

a most admirable kind, and were always attended by enthusiastic crowds of the citizens. Hence the name of Orpheonistes, which now designates the whole of the members throughout the empire.

Such being the antecedent history of the Orpheonistes, let us now pay a brief visit to a rather numerous sample of them at the Crystal Palace. Two thousand five hundred of them have assembled from the north, east, west, and south of France, and have come over in shiploads to fulfil, as the "Times" suggests, in a very pleasant manner, the supposed threats of invasion. They have bivouacked in a rather rude way in their extemporised hostelries in the new Cattle Market, and here they are, on this last day of their performance, filling that vast orchestra, and lifting their united voices in a grand spirit-stirring strain. Some twenty thousand of our countrymen and countrywomen, in the wide area beneath and the galleries around, are listening with ravished ears to the vocal torrent, and respond with rapturous applause and with waving of hands and handkerchiefs to the wondrous burst of harmony. Now it is a patriotic song, thundered forth by the "boys of Paris;" now it is a sacred strain, reverberating with solemn deliberation along the crystal vault above; and now it is a military drama, in which one hears the inarticulate thud-thud of the distant drum coming gradually nearer and nearer, till the low murmur resolves itself into words—swells into a chorus—fades and sinks into an echo—and dies away again in the scarcely audible rub-a-dub of the retiring drum. These graphic and dramatic vocalizations are so novel in character, so wonderfully harmonized, so startling and audacious in matter of counterpoint, that our English ears are taken by surprise, and the most hackneyed musical critic gets a new idea. They are varied at intervals by the performances of the celebrated band of the Guides, every man of whom is evidently a star of the first magnitude, and unrivalled on his own particular instrument; and it is alleged on all hands that they stand unequalled by all instrumental performers, which is probably quite true. The performance ends with "God save the Queen," the audience standing uncovered, and the response from an English band of "Partant pour la Syrie," the national air of imperial France.

And now commences a performance of another description. Our invaders must not depart without a taste of English hospitality, and they are accordingly summoned to sit down to dinner. Dinner for two thousand five hundred, to say nothing of a hundred or two of interlopers additional, is no trifling matter: the task of providing it, however, has been undertaken by the potent genie who built the palace itself, and so we feel assured that it will be done. And it is done accordingly, and goes off almost with the regularity of a piece of music, without so much as a false note, or hanging fire for a single instant. Without being partakers, we can see the vast company as they dine, and note that their consideration for English roast beef is perfectly fraternal, as it should be. Some of the guests during their short sojourn here have contrived to pick up a few English phrases, and

these they fire off at us, the spectators, from time to time. Thus, one flaxen-headed southern, laying his hand on his heart, shouts out, "Dis is teholly!" another is decidedly of opinion that "Engliss and Fransh all brudders!" and a third assures us again and again "Ve are all ver 'appy!" Meanwhile, the polite nation does not forget its politeness. Among the near spectators are many English ladies, and to these, when the dessert succeeds the dinner, the courteous guests send out portions of fruit and confectionery, and bow gracefully to the recipients, and drink their *bon santé*.

The good feeling, which has been growing warmer during the dinner, boils over when the dinner is done, and upon the discharge of the guests into the gardens takes the form of a series of demonstrations which rather astonishes the objects of it. Our French brothers will administer the fraternal embrace, and not a few of us get hugged in a way rather alarming to our nerves. As for the shaking of hands, it is something tremendous; our fingers are numbed, and our shoulders ache with the exercise, until we are reminded of old Blucher's growling declaration, "Me nevare shake of hand none more!" and feel half inclined to endorse it ourselves. After all, we spend a very pleasant day of it, and reach home at a rather late hour, with the conviction that nothing but good can result from the brief visit to England of our musical friends.

FOUR GENERATIONS OF SAMPLERS; OR, HOW DID OUR GRANDMOTHERS SPEND THEIR TIME?

YOUNG ladies of the present day may well ask such a question; and, considering the number of things in which they spend theirs, which were unknown to their female ancestors of a century ago, it is no wonder if the fair querists are a good deal bothered to answer it. Music was not then executed to the extent it now is, for pianos were unknown, and the ancient spinet and harpsichord were not to be found, as the new-fashioned instrument is, in every second house, but only in the mansions of the great.

Books, alas! were few. Cheap periodicals were unborn. Everybody now learns grammar, geography, and the use of the globes; or at least the advertisements say they are everywhere taught. But to our grandmothers these were, indeed, occult sciences. If I may judge from a specimen now before me, of the school books compiled some ninety years ago for the use of students who aspire to attain a knowledge of these said branches of learning, they must indeed have pursued it under difficulties. Nothing but a very extraordinary knowledge of their mother tongue could have enabled them even to *understand* the meaning of the awful strings of hard words which made up the questions and answers in a certain catechism of geography, which, from an inscription on the fly-leaf, I opine was the property of my maternal grandfather. In addition to the name and date, he favours us with the information that—

"Wen house and land and mony's spent,
Then learnin is most exelent."

And he had good cause to think the "exelent" endowment of learning was very bad to get at, I am sure.

But if our grandmothers had no pianos, they had the music of the spinning-wheel, whose hum was rarely still; for young and old, mistress and maid, all alike took their turn in keeping it in motion. In *my* grandmother's day, each serving damsel had her portion to spin before she went to rest, the upper servant being expected to get through a quarter of a pound of fine thread, and the one who did the rougher part of the household work a like weight of coarser quality. And there was as much emulation amongst these spinsters of bygone times as there is now among the fair artists in crochet and Berlin wool, for the house-mother did not disdain to enter the lists with her serving maidens, to try which could produce the finest line.

And our grandmothers wrought samplers too when they were little girls at school, which brings me to the especial subject of this paper; for I wish in it to illustrate the progress of orthographical knowledge as displayed in the various specimens now in my possession. These, I am proud to state, amount to four, and are the work of as many generations of fair needlewomen.

Here I may be permitted to say, that the females of our family were all clever persons according to the age in which they lived. In fact, the men seem, though decent people in their way, never to have done anything very remarkable; so that we are more inclined to look back to the labours of our maternal ancestors for something on which to found a claim to antiquity of family, than to the doings of the other sex. And really, after all, I think there is as much sense in boasting of one's grandmother's peaceful triumphs at the spinning-wheel as of one's grandfather's doings amid stormier scenes. If my brother sees fit to flourish his ancestor's sword, and look grandiloquent because it has been made the instrument of death, why should I not do likewise with the sampler wrought by the old gentleman's better half, which never did harm to anybody?

As I said before, I possess four of these feminine ancestral banners. The first is the work of my great-grandmother, and, as a specimen of stitching, is perfection. As to the orthography, etymology, syntax, and prosody—well, I have before explained that people were not learned in grammar when *it* was worked; so please to look at the fac simile (on next page) of my respected great-grandmother's production, and read it *if you can*. Lest you should fail in your endeavours, however, I will give a translation for your behoof, preserving only the peculiar orthography, and leaving out the ornaments, which can be inspected in the drawing.

"Martha Middleton is my name.
I was fowrtteen year old when I wroght the same,
The nine twenty day of Avgst, 1731.
A needle is pritty thing:
Its a companien for a queen."

There appears to have been great unity of opinion in those times with regard to "larning," as my ancestress has "wroght" in next, the couplet

which my grandfather inscribed some years later in his geography catechism:—

"When house and land, mony is spent,
Then larning is most exlent. The God abve in—"

Here the worker has broken off abruptly, and exercised her ingenuity on eyelet-hole letters, from A to N, of the most approved style. But, tiring of alphabetical monotony, our artist in samplery breaks forth in verse once more, and shows that—

"A man of words and not of deeds
Is like a grdin ful of weds.
The God of love send from abve—
Many daughters have done vertovsly, but thou hath
exceeded them all. Favour is dectetvl, buty—"

Here the spelling becomes still more eccentric, and the ornaments interfere to render it more difficult to decipher, "vean a woman that feareth the L—." This maxim is left unfinished, for Martha Middleton, recollecting that she has given us no specimen of her skill in figures, once more flies off into another track, and finishes her sampler with a line of such, from one to twenty.

It is amusing to note in the original how oddly capitals and small letters are mingled, and words of one syllable divided, to leave room for the crown at the corner; but, allowing for these peculiarities, the beauty of the work is very remarkable. All these letters and figures cover a piece of canvas less than eight inches square; and, after one hundred and twenty-eight years, every stitch is as firm as when Martha Middleton first "wroght" her sampler to the admiration of her compeers, and the expenditure of an immense amount of valuable time. To lady readers it may be interesting to know that both sides are alike, and joinings imperceptible.

Samplers not being, I regret to state, entailed, I have no specimen of the work of this accomplished lady's daughter, *that* having been claimed by some other member of the family, and, as far as I am concerned, lost. So I pass to the other side of the house, and refer to the sampler of my paternal grandmother, to show what progress had been made during the thirty-four years which elapsed between the working of the two.

This sampler is—after Martha Middleton's—a commonplace affair. It displays merely a border of trees, (genus unknown,) the letters and figures, then a division formed by smaller trees, bearing fruit fully as large as themselves, and on the other side of the barrier is the following verse, in the same order as is here set forth:—

"Lord give me Wisdom to direct
My ways. I ask not Riches nor the
Length of Days. My Life's a (here comes an elaborate ornament, to fill up)
Flour (!) the Time it hath to last.
Its mist with Frost and Shakes with
Every blast." (Another ornament.)

After this comes another strip of plantation in coloured silks, and below it the following record:—

"Done by Ann daughter of Thomas
& Ann Smales aged six years
One Thousand Seven Hundred
& Sixty five."

A perfect forest of trees, of still more extraordinary shapes than the preceding specimens, completes sampler number two, and the labours of my grandmother in that line.

There is certainly a great advance in orthography; and a full stop in yellow—the letters being red—at the end of every line of the poetry, evinces some pretensions to a knowledge of punctuation. But whether the artist thought she had done enough to exhibit this accomplishment, or was doubtful where to put the stops in prose, history sayeth not. Thus we are left in a state of uncertainty as to whether Ann Smale's daughter, or the maternal Ann, numbered six summers in one thousand seven hundred and sixty-five, though we naturally infer the former.

There are a few loose stitches perceptible below the glass—for this boasts a mahogany frame; but then, the little workwoman was only six years old, and the fruit of her industry has lasted nearly a century already.

But the very gem of samplery is the third on my list, and was the work of my own mother. Quite worthy is it of the smart gilt frame which surrounds it; for is not the border radiant with flowers in the richest of floss silks and most elaborate of embroidery? Are not the useful parts *indeed* an ensample to all coming generations? and is not the bouquet in the centre—tied with blue ribbon, and in which one can discover the national emblems—a very wonder of long and short-stitch. To be sure, ignorant and careless persons have

affronted my mother by asking whether the thistle were a moss-rose bud, and affected to mistake the rose itself for a tulip; but, after all, her flowers are quite as natural looking as a blue dog which I saw the other day worked in Berlin wool, and forming the cover for an ottoman. An inscription at the bottom informs us that—

“Ruth Simpson wrought this, in the 10th year of her age, 1779, in the 39th year of the reign of his Majesty King George the Third.”

My mother is accustomed to tell all to whom her sampler is shown, that before she commenced it she was obliged to cut out and make a shirt unaided, and that, if the said shirt had been imperfect, her piece of fancy work would have been indefinitely postponed.

Of my own sampler, which concludes the series, I need say nothing, but will leave that to those who come after me. No doubt it will be esteemed a curiosity by and by, for “indelible marking ink” is fast drowning the old-fashioned sampler, as shirts of wondrous pattern are superseding the home-made articles; which last, however, had the merit of displaying first-class needlework.

I have some thoughts of bequeathing my samplers to the nation, as I do not think the British Museum contains any specimens of the kind. At any rate, when I make my will I shall see about it.

