



MUSICAL CIRCLES.

Things locally in the musical way are dull. Church choirs are practicing Easter music and I hear that Trinity choir is going in for something rather ambitious in the way of an anthem. I should be obliged if choirmasters and organists would supply me with lists of their Easter music when completed, so that I may note as many as possible.

The Oratorio Society held their annual meeting on Monday evening. A few changes were made in the board of management, but the main officers are the same. The indefatigable Mr. Porter continues as Secretary, which title to a certain extent is a misnomer, as he is practically the manager of the society.

Musical services are announced for Sunday evening at St. Stephen's church and also German St. Baptist. At the former, a small orchestra will perform. Truly there is a great change in portions of the Presbyterian body when one thinks that it is not so very long ago, that a musical instrument of any kind, in a church of that denomination, was almost an unheard of thing.

Mr. Strand Explains.

THE EDITOR OF PROGRESS:—Will you kindly permit me in reply to "Unde's" remarks in a recent issue, to say that I perfectly agree with him as to the desirability of having a union of the supplied choirs; but for various reasons do not consider the work can be undertaken at present.

When a fitting opportunity occurs "Unde" may rest assured it will not be lost by
Yours faithfully,
R. P. STRAND.

Tones and Undertones.

August Enna, the young Danish composer, who has been having a brilliant success in Berlin, is the son of a shoemaker, and was himself brought up to the bench. He has produced several works, the last he pegged away at being an opera, "Die Hexe."

Miss Bettina Walker, a pianist and teacher of some note in England, has recently died. She was the author of an entertaining book, "My Musical Experiences" in which she described her insatiable thirst for great pianists and for studies indelible with them all—first with her countryman, Sterndale Bennett, then to Taubert and Sgambati and Deppe and Scharwenka, and last of all with Henselt.

A woman brought to Chicago from Engand the other day a novelty in needlework that will probably become popular this side of the water. It is a covering for the keys of the piano, cut as long and as wide as the keyboard and lined with silk. These coverings may be made of light tints of broadcloth or of chamois leather. In the latter case they are painted instead of embroidered. Notes of music, small musical instruments or narrow borders are usually used for the decoration done in flosses mingled with gold thread.

The French Chamber of Deputies has voted by a considerable majority, to levy a tax of 10 francs on all pianofortes. It is a curious fact as regards the campaign against pianofortes in France that some eminent musicians have been foremost in it. Ernest Reyer, the composer of "Sigurd," has long been in favor of a tax upon the instrument, and Verdi is known to entertain a similar prejudice against promiscuous pianoforte playing. The author of the present measure is Mr. Robert Mitchell, a son-in-law of Offenbach.

Grassini, the great Italian singer, was very much interested in the young girls among her relatives, and always ready to encourage any talent she could find in them. One day a novice was brought to her with the unpromising words, "She is a spoiled contralto, and will never do anything on the stage." But the singer listened while the young girl began her frightened trills, when suddenly Grassini caught her in her arms with delight. "Why, you are not a contralto," she said, "but the finest soprano in the world. Your voice is far stronger than mine. Study well. You want none of my help: there is a rich bank in your throat." The little singer was none other than Giulia Grisi.

The musical education of the daughters of the Princess of Wales is placed in the hands of Miss Olga Neruda, whose elder sister is the famous violinist, Lady Halle. Miss Neruda teaches them the pianoforte, but neither of the young Princesses has been able to learn the violin. This lack of musical talent has caused some disappointment to the Princess of Wales, who takes much pride in the doctorship of music conferred upon Her Royal Highness at Dublin some years ago. Some of the most famous musicians in the world have played with the Royal pupils. One of them, a brilliant violinist, was once asked his opinion of their performance. "You play like—like princesses," he replied.

Several "singing comedians" write their own songs, and occasionally make a hit with them, as Scanlan did with his "Peek-a-Boo," Emmet with his lullaby, and Mr. Flynn with "Down Went McGinty." Among those lesser composers is one whose songs have been sold by thousands in the music stores and made popular in the theatres all over the country. He confesses that he is not much of a musician, and says that it often takes him a month or two to write a song that sounds as if it had been "knocked off" in ten minutes. His songs, he says, are mosaics, made up of musical phrases that he catches here and there, sometimes from hand organs and gutter bands, sometimes from the cries of street hawkers, and occasionally from ideas that pop into his head. Inartistic as this process of manufacture seems to be, his songs bring him an income of several thousand dollars a year.

An "old subscriber" rises to ask the New York Sun what has become of negro minstrelsy. The decadence of this once favorite form of entertainment is significant of the changes wrought by the whirligig of time. The picturesque darky of negro minstrelsy owed much of his popularity to the war of the rebellion, and the further that struggle is left behind the less attractive he becomes. Much ingenuity has been exer-

cised to maintain his place. First came the female minstrel, then the white minstrel, and sundry other innovations. But all in vain. The negro minstrel does not interest the present generation, and he seems doomed, like the Chinese, to go. In strong contrast to this fate is that of the circus, which is as powerful a magnet for the youngsters of to-day as it was for our grandparents. The circus depends, not upon an epoch, but upon childhood, and that is always with us. The Madison Square Garden, by the way, has not yet passed into control of the "Greatest Show on Earth," although it is hoped to bring about a satisfactory arrangement at the stockholders' meeting early in April.

TALK OF THE THEATRE.

The latest news is that M. J. H. Laine, manager of Gilmore's Band has been in the city and arranged to take the dates fixed upon by the Minstrels.

The band will be here for three nights and two matinees.

The Minstrels will appear on Monday and Tuesday April 17th and 18th.

On Monday evening at the Opera House, the Wallace Hopper company will open its season playing at popular prices. The Halifax papers pronounce Mr. Hopper a good comedian, and his leading lady Miss Nella Robinson a bright and winsome little actress. By this time next week the public shall have had an opportunity to judge as to their capabilities.

It is passing strange isn't it what bad luck the Opera House Directors have had in their bookings for the season! Both in the theatrical and the operatic line all engagements nearly, have been broken.

The Katherine Germaine Company failed to materialise, and I should not be surprised if the Marie Gurney company would also fail to keep its dates. It was booked for the first week in April I think, but at the time of writing nothing here would indicate that it was coming.

The Snowflake Minstrel club is no more. One of its best men has gone across the continent to live; and others have gone in with the St. John Amateur Minstrel club.

Wm. Wheeler Jr., its late musical director is now also a member of the latter organization. He is a great worker and will prove a valuable addition when the Amateur Minstrels give their next performance, which is set, I understand, for the 20th of April, the ends will be almost entirely new; but two of the six old faces will gaze out at the audience from their positions. And it will be the last time one of them, Mr. J. S. Esson, will be seen here in that capacity, as he will take up his residence in Montreal after the 1st of May.

I should judge from what I hear of the rehearsals, that the singing would surpass anything they have given us yet, and that is saying a good deal. At present they are without an interlocuter, but no doubt will be able to find in their large membership, a capable man for the position.

Talk of the Boston Playhouses.

Were we in it?
Well, I guess yes!

I mean the eighth annual benefit of the Boston Press Club which took place in the Boston Theatre, on the afternoon of Thursday, 9th, inst., and which was, as it always is, the crowning benefit of the season. The programme was a long one, so long that the conductor swung his baton to start the overture at 12.30, and it was nearly 5.30 when the green curtain was rung down.

Every theatre in Boston was represented, and the great audience of three thousand people testified their approval by remaining through the entire performance. Julia Marlowe and her company gave an act of "Twelfth Night"; Stuart Robson and his players came along with an act from "Married Life"; the Boston Museum company did the farce of "Faithful James"; the Park Theatre sent in its people, with an act of "Temperance Town"; from across the way, at the Globe came a merry band of girls, from the "Ali Baba" company, headed by the bright particular stars of that spectacular production. The big theatre itself contributed the second act from the "New South"; the Bowdoin Square forwarded Chauncy Olcott and his people in a portion of "Mavourneen," and there were dancers, and singers and readers galore. It was a great show, and one long to be remembered. The souvenir programme was a thing of beauty, and a joy for a longer time than is usual with programmes, and taking it altogether, the boys at No. 12 Bosworth street have good reason to be proud of their eighth annual.

The Boston theatre has been given up this week to opera, and Lillian Durell has produced such time honored favorites as "Faust," "Mignon" and "The Bohemian Girl" to splendid audiences. Miss Durell is a graceful woman with a well trained powerful soprano voice, and a dramatic ability rather above that of the ordinary

operatic singer and she has gathered about her a good all round company of singers so that her operas have been presented very acceptably.

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The Park theatre still maintains "A Temperance Town" as its attraction and when one considers that it has been running for fifteen weeks with no diminution in the size of the audiences and no word of a successor, there must be great elements of popularity in it.

At the Globe we have had Joseph Murphy in his well known Irish plays "Kerry Gow" and "Shaun Rhue," to be followed next week by a piece that certainly has been produced before, in more than one theatre in the country namely "The Private Secretary."

Stuart Robson has pleased all his old admirers and made plenty of new ones during his two weeks' stay at the Tremont in "Married Life" and "The Henrietta." The former is a comedy on the lives of those of the old English dramatists written by T. B. Buckstone, but it is apt to be dull and wearisome, and the majority of people prefer to see Robson in his performance of Bertie the Lamb in "The Henrietta." Sol Smith Russell is the next attraction at this house, but unhappily we will only have him for a week and he will be seen in "A Poor Relation."

Down at the Museum they seem to have got a play that amounts to something in Herne's new piece, "Shore Acres." The piece is essentially a homey one, the scene laid on the coast of Maine, and the characters mainly people in the humbler walks of life, but the play is remarkably well written and is interesting to a great degree. It is perfectly true that the Museum Company are not up to the mark in many respects, but the part played by Mr. Herne himself, that of Nathaniel Berry, is so well played, so thoroughly artistic, natural and winning that the shortcomings of the rest are overlooked, and nothing but words of approval follow each performance.

The Hollis street theatre has given us the enjoyment of the season, so far, that of Julia Marlowe. This attractive little lady has been here two weeks and will be with us more, and in that time we have seen a counterfeit presentment of the most gracious of Shakespeare's women take form and presence before our eyes. Rosalind and Juliet, Imogen and Viola have all moved and lived under the magic of this charming actress' art, and Galatea too has stepped from her pedestal into the world. Parthenia has led her wild outlaw lover through the woods in silken fetters of affection, and that quaint old play "The Love Chase" has been seen and admired.

The company from the New York Theatre of Arts and Letters will be seen at the Columbia Theatre here next week in the "Squirrel Inn."

Joseph Murphy has a new play, called "The Game Keeper." What a relief to that horse that has been shod so many times in "Kerry Gow."

Another new theatre for New York. This one will be at 38th and Broadway. Harry Dixey has revived his old success "Adonis" and goes on tour March 20th. Minna Gale Haynes is an early comer at the Tremont, and will be seen in a round of legitimate plays.

Mrs. Brown Potter has got a new play that is said to be more realistic than "Therese Raquin," if it is, the audiences should be made up of married people only. "1492" captured Montreal recently and is now on the New England circuit. The piece will be played in Bangor on Monday

and Tuesday of next week, and I should not be surprised to hear that some St. John people went to hear it.

Cyril Tylersang at the Columbia Theatre this week, and, as usual, charmed his hearers.

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