

lect of candidates for perdition. Thus if ten people represent a certain aggregate power of evil, ten hundred people represent a much greater concentration of iniquity, and ten thousand an infinitely and deplorably greater; while such a collection of worldlings as is displayed at a Handel Festival is a thing to be wept over and bemoaned for days on the part of him who regards an hilarious assemblage of his fellow-creatures as made up of so many eligible souls for Satan.

Among the smug gentlemen who thus comfortably dispose of the rest of mankind, and deplore the spiritual future of the world with an unctuous gratification which belies its own whine, Mr. Spurgeon occupies a prominent place. Mr. Spurgeon and Dr. Cumming are both leading spirits in their way, but there is this difference between them; that while Dr. Cumming is in so great a hurry to wind up all things that he is perpetually endeavouring to bring the earthly estate to the auctioneer's hammer long before Tellus is declared insolvent, his Baptist brother is content to enjoy the state of affairs which he makes a good thing of by denouncing. Both gentlemen exist by appealing to that love of sensationalism which is no less discoverable in the chapel than in the theatre. The Presbyterian professor has for long worked the Millennial sensation with good effect. The Baptist gentleman is driven to seek lesser sensations with which to appease the appetite of his congregation. He found one out not long ago in the dangers of intersexual dancing, and worked that sensation with results satisfactory to himself. At the present moment he has discovered another theory, no less plausible from the Spurgeonic standpoint, and no less characteristic of the Spurgeonic sanctity than that tenet about mixed quadrilles. What can be worse, may the faithful ask, than going to a ball with a woman? Well, going to a Penny Reading with a man may be as bad, answers Mr. Spurgeon. The peril to the soul of a male Baptist in clasping a "sister" round the waist while the insidious Mildred Waltz is making its way, a dulcet poison, into the ear, is very great—at least Mr. Spurgeon has found it so, and he ought to know what constitutes to him a temptation. But clasping a "brother" may be no less reprehensible—that is to say if you take him by the arm with the view of leading him to a Mechanics' Institute to read Tennyson or Macaulay. You may dance with your brother, Mr. Spurgeon once ruled; provided there be no female syrens in the room to divert your godly attentions. You may even offer him the succulent orange or the joyous lemonade between the pauses of a polka. But you must not lead him to those Readings where curates most do congregate, and where the plebeian penny is received, and the stately threepence for the front rows. For Penny Readings are an abomination to the Tabernacle: so we gather from a collected form of the *Sword and Trowel*, Mr. Spurgeon's magazine. Whether this periodical succeeded or not, we are not certain, but incline to say in did not, seeing that a Year's number is bound up under the slightly hazy title of "A Record of Combat with Sin and Labour for the Lord." It is not obvious on the face of the title whether Mr. Spurgeon combatted for the Lord with Sin and Labour, or whether he combatted with Sin and with Labour for the Lord: what is however certain is, that he combatted with Penny Readings, which he evidently regarded as Labour for a very different personage. A paper entitled "Penny Readings or a Snake in the Grass" throws a strong light on Mr. Spurgeon's convictions. These gatherings, we are informed, are a compound of silly nonsense, senseless foolery, abominable absurdity, loose if not lascivious sing-song, and moonstruck sentimentality. The Spurgeonic vocabulary, it will be noticed, is copious, and admits of various synonyms. Thus if any doubt existed as to the character of "silly nonsense," we are enlightened by its apposition, "senseless foolery." At the verdict of "lascivious sing-song" brought against Penny Readings, the world will be disposed to open

its eyes in some surprise. That some readers—especially curates—were given to intone the "Queen of the May" and "Mormon" in that weary key which it is only given to curates to require, we already knew; but the "lasciviousness" was decidedly left for Mr. Spurgeon to discover. We regret that Mr. Spurgeon's experience of Penny Readings has brought him into such connexion: we wonder where Mr. Spurgeon has been, and what books he has heard read. Queer must have been the haunts penetrated by this Columbus of the Tabernacle. Perhaps, though, some wicked friend imposed on the innocent gentleman, and under the pretence of taking him to a Penny Reading lured him to the Coal-Hole, where Baron Nicholson and his naughty satellites merit that adjective hurled by the righteous orator.

For certainly our own knowledge of the typical Penny Reading is not of this abysmal kind. It is a very dull affair doubtless—especially in the country, where the recitor takes the chair, and three neighbouring curates drone through Tennyson and Longfellow, and an amateur from the village choir varies the program with a melancholy too-tooting on the flute. It is a dreary affair when the yokels in the back seats persistently mistake the points and roar with laughter at the pathos; though there is some little excuse for the back seats, too, when one of their number concludes a solemn poem of Hood's in the following fashion:—

Tow starn-fyced men sat out from Lyun,  
Throw the cold an' avvy mist;  
An' Hugh Jane Halrem wa-arked between  
Wi' joives upan 'is wrist.

All this is very dreadful, doubtless, and there is no element of excitement in it, such as thrills through the great Newington building when a religious stentor roars out the familiar catchwords. But though dull it may be, and silly, and sentimental, and moonstruck, we deny the lasciviousness—at least we are not so profoundly experienced in that as Mr. Spurgeon. But the real objection of the reverend gentleman is not against the moral looseness of the Penny Reading: we judge that to be only a wild charge raked up to strengthen his cause. The real objection comes out in the tailpiece of the article. It is got up, he says, *merely for amusement's sake*, and is therefore not to be tolerated by Christians. He once heard a wise and experienced father say that if he designed to ruin his children's souls, he should first give them a penny each to go to the Readings, feeling sure that they would then be quite ready to enjoy sixpennyworth of wickedness at the low music-hall. The next step, as a matter of course, would be the playhouse; and that, it stands to reason, is the gate of perdition. Here is the real peril of the Penny Reading. It fosters a taste for amusement—in other words, for the enjoyment of literature, humour, narrative, description, oratory: all of which graces and amenities of life, though they are conceded as a part of education and a means of refinement, are contrary to the spirit of religion—at least to that of some people. For it is curious to note that the religion of some people does not admit of grace, education, enjoyment, or refinement at all.

#### SCIENCE AT A SEANCE.

The discussion which recently arose between Home and Professor Tyndall relative to the proposed examination by the philosophers of the alleged wonders of spiritualism, points—as its issue proved—to no new idea. Years ago Professor Faraday was solicited to investigate spiritualism, with a challenge to detect the imposition if he discovered it. But Faraday declined the invitation on these logical grounds. "If," he said, "the conjuring is too cleverly managed for me to detect its process, my failure will be laid on the back of science, and will be recorded as a triumph of spiritualism over science. Now as it is possible for hocus-pocus to baffle the acutest observer, the spiritualists may baffle me; but I

should be sorry to let my inability to detect them be credited to the defeat of science." The late professor here showed himself a profound reasoner—one more careful of his darling science than of himself. But the spiritualists did persuade one philosopher to attend a seance—Professor Tyndall. And as Mr. Tyndall wrote the results of this conference in a defunct journal, the *Reader*, and as he has no objection to the republication of his experiences, we give them here.

Professor Tyndall took down a delicate pale-looking young lady, who was a medium, to dinner; and in the course of conversation she assured him that the presence of a magnet rendered her terribly ill. The following conversation ensued:—

Writer: Am I to understand that, if this room were perfectly dark, you could tell whether it contained a magnet without being informed of the fact?

Medium: I should know of its presence on entering the room.

Writer: How?

Medium: I should be rendered instantly ill.

Writer: How do you feel to-day?

Medium: Particularly well. I have not been so well for months.

Writer: Then may I ask you to state whether there is at the present moment a magnet in my possession?

The young lady looked at him, blushed, and stammered "No; I am not *en rapport* with you."

Professor Tyndall was sitting at her right hand, and a left-hand pocket within six inches of her person contained a magnet.

After this, it was no wonder that the heat deprecated discussion, as it exhausted the medium. The conversation then turned on the wonders of spiritualism, but Professor Tyndall had no less wonders to relate connected with the world of natural science. A lady present discoursed of spiritual atmospheres, which she could see, as beautiful colours, when she closed her eyes. Tyndall professed himself able to see similar colours, and, more than that, to be able to see the interior of his own eyes. The "medium" affirmed that she could see actual waves of light coming from the sun. Tyndall retorted that he could tell the exact number of waves emitted in a second from the red table-cover before them, and also their exact length. The medium spoke of the performances of the spirits on musical instruments. Tyndall said that such performance was gross, in comparison with a kind of music which had been discovered some time previously by a scientific man. Standing at a distance of twenty feet from a jet of gas, he would command the flame to emit a melodious note; it would obey, and continue its song for hours. So loud was the music emitted by the gas flame that it might be heard by an assembly of a thousand people. These were acknowledged to be as great marvels as any of those of spiritism. The spirits were then consulted, and Tyndall was pronounced to be a *first class medium*.

The Professor found that the spirits were very chary of having a scientific test applied to them. Thus, he says, "during the above conversation a low and oft repeated knocking was heard under the table. These were the spirits' knocks. I was informed that one knock, in answer to a question, meant 'No;' that two knocks meant 'Not yet;' and that three knocks meant 'Yes.' In answer to the question whether I was a medium, the response was three brisk and vigorous knocks. I noticed that the knocks issued from a particular locality, and therefore requested the spirits to be good enough to answer the question: from another corner of the table. *They did not do so*; but I was assured that they would do it, and much more, by-and-by. The knocks continuing, I turned a wine glass upside down, and placed an ear upon it, as upon a stethoscope. The spirits seemed disconcerted by the act; they lost their playfulness, and did not quite recover it for a considerable time."

While he was not looking, the table moved

and the believers cited the fact as illustrative of the superhuman power of the spirits. The strength of man, it was affirmed, was unavailing in opposition to theirs. No human power could prevent the table from moving when they pulled it. During the evening this pulling of the table occurred, or rather was attempted, three times. Twice the table moved when Tyndall's attention was withdrawn from it; on a third occasion, he tried whether the act could be provoked by an assumed air of inattention. Grasping the leg of the table firmly between his knees, he threw himself back in the chair, and waited, with eyes fixed on vacancy, for the pull. It came. For a few seconds it was pull spirit, pull muscle; the muscle, however, prevailed, and the table remained at rest. The civility of the spirits to one who had manifested such malapert antagonism to their wishes is very curious. At the close of a confessedly dull evening they were asked to spell the name by which Professor Tyndall is known in the spiritual world. The Professor shall tell the story in his own words:—

"My host commenced repeating the alphabet, and when he reached the letter P a knock was heard. He began again, and the spirits knocked at the letter O. I was puzzled as to my spiritual name, but waited for the *dénouement*. The next letter knocked down was E. I laughed, and remarked that the spirits were going to make a poet of me. Admonished for my levity, I was informed that the frame of mind proper for the occasion ought to have been superinduced by a perusal of the Bible, immediately before the *séance*. The spelling, however, went on, and sure enough I came out a poet. But matters did not end here. Our host continued his repetition of the alphabet, and the next letter of the name proved to be O. Here was manifestly an unfinished word; and the spirits were apparently in their most communicative mood. The knocks came from under the table, but no person present evinced the slightest desire to look under it. I asked whether I might go underneath; the permission was granted; so I crept under the table. Some of those present tittered; but honest G. exclaimed, 'He has a right to look into the very dregs of it to convince himself.' Having pretty well assured myself that no sound could be produced under the table without its origin being revealed to me (I had craved and obtained permission to pace my hand upon the medium's and other feet, if I deemed it necessary), my host was requested to continue his questions. He did so, but in vain. He adopted a tone of tender entreaty; but the 'dear spirits' had become dumb dogs, and refused to be entreated. I continued under that table for at least a quarter of an hour, after which, with a feeling of despair, as regards the prospects of humanity, which I had never before experienced, I regained my chair. Once there, the spirits resumed their loquacity, and dubbed me 'The Poet of Science.'"

#### LONGFELLOW—SONGS AND SONG WRITERS.

To the Editor of *The Orchestra*.

Sir,—In these loud-shouting, Crystal Palace Festival times, it is cheering to note in your always amusing and readable journal, that the still small voice of Longfellow has had a welcome. Thousands of men think as you do, and join in the congratulations at Cambridge to the good and great American poet. But your readers naturally say, What has all this to do with "fifths" and "thirds," and counterpoint, songs or song-writers, or the question you you have raised as to the latter.

It is scarcely a test of a popular poet, like Goldsmith, Wordsworth, or Longfellow, that they must tell us what the wild waves are saying, or "Wanted, a Governess," or something about jolly dogs, or a not willing Joseph, or the other tawdry nonsense married to the immoral verse or music of the music halls. Schubert, the king of song-writers, stands

by himself without such aid. We could have no *Lieder ohne Worte* sonatas or symphonies, if the connection were absolute of good words and good music. No doubt there is a good deal to be said on both sides. Arne and Bishop have added beauties of their own to the beauty of the great poet. The "*Stabat Mater*" only suffers by contrast of its exquisite Latin, when it loses with the Latin masses by a translation at Exeter Hall.

Then again, in true poets, like Shelley, Wordsworth, Byron, Goldsmith, Longfellow, there is perhaps always a lingering *arrière pensée*, let the music be never so good, that it does not come up to our previous idea of the words; such words as these, taken at random from Longfellow—

"There is a Reaper whose name is Death,  
And with his sickle keen,  
He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,  
And the flowers that grow between."

And then the sweet words—

"The mother gave in tears and pain  
The flowers she most did love;  
For she knew she should find them all again  
In the fields of light above."

One almost prefers these touching lines by themselves. Of course they have been set to music, with the "Psalm of Life," or "Excelsior," as Gustave Doré spoils our idea of the poetry of the Bible by his artificial ideas of the Deluge, or Don Quixote by mistaking it as an allegory. Then the "Children's Hour," the little blue-eyed banditti; Hiawatha, with its noble opening. Who can give us better music than Longfellow—

"Ye who love the haunts of Nature,  
Love the sunshine of the meadow,  
Love the shadow of the forest,  
Love the wind among the branches;  
Ye whose hearts are fresh and simple,  
Who have faith in God and Nature,  
Who believe, that in all ages  
Every human heart is human," &c.

This is a sermon, in the music of humanity, of deep significance in these Positive Philosophy times, Governor Eyre governings, and penny-a-liner worship "to order" of Tennyson's "Lucretius"—to tell us

"That in even savage bosoms  
There are longings, yearnings, strivings  
For the good they comprehend not,  
That the feeble hands are helpless,  
Groping blindly in the darkness,  
Touch God's right hand in that darkness."

Yes, we may depend on it Longfellow will live as long as Goldsmith and Wordsworth in the cabins and cottages of the poor, when the harsh ethics of Tennyson are left unread on fashionable drawing-room tables. Longfellow, Emerson, Mrs. Beecher Stowe, and all the good men and women of America have written on the side of humanity; while our ethics have been glorifying Stonewall Jackson, in the silly shout of the music halls, on the side of slavery. Longfellow ranks very low as a poet amongst critics who favour only the "roll of the hexameter," or such gibberish, or who prefer slavery, or strive to unweave the tangled web of Mr. Browning's almost unreadable verses. But poetry is not confined to hexameters or pentameters. Mr. Ruskin's prose is more poetic than the most rolling hexameters of our magazine literature; Carlyle's prose is poetic because he copies the German poets. Longfellow need not fear the critics who find fault with the prosody of "Hiawatha."—Yours, &c.,

CHARLES KIDD, M.D.

Sackville Street, W.  
June 15.

#### LONGFELLOW IN ENGLAND.

To the Editor of "*The Orchestra*."

Sir,—The claims you urge on behalf of the poet Longfellow to public welcome in this country have been well substantiated elsewhere. He has been warmly received in Carlisle, and created a LL.D in Cambridge. Oxford will follow the example and give him a stately reception. But when the poet comes to London, what are we going to do for him here? I suggest a public dinner, to which our eminent men would surely throng. We have no

time or opportunity for pageantry; we have no splendid buildings to show him over, and no particular municipal honours to accord him—unless he is shown Temple Bar and the Thames Embankment and presented with the Freedom of the City; no grand things either of them. But we can at all events be genial in our own English way,—which mostly means eating and drinking. The Americans were prodigal of their hospitality to Dickens: let us return the compliment, in a quieter fashion. For, as you say, the merits of Longfellow are of world-wide recognition. Thousands of people on both sides the Atlantic hail him as their poetic teacher; and he is in addition a ripe scholar. In him is the singular union of culture and refinement *plus* the power of swaying the great common heart; and the combination of these faculties in one man is, I take it, worthy of no small consideration. Therefore on all grounds—from the popular point of view and from that of culture and scholarship, I urge a Dinner to Longfellow.—Yours obediently,

A COCKNEY.

#### PSALM CHANTING.

To the Editor of *The Orchestra*.

Sir,—What is the precise meaning of the terms "synthesis" and "diæresis" when applied to chanting? Professor Ouseley, I learn, prefers "diæresis," the Dean of Ely "synthesis." Mr. Pullen of Salisbury adheres to synthesis, whilst Mr. Ramsey follows diæresis. Are these things new systems of chanting, or simply old ways disguised under new phrases? Canon Oakeley when at Margaret Chapel, some twenty-five years ago, published a psalter on the syllabic system without reference to accent. Is this a third invention?—I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

A CHOIRMASTER.

#### CADENCES IN HYMN TUNES.

To the Editor of *The Orchestra*.

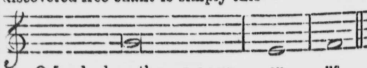
Sir,—I am not aware that there is any law to be found in books of theory respecting the conduct of cadences in chorals, but I presume a choral is not exempt from the usual conditions attending musical compositions whether long or short. After reading your notice of the new theory of music published at the Oxford University Press, I turned to the tune called *Cyril* composed by the Oxford Professor, and I find it is a six-line tune, the first four lines all ending upon E, the dominant of the key, A major. This is certainly a most unusual mode of composing a short piece of music, and one great teachers would not only disallow but term poor and contemptible. As the professor at Oxford did not act upon this plan in his choruses of *Plycarp*, I presume a psalmtune is an exception to the laws of composition, and a tune in which violation of grammar and defiance of rule is of no consequence.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

AN ORGANIST.

#### THE FREE CHANT.

To the Editor of *The Orchestra*.

Sir,—I am much surprised to find professional musicians—especially such as write in the pages of your musical contemporaries—giving credit to a Mr. Cowdry for the invention and propagating of a new chant, which this supposititious inventor describes as "a Free Chant." Mr. Cowdry's newly discovered free chant is simply this—

  
O Lord, show thy mercy up - on us.  
I am, Sir, your obedient servant, PRECENTOR.

#### POINTING THE PSALTER.

To the Editor of *The Orchestra*.

Sir,—The Dean of Chester is about to favour the musical world with another new psalter, founded, I