

SOME CELEBRATED FEMALE MUSICIANS.

ST. CECILIA.

By J. F. ROWBOTHAM, Author of "The History of Music."



THOSE who have seen the angelic face of St. Cecilia in Domenichino's picture of that saint of music, cannot but have paused for some moments spellbound and wonderstruck at the celestial beauty which the painter has contrived to inspire into the features of his heroine. There is one peculiarity about the various pictures of St. Cecilia. Although the series of them extends over many centuries, and they are the works of artists who were by no means copyists of each other, they all possess a common family resemblance, unmistakable and marked. This points obviously to some traditional likeness which has descended from the earliest times—possibly pictorial, and bearing an analogy to the reputed portrait of Our Lord, which furnished painters with such ample materials for their skill; or perhaps merely verbal, consisting of a detailed description of this celebrated lady, which early artists rendered as best they could by the help of brushes and colours. She is generally represented with a round rather than an oval face—indeed, this aspect of her features is so prominently brought out as to be almost a singularity. Her hair is wreathed in a graceful coil round her head. Her figure is full and luxuriant, and she often sits reclining backwards with her arms thrown easily on the cushion behind her, gazing rapturously up to heaven. Her eyes are full of a holy light; her features are regular and symmetrical, and of the loveliest mould, but inclining rather to a joyous, even to a buxom beauty, than to that pensive melancholy which we should be apt to imagine was more in keeping with her character. Frequently the fancy of the painter has placed in her hands a lyre, a lute, or even with excusable anachronism, a mandolin or a guitar. Sometimes she is portrayed seated at an organ, which she plays in the ancient style, that is, by her fingers alone, the thumbs grasping the key-board underneath. One cherub blows the organ, while another, attracted from heaven, listens entranced to the melody.

The circumstance which has furnished St. Cecilia with such immortal fame—as many may think quite incommensurate with her acquirements, for she has never been credited with any compositions, and all her repute rests upon the eulogistic phrases of legend, of ecclesiastical tradition, and of poets—is the fact that she was the greatest musician of a musically ignorant age, and excited astonishment by the exhibition of a skill which, if then deemed miraculous, would at a later date have possibly claimed very little consideration. We say "a musically ignorant age," but we should rather substitute for the latter expression the word "*sect.*" While ancient Rome seethed with a surfeit of rich and magnificent music, being the meeting-ground of all the musics of the ancient world; while the lutes and sistrums of the Egyptians, the dulcimers of the Assyrians, the lyres of the Greeks, could be heard daily in the forum; while the singers and dancers at the theatres numbered thousands, sometimes more than a thousand

appearing on the stage at a time—the early Christians carried on their worship and their life in the most primitive simplicity, entirely removed from the influences of the world around them. They held all music unholy and unlawful, taking this extreme view in opposition to the Pagans, who cultivated the art assiduously. A Christian maiden was enjoined by the elders of the church never to approach near the environs of a theatre; to stop her ears if by chance she heard a Pagan song; and with regard to musical instruments, to be so innocent of such fell contamination that she must not know the use of them when she sees them.

The Roman maiden Cecilia, or as her name is more correctly spelt, Cæcilia, was the daughter of Pagan parents, but at a comparatively early age had been converted to Christianity. Her parents were patricians, belonging to the family of Metellus, one of the most ancient in Rome, and one too which had given many heroes to the Republic. The palace of her father stood in the Campus Martius, and was the rendezvous of the most refined and wealthy Pagans of the time. There is no doubt that the girl, in her early years, would receive the very best instruction in music which Rome was capable of affording. A girl's education in those days consisted chiefly of instruction in music, needlework, and the duties of the household. The music masters were, as a general rule, the singers and instrumental performers from the theatres, who were engaged at high sums by the wealthy Romans to teach their daughters the art of music. The girls were provided with lyres, often studded with sardonyxes and other precious stones, and of a small size, on which they practised under the direction of the musician, sometimes singing to the accompaniment of the instrument, and sometimes playing it alone. A musical education of this kind, under the superintendence of some skilful Greek performer, would, in the ordinary course of things, be afforded to Cecilia. Her conversion to Christianity took place when she had just passed from the girl into the maiden, and contrary to the wish of her parents, she became indefatigable in her attendance at the Christian services, which were held in crypts, in catacombs, in tombs. Forced to observe the utmost secrecy in holding their assemblies, the early Christians conducted their simple services in dark and sequestered retreats underground, often at the dead of night, for fear of the law which prohibited religious gatherings. The catacombs of Rome, which were their favourite place of meeting, consisted of long subterranean passages, at the side of which, in vaults and alcoves, were the ashes of the dead lying in urns and bedecked with faded flowers, which the solicitude of relatives or friends had placed there soon after the day of burial. We may imagine the Christian maiden, Cecilia, stealing to the catacombs in the late evening, and descending fearlessly into their gloomy recesses, in the joyful certainty of meeting others of the same persecuted sect to which she belonged, and joining them in prayers and thanksgivings to God. Those whom she met, the Christians at this age, were, it must be remembered, the poorest of people, many of them quite uneducated, drawn from the most heterogeneous orders of the populace, with only one bond which united them in common—love for Christ, and profession of the true faith.

The vault in the catacombs in which they

assembled was lighted with one or two oil lamps, and often dressed with flowers by the tasteful hands of the Christian maidens who were numbered among the worshippers. At their side and all around lay the bones and ashes of the dead—funereal emblems, which might have struck terror into the hearts of others, but to the early Christians, familiar as they were with death and martyrdom, seemed in no way out of place in their nightly gatherings for purposes of worship. The congregation having assembled, the presbyter read portions of the sacred books, after which he delivered an address of the nature of a sermon; on the conclusion of this the congregation recited and sang their psalms. Though we use the word "sang," their delivery of the Psalms of David was very far removed from what we call singing, being rather in the nature of an elevated intonation or emotional recitation, with nothing in the way of definite tune about it. Once a week they celebrated their Agape, or evening meal, when they all assembled, each bringing his or her share of food, already dressed, fruit, bread, and wine. When they had offered prayer to God, they ate and drank together, and conversed cheerfully with one another, till the lights were brought in, after which they celebrated Holy Communion, and listened to the reading from the diptychs, or tablets of wax, of the names of those Christian saints and martyrs who had died for the sake of their faith, as they too were prepared to die.

St. Cecilia is said to have been the first who introduced music and singing into those simple and innocent gatherings. She had a beautiful voice, trained by the best masters of the day, and her singing of the Psalms excited to emulation the other Christian maidens likewise, who, though at an immeasurable inferiority, also began to sing at the services in imitation of Cecilia. Not only did she give this impetus to singing among the early Christians, but she is said to have accompanied her melodious voice in the services by an instrument—the lyre or the Egyptian lute—and thus to have introduced an innovation into the simple rites which was the first step to the instrumental music of later times. If in her pictures she is represented as playing the organ, yet we must not connect that in any way with public worship. If we consider the places in which the services were held—in subterranean vaults and at dead of night—it will be plain that an organ there would have been quite out of place, as leading directly to discovery. In addition to this, the organ, until a late era in Christian history, was a purely secular instrument. Having been introduced into Rome by the Emperor Nero, it was limited in its employment for many centuries to theatres, circuses, and as a fashionable instrument for private houses. In the latter capacity it stood in the palace of Cecilia's parents; and such skill did the young Christian maiden possess on the instrument, that wonders are reported of her. The legend goes that she played so sweetly and melodiously, that an angel from heaven, ravished with her celestial minstrelsy, descended from the clouds to listen to her strains. Whenever she touched the keys the angel came down to hear her; and in a strange way did this seraphic visitant lead to the conversion of other noble Romans, and play a part in connection with her martyrdom, which was soon to be.

Her parents, when she attained the age of womanhood, were anxious that she should be married, and favoured the suit of a noble

Roman named Valerian, who was deeply attached to her, but a Pagan, like all the rest of the fashionable world in his day. Cecilia, although she loved the young man like a brother, was averse to wedlock. The high and exalted conceptions of the early Christians set up the ideal of celestial purity, regarding marriage as a weakness of our nature; and Cecilia shared these notions, like other Christian maidens of her time. Yet, in obedience to her parents' will, she consented to marry Valerian. The wedding day was fixed. The company assembled at the palace of the Cæcili in the Campus Martius. The lovely bride appeared, dressed in white robes, and with her beautiful face hidden in the crimson veil, which with the Romans took the place of the white bridal veil used by us. The marriage ceremony was performed according to the ancient Roman rites, which were of the greatest solemnity and impressiveness. The symphony of the far-famed Latin pipes pealed forth, in strains less melodious than the music of Cecilia, yet entrancing to all who heard them. The bride, at the conclusion of the ceremony, was escorted by her maidens to an inner chamber, there to await the arrival of her husband, who should take her away from her father's house to the mansion prepared for her in another part of the city. She was left alone in the room by her maidens and friends, who departed to mingle in the banquet and dances, which were proceeding in another part of the palace. The bridegroom hastened to join Cecilia. On

entering the room where she was, he is said to have found the angel there with her who came to visit her from heaven, ravished by her harmony. Astonished and dismayed by this unexpected apparition, Valerian retreated from the chamber before his entry had been discovered either by his bride or her celestial ministrant. He sought not the company of the guests, but went to a sequestered part of the city where a holy man lived, to whom he confided what he had seen. This man was a Christian, and his exhortations, combined with the entreaties of Cecilia herself, converted Valerian to Christianity. His brother Tiburcius was likewise converted, and Cecilia found her new home in every sense of the word a Christian one, and looked forward to passing her life in a dream of happiness and the cultivation of the true faith. But alas! the high position of Valerian drew on him the attention of the authorities; and refusing to offer incense to the idols, he was condemned to die along with his brother. Cecilia had the bitterness of seeing him taken to execution down the Latin Way amid a long file of soldiers. Since Romans were forbidden to inflict capital punishment on one of their own nation, some foreign mercenary troops were engaged to perform the office on Valerian and Tiburcius, who were beheaded amid the wails of their kindred, and chiefly of her who was the wife of one and sister of the other.

Cecilia herself was soon to follow these two martyrs to the tomb. Her simple and innocent life was no protection against the malevolence

of the Pagans. She, as her husband had been, was required to throw a few grains of incense before the statue of Jupiter, and refusing, was brought before the tribunal of the Prefect Almachius, a coarse and brutal soldier. Her reply to him, when he asked her name, is a famous one: "Cecilia," she said, "is my name, but Christian is my most beautiful name." Almachius, after hearing the charges against her of professing the religion of Christ, brutally ordered her to be suffocated in a bath. His orders were carried out, but with insufficient ardour by those entrusted with the duty, and Cecilia survived the ordeal. Almachius again asked her to adore the image of Jupiter, and she again refused. His second command was that she should be beheaded. The lictor struck her three times before he dealt the fatal blow, and even then Cecilia lingered in agony for three days afterwards. Her constancy and fortitude under persecution have obtained for her canonisation as a saint, while her skill in music, and the marvel which, according to the legend, it effected, have placed her on a pinnacle of the art, where her only companions are the legendary minstrels of ancient Greece, of whose skill wonders are reported likewise. In the words of Dryden, which Handel has so sublimely set to music—

Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
Or loth divide the crown.
He raised a mortal to the skies,
She drew an angel down.

A NEW WAY OF ENTERTAINING FRIENDS.



It is often said that one of the needs of the present day is the need that people, and especially young people, should get together in a simple

fashion, and enjoy each other's company in a hearty, human, friendly way. Of getting together from the society point of view there is enough and to spare; but the ma-

majority of the gatherings approved by society are nothing but a fraud. They are pretentious and vulgar; their object is display; they are not intended to afford opportunity for kindly greetings, but to pay social debts; and they merely serve to rouse envy and encourage extravagance. Yet it is mutually helpful, pleasant, and profitable that people should get together. "As iron sharpeneth iron, so does the countenance of a man his friend." We feel kindly to those whom we meet frequently. Isolation begets suspicion, and nothing rubs off one's corners, and liberates us from prejudice, selfishness, and narrowness, like association and contact with our fellows. People who conduct their lives on the self-centred principle are always less genial, bright, and happy than are those who form part of a circle; and the very best thing that could happen to a large number of individuals who now lead cold, dull, dreary, monotonous lives, would be that they should be drawn into the warmth and light that is generated by communion with others.

"The best thing one can do with a home is to share it with those who have none," is a saying to be remembered. There are many possessors of homes who would be glad enough to share their joy with others if they did not feel that the orthodox modes of entertaining friends are too costly and troublesome; that

they involve too great an outlay of time, labour, energy, and money. If we could return to simpler ways of living, they would be quite willing to be "sociable," and to let their neighbours benefit by their advantages. It would, therefore, be a real kindness if some enterprising members of the community would set an example of simpler ways, so that their neighbours might take their ideas and act upon them. If individuals could once be brought to see how much satisfaction was to be gained thereby, perhaps the more excellent way would be adopted and approved, and the inane, pretentious forms of hospitality would not be regarded as the only ones possible.

It happens that in a certain corner of the United Kingdom this experiment of entertaining without display has been tried for several winters, and it has been so abundantly successful, has afforded so much innocent enjoyment, and has tended so much to the cultivation of sympathy and kindly feeling, that it has been decided to give an account of it here, in the hope that in other corners of the land individuals may be found who will be inspired by the narrative to go and do likewise, and that they will get as much out of the enterprise as did the original founders.

Was it not Mrs. Browning who said somewhere, that it is a characteristic of modern Britons that they cannot do so simple a thing as give a cup of cold water without first forming themselves into a society? Carrying out this peculiarity, the founders aforesaid (who will henceforth be referred to as the "I. Q.'s.," because that was the name they bore amongst themselves, someone having once said of them in fun that they all must have come originally from an intellectual quarter), had no sooner entertained the notion of experimenting in sociability, than they met together and formed themselves into a society, the avowed object of which was to provide mutual pleasure and innocent relaxation by cultivating and en-

couraging an acquaintance with English literature. Their rules were extremely few. There was to be one official, the secretary, whose duty it was to take and read the minutes of the proceedings and to keep the affair going. His stock-in-trade was a six-penny memorandum-book. The meetings were to be held fortnightly, and invitations were never sent out, but it was understood that the members were to come regularly unless they received a notice to the contrary. This arrangement saved a good deal of trouble.

The master of the house where the meetings were held was the president of the society, and his wife was the vice-president. The president took the chair at the meetings, he signed the minutes, he regulated the method of procedure, he determined the length of the speeches, and he kept order generally. If the truth must be told, he was rather arbitrary; he would not permit his authority to be questioned, and he ruled with a rod of iron. Once or twice daring individuals attempted a mutiny, and facetiously tried to introduce rebellion in the form of a resolution; but they never succeeded in their attempt. They were put down instantly and ruthlessly, and speedily had to acknowledge their defeat. But indeed the president's "arbitrariness" was salutary; it tended to peace. Obedience to lawful authority may be out of date, but decidedly it promotes harmony. Insubordination and turbulence die a natural death when they are not allowed even to utter a word. The duties of the vice-president were less pronounced than those of the president, but they were quite as important. The "Vice" paid for the postage-stamps needed occasionally, she provided the refreshments, she admired and supported the president, and she thoroughly enjoyed herself. She was like the parrot that Bernal Osborne once mentioned in the House of Commons—she did not say much, but she thought a good deal.

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SAPPHO.

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IT is nearly two thousand five hundred years ago since Sappho lived, yet her fame as the greatest female musician of the ancient world has endured during this immense length of time, and is still as

fresh to-day as it was when Britain was a forest, and Roman ladies in their mansions on the Palatine wondered who Sappho could have been to have earned such immortal fame, although not a song of hers, even at that early day, had escaped the ravages of time.

Two thousand five hundred years ago seems an immense interval for our fancy to travel over; and we are apt to imagine that every dweller on the earth at that remote period, with the exception of the Jews and the Egyptians, were plunged in the grossest darkness, and leading lives gloomy with heathenism and idolatry. Yet if we had cast our eyes on the blue Ægean Sea during that period, we should have seen an archipelago alive with white-sailed ships, islands bustling with the hum of traffic, harbours, marts, and luxury. The Phœnicians were the great traders of that time, and long-continued commerce between them and the islands of Greece had raised the latter to a degree of prosperity and wealth which they never before and never afterwards attained.

Of all these islands Lesbos was the most beautiful and most prosperous. Its commerce was confined to the capital city, Mitylene, and the rest of the island was a very garden, luxuriant and prolific, abounding in beautiful landscapes and sequestered retreats. The wheat of Lesbos, it was said, was as white as snow. The vines, loaded with purple grapes, grew in such luxuriance that, leaving the over-burdened vine-poles, they spread trailing on the ground in all the vacant places of the island, so that little children could pluck the grapes by stretching out their hands. The nightingales of Lesbos were the most musical in the world, and strangers would travel long distances to listen to these birds as they sat and sang to the moon on the palm-trees in the evening. The head of Orpheus, and his lyre, so says the legend, had floated across the Ægean Sea from Thrace, when he was seized by the barbarians there and inhumanly slain. The waves, as they bore the precious relics along, tuned their ripples to melody, and on Lesbos, most musical of all the Grecian isles, they cast them ashore. So runs the legend. And the tomb is still shown where the head of Orpheus and his lyre are said to be.

The houses were built, for the most part, near the sea, and generally with courts, sometimes made of marble, and furnished with shapely balustrades, overhanging the blue water, in which the people would sit of an afternoon and look at the ships passing and repassing in the distance, or at the other islands afar, which rose like white shields from the surface of the sea. Thus must we picture Sappho sitting on a balmy afternoon in Lesbos, and the marble court around her is full of her companions. Their dress is that long white robe without sleeves which we see in pictures of Greek subjects and on ancient vases. Golden clasps catch the dress at the shoulders, and belts of various colours gird it round the waist. Some of them wear golden frontlets in their black

luxuriant hair; but most of the maidens are contented with the simpler fashion of binding two pieces of ribbon round their hair, which is collected in a coil behind their heads. Sappho herself is small of stature, and exceedingly dark of complexion. The Greeks themselves celebrated her as having hair as dark and glossy as violets. When we remember that the Greek violet was our pansy, we may gather from the look of this flower that Sappho's hair was as black as jet. She has often been described. Socrates has drawn a picture of her. The Greek orators under the Roman Emperors vied with one another in collecting particulars as to her personal appearance, and portraying her to the fancy of their hearers. We need not pause to reconcile conflicting accounts, but may merely observe, that it is agreed by all that her beauty was great, and that her smile had a fascination in it second to Helen's alone.

These ladies who throng around her in the court are, or rather were, her pupils, who have passed from that inferior grade of acquaintance into the select coterie of her companions. Sappho was the most renowned player of the lyre in Greece of her time. The lyre was an instrument resembling a small harp with seven strings, being generally played to accompany the voice. She was likewise the sweetest of singers, and no less renowned for her fame in this respect. Her voice was a rich contralto, most admirably under command, and able to execute to perfection the frequent graces and embellishments with which Greek song was studded. Even in such remote times as this a *solfeggio* has been discovered, or exercise for practice in singing by means of the syllables to, te, ta, etc., which answer to our do, re, mi, of modern times. This *solfeggio* would undoubtedly be in use among Sappho and her pupils, and by its means, and similar exercise, their singing would attain that pitch of beauty which we are assured it reached. Were we to believe all the statements of the Greeks relative to the inventions and musical discoveries made by their "queen of women," we should have no option but to credit Sappho with the creation of at least half the entire art of music as practised by the Greeks. And before we go on to consider her from a more general point of view, it will be well to mention two or three of the eminent musical discoveries which all antiquity admit her to have made. She is said to have been the first to make the following important discovery in relation to stringed instruments—that if a bridge is placed a third of the way up the strings, dividing them into two unequal parts, these two parts will be precisely tuned in octaves to each other. Consequently, the player on the seven-stringed lyre could play fourteen notes now instead of seven, and the reverberation of the octaves greatly strengthened and enriched the tone. Another invention of hers was the plectrum—which is in the hands of every figure in Greek sculpture who plays the lyre, of the gods no less than the heroes—a piece of ivory it was, or sometimes a thick quill, with which the strings were struck, in place of employing the fingers to do so. The object of using the plectrum was to increase the brilliancy of the tone; and while before its invention the sound of the lyre must have been weak and dim, it afterwards became as rich, loud, and sonorous as the tones of a mellow harp. She is also said to have invented a peculiar kind of scale, known as the Mixolydian mode, which is ineffably soft and tender.

Having briefly stated a few of her contributions to the musical art of the Greeks, let us now go on to consider her in that more general aspect of her life to which we before alluded. Owing to the fame which Sappho acquired as the principal musician of her time, the parents of young girls in various parts of Greece sent their daughters to her to be educated in the arts of poetry and song. These pupils principally came from Lesbos itself, but others were from very distant places on the mainland—Thebes, Athens, and Corinth contributing their quota of ambitious young ladies, all anxious to take lessons from the great mistress of the musical art. What method of training she used with the younger pupils we are not aware of; but those who were specially talented, or whose charms of character won upon their celebrated instructor, were in course of time admitted into the ranks of her friends, and became the members of as strange a coterie as ever existed except in the vision of a philosopher or the dreams of a poet. Sappho's private circle was, in fact, a female college, from which everyone of the opposite sex was rigidly excluded. The members of the fraternity lived together, and possibly had all their property in common. The orator, Maximus Tyrius, from whom we derive much of our knowledge of Sappho and her doings, compares her to Socrates, and the young ladies who formed her sisterhood to the disciples of that philosopher. As Socrates passed his time in propounding and debating questions of morality and polity with his young adherents, so Sappho is said to have employed her time with the ladies of her sisterhood in extempore singing, in the composition of verses, and in the practice of music. These exercises were varied with discussions of musical theory, and the consideration of new inventions. In such leisurely and refined occupation the life of these ladies was passed. The names of ten of the most celebrated of her friends have been preserved, and since they come to us as the relics of so immense an antiquity, we may be excused for setting them down here—Atthis, Telesippa, Megara, Cydno, Anactorie, Andromeda, Gyrinna, Eunice, Gongyla, and Erinna. We know something about each of them. Erinna was a girl who begged permission from her parents to join Sappho's fraternity, which was with reluctance granted. Having entered on her new life among her musical friends, she soon became so enamoured of it that nothing could induce her to leave Sappho's side. This excessive affection for her mistress offended the girl's parents, who ultimately carried her away by main force from the sisterhood, and condemned her to a life of spinning wool at home. This so affected Erinna's spirits that she died broken-hearted. Atthis was, however, Sappho's chief and dearest friend. Two of Sappho's most beautiful poems are in her honour, and the love of the mistress for the pupil surpassed the bounds of affection, and became passionate adoration. The internal doings of the fair fraternity are very strangely illustrated in relation to Atthis. Andromeda, it appears, was also very fond of the beautiful Parian girl, and Sappho at times resented the rivalry of the other lady with as much warmth and hot spirit as if the twain had been two cavaliers contending for the smile of some lady of romance. Occasionally the entire sisterhood was disturbed by bickerings of a most persistent character. Although the epoch we are writing of was two thousand five hundred years ago, ladies at that time

were not above casting reproaches at one another's dress and personal appearance. To such a pitch did internal feuds at times proceed, that we have one of the bevy of ladies describing her antagonist as "a thing with a drabble-tailed gown," while the other combatant retorts that her opponent is most ungraceful in her gait, and shows her ankles every time she walks. On the occasion of a quarrel between Sappho and Atthis, Sappho declares that her young pupil "was a mere chit when she knew her first, and dreadfully plain into the bargain."

But these discords were merely the rare and short-lived interruptions to a general and tranquil harmony, which characterised all the doings of the fair recluses. A very happy life they must have led in their gardens shaded with the palms and vines of Lesbos, and in their marble courts overlooking the blue Ægean. As we have mentioned, no individual of the sterner sex was allowed within the precincts of their maiden sanctuary. A gentleman of Lesbos, who appears in the fragments of Sappho's poems under the name of "the son of Polyanax," was ardently attached to one of the ladies, and was for ever hovering in the neighbourhood, on the chance of gaining an interview with his adored one. Such, however, was the fidelity of the maidens to the strange celibacy which they had proposed to themselves, that she would on no account see him, ardent wooer though he was. On one occasion we have Sappho sending a very blunt message to the infatuated young man. "Tell the son of Polyanax," she says, "that he need not come here after any of us, for it is no good."

Unfortunate it was for Sappho that this principle of completely repudiating the sterner

sex was not rigidly and inflexibly adhered to. The rule was for once broken; its violator was herself; and her weakness led to the complete dispersion of her fair bevy of companions, and to her own unhappy, if romantic, death. Near the place where they all lived was a river, at which an old ferryman named Phaon was stationed, whose duties consisted in ferrying passengers across the water, for which he received a slender dole scarcely sufficient to keep body and soul together. One day among his passengers was a lady of surpassing beauty, who having no money with her to pay for her fare, gave him a box of ointment. The legend goes on to say—for in the account of Sappho's death we have only a legend to guide us, and we must give the story as a fable reports it—that Phaon applied this ointment to his face, and immediately all the wrinkles fell off his skin, and a countenance of youthful beauty took the place of his old and careworn visage, the fact being, that this box of ointment was a magic box, and it was Venus herself who had given it him. By means of this marvellous charm the old boatman was completely changed, and became the loveliest youth which the sun of Lesbos ever shone upon. The news of the remarkable transformation reached the ears of the sequestered sisterhood, who, sitting beneath the silent shade of their palm-trees, were occupied in discoursing of abstruse questions of music, or running their fingers over golden lyres to elicit unpremeditated harmony from the strings. Out of a sheer spirit of idle curiosity, Sappho confessed her wish to see the transfigured youth. She saw him, and her happiness from that day forth was gone for ever. She conceived a violent affection for this paragon of masculine beauty; but he, to whom the whole island were paying

court, and who was probably intoxicated with the flattery he everywhere received, would not bestow a smile or even a kind word on the secluded musician, for whose nunnery of art and culture he had little sympathy or understanding. Sappho composed endless songs in his honour, and had them sung in Lesbos and elsewhere, in the hope that she might win him to become her husband. But finding all her arts in vain, and her most passionate appeals useless, she stole out one evening to the Cape of Leucate, where it was said that any maiden bold enough to make the experiment could purchase either success in her love or the eternal repose which death alone can bring. The terrible ordeal was to spring from the cliff into the sea. If Venus granted that the loving girl should prosper in her affection, birds of the sea, ospreys, eagles, and gulls, would soar to the assistance of the falling maid, and buoy her up on their wings until she reached the sea as softly as if she had stepped there, whence she was by her feathered friends conveyed to shore. If Venus was unpropitious, she would fall into the sea, to drown or be dashed to pieces on the rocks. Alas! for Sappho, the latter fate was hers. She laid down her lyre on the top of the Leucate cliff, sprang over, and was never seen by human eye again. Thus died at the zenith of her reputation, and in the prime of her wonderful beauty, one of the most romantic characters which the history of music, or, indeed, any history, has to show. She passed her life in a dream of art and happiness, and her death has furnished a theme for countless poems to descant upon from her day to our own. Who would not envy her the felicity of the first, and heave a sigh of pity over the tragic nature of the last?

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

EDUCATIONAL.

GERTRUDE M. P.—We are happy to inform our readers of your Reading and Self-improvement Society. It will probably gain you members to hear that the first prize given amounts to £3 for the Reading Department and £1 for the Improvement. All profits (we suppose exclusive of the prizes) go to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Those who desire to be members should enclose a stamp for an answer. The rules are threepence each. Address, Miss G. M. Plummer, Oak Lodge, Chislehurst, Kent.

KATHLEEN will do well to write to the Secretary of the society abovenamed, and to Miss Allen, 79, The Mall, Newport, Isle of Wight. Subscription, 2s. 6d. annually, paid in advance. Prizes given in money. Or else to Miss Massey, 41, Park Street, Grosvenor Square, W. The society has objects in view similar to those of Miss Plummer, and is called the C. E. A. Musical Practising Club, the ulterior design being to aid a religious society, *i.e.*, the Church Extension Society. Should you approve of this double object, write to Miss Massey. The annual subscription is 2s. 6d.

ANNIE ROONEY.—I. We have many times told our readers of the duties of a nursery governess. She should be thoroughly well educated in the English department, write a really good hand, and have acquired the art of imparting knowledge clearly and agreeably—all the more necessary when children are her pupils. (Their lessons can be made as interesting and attractive to them as telling them a story). You should also have had some experience in the judging of character and ability, have given special attention to those lessons for which your pupils are likely to have a taste and aptitude, as well as be able to discern between a fit of obstinacy, idleness, or mental incapacity, and the lack of nervous power, agitation from over-anxiety, headache, and weariness of brain. Such children should be at once relieved of all pressure and lessons, and dismissed before the regular hour. Children are only too often treated like machines.—2. The term "pseudonym" is pronounced "su-do-neem."

SOUTHSEA will do well to procure the *Englishwoman's Year-Book* (F. Kirby, 17, Bouverie Street, Fleet Street, E.C.). We have so often repeated our answers on clerkships under Government; you had better consult that book.

MUSIC.

GRATEFUL READER.—Neither the banjo nor the guitar is by any means suitable for leading sacred music at a mission meeting. You might as well play the bones like a Christy Minstrel! A concertina or organ-accordion would be very suitable for such a purpose, and more easily learnt.

NANCY.—It is impossible to tell you what you could make by giving piano lessons. I heard of a young girl the other day who obtained three shillings a lesson as a visiting teacher, and she was a good pianist. Much depends on the connection you may have, who may recommend you, and whether there be any other competitor for such engagements. If there be a local paper, you would do well to put in two or three advertisements, and put a few of your professional cards, with terms, in some of the neighbouring shop windows, and in a lending library, if you can obtain that favour. You might also name your desire to obtain engagements to your clergyman or minister, and your doctor.

MISCELLANEOUS.

ELSIE.—Lynch law is said to derive its name from John Lynch, a farmer who was said to exercise it on the fugitive slaves and criminals dwelling in the "Dismal Swamp" of North Carolina. It began about the end of the seventeenth century, and still exists in the outlying districts of the United States, where men are able to override the law and take leave to direct its operations.

ALGE.—"Call us not weeds; we are flowers of the sea," is generally thought to be by Eliza Cook; but we find also an American poetess claims it—E. L. Aveline, in *Mother's Fables*.

IDALIA HENDERSEN.—"Love in idleness," the wild violet, or small pansy, mentioned in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

ISLA VERONICA.—"Who would be healthy," and "Only on my head," are the translations of your two mottoes.

META PETA.—It probably means, "Bear, or endure with all."

A LONELY ONE and NINETEEN.—The account of your illness sounds like liver. Perhaps you drink too much tea. Go to bed early, and take more exercise.

RET.—Coarse crochet lace is the last thing for draping mantles. Patterns were given in present volume, part 142, page 26.

HELEN LEICESTER.—The inscription on the monument to Mrs. Craik in Tewkesbury Church is: "A Tribute to Work of Noble Aim, and to a Gracious Life. Dinah Maria Mulock, Mrs. Craik, born April 20th, 1826. Died October 12th, 1887." She wrote *John Halifax, Gentleman*. "Each in his place is fulfilling his day, and passing away just as that sun is passing—only we know not whither he passes; while whither we go, we know; and the way we know. The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

M. A.—You are not correct as to the first of English novel-writers. Daniel Defoe, who wrote the *History of the Great Plague* and the *Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, is styled "the father of the English novel." He published as many as 210 works, and some of them were condemned as libellous, being political. He was intended for a Presbyterian minister, and was a good and religious man, but was engaged, and very successfully, in trade and in literary work. He went through many misfortunes, and broke down under them at the age of seventy.

KATHLEEN MAVOURNEEN.—We believe that some can accomplish the difficulty of learning shorthand without the aid of a master; but we should say that, as a general rule, a teacher would be essential.

BUNGALOW.—We do not think it needs any great amount of strength to learn to swim.

HOSLUS.—Lay the flannel in a saucer and keep it wet. There is no difficulty in growing cress in this way.

J. A.—The address of the Institute and Training College for Teaching Lip Reading is at Elmhurst, Castle Bar Hill, Ealing, W. Address the Principal, for teachers of pupils.

LILY OF THE VALLEY.—If the persons concerned do not mind the difference in age it would be the business of no one else, of course. But you had better wait a little.

ONE WILLING TO LEARN.—The cook should dust the plates, of course. The things that the housemaid or parlour-maid takes should be ready to put on the table.

TONY.—Begin "Dear Mrs. Smith," and end "Very sincerely yours," if the invitation be an informal one. If formal, "Mrs. and Miss Brown accept with pleasure Mrs. Smith's kind invitation for Monday next, February 25th."

DAGMAR.—*Eolhen* was written by Henry Kingsley. Your writing is good.

FLIRTATIONS.

By ANNE BEALE.

CHILDREN of two families
Play together ;
Healthful limbs and mirthful eyes,
This June weather.

Flirtful Gwenny, three-year-old,
Blue-eyed, bonny ;
Makes advances over-bold
To two-year Johnny.

He, the heartless bachelor,
Woman-hater,
Hides his frowning face from her
Like a traitor.

Gallant Hugh, a four-year knight,
Sighs for Gwenny ;
Thinks her brightest of the bright,
Fair as any.

Snatches she her hand away—
Worst of misses !
Gives her lover kicks for play,
Cuffs for kisses !

Black-eyed Maggie sighs for Hugh,
Him caresses ;
He'll have nought but eyes of blue,
Golden tresses.

Thus the youthful belles and beaux
Pull and scuffle ;
Colours rise and passion glows ;
Tempers ruffle.

So to older beaux and belles
Oft it chances,
Love with spells and counter spells
Leads strange dances.

Tender maid for fickle youth
Sighs—is slighted :
Smitten swain finds lifelong truth
Unrequited.

So they struggle, pine, and fret,
Cruel-fated !
For the loves they fail to get—
Die unmated.



SOME CELEBRATED FEMALE MUSICIANS.

JENNY LIND.

By J. F. ROWBOTHAM, Author of "The History of Music."

THE greatest singer within living memory was Jenny Lind. Probably throughout the whole history of music there has never been her equal, and her life, for that reason, is more than usually interesting to all those who love the art. She was born just seventy-one years ago at Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, the Venice of the North, her father being an accountant and notary in the city. Business was never very flourishing with Herr Lind—at least, it certainly was not at the time of Jenny's birth; and his wife, in order to help the finances of the house, started a school for young girls, in which occupation she proved more successful than her husband in his wits and deeds.

Like all great musical geniuses, Jenny Lind showed her capacity for the art at a very early age, and in so extraordinary a manner that the tale deserves to be put on record. She was only three years old when the event happened; and if we examine our own experiences of children at that age, we shall have no option but to confess that the story would seem incredible unless amply attested. The baby—for she was little more—had been taken through streets in the town where bands of soldiers were in the habit of passing, and her infant ears must have been marvelously impressed by the tunes which they played, far more than those of the nurse-girl who carried her. This practice of carrying her through the streets continued until she was three.

One day, soon after her third birthday, she happened to be in the parlour, as she thought alone; but in reality her grandmother was sitting in another part of the room unobserved. The child stole up to the pianoforte, and began to play with one hand the bugle calls with which the tunes of the military bands were greatly interlarded. Her grandmother, hearing the music, imagined it was her elder sister who was at the piano, and accordingly called the former by name. Jenny, believing that she had done something wrong in touching the instrument, darted out of the room and tried to make her escape; but in vain. The old lady confronted her with a face wherein astonishment was so vividly depicted, that the young girl mistook it for anger, and gave vent to her emotion in a scream. But the old lady consoled the youthful musical prodigy as best she could, and calling in her mother, declared that one of these days the child's talents would retrieve the fortunes of the family—a prophetic utterance which undoubtedly came true.

Jenny Lind was, however, suffered to grow up with no definite musical instruction for some years to come, and if her genius for music had not been an exceptionally strong one, she might have relinquished her attention to an art which she was not encouraged to cultivate. She was accustomed to amuse herself during this period of her life with playing in her own artless way on the pianoforte, and was best pleased when she could practise these

musical exercises alone. Her singing first came into notice in the following strange way, when she was nine years old. The street where her parents' house was situated was that lively bustling thoroughfare in Stockholm which leads to the church of St. Jacob's. At one of the windows it was Jenny's habit to sit with her cat, and gaze in a dreamy manner upon the hum of busy life beneath. Puss had a piece of blue ribbon round its neck, and being one of the most quiet and docile of its race, was quite willing to pass hours at a time in its young mistress's arms, listening very gravely while she was singing. All the while that the little girl sat with her cat she never failed to keep up a constant and spontaneous warble, which, without her knowing, soared to the height and beauty of a nightingale's trill. The people in the street used to turn round and listen to the flood of heavenly melody which the girl's throat was pouring forth, and were amused to observe pussy's grave countenance, the most intent listener to the music of her mistress. Among others who used to pass the window and hear the singing was the maid of a celebrated Swedish singer—Mademoiselle Lundberg. The maid told her mistress of the phenomenon; Mademoiselle Lundberg herself determined to walk past the window and see if the accounts she received were true. To her astonishment she heard the finest voice which her ear had until then listened to. She called on Jenny's mother forthwith, and told her

that it was her duty to have Jenny properly educated, with a view to her becoming a public singer. Madame Lind had a horror of any such path in life for her dear daughter, but at Mademoiselle Lundberg's earnest representation she consented to have the necessary instruction given to the child. A master named Herr Berg was obtained, who devoted a great deal of his time to her training. He educated her taste in singing by instructing her carefully and completely in the practice of one or two instruments; he made her study harmony and the theory of music, while at the same time he was never weary of giving her the best possible instruction and advice in the art of vocal delivery.

At the age of twelve her voice broke, and for a while at least all vocal exercises were perforce suspended. Such was her enthusiasm, however, that she devoted herself to harmony and composition with great ardour, determining not to waste these precious years of her life in enforced idleness. It was shortly after this that the Swedish composer, Lindblad, undertook her instruction. He had conceived such an interest in the child through hearing her sing his songs, that he offered, in return for the pleasure which she gave him, to give her the most thorough instruction in music which his knowledge could afford her. She took up her abode in his house, and under this admirable musician's tuition she learnt most of the best melodies of Gluck, Spontini, Cherubini, Delayrac, Mozart, and other great composers. Not only was she entirely acquainted with the music of these masters, she learnt thoroughly to sympathise with and understand their style, to recognise their inner meaning and characteristics, and embody these features in her singing. The influence of Lindblad was very evident in her style. "When she sang at Stockholm," says a contemporary of hers, "the people were unbounded in their enthusiasm, for they seemed not only to hear the notes, but to feel the very emotions which the singer portrayed." Often did she sing in Stockholm, and on every occasion to a more enthusiastic, a more demonstrative, audience.

But the limited world of Sweden was not considered sufficient either by herself or by her truest well-wishers for the development of her remarkable powers. She was to be the singer of Europe and of the world, and at the age of twenty-one she set out for Paris in order to receive instruction from the celebrated singer, Signor Garcia, fortified with the secrets of whose art she was in aftertime to fascinate the world. Garcia found in her a most apt pupil, and taught her the true Italian style of song. From him she learnt how to render her voice amazingly flexible and agile. She acquired, by unceasing practice, the most perfect shake that ear had ever heard; she gained the power to blend the different registers of her voice so skilfully as to conceal effectually any break; she learnt to execute passages and runs with a full, rich tone, instead of the thin, wiry quality which generally belongs to *bravura* singers; and finally, she acquired the art of being perfectly infallible in her intonation. All this practice under the greatest master of the age, all these marvellous powers which she had acquired over and above her own natural qualifications and endowments, combined to make her without doubt the greatest singer in the

world. The great composer, Meyerbeer, heard her sing, and recommended her most strongly to the director of the Académie de Musique in Paris. A meeting of great French musicians was summoned in order to listen to her singing, and the director of the Académie was expected to accept their verdict on the matter, and offer Jenny Lind some lucrative engagement which would bring her prominently before the people of Paris. Meyerbeer, Auber, Halévy, Rossini, and many other great composers, were present at the meeting, but the director of the Académie did not make his appearance. The select conclave of judges waited half an hour, an hour—in vain. Jenny Lind therefore began her singing, and delivered her songs to the rapture of all present. Too late it was discovered that the director's absence was due to the intrigues of Mdle. Rosina Stolz, the most popular singer of the day at that time in Paris, although in comparison with Jenny Lind she was quite an inferior vocalist. This lady, jealous of the Swedish nightingale's renown, persuaded the director at the last moment to stay away from the meeting, as a consequence of which Jenny Lind got no engagement in Paris, despite her utmost efforts to obtain one, and the long time she had spent in that capital under the tuition of Garcia. This unfair treatment made such an impression upon Jenny Lind, that she formed a resolution, which she adhered to all her life, never to sing under any consideration in Paris. In after years, while all other cities were echoing with the praises of the Swedish nightingale, in Paris alone were those echoes silent, for despite the most tempting offers afterwards made her, and the strong influence brought to bear on her to alter her resolution, the tones of the Swedish nightingale were never heard in that capital of pleasure.

At the great Rhenish festival at Coblenz in 1845, she sang for the first time before Queen Victoria. It was on the occasion of our Queen's visit to the King of Prussia, and we have ample testimony as to the delight with which the English sovereign listened to the wonderful singer—a delight and an appreciation which she ever afterwards retained. During all her career of singing in England the Queen stood her unfailing friend and patroness, which was of the greatest value to her amid the numerous jealousies and heartburnings of which she was the unconscious and unwilling cause. Another great admirer whom she secured at this period of her career was the composer Mendelssohn. He paid her a tribute of his admiration which is destined to be imperishable, inasmuch as he wrote the soprano part in the oratorio of *Elijah* for her special behalf. All those who have listened to this sublime oratorio—and few have not heard it—will remember the noble soprano solos which adorn the work. To have heard Jenny Lind sing these must have been a realisation of musical beauty only vouchsafed to men once a century. Mendelssohn knew this full well. He appreciated to the full her marvellous voice, her consummate style, her deep and genuine religious feeling, her fervent belief in the syllables she was singing, her reverence for the sacred subject which was the theme of the work; he appreciated all this, and threw himself with enthusiasm into the part of the oratorio assigned to her. The solos written for the soprano are a triumph of art. How

entirely triumphant must have been their interpretation when Jenny Lind sang them!

In 1848 she sang at Exeter Hall for the purpose of founding a Mendelssohn memorial. By that year Mendelssohn was dead, and a number of his friends were trying to gather together sufficient money to found a fitting memorial of the great musician in the shape of a scholarship for music. Jenny Lind promised her services towards that good end. Her singing, as described by writers of that day, reached a point of magnificence beyond which fancy cannot go. *Elijah* was the work performed. Her delivery of the soprano airs melted hundreds to tears, threw hundreds more into heavenly joy, and aroused all to enthusiasm. Such a performance of this great sacred work never was given before and never will be given again. The sum gained for the scholarship by this means was close on £2,000, and the first scholar who availed himself of the munificent privilege thus accorded to talent was, it may be mentioned, Sir Arthur Sullivan, then a boy.

Her singing in the *Messiah*, the *Creation*, *St. Paul*, and other oratorios, is spoken of with united admiration by her contemporaries. She eclipsed all singers of the past, and very probably all of a far-distant future.

In personal appearance Jenny Lind was by no means handsome. She was plain and commonplace in feature, and her mien and deportment were no less homely and ordinary; but when she opened her lips to sing, all was forgotten in the joy of hearing such music. A kind and genial expression in her face made amends, to some extent, for the want of personal beauty.

Her tour in America was one of her greatest triumphs, or rather series of triumphs. Her first appearance in that tour was at New York, where a strange incident occurred. She stepped on the platform, and after a hearty welcome on the part of the audience, opened her lips to sing. Her song began with the words, "Seditious voices, voices of war." Scarcely had she uttered these words when a roar of artillery crashed through the building, to the dismay of the audience and the alarm of the vocalist. She faltered and stopped. At length it was explained to her that on this identical morning a new State, viz., California, was added to the Union, and the accession of the fresh member of the Confederacy was thus proclaimed by a salute of guns. The only place where she was not well received in America was at Havana, where, probably owing to the Spanish style of music being much in vogue, her own efforts seemed strange and unimpressive to the audience. She determined not to be conquered; and being, as it were, put upon her mettle, sang her very best, and ultimately roused the torpid and hostile audience into the wildest enthusiasm. This, she was accustomed to say, was one of the hardest feats in her life.

She married Mr. Otto Goldschmidt in 1852, and retired some years afterwards into private life, reserving her marvellous gifts to enchant and give pleasure to a select circle of friends. Since her death there has never been a singer to equal her, in the opinion of those whose life has been sufficiently long to enable them to form a fair judgment and comparison between her and other singers who have arisen after her.

