girl acted beautifully a scene from one of De Musset's comedies. The class listened spell-bound. On finishing, she was embarrassed by the silence.

"Was I so very bad?" she asked.

"Look at your fellow-students," said Got; "when they listen without comment, you may know you are very near right."

Montval, having finished his scene, comes forward for criticism. Delaunay questions him as to his conception of the part, and asks if he founded it on the lines of De Musset, or on the interpretation of some actor. Montval is, perhaps, unable to give a definite answer. Delaunay then, forming his idea from the words of *Grignon* and all that is said of him in the play, sketches, in clean outlines, the man's character; gives, as a background, the circumstances that surround him, and shades and lights the figure with the emotions they must excite in such a man. Montval's recitation is then reviewed, and found to indicate a quite different conception. Beginning again, he repeats the scene, Delaunay interrupting to criticise his delivery of paragraphs, sentences, phrases, words; showing where he is untrue to *Grignon*, often where he has belied a correct idea by false intonation, gesture, or facial expression. The young lady is noticed only when her replies give an unintended meaning to *Grignon's* speeches; but it is likely that she is studying the part she recites, and she listens attentively, for a knowledge of *Grignon's* character as affected by the *Countess* will aid her in forming a conception of her rôle.

The session lasts two hours, the pupils following one another in order, and several scenes are acted and reviewed, the professor often illustrating points by bits of his own experience or anecdotes of other actors.

Each of three professors teaches in the theater twice a week. On Got's days the class of Monsieur Maubant meets in another room.

Monsieur Got's class is conducted on the same plan as is Delaunay's, but in a different spirit. Delaunay reasons with his pupils; Got imitates them, showing their mistakes by witty or grotesque exaggeration. Delaunay talks with a musical flow of language that charms them into attention; Got speaks in terse sentences that stir them to exertion. Severity is Delaunay's last resource — a pupil will work untiringly to escape it; a *très-bien* from Got is equally rare — a pupil will slave to win it. The result of Delaunay's teaching is spirituality, smoothness, finesse; the result of Got's is intellectuality, vigor, power; not that Delaunay is weak or Got unpolished, but the strength of Delaunay's work is its beauty, and the beauty of Got's is its strength.

The *répertoire* of the Comédie-Française is studied,— tragedies, and old and modern comedies. Delaunay requires that his comedians study the tragedies, for the development of the voice and the acquirement of breadth of gesture and dignity of bearing. A teacher of deportment is provided, to correct especial awkwardness in the young people and to teach them to walk, to fall, etc.

The Conservatoire students come, almost invariably, from the *bourgeoisie;* they are the sons and daughters of tradespeople. During the course of three or four years they are educated, mentally and physically. They attain to the greatest familiarity with the meanings as well as with the words of French dramatic literature, and, through it, with history and romance. They have free admission to every theater in Paris, and see their art exercised in all its branches. They have the benefits of practical experience without its disadvantages. They perform on a stage before an audience. In their lessons, as much attention is given to stage business as to elocution; every part of a play is acted by a different person, and while, in each scene, one pupil is the object of criticism, every line of the other parts must be spoken, and spoken intelligently. They are spared the pain of exhibiting their imperfections before the world; and their critics are artists whose acknowledged greatness gives them authority.

At the end of the season a competitive examination is held. The scenes that have been studied during the winter are acted before a jury. The winner of the first prize is entitled to three débuts at the Comédie-Française. If he proves competent, he remains there. Winners of second prizes, or "*accessits*" — equivalent to "honorable mention" — either continue their studies at the Conservatoire or seek engagements in other theaters. They are sure to take whatever rank they deserve, and to advance as fast as they improve. Those who go to the Française may be said to enter a college where they study under their former teachers until these die, and pupils, qualified by experience, become in their turn masters. Plays are constantly in rehearsal at the Française, under the direction of the senior *sociétaires*, each of whom serves for a week at a time and is called the "*semainier.*"

The effect of this system is to be realized only by attendance at the theaters. The Comédie-Française is the mirror of manners and morals, the school of language — it is the mind of Paris. Sure that all the shades of their thoughts will be rendered in their just values, the authors of France give their best work to the theater; sure of justice from public and press, the actors give their lives to their art.

And their lives are theirs to give. Having permanent positions and sure incomes sufficient for all needs, the problem of existence, which possesses our minds, is solved for them; they are free to form family and social ties, to cultivate the many talents that are accessory to the dramatic; that is, to lay a firm foundation for an artistic structure.

They have a home at the theater. Their dressing-rooms are not wretched, damp little closets, but furnished rooms, which the artists vie with one another in making inviting. There is a library, rich in theatrical annals as well as in other literature, and a fine collection of busts and portraits. In the green-room the actors meet socially the distinguished in arts and letters.

If we could live in intimacy with these actors, we should doubtless find selfish ambition and vanity in them; but they are not allowed to inflict their idiosyncrasies upon the public. One leaves the Théâtre-Français impressed, not with the marvelous toilets of Mademoiselle A., not with the beauty of Mademoiselle B., not with Mademoiselle A. nor Mademoiselle B. at all, but with the persons they represented, with the excellence of the performance as a whole.

It is impossible for a foreigner to become a pupil of

the Conservatoire unless he have quite conquered his foreign accent. Let him not think for an instant that his own ear is competent to judge. The French ear is far more acute and far more exacting than any other. Not long ago a young American, after studying a scene from "Camille" with a French actress, until she thought herself perfect in it, ventured to recite before the jury that decides upon applicants for admission. The young lady had not spoken four lines when these gentlemen began to laugh — the kindest but most conclusive of laughs. Monsieur Régnier says that she spoke intelligently and with feeling, "but there was an accent."

Neither is it possible to have private lessons of Régnier, Delaunay, or Got. Régnier has ceased to teach, even at the Conservatoire. Coquelin and Worms sometimes give private lessons, I believe, but it is doubtful whether either would take a foreign pupil, unless interested by an extraordinary talent. Even if they could be obtained, the benefit of such lessons is questionable. The principles of the art are laid before the classes at the Conservatoire; principles fundamental to acting in all languages. These must be learned. When, feeling himself to be grounded in them, the student begins to study plays, it is well to submit to criticism in order to eliminate defects of pronunciation, carriage, etc.; but such criticism must be better given by one who speaks the language and can enter entirely into the spirit of the characters under study. If one were to act in French, no critic could be better than Coquelin aîné; but if one is to act in English, an Englishman, even if he be not so good an actor, is the better teacher.

It is less difficult to enter the Conservatoire as a listener. A written word from Régnier is an "open sesame," and, as he is least occupied and most approachable of those in authority, it is best to go to him.

Thorough knowledge of the French language is quite indispensable, and is to be gained only by speaking it with French people. The first sensation of most Americans arriving for the first time in France is astonishment at their ignorance of the language. A few months of intercourse with a native family, however, will train a dull ear to comprehension, and the tongue is an apt pupil of the ear.

The Conservatoire opens in November, but it is well to go to France in May or June.

Women should not go alone. Among Parisians a woman that is alone is always under suspicion. A student owes to her art as well as to her womanhood to protect her reputation; to have, as companion, a married woman older than herself.

The summer may well be employed in making the acquaintance — the friendship — of the French drama. Most of Molière is played; of Racine, "Britannicus," "Phèdre," "Andromaque," and "Iphigénie;" of Corneille, "Le Cid" and "Les Horaces" are still played. The modern dramas are legion; to read them seems an endless task, but a listener at the Conservatoire, if he be not familiar with them, will find much of the instruction unintelligible. In other ways, also, they repay the reading. There is no better means to acquire facility in understanding and speaking than to read them aloud. There is a book-store under the Théâtre-Français where any play may be bought, and the salesmen will take pleasure in marking in a catalogue the names of the most popular ones. Regular attendance at the theater is as important as attendance at the Conservatoire. The Français is, of course, first on the list.

The Odéon is called the "second Théâtre-Français" only because the classics are played there also. The performances are not to be compared with those given in several other theaters. Pupils of the Conservatoire who aspire to playing tragedy, and who fall short of the first prize, go to the Odéon. Some of the now celebrated actors began their careers there.

Almost as powerful as the theaters to train the judgment are the criticisms in the papers. The articles of "Un Monsieur de l'Orchestre," in the "Figaro," can scarcely be called criticisms, but they are full of suggestive wit. Monsieur Auguste Vitu is the critic of that paper, and writes in a dignified style that carries conviction. Monsieur Sarcey, acknowledged leader of living dramatic critics, writes for "Le Temps." The student will form no pleasanter habit than going to his news-stand on Sunday afternoons, buying his "Temps," and reading Monsieur Sarcey's article by the fireside. The day after the first performance of a new play he will buy all the papers, and learn as much of the literary, dramatic, and moral qualities of the piece, the history of its growth in the author's mind, and the work of the actors, judged by their own ideals and in comparison with great ones of the past, as by seeing the performance a dozen times. He will be delighted with the earnestness, the educated intelligence, and the impartiality of these criticisms. There is no vague, thoughtless praise; there are no long sentences that indicate nothing but an abnormal secretion of adjectives in the writer's brain. "It is enough to make a man respect himself," he will think, "to be held worthy of treatment like this; and to stand such a test, he can permit himself no weak points." A paste diamond would turn very pale under the searching light that is thrown upon the jewels in the crown of Paris — the actors of her drama.

The advantage of a year of study in Paris to an American depends upon himself. If his object in going upon the stage be to make a fortune or to display his individual peculiarities, or if he go abroad expecting to act in Paris and return with a European reputation, to sweep like a comet before the "upturned, wondering eyes of mortals," filling the theatrical sky with a glittering Parisian tail, then he will gain nothing. It will be far wiser to stay at home, engage some playwright that knows him to put together some incidents in which his eccentricities can be made conspicuous, and start "on the road," heralded by flaming pictures and advertisements written in the superlative. If he be prompted by a sense of the importance and the consequent dignity of his art, by a conviction that he can do his life-work better in that field than in any other, then a season spent in the theaters of Paris will be of inestimable value to him. He will, perhaps, make little progress in the technicalities of acting; he will go home to begin at the very bottom; but he will have gathered a store of knowledge that will aid him at every step, and he will have conceived an ideal that will inspire him, make him indifferent to difficulties, and feed in him the determination to do his utmost to help on the organization of our theatrical class into a dramatic world.

Juliet M. Everts.

C1884B

With each day's advance in population, the country must necessarily rely more and more upon its militia. It is of no value unless effective, and it is therefore of national importance that it should be made so.

Forgotten Lessons.

THERE is hardly a chapter in human history more instructive to those who have to deal with public questions than the story of the rise and development of the trade in the thirteen American colonies as told by Dr. Eggleston in the present number of THE CENTURY. One may here observe all the great laws of political economy acting nakedly and without complications; one may here see all the great forces of trade in their rudimentary conditions.

No more striking illustration can be found of the futility of governmental meddling. Pennsylvania and Carolina endeavored to build up whale-fisheries. All the Southern colonies strove to establish ship-building and general trade. But, by laws too strong for legislative control, the New-Englanders who proposed to themselves to follow agriculture became renowned in ship-building, cod-fish and mackerel catching, and far-away commercial ventures; while all the bounties and customs-exemptions offered to country-built ships at the South left these colonies agricultural—dependent on New-Englanders, Scotchmen, and English merchants for the little mercantile life to be found in them. The restraint put upon colonial trade in the interest of English merchants promoted smuggling, gave birth to American manufactures in competition with the English, alienated the commercial classes from the mother country, and helped to destroy entirely the dependence of America on England. One may do incalculable mischief by seeking to thwart the action of the great economic forces; but one can never permanently turn them out of natural channels by legislation.

There has been no plan broached in our time for making money by mere ordinance that was not tried in substance by our forefathers. Massachusetts made cheap shillings as we now make cheap silver dollars; Virginia allowed debased coin to pass in order to "make money plenty"; and all the colonies tried to make their people rich by stamping values on paper. In every instance the action of financial gravitation sunk each coin and bill to its just level. Then, as now, fine words failed to butter parsnips.

The story of ante-revolutionary commerce is pregnant with the lesson that trade in a large sense can never permanently flourish unless it is kept within the limits of commercial rectitude. The thieving Indian trader gradually undermined the traffic by which he lived. The "rich mynheers" of New York whose ships came home with ill-gotten booty bought from the Madagascar pirates were fostering an evil fatal to their own commerce. Charleston and Newport made money by piracy, but Newport saw the time when alarms were beaten in her own streets on account of peril from pirates off the coast, and Charleston found the rice trade likely to be throttled at its birth by pirates who captured nearly every ship that sailed out of its harbor. Judge Sewell tells us of a curious superstition in New England at the end of the seventeenth century. Whenever Arabian coins appeared in circulation in large numbers, there were those who refused to receive them, lest by taking a single coin that had formed part of a pirate's plunder they might introduce a canker that would eat up their whole estate. Without putting too much faith in poetic justice, one may clearly trace in the well-understood laws of public economy a principle that bears a considerable likeness to the notion that led the cautious Yankee sometimes to refuse Arabian gold pieces. Certainly, on any broad scale and in any long run, no trade is securely prosperous that has an element of injustice in it. Those who are loath to permit the book-trade to give up its practice of despoiling foreign authors might well consider whether the canker is not already eating out its prosperity.

OPEN LETTERS.

What the Choirs Say.

THERE is a well-known book called "Rejected Addresses," consisting of poems and sketches purporting to have been denied insertion in the literary periodicals of their day. When I began this series of open letters on music in the churches, I had in mind almost constantly some lines of poetry which I formerly read in that volume; and, indeed, several times I wrote them down to be published, as presenting the most exact picture of the modern quartet, in its characteristic attitude, taken as it flings its supercilious gaze over upon its employers, and delivers itself thus:

> "I had a grandmother: she a donkey kept:
> And when that donkey looked her in the face,
> Its look was sad—and you are sad, my Public!"

It was as if the music-people stood, grandmother-like, looking down with pity on us, the sad religious public, and gave us all we deserved, their commiseration, as they perceived we had at last reached the full force of the conclusion that we had fastened them on ourselves for the slow twelve months to come; and yet it was comical to mark how stupidly melancholy we were over it. Could we not see that we were outwitted? And must Christians be weak enough to whine when they were whipped?

One of the best preachers, pastors, and musicians in this country, now settled in a New England city, went forth from his own pulpit, just a little while since, to minister for a single Sabbath in another. He says that an "Order of Service" was put in his hands as he entered the church by the organist, who was also the leader of the music. This slip of printed paper contained whatever he was expected to content himself with singing during the worship. He tells us under his signature that the morning was beautifully bright

with sunshine, and there was no sign of a funeral anywhere. Yet the first hymn was the dirge:

> "Unveil thy bosom, faithful tomb,
> Take this new treasure to thy trust."

And the second was of the same description. But, as if in order tŏ prove there was not even method in such madness, the anthem between the prayers was "Protect us through the coming night!"

The stranger, however, could not bear to have his service destroyed; so he effected a compromise in some delicate fashion, and left no result more perilous to the peace of the church than the evident displeasure of the musician whose pretty tune was put aside. Probably the next preacher caught that the week after.

Now this is my constant picture; I cannot get it away out of my reach. But more and more, as I have written on, I have bethought myself of so many excellent people, so many genuine musicians, so many devout worshipers of God, who, in these twenty-five years of my observation, have shown how earnest were their aspirations, how intensely eager their wish to be decent, honorable, and true to every obligation and proper rule; how plainly they purposed to be considerate to all parties concerned; how reverent were their hearts in the service of God; how charitable and patient were their sentiments, even toward those who sometimes were rough in criticisms and harsh in behavior,— so many memories of such persons have returned to me, as my pen has moved along, that a certain uneasy sense of unfairness has crossed the lines of my conscience. If I leave these sketches just as they stand up to this moment, I shall not be satisfied. Every story I have told has been unexaggerated. But have I not declared that there must have been, and that there are at this instant, charlatans in the profession who ought to be sent out of it by that better public opinion we all recognize as ruling among the few of its members? Have I not asked earnestly that those musicians whom most of us know and honor would speak out in a revision of the "common law" of maxim and behavior, thus giving us a new basis of association and engagement more equitable and becoming, upon which we may proceed for the future?

There are two sides to most of these questions which come under constant friction of discussion. There are choirs and organists, and there are choirs and organists. And these are not always the same, nor always just alike. We are agreed that many of those who are paid highest prices, and are filling most conspicuous places, are utterly unfit to lead in church services, because their whole vitiating principle of action is found in personal display; they introduce into the church the ideas and suggestions of the concert-room; they give us solos of artistic exhibition, instead of leading the people in their worship.

To this the reply is proffered in good faith, and without any acrimony of feeling. It is said that the leading positions are bestowed upon those who can make the most show and attract the most notice, no matter who or what they are. Those on whom we might hope to depend for genuine help declare that we render them powerless by associating them with the mere mercenaries of the profession against their taste and will, and still seem to expect worship from them. It is hard beyond description for two women of refinement and taste to stand between two members of some burnt-cork minstrel band on the Lord's Day, and see behind their ears the grime not yet washed off from Saturday night's concert, and still preserve the honorable silence which it is not their business to break with words. Such persons know the difference between the false and the true as well as any one; they have to take what is brought to them by those who select. They frequently mourn over what they are not responsible for, and cannot in the least control. And they publicly do what they think inappropriate and fairly detest, because the leader directs, and the authorities endure, the wrong.

Are these intimations true? The writer of this paper was once a passenger on a steamship which carried a large minstrel troupe. He preached on the Sabbath at the invitation of the captain of the vessel, who also told him that a company of musicians would intone the responses of the liturgy and sing the canticles and hymns. The performance of that day on the ocean was fairly exquisite; and when the preacher openly expressed his wonder that such men could be so familiar with every part of the ritual, one of the wives accompanying the band pointed out eight of the singers who had been for years members of church-choirs on Sundays, and told him that four of them had relinquished positions as leaders to go on this foreign trip of six months with their company. And to that the writer of this paper would also add that he can give the name of a prominent soprano in New York who, immediately after Sabbath evening service was over, went to a beer-drinking saloon to sing at the concert.

Some things there are which we feel sure might be corrected. The contention for places in most of our great cities and large towns is most violent and oppressive. Some churches will try to steal a settled and favorite singer with the proffer of higher salary, and behave as contemptibly in the transaction as a shoddy woman, who, under guise of distributing tracts, calls in a neighbor's kitchen, and seeks to pervert the cook. These singers, therefore, never know whether they are to be in the same position another year, or are going to be compelled to change. Some shrewd agent may be "prospecting" secretly to ascertain whether such and such a one can be enticed away in the spring. Then, at the final moment, there comes a rush and a strife of factions, and out upon the street stand a discharged crowd with all the dishonors of a defeat which they never anticipated or deserved, and certainly never dreamed of provoking.

This is started by some of our quietest singers as a genuine complaint; they insist that it is a grievance. And any one who has instincts which make known to him what is right and generous and true, must admit that such a form of treatment and behavior cannot have any apology. The whole thing is miserably unjust; and, if there ever be any extenuating circumstances for bad blood in a Christian's heart, this is a fair case for some show of temper. For if the discharged singers had done to the congregation precisely what the gleeful maidens now engaged in their places did to the churches they left, that is, if they in tricky secrecy had suffered themselves to be bought like mer-

cenaries, then that congregation would have turned upon them with indescribable spitefulness; and there is no word of reproach in forcible speech that the sewing society would not have employed to free female minds against them for such behavior — which, by the way, it is likely the church just despoiled is now doing in its own fashion, and with a sense of most righteous indignation. Hence this is a state of things more frequent than it is honorable; and, on the whole, it is more noisy than it is Christian.

In such an unsettled condition, there must be some measure of anxiety. Hence arise these unseemly struggles for place. I am acquainted with a minister who was present when seventeen women and four men, young and old, married and unmarried, experienced and unskilled, timid and dauntless, painfully embarrassed and ambitiously confident, Italian, American, Spanish, German, and French, all tried in one evening before an audience of ten or twelve cool critics, who of course grew tired and petulant as the time moved along; and he says he went around among them constantly, answering their questions, and trying to cheer them up a little, to suggest here and prompt there, and help in some measure in some way, for three hours and a half, until his brain whirled and his heart ached with sympathy for singers and committee and everybody else; and all the following night, he declares, he dreamed he was somewhere where he heard what never since has he proposed to describe, never since to recommend.

No one knows, until he has tried it, how hard this ordeal is to a lady or gentleman. The criticism on mere musical conditions is severe enough; but, beyond this, choirs tell us, there is a suspicion that all will be hopeless and useless in the end. While one is looking about him he sees here and there a singer, perhaps two with their heads together, so cool, so composed, and so confident, that he finds himself growing disconcerted; he says to himself over and over again, "These persons have learned that a decision has been reached already; the selection to-night will depend, not on capability, but on patronage or favoritism; money is scant, and that bass performer has a friend in the congregation who is to send in a check for a subsidy in case he is elected, and he, of course, will select his friends. So the leader gets his own way, as he meant to get it when he came; for we know the minister is opposed to a choir anyhow, and they all intend to head him off from securing a precentor. It is a farce, all this coming here for a fair competition."

Now if any one says that these thoughts, thoroughly human as it is to be confessed, never flit through such serene minds as those of quartet singers, let him put the question to some who every spring have to candidate for a situation, and then he may be content to trust their answer. It would seem as if such a charge might be thrown back with some show of feeling, and so absurd a suspicion might be rebuked as unworthy of fair Christian dealing. But during these years at least three significant facts have come to my own knowledge; which may not show that congregations are tricky, but which seem to show that there are some employés in the church-choir profession who would be glad to make congregations put themselves in a false position. A neighboring pastor once suddenly corrected my remark that a certain soprano singer was accustomed to receive two hundred and fifty dollars for taking part in a concert, and that few committees could afford to pay such a sum. On private inquiry afterward, I ascertained that her formal bill had been made out for that sum; but that she had always settled for less than a third of it, without any request, only saying that her professional position required that she should be able to exhibit the account at that price. On another occasion, I learned that a bass leader was paid a thousand dollars a year; and that he took a pew rented at two hundred and fifty, which he never occupied, of course, but which went for so much cash in the reckoning. Again, I read a letter in which a friend outside of the congregation made the deliberate offer of a check of five hundred dollars toward the salary of a lady who demanded an engagement for a thousand dollars as mentioned in the agreement. The reason openly pressed was that she must have her "position" recognized among the leading singers of the city, or she would experience a falling off in her reputation. The offer was refused. I submit, it would not be fair to suspect that congregations are insincere, on the knowledge that there are some professionals whose engagements do not tally with the terms of their bills and receipts. Possibly they do not get such salaries as they claim they do.

Many of the most thoughtful men in the congregations are coming to the conclusion that the usual form of candidating for places is wrong and hurtful to every one concerned. Some of us have known a diffident singer, who was incomparably the best in the whole list, calmly give away her chance — which meant a chance of supporting her widowed mother and of sending a brother to college — because, in the pride of her womanhood, she could not suffer her sensibility to be paraded before the committee of decision. Ask her what was the reason, and most likely she would answer: "Oh, I could not sing that fine old piece then as it ought to be sung!" Ask them, and they would perhaps say: "What a pity! she spoiled an excellent solo; she has some good notes in her voice, but she lacks in feeling!" While the fact was, all the time, she shrank from profaning her wealth of feeling there in the empty church by exhibiting it in tremulous volume, just to be pronounced upon. Let it be borne in mind that musicians must be of a keenly sympathetic temperament, or we do not want them; but that means keenly sympathetic suffering, when they happen to be snubbed or misconstrued.

Thus she would tell her own story; and there is some show of justice in the protest she makes. It is the universal protest; nobody likes this way of testing and engaging singers for choirs. But it is useless to charge the awkwardness of it upon either one of the parties concerned. It does not improve matters to call committee-men ignorant, or musicians egotistic. Some committee-men are intelligent, and some musicians are modest. It has been suggested that churches might choose some fit leader, and put the appropriated sum of money in his hands; let him select the members of the choir, and be responsible for giving satisfaction; or, that some interested Christian musician in the congregation, some one whose taste might be trusted, and whose judgment would command respect,

should take the whole matter in charge; or, again, that some prudent expert outside the congregation could bring proper parties together. It is very difficult to decide what should be done in order to avoid such embarrassing complications. But of one thing we may all be certain: the last spark of hopefulness will expire when we go to calling each other names, and to doubting each other's purposes.

Charles S. Robinson.

"Music in America."

ON January 8th, 1884, Mr. R. G. White published a letter in the "Evening Post," insinuating that my work, "Music in America," is untruthful; also saying that it "contains many errors and misstatements, all of a misleading, and many of an injurious, character"; and informing the public that "this will be shown in an article to be published in THE CENTURY MAGAZINE." This attack on my book was pointed out to me by a friend, several days after. I then took up Mr. White's gauntlet in the "Evening Post" of January 25th, announcing my intention to meet his onslaught *en preux chevalier*, as I shall now endeavor to do.

Mr. White's attack on my book, which, in its terms "injurious," etc., may be stretched to an extent undreamed of, let me hope, by Mr. White, was apparently called out by the simple fact that I, fulfilling my duty as historian and critic, corrected in my book, in a courteous and moderate spirit, two errors in musical statement by Mr. White, which fell in the path of my labors. I did this also in the case of men immeasurably Mr. White's superiors as musical writers, such as Fétis, Sir George Grove, etc.; such corrections, when justifiable, being naturally expected from a historian. Had I intended to *criticise* Mr. White seriously, I should indeed have taken another course; for he is lamentably ignorant in musical matters, and thus open to criticism as a musical writer, his works being, as I stated in my "Evening Post" reply, crowded with errors. Now let us examine Mr. White's "show," as published in his "open letter" in the April CENTURY.

When closely analyzed, this is reduced to a few objections which Mr. White makes to certain unimportant points in my book. First, as to my two corrections of him, Mr. White is angry because I discovered that the first performance of "Der Freischütz" in New York took place two years later than the date affixed to it by Mr. White in his article on "Opera in New York" published in THE CENTURY in March, 1882. He thought it necessary to say, in a note to the same article, that in 1825 there was only one theater in New York; in my book I quoted Wemyss and Ireland to prove that there then were two. He thereupon falls foul of me again, and sneers at my authorities. But "the humor of it is too hot" when he glows with a white heat upon me for copying a certain criticism of Ireland's, and honestly asserting that I did not know from what source Ireland took his criticism. Mr. White now declares that Ireland compiled it from two different articles in the "Evening Post." But when I read Ireland's criticism, and Mr. White's (in "Opera in New York"), I was puzzled by the discrepancy between the two; I now acknowledge that I feel deeply for Mr. White, and am indignant with Ireland for playing us both such a trick. Next (to proceed to his "open letter"), Mr. White accuses me of being in the dark, and leaving my readers there, in regard to the old St. Cecilia Society, which was, he says, "the first to perform orchestral music in the country." Now, in order to cast a little light on this profound detail, I will avail myself of Mr. White's dark lantern, which he so obligingly places at my disposal. I was perfectly aware of the existence of the old St. Cecilia Society between 1790 and 1800; but, in a number of one of the obsolete American musical journals, I happened to read so severe a criticism upon it, copied, as I afterward found, from letters published by a traveling Englishman, that I thought the kindest thing I could do for the St. Cecilia Society was to leave it to its repose, among many hundred pages of rejected matter which I have not published, and which would lend no further interest or credit to "Music in America." This Englishman, not given to mincing words, apparently, observes of this society: "They have an orchestral band here, dubbed the St. Cecilia Society; but the fellows play damnably! I wish they could once hear Salomon's excellent band," etc. (It will be remembered that Salomon induced Haydn to come to England in 1791 to compose symphonies for his band.) Here again I am forced to correct Mr. White. This St. Cecilia Society was not, as he says, "the first to perform orchestral music" in this country; that was done by an older — at least ten years older — society, the "Apollo," but I have not been able to fix the exact date of its first establishment. Here is a chance for Mr. White to exercise his boasted spirit of research. Mr. White rubs his hands victoriously over a great "find" of his, the Pilkington dictionary, which he seems to think me unacquainted with, and which he therefore magnifies into "a manual so thorough and so sound," and terms an "original" work. Here is the title of this work, which is not "thorough" nor "sound," and is now also obsolete and antiquated. Let every reader of the English language judge for himself of its "originality."

A
MUSICAL DICTIONARY
COMPRISING THE
ETYMOLOGY, AND DIFFERENT MEANINGS OF
ALL THE TERMS THAT MOST FREQUENTLY
OCCUR IN MODERN COMPOSITION.
COMPILED AND ARRANGED BY
H. W. PILKINGTON
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WATSON AND BANGS
1812
84 printed pages.

You can "mock a leek," but can you "eat a leek," good Pistol?

I was not only aware of the existence of this compilation, but I also knew the sources whence Pilkington compiled and arranged it. But as "the gentleman from Alsatia," who wants "to teach us," has not the faintest desire to number Mr. White among his scholars, he has no idea of appending a list of those, or of the hundreds of books, personal reminiscences, papers, pamphlets, manuscripts, etc., etc., from which, combined with his own experience, he

tion of a painfully inadequate "Stanza," suggested as the concluding one to Bryant's imaginative and exquisite "June"; while the tone of the Webster ode, outside of certain fine passages, is strained even to the point of absurdity. These "Poems," then, will be likely to strike the reader as unequal, but among them are some fine and thoughtful poetical essays. "The Song of Runaway Pond" is a stirring piece of descriptive poetry, narrating an extraordinary occurrence. "The Vale of Otter" is another felicitously worded descriptive poem. "Dedicated" is an album piece, written with simplicity and sincerity. If there were room, attention might be called to other pieces that the appreciator of beautiful verse should not let pass. A poem that shows the author at his best in both diction and feeling is the one entitled "Desiderium," from which are quoted the first and last stanzas:

DESIDERIUM.

The shattered water plashes down the ledge;
The long ledge slants and bends between its walls,
And shoots the current over many an edge
Of shelvy rock, in thin and foamy falls,
With the same streaming light and numerous sound
As when his musing way he duly hither wound.

. . . . . .

These tokens of that gracious presence here,
O Nature, you and I together mourn;
But you and I, O Nature, have our cheer
Concerning him that helps our loss be borne —
You mold his dust to keepsake grass and flower,
What warmed his dust molds me to forms of finer power.

In "The Venus of Milo, and Other Poems," Mr. Sill shows a genuine poetic faculty. Here are lyrical feeling and imagination of an unusual character. The title poem has a thoughtfulness, a dignity, and spontaneity of expression that lift it above the ordinary rhyming of the day, and lead one to wish that the author might in the future cultivate his gifts with greater assiduity than heretofore. Here is no lack, apparently, of original qualification for a poetic career; and if it were not so common to see young authors deflected by circumstances from following out a natural bent toward imaginative work, one might have the highest hopes for Mr. Sill's future as a writer of poetry. We copy out a few lines from a striking poem entitled "Field Notes":

"Life is a game the soul can play
With fewer pieces than men say.
Only to grow as the grass grows,
Prating not of joys or woes;
To burn as the steady hearth-fire burns;
To shine as the star can shine,
Or only as the mote of dust that turns
Darkling and twinkling in the beam of light divine;
And for my wisdom — glad to know
Where the sweetest beech-nuts grow,
And to track out the spicy root,
Or peel the musky core of the wild-berry shoot,
And how the russet ground-bird bold
With both slim feet at once will lightly rake the mold."

Ellen M. Hutchinson, Owen Innsley, Edith Thomas, and Helen Gray Cone are names (real and assumed) of young American women who have very recently come before the public as writers of verse of unusual merit, though of these four only the first two have yet published in volume form. To these poets must now be added the name of Louise Imogen Guiney, whose "Songs at the Start" include several poems of great beauty and finish, and of an indefinable charm. When the author comes in later years to revise the present volume, she will perhaps omit from a serious collection like this such alien notes as those struck on pages 21, 76, and 80; she may, perhaps, also discard or recast some other pieces in the book, but not such fine and well-wrought poems as "Hemlock River," "An Epitaph," "Poete my Maister Chaucer," "Charondas," "Crazy Margaret" (with its ending touch of fate), "My Neighbor," "To The River," "My Soprano," and "Spring." This new poet — for poet she surely is — has a young and healthy maturity of thought and art, a nice verbal sense, a sincere human sympathy, and a lyrical grace, that give the lover of poetry a keen pleasure, and promise still stronger performance in the future. The gem of these songs is a little poem of two stanzas. A famous writer of exquisite verses once said, "How grateful we ought to be to a poet who writes even but a single poem that we love and remember!" And a poem to love and remember is

SPRING.

"With a difference."—*Hamlet.*

Again the bloom, the northward flight,
The fount freed at its silver height,
And down the deep woods to the lowest,
The fragrant shadows scarred with light.

O inescapable joy of spring!
For thee the world shall leap and sing;
But by her darkened door thou goest
Forever as a spectral thing.

Many things could be said in praise of the above lines, but the best of it is that the author shows in many parts of her first book the same qualities which go to the making of this perfect lyric.

* * *

The Minister and the Music.

In all these discussions concerning choirs and congregations, a careful reference must be had to the clergyman who is responsibly in charge of the church. He is an important factor in every case, and some righteous disposal must be made of him. For example, if it be insisted that every chorister, in order to avoid singing an inappropriate opening piece or an inconsistent anthem, must seek music with the kind of sentiment in it which will represent the spirit of the present service, then it follows certainly that the minister must in some intelligible form make known to him what the spirit of that special service is going to be. In many congregations the rubrics of what is called the Church Year fix the themes of the sermons and the subject of prayer. But in the larger number all this is left to be fashioned by the judgment or even the caprice of the preacher. I once in Brooklyn heard a man deliver a long discourse on political misrule, and he took this text: "Let her drive." It does not appear worth while to argue whether in a case like that the choir could have selected pieces to match exactly; but I am happy to report from memory that the singing on the occasion was decidedly inappropriate and religious.

In ordinary working times, even if the notes of his sermon are not finished, any clergyman can be sufficiently sure of his purpose so as to send word to the leader what to choose. When this man has no hint

whatever to guide his selection, and so it appears that it is a matter of indifference to everybody, it is not fair to blame him in his perplexity if he happens to remember that now the chance has come for him to answer the request which one of the committee pressed upon him a fortnight before. He ought not to be held responsible for the very troublesome incongruity between his "Rain-chorus" from the "Elijah" and the clergyman's discourse on the pathetic needs and the awful terror in Ohio because of the floods. The minister grows eloquent over the desperation of the people, and prays God to stay his hand in his judgments; and then, while the contribution box is going around, the whole quartette are uttering a passionate outpouring of gratitude for what stifled the suffering and half-drowned citizens for whom the money was wanted. Hear this once: "The waters gather, they rush along, they rush along! thanks be to God! the stormy billows are high! thanks be to God! their fury is mighty! thanks be to God!" But now, if the minister complains, why may not the chorister complain too? When the committee want a chorus from Mendelssohn, what right has a minister to destroy all the force of it by an inopportune discourse? And will any one please mention the appropriate occasion for such a performance in a Sabbath service, so as not to disappoint the committee?

Unfortunately, it is one of the greatest losses to the usefulness of a minister that (as sometimes happens) he is not a musician; but the misfortune is still deeper and more pitiful if, with the absence of the artistic gift, there is the presence and possession (as sometimes happens) of a prejudice against musical art altogether, that renders him pettish under even a suggestion of help. Once a large congregation witnessed an unseemly display of temper on the part of one of the most celebrated orators in our land. He prided himself upon his dramatic power in the rendering of hymns in the pulpit, and on this occasion he gave out "Jesus, lover of my soul," in his service. But as he read along he delivered the seventh and eighth lines of the verse before the fifth and sixth; so he found himself blank up against nonsense and a semicolon at the climax. He grew scarlet with anger, and almost pouted as he turned from the pulpit to the choir. The audience saw his rapid protest as he whispered to the pastor in charge, and it is not too much to say that the service received an uncomfortable interruption. Now the trouble was that the hymnal he read from had given the poetry correctly enough; but when it was set to the usual tune, "Martyn," it was thought best to double back the lines in the music for the repetition of the strain. The compiler of the book committed an intolerable folly in not giving the first verse outside of the tune in its place at the head of the hymn. And so the excited speaker, entirely ignorant of such technical things, had no chance even to recognize his mistake.

It is not easy to suggest a remedy for such a deficiency, except the ordinary one for all trouble—ask help. But only a few persons in this proud world are willing to take assistance in artistic matters, and not a very large number are competent to give it. Though it is never any shame for a man not to know, it is always a shame for him not to learn.

Much of the wrestle between ministers and musicians could be avoided if they trusted each other more and took each other into confidence oftener in the arrangements for the services of each Sabbath. Frequently, the source of all the confusion lies in mere forgetfulness or inadvertence on the part of the preacher. Not a year ago I heard a pastor in a distant city, a gentleman of the highest standing, give out a hymn beginning "Pour out thy Spirit from on high," for an ordinary assembly. He had entered the pulpit in a hurry, and this came to hand the earliest. He read it nearly through before he seemed to discover it was for a convocation of ministers only; all he could do was to counsel the dropping of the final stanza about their all going to heaven together after they had "resigned their charge."

Choirs complain that they are suddenly thrown into the embarrassment of singing nonsense and contradiction in many cases when these omissions of stanzas are made. The old illustration, which is never to be forgotten or forgiven, is always put into use for argument and expostulation. The hymn was the one beginning "When thou, my righteous Judge, shalt come." Out of this, after reading, the preacher said the second stanza was to be omitted. Thus it came about that the people were instructed to pray that, as to being found at the "right hand" of the eternal Judge, the Lord would "prevent it" by his grace, when what was to be prevented, if possible, beyond everything else, was the awful risk of one's name being "left out" of the Lamb's book of life at the last; but the only mention of that disaster was in the stanza omitted. Thus the hymn was travestied and destroyed.

Sometimes a minister sends up one number to the leader in the haste before service, and puts another on his own list; the tune does not fit, and so there is confusion. I once listened to the stubborn endeavor of a choir to carry out their plan, despite of their upset; it was with a short-meter tune, to which a careless pastor had given them a hallelujah meter hymn, after it was too late to get another. The leader whispered that they would now repeat the last two lines; and so they went on. This sedate paper will not attempt to relate how the soprano stopped at the third line with her lips full of two notes of unrendered music, and murmured "*oo-oo*" to dispose of them; nor how she distended and prolonged the final line on the perplexing repeat so as to compel six notes to carry eight syllables; but it must be mentioned that this ingenious work was done through four stanzas; and still the choir had to take the blame.

In the early years of my professional life, I once asked one of my neighbors to take our service for me for a morning of relief. This gentleman was very peculiar in manner, but a truly Christian worker, and a good friend of mine; I do not consent to caricature him in a single particular. He gave out his opening hymn from the old Watts collection. He emphasized the syllables fiercely, but even that showed he had an ear for rhythm. Thus he began: "Let us commence divine worship by singing the ninety-second psalm, second part—the second part of the ninety-second psalm, long meter: Lord, '*tis* a pleasant *thing* to stand In *gar*dens planted *by* thy hand; Let *me* within thy *courts* be seen, Like *a* young cedar, *fresh* and *green*." By this time he perceived that something was wrong. Moreover, the choir were excitedly changing

their tune-books in a frantic rustle, and the congregation were almost in a titter. But he rose to the occasion, and said impressively: "I have made an unfortunate mistake, and will consult my card. Ah, yes! ah, yes! I see; I have misunderstood my figure; it is a *seven*. We will sing the seventy-second psalm, second part — the second part of the *seventy*-second psalm: Je*sus* shall reign wher*e'er* the sun Does *his* successive *journ*eys run." Shall I need to add, after this history of a literal fact, that for several years I used now and then to be asked, with as much gravity as was possible: "What ever became of that *young cedar*, fresh and green, whom you had here awhile ago to preach for us?"

Such things are not funny; they are very melancholy, when they occur on the Lord's Day. They have their source in simple heedlessness, and in want of thought in the preparation of hymns before the public exercises begin. We insist that the minister must manage the music; but then, if that be true, he *must* manage it; it cannot go haphazard. It needs care and information, and he ought to put himself in contact with the choir-leader always. He ought to have his wits about him, and not throw everything away in a mere nervousness concerning his sermon. Beside me now, as I write, sits an admirable man, my old friend, a college president; and he tells me this incident, which I relate exactly as it comes from his lips: He was in the pulpit not long since, just going to preach for a neighboring pastor. He could not help being annoyed by the levity of the choir, seated opposite the pulpit in the gallery; they were fairly hilarious with laughter. The pastor was evidently distressed and mortified in his turn. He was an excessively nervous and absent-minded man, and the responsibility of having a stranger in his place had agitated him all the morning; this almost completed his overthrow. Just then, up the pulpit steps came the chorister, beckoning to him. He leaned forward to take what seemed like a notice from his hand; then the man asked for the card with the hymns chosen upon it, as usual. Into every pocket on his person went the flying fingers of the minister, as he whispered to himself, "I am sure I sent it to him or somebody; where on earth can it be? Oh, here," with a sense of indescribable relief. Thus the leader went his way elated. And then our president asked for his copy of the same, and the pastor mechanically put in his hand the paper which the chorister brought back to him a few minutes before. My friend opened it at once, and found on it this remarkable direction: "You must not forget to call for my back-switch, or it will be necessary for you to go clear back again after it; I need it for to-morrow." He passed it over to the parson; as he caught sight of it, the poor preacher jumped as if hit. "Oh, what have I done!" he cried in a stage-whisper. "That was my wife's note to remind me yesterday when I went into town; I sent it to the choir; that is what they were laughing at!"

But now, in the other direction also lies peril for a minister: he may know much, and be too "artistic." There are in every generation a few clergymen who have unusual musical gifts; in some cases, a talent for composition and for management of choral services in the house of God. Their temptation is to indulge their æsthetic taste to such an extent as to render them regardless of that part of their congregation who have simpler needs and less cultivated appreciation. Of course, such persons would soon reach their place and level among the people to whom they minister, and the public at large would not have to be disturbed by them. But they are the speakers who come forth in conventions and assemblies and start the argument for a higher class of performances; they clamor for liturgies, and grow crazy over chorals, and plead for more "richness" in worship, till the sad and bewildered people, who never did profess to understand them, wish they would be quiet. They assert they know what Christians want, because they themselves know "thorough bass." It has been quoted as a remark of Legh Richmond, that "Christ has more than once been crucified between the two thieves of mathematics and classics." That may or may not be true; one thing is certainly very nearly true, namely, that "high art" kills the spirit of the gospel in a preacher's heart more quickly than anything else in the world. The end is generally close at hand; these ministers ooze themselves out of the churches they weary, and then we are treated to their discontented criticisms upon modern music, uttered in the newspapers.

Art is excellent as long as it is subordinate; when it is thrust up into dominance, it is only a King Bramble which royal cedars and vines perfectly understand. Within a week I fell upon a passage, which I used to repeat and always have wished to quote, from one of the letters of the poet Cowper to his friend John Newton. He is writing about a clergyman they had recently received at Olney, and this is what he says:

> "He seems, together with others of our acquaintance, to have suffered considerably in his spiritual character by his attachment to music. The lawfulness of it, when used with moderation and in its proper place, is unquestionable; but I believe that wine itself, though a man be guilty of habitual intoxication, does not more debauch and befool the natural understanding than music, always music, music in season and out of season, weakens and destroys the spiritual discernment. If it is not used with an unfeigned reference to the worship of God, and with a design to assist the soul in the performance of it, — which cannot be the case when it is the only occupation, — it degenerates into a sensual delight, and becomes a most powerful advocate for the admission of other pleasures, grosser perhaps in degree, but in their kind the same."

When we bear in mind that these strong words are spoken concerning a Christian minister, by one of the authors of the Olney Hymns to another, — Cowper to Newton, — there must be much important suggestion in them. At the foot of the page in the biography of the poet, from which I have quoted them, there is also this note: "It is recorded of Rev. Mr. Cecil that, being passionately fond of playing on the violin, and finding that it engrossed too much of his time and thoughts, he one day took it into his hands and broke it to pieces." I have undertaken to verify this statement, but I do not find the story in full. I found this paragraph, however, in Cecil's "Remains":

> "Admiration and feeling are very distinct from each other. Some music and oratory enchant and astonish, but they speak not to the heart. I have been overwhelmed by Handel's music: the Dettingen *Te*

Deum is, perhaps, the greatest composition in the world; yet I never in my life heard Handel but I could think of something else at the same time. There is a kind of music that will not allow this. Dr. Worgan has so touched the organ at St. John's that I have been turning backward and forward over the Prayer Book for the first lesson in Isaiah, and wondered that I could not find Isaiah there! The musician and orator fall short of the full power of their science, if the hearer is left in possession of himself."

It is evident from this, therefore, that even "the good Cecil," as he was affectionately called, perceived his own exposure to peril in the reach and strength of his enthusiasm for music; and it is not impossible to believe that he may have put away his temptation in the violent way the story suggests It is enough here to say that art is a servant; and when it begins to act as master, devotion disdains even its proffered help.

Charles S. Robinson.

In Re Church Music.

THE expression "worshiping by proxy," as applied by Dr. Robinson to church music, emphasizes, in a certain way, a habit of thought which is harmful to the highest usefulness of music in the public service. Of course, Dr. Robinson does not really object to "singing by proxy" any more than to "praying by proxy," but the readiness with which the phrase comes to hand indicates the extent to which this habit of thought has grown upon us. Do we not often allow our attention to be called away from what is being sung to who is singing and how it is being performed? Have we not allowed ourselves to look upon the singing as a "performance" and not an act of worship. And, as we settle ourselves in our pews to "listen to the voluntary," do we, as a general thing, endeavor to understand the thought of the composer (supposing the music to be properly selected), or do we rather, criticise the singers and spend all our thought upon the execution of the "selection"? It is this latter habit which gives point to the expression "by proxy," and not that it is another's voice that sings.

We go to church, it may be, to be lifted up, to be inspired, to be carried away out of ourselves to something better and above us, and beyond what we can understand from the level monotone and discord of daily life. As we come away from the morning service at Trinity, perhaps, where we have listened to the boys' clear voices rising through and over the full tones of the men, and with the organ, under and above all, filling the vast spaces with an ecstasy of song and praise; where we have heard deep calling unto deep, and angel voices telling unutterable things which only the inner ear at such times can hear and partly understand,— must we be told at the door as we come away, "down from the mountain," that we have been "singing by proxy," because, forsooth, the boys laughed amongst themselves during the sermon? Must we lose the inspiration of the morning because our soprano's good honest voice, in "I know that my Redeemer liveth," must be compared with Patti's? Or must we lose it entirely because we must not sing by proxy, and we certainly cannot sing it ourselves? The trouble is not so much in our singers as in our worshipers. We find what we seek.

One word, not in defense, about singing in a "foreign tongue," or, what amounts to the same thing, singing so that the words cannot be understood. In the first place, do we not sing many hymns to one tune? It is the tune and not the words that we care most for. Again, some of us may have listened to high mass in some grand cathedral, where every word was in a foreign tongue; shall we ever forget the emotions, the exaltations, the utter self-forgetfulness? Did we not, indeed, "bow down and worship," although we knew no word of what was being said? True, the words might have been assistants at the first, but once in that higher atmosphere and words do not avail,— it is "the worship of song."

W. H. S.

An Ideal Church.

PERHAPS I cannot place my view of this whole question of "Artistic Help in Divine Service" more clearly before those I want to reach than by telling them of an ideal church I have in mind. In that church the clergyman, the choir-leader, and the organist are a committee, meeting regularly to arrange for each service. The clergyman sets the tone of the service; and the organist and choir-master adapt themselves thereto, choosing music bright or sad, as is best, but always *the best*. In the choir gallery of that church are the best voices obtainable, and the choristers are ladies and gentlemen. The clergyman has confidence that his sermon will be supplemented by a service of praise which will heighten its effect, and the members of the congregation know that they will be given opportunities for joining audibly in the service of praise, and of worshiping by proxy through the medium of devotional music so sung and played that it will certainly call their minds from the contemplation of earthly to heavenly things.

Is that ideal church impossible of realization? I should like to have all concerned make strenuous efforts toward that end.

Fred. W. Wodell.

The Study of Acting in Paris.

ONE day, in Paris, in a conversation about the stage, Monsieur Régnier said to me: "I have many applications from Americans for private lessons and for admission to the Conservatoire; the number of such students is constantly increasing. Why is it that they do not study at home?"

I answered: "In America, acting is considered a trade rather than an art, save by very few; and the few, being forced to live like the wandering tribes of Israel in order to live at all, cannot teach. The opinion is often expressed by our actors that the quality of a dramatic performance is a matter solely of individual feeling; that it is, therefore, impossible to establish a standard of acting; that, moreover, no man can give another any valuable aid in learning to act."

"But you teach your young painters to see, although every human being looks through his especial pair of eyes; you have so-called 'art schools,' have you not?"

"Yes, many. We train our young lawyers, our young preachers, our young authors, all whose professional worth depends upon knowledge of human

the air-engine to a pressure of sixty pounds to the inch. In the machine examined, the temperature of the air in the pipes was, on starting the engine, sixty-four degrees Fahr., and in twenty minutes had fallen to thirty-two below zero, while in a few minutes after starting the pipes in the brine-tank were coated with frost.

There seems to be no reason why both of these types of machines may not be used to supply cold to domestic refrigerators by circulating either brine or cold air through a coil of pipes. The system would certainly be clearly safe in a sanitary sense (for only brine or air enters the house in closed pipes), and probably cheaper than ice. All the refrigerators in the stalls of the new Washington Market are to be kept cold by pipes filled with brine sent from a central station through the streets. One large apartment house has already this plan under consideration for supplying cold to all the tenants.

Charles Barnard.

Booth's Escape.

HAVING read the account of Booth's escape from Maryland into Virginia, in your April number, I cannot let the matter pass without correcting some errors in the narrative, as far as concerns the adventures of the fugitive and his appearance at Dr. Stuart's.

I was a guest at the home of Dr. Richard Stuart (not Stewart) when the unfortunate man came to the house. He asked to see Dr. Stuart, saying that he "was suffering from a broken leg, and wanted medical aid." The family had just risen from the evening meal (supper, not breakfast); there were a number of friends in the house just returned from Lee's army; every room and bed was occupied. Dr. Stuart was absent. Mrs. Stuart received the two men,— none of us knew who they were,— and, according to the usual custom of the family, they were invited in and given their supper. Booth, as one of them afterward proved to be, requested lodging. It was impossible to accommodate him, nor would any one unknown to the family have been taken in. A party of strangers who had been entertained on a former occasion proved to be spies. They afterward arrested Dr. Stuart, and conveyed him to the Old Capitol Prison, where he had remained many weary months. Profiting by this experience, no one was ever afterward received under suspicious circumstances, such as surrounded these men.

At bed-time the strangers were shown the way to the house of a respectable colored woman — a tenant of the Doctor's — near by, who had a spare room, where they slept that night. It frequently occurred that belated travelers were lodged there.

Dr. Stuart's fortunate absence in all probability saved the whole family from prison; and Mr. Townsend has neglected to state that, although the Doctor was away from home, and in fact never saw Booth, at that time or subsequent thereto, he was for this simple act of hospitality on the part of his family arrested again and thrown into solitary confinement, where he remained many weeks.

The letter which Mr. Townsend mentions was written from the woman's house, and though couched in polite but sorrowful language, interlarded with quotations from Shakspere, was very mortifying to the family. However, it afterward proved to be the key which opened the prison doors to the Doctor — a noble Christian gentleman, the very soul of hospitality, a man who was never known to turn from his door the poor, the unfortunate, or the distressed.

Although the shot fired in the theater by Booth was the greatest disaster that ever befell the Southern people,— I do not except the fall of Richmond or the surrender of Lee,— yet to my dying day I can never think but with pity of the sad, handsome face of the poor wanderer as, with all hope dead within him, suffering agony in body and mind, leaning upon a broken oar, and wrapped in a heavy fringed shawl, which fell in graceful folds from his right shoulder, he slowly and painfully passed out into the night.

E. G. D. G.

Church Music: A Letter to the Rev. Dr. Robinson.

MY DEAR SIR: No one interested in church music can be otherwise than edified by your admirable letter in THE CENTURY for April. The error in it is, however, fundamental. You write of church congregations as assembled *for the worship of God.* Nothing could be further from the truth. The buildings and trimmings of churches are simply the survival of a practice around which a multitude of pleasant and tender recollections twine, but the true and original spirit of which has utterly perished. Indeed, the churches have very aptly been styled the dress-parade of modern civilization. Leaving out of sight, for argument, the consideration of the purpose for which people are in theory supposed to attend churches, and falling back on your own actual personal experience, ask yourself what are the real objects which engage the thoughts and attention of the persons whom you yourself actually know. Unless your experience differs vastly from mine, you will admit that these objects are, at one end of the church, dignified and polished oratory; at the other, sensuous and ravishing strains of music; and in the territory between, unexceptionable manners and rich and stylish apparel. When people are leaving church, what subjects other than these form the staple of conversation? And when the clergyman makes a "pastoral" (!) visit, in what other topics does he hope to interest his parishioners? I say it without a particle of irreverence, and with no desire to wound the feelings of any one, that modern church-going is simply a form of decorous Sunday amusement, differing only in degrees from the so-called "sacred" concert. If this be so, as I am very sure it is, and if it be found that the best music is furnished by foreigners, why should the easy-going German and the dark-browed son of Italy be banished from our organ-lofts? And if people want fine music, good oratory, and brave millinery, why should they not have them?

Sincerely yours,

A Pew-owner.

about the abolition of slavery in the State, made the colored man a citizen, and established a school system for the people, as "infamous," he betrays his inability to discuss historical matters with candor and impartiality. It is, perhaps, too early to expect such qualities in a section so recently enfranchised. The day is not far distant, it is to be hoped, when the "joke" out of which grew the inexpressible horrors perpetrated by the Ku Klux Klan will find a different mode of treatment from that indulged in by the writer in THE CENTURY.

An Ex-Member of the "Union League."

July 14, 1884.

Congregational Singing.

SHALL our church music be by the people or by choirs, or by both? This question of choirs or no choirs seems so largely one of taste that we could safely leave it to the individual choice of the churches, did not other considerations present themselves. I believe that we should by all means have a good chorus choir. Few churches will hesitate to avail themselves of the assistance of a good organ and organist, with or without a precentor; why not as well employ the much more effective help of a good chorus choir? If it is feared that the choir will sing for, and in place of, the congregation, let the choir be restricted to one anthem in each service, and the organ played so full in the hymn-tunes that the congregation will, practically, be forced to sing. If personal display be feared, it is to be said that there are no solos in the full or true anthem, and that it is only in the professional quartet where this unseemly ambition obtrudes itself for the pleasure or misery of the auditors.

In the unfortunately plain service of our American churches, the Roman Catholic and Episcopal of course excepted, there seems to be no way in which the people can take part except by the singing of hymns. And as the people evidently should take some part, they then must sing. As they cannot sing the elaborate music of the anthem or cantata, they must needs have hymns and plain tunes for their use; and this leads us to our theme of congregational singing.

First, what is congregational singing? Everybody is ready with a reply, yet few will give a correct one. In the many churches where congregational singing has been attempted, and alleged failure has been the result, the first essential has been lacking, namely, a congregation. A few worshipers scattered over an auditorium far too large for them do not constitute a congregation. A congregation is such a number of people as completely fills the edifice or room in which they are gathered. Five hundred people in some charming country church or chapel would at home make a congregation. The same persons in Dr. Hall's church in New York city would not be a congregation at all; and their singing in the latter place would be practically a failure, however fine and effective in a church which they filled. If a church seats five thousand people, there must be five thousand people in it to have any congregational singing in the true and proper sense of the word. Singers may be likened to gunpowder. Condensed in the pistol, the thimbleful of powder may produce marked effect; a barrelful scattered over the lawn will not injure him who may apply a torch to it. Our singers, whether choir or congregation, must be compact and together if we would realize our just expectations. Therefore, let us not attempt congregational singing until we first have a congregation. This essential lacking, let us, with or without money, get a choir to do for us what we shall fail in attempting ourselves.

With our full congregation gathered, what else do we need? Many things. Next, a good organ. Now, a good organ is not simply a well-made instrument; it must be of proper size and specification. The size may be determined as follows: Given for example, an auditorium 50 x 80 feet, with a space of 4000 square feet. Divide by 4, and we have 1000 as the number of sittings. (This allows fully for aisles and other passages.) Divide 1000 sittings by 25, and we have 40 as the proper number of registers the organ should contain at the ordinary three-inch hydrostatic pressure. Suppose the auditorium to be twice this size, it would seem that the organ should have 80 registers. This does not follow. Sixty registers should be the absolute maximum and limit of the number of registers in any organ. If more power be needed, let it then be obtained by increased pressure. My own test is this: when any organ reaches the point where that impertinent abomination called the pneumatic action is needed, it is too large, and is sure to be a failure more or less complete. Having played nearly all the great organs in the world, I am able to affirm this with great positiveness. By the preceding formula the desirable size of the organ may be determined for any edifice. The organ should also be properly placed, preferably in the rear of the pulpit, in all except Roman Catholic and Episcopal churches, the organ-floor to be raised slightly, say five or six feet, above the floor of the house. Crowded into some tower or niche, the organ will take its ample revenge by a choked or sullen utterance, worthless alike for leading singers or devotions. If architects would only take a few music lessons!

Next, we must have a good organist. A good organist is not simply a good executant and master of the instrument, but a man of character and consecration. He who views himself as a hireling simply will most surely fail in reaching the highest powers of music in public worship. He should be a member of the church,— the Christian Church of some or any sect,— and interested in its work and welfare. Perhaps some of you may not agree with this latter proposition, but I tell you, brothers, to try it: it *may* help the church, and I *know* it will help us.

After the good organ well played, we should have a good precentor. Not simply a singer, but also a consecrated man who has voice as well as ability. The baritone voice is by far the best for this purpose when joined to the person indicated. We now seem to be fully armed and equipped, but not yet. Almost our chief necessity is yet lacking, namely, a good book of hymns and tunes.

It has been a part of my labors the past season to examine the leading books issued for congregational singing. What is a good congregational tune? I can best define it negatively. It must not lack rhythm, yet it must be free from all odd, strange, or complicated rhythm. It must not lack harmonic variety, yet strange, confused, or elaborate modulation and unusual

intervals must be studiously avoided. In the present state of musical knowledge, we may positively define it as follows: As all people, civilized and uncivilized, are affected strongly by rhythm, the tunes must have some easy and strongly marked rhythm, some "go" in them, if we would induce the people to sing them with any degree of heartiness. Excuse the colloquialism, but, like many another, it seems to express the meaning most briefly and strongly. You all know what I mean—a certain pulsing, on-carrying sweep, which assists both the movement and spirit of the singing. The harmony must be mainly diatonic in its character. This need not confine us to the poverty-stricken tonic and dominant of our forefathers and certain contemporaries. Yet right here I wish to say that I fear we have too often underrated the well-meant efforts of these pioneers. When one fully appreciates the deplorable general ignorance of music in their day he may well wonder that they accomplished anything. They certainly understood the needs and wants of the people of their time, and succeeded in doing much good where doubtless better musicians would have failed. Peace to their ashes! they served faithfully their day and generation.

To return, our tune must have a proper range, rarely exceeding an octave. Five or six notes would even be better as a tessitura. From D below the staff to D fourth line seems to be the most desirable compass. As a general rule triple time of any sort is to be avoided. That hymn which is sung all over the globe, and may properly be called the "World's National Hymn," the English "God Save the King" (called here "America"), is a specimen of a good tune for the people. It has, to be sure, the triple time, but the movement is relatively so slow that it does not here have its usual disastrous effect. Our own bombastic, spread-eagle song, "The Star-Spangled Banner," is a dead failure, owing chiefly to its preposterous range of over an octave and a half.

A few words about details. The experiment of hiring singers, placed in the congregation, to inspire the people to sing, is essentially self-defeating. The people soon become aware of the fact, and all within a radius of thirty feet stop their singing to listen to the surprising ardor and zeal of these well-paid stool-pigeons. The introduction of a blaring and impertinent cornet in the place of a precentor is equally absurd. If it be desirable to have the melody hurled at us in this barbaric fashion, why not put a tuba mirabilis register into the organ, and thereby have the whole matter under the control of the organist, one person instead of two, and unity secured in a legitimate way?

It is "a consummation devoutly to be wished" could we have the idea of association better carried out in our service hymns; I mean that the hymn be invariably sung to a certain tune. So long, however, as the public will not purchase a hymn-book with less than 1500 or more hymns, we shall look in vain for this most desirable reformation.

The grand old choral will eventually be the song of the church, here as well as in other lands; but I have to confess that I fear we must first wade through several generations of rhythms of a more or less trivial and irreverent character. When Moody and Sankey can sell three millions of their pretty books with pretty tunes, what author or publisher shall dare attempt a rivalry?

It is certainly desirable, although not indispensable, that the congregation should sing in tune. At any rate, they should all join in the singing as best they can, and trust to time and experience to remedy any defects of intonation. Also we would have them sing in good and accurate time, although we have to admit that they rarely do. So strong and universal is the sense of rhythm that, with a good tune, I believe this excellence will not long be lacking if the people will only join regularly in the singing part of the service.

It is here that I must say a word about music in our public schools—the only source to which we can look for the remedy of these defects. Let us by all means each lift up our voice for the further spreading and development of this glorious educational feature. The system is of incalculable value, and must in a short time work mightily for the upbuilding of our beloved art both in and out of the church.

Whether or not there be a choir, the organist is properly the leader. A singer is accustomed to follow and listen for only one part, and cannot so well detect faults of harmony as the organist, who is constantly following and listening to the full harmony of four or more parts. If there be a choir, the danger of jealousy among the singers is much less if the organist direct than when one of their own number assumes control. I may here notice one of the familiar objections to the employment of a chorus or volunteer choir, namely, that they will not attend the rehearsals or service regularly Personally, I have never been troubled by this delinquency. Devote a part of the evening (the latter part is always best) to the singing of part songs and other light and entertaining music, and they will rarely fail to be present. If it be said that this music is of no use or value in the church service, and that its practice is a waste of time, I should reply that, at all events, it improves their reading and singing in general, and thus, indirectly at least, does very greatly assist the service proper. Another plan is to pay each singer a salary, and he is then properly bound to come. Twenty singers at $50 each make an expense of $1000. A good professional quartet would cost at least three times that amount, and yet few churches hesitate at such expense when the quartet is called for. Another objection to choirs has been that they have what has been termed an "annual row." I do not believe that this is necessary, or even that it is true in the majority of cases. Even if true, it is no less true that a year rarely passes in churches where there is no choir, during which the music is not discussed with more or less warmth and interest. As these matters may always reach an amicable solution, their discussion is rather to be desired than otherwise.

The question of interludes is one of easy settlement. Let there be a short interlude after each two stanzas, and this will be found the best compromise between too long interludes and none at all. Interludes, at least, avoid a disagreeable wait (or "hitch") between the verses, and give the people a chance to breathe a moment naturally.

And now comes a musico-ecclesiastical question. Singers and organists have been often heard to complain of what they term the selfishness or impertinence

of pastors who insist that music should not form the chief attraction of the service. But the ministers are right in this matter. We have all seen churches where for a little while attractive music seemed to augment the number of worshipers. There is not a case on record where this device did not ultimately fail. Nothing but the Word of God, preached by one able and consecrated, ever did or ever will permanently fill the church. Setting aside, however, all the claims of worship, the pastors are still in the right on simple grounds of courtesy and common sense. A plain parallel case is this: How would we like to have them step upon our concert platform and insist upon reading the liturgy or even the Bible as the chief attraction of the concert? No; we are not to forget that music in the church is a means, and not an end. We weaken our cause when we claim too much for it.

Eugene Thayer.

Is Arctic Exploration Worth its Cost?

A FULL affirmative answer could be made to this inquiry; its outlines only can be laid down within an open letter. The reply may run counter to a widely entertained feeling, yet it is justified by history, and is due to the interests of science. Sympathy with the losses sustained by the De Long and Greely expeditions is sincere, deep, and wide-spread. But sympathy with the sufferers, and with the bereaved, cannot dim the value of the results secured by the sufferings of the lost and the living. Their work is a compensation for at least something of the severe sacrifices made, and history shows that the well-being of man has ever been and will be advanced by sacrifice.

To meet the inquiry fairly, is to recall the true objects and gains of Arctic exploration; its history, like that of other experimental progress, begins with a single object which, in the logic of events, evolves other and far more important issues. Its gains have been made with a remarkably small loss of life, for the whole number of deaths occurring in all the Arctic expeditions from the year 1819 to 1875 was but one and seven-tenths per cent. of officers and crews, while in carrying on the work of the fourteen meteorological stations of the past two years, but two deaths have occurred outside of Greely's party of Lady Franklin bay. With the sufferings of Greely's men before their minds, people are heard to exclaim: "Four miles nearer the Pole! Is this worth nineteen lives?" Forgetting the true objects of Arctic exploration, they lose sight of all but the polar problem alone, and they deal inconsiderately with even this, the origin of more important issues.

The first point in the inquiry here is to recall the fact that the search for the Pole itself was begun, three centuries ago, in no motives of mere curiosity or even of theory. The impulse was of the most practical character, to find a new commercial route from northern Europe to Asia. Columbus and De Gama had opened up the world West and East, but seemingly only for the two nations Spain and Portugal; these two powers promptly setting up for themselves the exclusive right, not only to the new lands found and to be found, but to the navigation of the great oceans. As they were then able to maintain their claim by force of arms, northern Europe soon set about the search for a safer and a shorter route to the rich lands of Asia.

The history need not be traced in full. It began with the voyage of old Cabot, in 1497, and was closed only in 1847 with the discovery of the passage by the drifting and crushed ships of Franklin. The northwest passage will not be pursued. Sir Allen Young's latest disappointment in the *Pandora* (1876) closed the question even for the curious. Tortuous and shallow channels, if found, could, indeed, offer no advantages except for the small exchanges carried on by whalers. Nor is it likely that for years to come national aid will be given for further attempts to push through any one of the supposed gate-ways to a theoretical "open Polar sea," found by Koldwey, Payer, Hall, Nares, De Long, Ray, and Lockwood, to be sealed up as ever by the paleocrystic masses.

Have, then, the labors, exposures, and patient endurance, of Arctic exploration, been profitless and discouraging to future effort? By no means. They have teemed with incidental results in value immeasurably greater than could have been gained from success in their first object. They are a record of extensive geographical discoveries, of large additions to scientific knowledge, of material gains for navigation, commerce, and industry and of moral lessons taught by these examples of heroism. It is something to learn the true boundaries of the land and water surfaces of the globe on which we live; it is yet more to have eliminated from the sphere of human attack the absolutely unconquerable of nature's forces. Lockwood's latest daring advance has again done much in both of these directions.

A true estimate of what Arctic exploration has gained will, in part, be reached by a comparison of the knowledge of our own continent half a century ago with that shown upon the school-boy's map of to-day. The maps of 1825 exhibited for our northern coastline Baffin's Bay only on the east, and westward, dots only for the mouths of the Mackenzie and Hearne Rivers, up to the icy Cape of Cook and the Behring Sea,—all which was then known except the new sweep of Parry's voyage in the far north. The charts of to-day accurately delineate the zone of land and the coast-lines within the 60th and 130th degrees of west longitude, up to Cape Parry, latitude 71° 23′, a region now largely frequented by the trader. To these add the explorations in the Eastern Hemisphere by the Russians, Danes, Austrians, Dutch, and Swedes, crowned by the circumnavigation, first in the world's history, of northern Asia. And now Lockwood has extended the line of North Greenland.

Again, no Arctic expedition has been fruitless of commercial and scientific gains. Cabot failed to find the passage, but he established the claims for our inheritance of English liberty and law. The first attempt to find the passage by the north-east brought from the ill-fated Willoughby news like that from our De Long:

> "He, with his hapless crew,
> Each full exerted at his several task,
> Froze into statues."

But Willoughby's second ship made the discovery of Russia's wealth — "a new Indies" — for England, the beginning of maritime commerce on the north.

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with such a medium, that they cannot be reproduced with anything like an adequate result. If we were deprived of the actual work of Sir Frederick Leighton or of Mr. Millais, these masters would still live for us in engravings and photographs. But no process reproduces Mr. Watts's pictures successfully. The engravings of one or two of them, published in THE CENTURY for August, 1883, are the best that have been made, and these are very unsatisfactory. Therefore, if the ship that takes this argosy over to New York should founder in mid-ocean, Mr. Watts, as one of the chief glories of our national art, ceases to exist. There actually was once a Royal Academician whose entire works went bodily to the bottom of the sea, and now toss with shells and dead men's bones in the surge of the Bay of Biscay. Mr. Watts's pictures, moreover, are, in a large measure, not the property of private persons, but hoarded by him for a public purpose, and many of them destined at last to be a gift to the nation. No wonder, therefore, that friendship is alarmed and reluctant.

Mr. Watts, however, has consented. He first proposed to send a set of large photographs, painted up in monochrome under his personal direction, so as to give to America the scheme and sentiment of each picture, and everything, indeed, but just the color. To this and other proposals short of entire concession the Metropolitan Museum returned a steady refusal; and now Mr. Watts is gathering together a typical collection of the best pictures of his life-time to send to New York this winter. In the article in THE CENTURY to which I have just referred, Mr. Prothero gave an enthusiastic account of the pictures as they were seen at the Grosvenor Gallery. Most of what he so warmly described will shortly be seen in America — the portraits of men of genius, the "Paolo and Francesca," the "Psyche," the "Orpheus and Eurydice," and above all, the solemn and beautiful "Love and Death." There will, moreover, be certain important recent works not yet seen by the English public — in particular, an exquisite "Love and Life," which is only just finished, the ambrosial god leading the timid feminine incarnation of life up a narrow and rugged mountain pathway — a picture than which the artist has finished none more full of delicate imagination and tender beauty.

My vocation, however, here is not to stand upon Mount Gerizim, but upon Mount Ebal. I must not indulge in the privilege of praising. Mr. Watts desires rather, through me, to warn America of certain qualities which run throughout his work, which are part and parcel of its being, and which may cause disappointment to those who have only read the panegyric of his admirers. We understand in this country that American amateurs take but scanty interest in the development of our art as English art. They are interested, no doubt, in certain English artists, but not in English art. French art, on the contrary, we are told, is almost more interesting to them than French artists. They like the courageous training of the Parisian schools; the undaunted execution, the splendid brush-power, of the young Parisian painters. The youths that paint a piece of a street, with a barouche in it as large as life, or a pilot-boat of the natural size breaking on a reef that seems to roar with the surf,— these, no doubt, present us with a sort of art which is fascinating, marvelous, and peremptory in its demand on the attention. Any one who has been a little behind the scenes knows how these "realists" will pirouette upon their stools before an empty canvas half a year, praying for one little idea, even somebody else's old idea, to descend upon them and give their skillful hands something to exercise that skill upon. We suppose, here in England, that when America contemns our sentimental English art, and looks to Paris, it is this skill that she admires, and that the want of thought that underlies the skill escapes her. Mr. Watts, at least, believes that the one goes with the other; that all this excessive cleverness in execution, in imitation of surfaces and textures, all this wonderful *chic* and *brio* and tricks that are *pschutt*, are signs of artistic decline. Without judging Paris or any living school of art, he is anxious to have it understood, for fear of disappointment, that this cleverness of imitative execution, the fruit that deceives the bird, the curtain that deceives the slave, has never been a matter of solicitude with himself; that in such work as he has carried through, the idea has been preëminent; and that in short he has always approached art from the point of view of a poet, rather than of a mere painter.

I do not think that it would in the least amuse Mr. Watts to be told that any one had fancied his garlands to be composed of real roses, or his nymphs to be hung about with real jewels. This has not been his aim. But if any observer should sincerely say that the "Love and Life" possessed a Virgilian perfume and tenderness, that the "Paolo and Francesca" translated the real sentiment of Dante, or that the Greek landscapes breathed the spirit of Sophocles, that, I think, might be conceived to please him. That Americans should be prepared to find a meaning in the pictures which are about to cross the sea, not that they should be looking forward to dazzling executive effects and juggling with the brush, that seems to be Mr. Watts's desire. That he has never neglected the executive part, and that he might make his boast of his skill if he chose, that is not for me, as his mouthpiece, to insist in this place.

Edmund Gosse.

LONDON, ENGLAND.

A Word from the Organ-loft.

IN our ordinary congregations, from one-fourth to one-third of the time spent in public worship is given to musical exercises of some kind. The management and direction of divine service is entirely in the hands of the minister. He either reads the prayers prescribed by the Liturgy, or offers prayer *ex tempore*. The selection of the Scripture read is in most cases his own, while the subject and matter of his sermon are left entirely to him. For these duties careful preparation has been made during his years in divinity schools, and he feels his competency to direct. But is he competent to direct the Service of Praise? In most cases he is not; and realizing his insufficiency in this respect, his want of knowledge of musical matters, he naturally turns to those who are, or ought to be, proficient, and delegates to them the direction of this part of the service.

Why should he delegate the management and direc-

tion of his Praise Service more than prayer or sermon? "A minister," says Mr. Taylor, "is one who actually or habitually serves at the altar. The *clergyman* who delegates his functions is not a *minister*."

In so important a matter as that of the proper conducting of this one-fourth of our service, as thorough and complete preparation, it would seem, should be afforded students in our seminaries as for the other duties of the sacred calling; but inquiry made of thirteen of our leading theological seminaries develops the remarkable fact that in *not one* of them does music form any part of the studies of its course. Is it to be wondered at, in view of this startling fact, that things even more repugnant to good taste and to the proper conduct of the Service of Praise do not take place than have been recorded in these columns? I venture the assertion that careful inquiry into all the ludicrous cases narrated in Dr. Robinson's letters would develop the fact that not one occurred in a church where the minister was a good musician, and was in weekly consultation with his choir director.

The want of proper musical knowledge upon the part of the minister, the possession of which would enable him understandingly to direct, together with the want of consultation with the chorister, which should be in time to arrange for the Sunday's services, — here is where the fault with the "music in our churches" is to be largely, if not mainly, sought and found.

The remedy, I believe, is of easy application; let our theological seminaries provide competent instructors in music; let there be among the students free and full consultation and criticism in musical matters; let this study be not an "annex" to the course of study, but let it take the place it deserves to occupy among the preparations for the ministry; let the opportunity be given the students for instruction in this important part of the conduct of public worship — whether there be musical talent or not among them; — let this be done, and then, with as careful preparation in *musical* matters as in their other studies, it will doubtless be found after a while that the minister will have no more trouble with the conduct of this part of public worship than with the other parts, for all of which he is equally responsible, and should be alike qualified.

Diapason.

BRIC-À-BRAC.

In Arcadia.

BECAUSE I choose to keep my seat,
Nor join the giddy dancers' whirl,
I pray you do not laugh, my girl,
Nor ask me why I find it sweet
In my old age to watch your glee —
I, too, have been in Arcady.

And though full well I know I seem
Quite out of place in scenes like this,
You can't imagine how much bliss
It gives me just to sit and dream,
As your fair form goes flitting by,
How I, too, dwelt in Arcady.

For, sweetheart, in your merry eyes
A vanished summer buds and blows,
And with the same bright cheeks of rose
I see your mother's image rise,
And o'er a long and weary track
My buried boyhood wanders back.

And as with tear-dimmed eyes I cast
On your sweet form my swimming glance,
I think your mother used to dance
Just as you do, in that dead past,
Long years ago,— yes, fifty-three,—
When I, too, dwelt in Arcady.

And in the music's laughing notes
I seem to hear old voices ring
That have been hushed, ah! many a spring,
And round about me faintly floats
The echo of a melody
I used to hear in Arcady.

And yonder youth — nay, do not blush,
The boy's his father o'er again;
And hark ye, Miss, I was not plain
When at his age — what! must I hush?
He's coming this way? Yes, I see —
You two yet dwell in Arcady.

R. T. W. Duke, Jr.

Uncle Esek's Wisdom.

YOU can encourage the timid, restrain the bold, punish the wicked, but for the weak there is no help.

THE most reliable people we have are those whose brains are located in their heads.

THERE is nothing like necessity to quicken a man,— I once knew a man who was the laziest fellow on earth, until he lost a leg by accident, after that no able-bodied man could get around the village as quick as he could on one leg and a crutch.

DON'T go back, my friend, after many years, to your old home expecting to be made happy; for, if you ever happened to commit an indiscretion in your boyhood days, people will remember nothing but that, and most of them will remind you of it.

WHAT the world wants the most is novelty and dispatch. Civilization has so quickened all things, that, before another hundred years rolls around, we shall require a quicker kind of lightning than we have now to do our telegraph business with.

THERE are those so pure that they are continually repenting of sins they haven't the pluck to commit.

LEARNING seems to be rapidly driving all the common sense out of the world.

Uncle Esek.

Love Passes By.

(FROM THE SPANISH.)

THE pure invisible atoms of air
Palpitate, break into warmth and glory;
The Heavens descend in rays of light.
Earth trembles with silent, unspeakable bliss,
A pang of delight, too dear!
Strange shocks and tumults of harmony
Swell on the winds, and fall and die!
In broken music I seem to hear
Confused, half-told, an exquisite story,
A murmur of kisses and rustling wings.
My eyelids close. What can it be
This marvelous presence so far, so near,
This unseen vision, I dare not see?
Love passes by!

Mary Ainge De Vere.

ful alacrity, with which all demands are responded to, the absence of all petty jealousies and narrow-minded criticism, the ready assent to all measures for the general good, have been very marked. The tithes of "mint and anise and cummin" have been paid without demur; neither have the gold, the myrrh, nor the frankincense been held back.

In short, "The Fortnightly" maintains that the woman loses her life who devotes it all to material uses — who crowds it so full either of work or of pleasure as to leave room for nothing else.

Like a previous letter, this is written in answer to many inquiries; and this must be the writer's only apology for details and prolixity.

Julia C. R. Dorr.

Another Plan for Women's Clubs.

THE open letter, "More Words with Countrywomen," presenting a new manner of providing intellectual and literary feasts for those women who may wish to and *can* partake of the same, is most praiseworthy. Still there is an impediment to young mothers which cannot be overruled, viz., babies. I am one of that class, and sadly miss the mental food which was furnished me at school. 'Tis true the precious babes are the first care, but they are also a mother's barrier to the acquisition of any but maternal knowledge!

Mrs. Dorr's "Friends in Council" have meetings fortnightly, and organize a committee, board of directors, etc. Then they have a plan of study, also preparation of essays. Now, I want to ask how all this can be accomplished when home requires your presence, time, and care. How can you attend these meetings? I write this in the cause of women of my own standing and social status, who, it is true, have to do their own work, but at the same time crave the intellectual food — not as a necessity, but as part of the manna on which they have been raised.

While we have not time to devote to these councils, we have intervals of leisure at home, which we spend in reading ancient and modern history when we chance to light on them, but frequently intersperse with romances, novelettes, descriptive notes, and, last but not least, THE CENTURY. Now I am going to suggest to many of my friends who are situated as I am a scheme for organizing a literary club of an indefinite number. It will not be productive of any ebullitions of wit, nor will it lead to much learning; but it will be a source of entertainment which we poor mortals sadly lack.

This scheme consists in establishing a library, to be in the most convenient and commodious house of a circle of friends, its mistress to be the librarian. All the members of the club to furnish what works they possess, whether historical, ecclesiastical, poetical, political, novels, or any addition they wish at times to make. No criticisms or formal meetings, which to me savor of the *bas bleu*, but perfect liberty to each member to call and select a book — one at a time — when so disposed, and return in a reasonable number of days. Have the library insured in case of accident, and outside of this there will be no expense. This clique of friends can then exchange notes and ideas during any social call, if so inclined, and no need of borrowing or lending books, no need of laboring on literary compositions when other things more important demand our attention. I do not place my views in opposition to *any*, but as a woman who loves to study and develop the mental faculties,— which have only lain dormant since leaving school,— and with the restraint of two "darling responsibilities."

DENVER, COLORADO. *M. L. N.*

Co-operative Studies — The Natural Sciences.

WHILE reading Mrs. Dorr's very suggestive and helpful letter in the September CENTURY, on the formation of societies for mutual study and discussion, it occurred to us that this is just the time to put in a plea for the coöperative study of the natural sciences.

Not that we undervalue the importance of history, or consider that Greece and Rome belong in any sense to a dead past, but there is such a very "living present" all around us here and now.

Although winter is not the best time to begin the study of a natural science, since the material necessary for thorough work cannot always be readily obtained, still private and public cabinets offer something, and much may be done to create the taste for experimental work — work which could be pleasantly and profitably carried through the summer months, which are now so largely wasted.

The natural sciences seem to be particularly well adapted to society work, so numerous and varied are the phases any one of them presents — sufficient to satisfy the demands of any society, however heterogeneous its elements. Take botany, for example; what opportunities for investigation and discussion would arise from the consideration of

1. The Beginnings of Plant Life.
2. How Plants Grow.
3. Their Pedigrees.
4. Family Traits and How Modified.
5. Varieties and How Produced.
6. Carnivorous Plants.
7. Parasitic Plants.
8. Floriculture as an Art.
9. Floriculture as an Occupation for Women.
10. Flowers in Art.
11. Flowers in Poetry and Song.
12. Flowers in the Bible.

What a preparation such a winter's work would be for the coming of the New Year, the real New Year, which comes to us with the budding spring! What pleasant "field-days" might follow, and what choice collections could be prepared for the following winter's work, or as a nucleus for a village museum.

Entomology, or mineralogy, or indeed any other one of the various branches of natural science, presents an equally broad and rich field for mutual labor and discussion. Will not some society make the experiment and report?

*

Church Music.

A VOICE FROM THE CHOIR-LOFT.

In the first place, it cannot be doubted that a great reformation has been going on during the past twenty years, not only in the character of the music performed in our churches, but as well in the character of the per-

sons employed in the musical service of the sanctuary; this much must surely be patent to any one competent to observe the change. One institution of former times has seen its palmy days, and will soon be a thing of the past. I allude to the "quartet choir," alone and unaided. No educated church musician will to-day be satisfied with such a choir; and with the "quartet" will die many a disturbing element.

Thus the reform in church music has been begun, and indeed made good progress, and the question would seem to be, what can be done to aid in the good work, and to carry the same on toward completion?

Money will be a potent factor in this, as in all good works, so I will first take up the question of salaries; and, in behalf of my brother organists and choir-masters, I claim that the salaries generally offered are totally inadequate to pay for the services expected and demanded. I know I shall be met here, and at once, with the statement that "the pay is fully as good as the services rendered"; and my retort will be that "the services are fully as good as the pay." And both statements will, in the great majority of cases, be very near to the truth. I am perfectly willing to admit that the pay and the services are generally about on an equality. But the trouble is, there is but little manifestation, on the part of the churches, of a readiness to pay better prices for better work. On the contrary, there seems to be a tendency in many places toward a wholly unnecessary and petty economy in regard to the music of the church. We too often hear the phrase, "Oh, it is good enough for us!" or, "It will do!" I think I am safe in saying that the average salary now paid to organists is not so large as was paid five or ten years ago. For one instance, I know of a city claiming to have over one hundred thousand inhabitants, and also claiming a great amount of musical culture, where, as I am informed by good authority, the highest salary paid to any organist is the munificent sum of four hundred dollars. One church in said city, and one of the largest and most prosperous, paying its minister a salary of five thousand dollars, had an organist who served them well and faithfully for many years. Him they discharged a year ago, because—why, because another organist could be secured for fifty dollars less per year. And this is but a sample of the encouragements which are to-day held out by the churches to ambitious young people to fit themselves for church musicians. Another statement, which I am sure all my brother professional organists will say I am correct in making, is this: that there are at present in this country fewer organ students than there have been in times past; I mean, of course, in proportion to the number of places to be filled; and this I fully believe to be a consequence of the meager salaries paid. I would therefore warn all church music committees that the time is rapidly approaching when they will have to put up with more and more inefficient services on the organ-bench, or pay larger salaries than they at present dream of paying. But let it be known that the churches are ready and willing to pay proper salaries for competent services, and in a few years there will be an abundant supply of educated church musicians. I imagine myself asked the question, What would be a proper salary? I will answer that question boldly, and say that an efficient organist and choir-master should receive a sum certainly not less than one-third of the total salary paid to the minister of the same church. Methinks I hear loud exclamations of dissent, even of indignation. But let us reason together. I said an "efficient" organist and choir-master; and I certainly would not advise the payment of such a salary to any one of the many incompetents who at present fill positions where they have no more right than I would have at the helm of a Mississippi River steam-boat. I am writing of an ideal time in the future, when any church, willing to pay a liberal salary, can secure good service. And am I extravagant in my ideal? I think not. I have based my estimate of what should be the salary of the organist and choir-master upon the salary of the minister, for the reason that the clergy are very apt to consider themselves not overpaid as a class, and I am quite disposed to agree with them. Now the organist and choir-master, to be at all competent, must surely be a man of at least one-third the intelligence of the minister; his musical education must have cost at least one-third as much as the theological education of the minister; and he must be able and willing to devote at least one-third as much time to his department of the church work as does the average clergyman to his parish work. I know this last statement will be received by some with surprise, and by others with incredulity. Many a time have I had said to me the equivalent of this: "I would be very glad if I could earn as much money as you can by a few minutes' work on Sunday and at rehearsal." Well! so would I be glad, very glad indeed, if I could honestly earn my salary by so little work as many good people imagine. But every organist and choir-master knows that his work cannot be done, with any satisfaction to himself or to those whom he serves, without his devoting to it every week a number of hours sufficient to constitute at least two good days' work. And I really think that, in most cases, the meagerness of the salary offered is due to ignorance of the amount of time and labor required to satisfactorily fulfill the duties of the position. While on this subject of salaries, let me say that I have a still higher ideal of what may be in the future. There are very many churches in America abundantly able, and which ought to be willing, to pay to their organist and choir-master "a living salary"—a salary sufficient for all his needs—so that he would not be forced to gain a livelihood by other means, but would be able to devote his entire time and work to the service of the church. And there would be plenty to occupy his attention. He should be present at all services or meetings, on week-days as well as on Sundays; should work in the Sunday-school as well as in the church, meeting the children of the school every week for practice; the young people of the church should be given an evening in every week for practical and free instruction in the rudiments of vocal music; advanced classes should also be formed for choral practice; congregational rehearsals should be held as frequently as possible; special instruction should be given to such young voices as gave extraordinary promise of being available in the choir; all this being understood to be included in the pay given to the choir-master, so that there would be no feeling that a charity was being accepted.

In regard to the so-called "trials" of organists and singers, I fully agree with the Rev. Dr. Rob-

inson that they are simply a farce. They are fair neither to the musicians nor to the church, and should be done away with, as has, in at least a great measure, the old plan of "preaching on trial." They are fully as unsatisfactory, and, in some respects, for corresponding reasons. And at the same time with the "trial," I would do away with the equally faulty system of yearly engagements. Let the engagements be made terminable at the pleasure of either party to the contract, such reasonable and proper notice being given to the other party to the same as may have been agreed upon. I have worked under both systems, and believe the one proposed will be found much more satisfactory; that under it engagements will be much more likely to prove agreeable and permanent, and far better results be attained. Under the yearly engagement plan both music committees and musicians get into the way of beginning to be unsettled in mind at least three months before the expiration of the year, and to begin to look about to see if they cannot in some slight degree better themselves, even though the present situation of affairs be quite satisfactory, and things are just settling down into good working order.

Another great source of trouble is the want of any interest taken by the members of the church in the members of the choir. I do not mean in the music itself, or in the choir as a whole, but in the individuals composing the same. A friendly word to some one belonging to that body, a little bit of praise for the singing of some particular anthem or hymn, goes much further than is imagined. Much moral good may often be accomplished by letting the members of the choir feel that they are regarded as a part of the congregation, and not as a separate, possibly even a somewhat antagonistic, body. But, surely, if the church is disposed to regard the relation of the musicians to itself as a mere matter of business, no fault can be found if they, the musicians, regard it in the same light.

Edward Witherspoon.

WATERBURY, CONN., June, 1884.

The Recent Legal-Tender Decision.

ON page 540 of THE CENTURY for August last, in a note accompanying Mr. Rice's "Work for a Constitutional Convention," it is stated that in the case of Juilliard v. Greenman, 110 U. S., 421, "The Court holds that when Congress is not expressly prohibited from passing a certain law, it is left to its sole judgment whether or not it be a constitutional law." If this is really the meaning of the decision, all checks upon the legislation of Congress would seem to be removed. The only duty of the Supreme Court in deciding upon the constitutionality of a law would be to inquire, "Is Congress expressly forbidden to pass this law?" If not, the law must be declared constitutional. Under such an interpretation, Congress would have power to interfere in all matters, however local, now left to the State legislatures — except the few expressly denied to it. All constitutional objection to the giving of money for the protection of the lands of the Mississippi delta would fall to the ground — for such gifts are nowhere "expressly prohibited." The clauses of the Civil Rights Bill lately declared void could be reënacted and stand as law, since a Civil Rights Bill is not "expressly prohibited" by the Constitution. And so, for hundreds of more objectionable laws, Congress would simply say to the Supreme Court, "Hands off."

But I think the decision has been misinterpreted. The question before the Court was whether Congress could give United States notes the legal-tender quality. The Court held that it could, not at all because it was not expressly prohibited from so doing,— that must be true of every power conceded to Congress,— but because Congress was *expressly granted* a power (to borrow money), to carry out which this was a suitable means. The difference between this interpretation and the other is of course very great. In the one case, every law which is not expressly forbidden is constitutional. In the other, every law, to be constitutional, must be, first, not forbidden, and must be, second, a means of executing some power given by the Constitution to Congress. As these powers are comparatively few, this second qualification cuts off hundreds of laws, good, bad, and indifferent, which without it Congress could enact with impunity.

It is impossible to give quotations in the space allotted to an "open letter." It is owing to careless and incomplete quotations from the fifty pages of the decision that the general misapprehension concerning its effect has arisen. I believe that a careful reading of its whole text will convince any one that the Court has only reapplied — in a very loose manner, perhaps — the words of Marshall, spoken sixty years ago:

"Let the *end* be legitimate — let it be within the scope of the Constitution — and all the *means* which are appropriate, which are plainly adapted to that end, *which are not prohibited*, but consist with the letter and spirit of the Constitution, are constitutional." (4 Wheaton, 316, 421.)

The *end* — to borrow money — was legitimate; the Court declares that the means — to give the legal-tender quality — are appropriate, are adapted to the end, and are not prohibited. The last is the least important qualification, for it is simply a matter of course.

Harry H. Neill.

REJOINDER BY MR. RICE.

MR. NEILL contends, in the first place, that if my interpretation of the decision in the recent legal-tender case be correct, "all checks upon the legislation of Congress would seem to be removed." I think that in this he is mistaken. Putting the responsibility for violating the Constitution upon Congress does not remove a single constitutional check upon legislation. On the contrary, it tends to increase the influence of those checks, as I have endeavored to show in my article. France, England, and Germany are governed under constitutional limitations, and yet no one in those countries ever dreamt of confiding the safeguards of the people to the courts; and it seems to me that a truly responsible government cannot exist in our republic until in this respect we follow the example set by the great nations of Europe.

Mr. Neill, however, goes beyond the *argumentum ab inconvenienti* just referred to, and attempts to estab-