



MUSICAL CIRCLES.

I was glad to see by Mr. Strand's letter last week that he was favorably impressed with my suggestion regarding the supplied choir. Of course, he must be the best judge with regard to the feasibility of the scheme, but I hope the difficulties that apparently exist just now will be smoothed away and that at an early date something definite will be done.

As previously announced Gilmore's band will positively come to St. John, the dates having been fixed. There is no question as to the standing of this splendid organization. Of course with the majority of Americans, they claim to be in the world, but that is a very large contract, when you consider some of the great European bands, military and otherwise, which were old institutions long before Gilmore was thought of. No doubt they can claim justly first place on this continent. Apparently from all accounts, the mantle of the deceased leader and originator has fallen on worthy shoulders. As the record of Mr. D. W. Reeves, the present musical director, is of a very high character both musically and otherwise. I have only one regret about the matter viz. that the Opera House is too small a place to hear properly the full power of a magnificent band like Gilmore's. Of course I know there is no other place in the city where they could perform at this time of the year and so we must put up with it.

The assisting artists for these concerts include a Russian princess, who plays the viola divinely, they say, and a contralto and baritone. The press notices from leading journals speak in the highest terms of all these artists, and St. John will, after a very long time, have a chance to hear a concert of the very first class. Tickets should be at a premium by the opening night.

Last Sunday evening at St. Stephen's church, was one to be long remembered by those fortunate enough to gain admittance, for not only was some fine music well performed, but also the hearers were treated to a most admirable discourse on music, delivered by the able pastor, Dr. Macrae. In my humble opinion, no other man in this city could have handled the subject in a more masterly manner than did the learned doctor.

Of the music, Mendelssohn was the favorite, there being no less than four selections from that composer, three from St. Paul and one from Athalia. Miss Clara Watson sang "I will sing of Thy great mercies," and also some of the solo work with the chorus "Heaven and the Earth Display." This lady's voice is much improved, as I have before noticed, but she is hardly up to the heavy work of oratorio yet. I was glad to find Mrs. Gilchrist singing in her legitimate line of contralto, and she appeared to advantage in that ever beautiful arioso "But the Lord is Mindful of His Own." Miss Violet Lamb, a young lady I have not heard before, was the second soprano in "Heaven and the Earth Display," and I was much pleased with her voice, which, though of small compass, possesses a nice full tone, and she sings easily.

With regard to the duet in "Now we are Ambassadors," the less said about it the better. There was neither time, tune, proper notes, or anything else. Mr. Ritchie certainly has a fine natural voice, and when he has learned how to use it, it will be a great pleasure to hear him, but as for Mr. Gunn, well—

The choruses were good. For a small choir to attempt "How lovely are the Messengers," and "The Heaven and the Earth Display," it means that every member must know his or her part extremely well. The basses and alto could not have been better, and the only fault to find with the tenors and sopranos, was a feebleness in attacking leads, and an overweighing of the latter in the higher passages. Here I might mention the capital work that the two first violins got in, when the sopranos were in difficulty; they seemed to get extra power on at once, and kept the sopranos in tune.

The orchestra of nine pieces acquitted themselves well. I am told all the orchestral music was practically under the leadership of Mr. W. A. Ewing, and that means success, as one knows by experience when that good musician takes charge.

Miss A. K. Wilson, the organist of the church, presided at the organ, and I hope she will not think it a doubtful compliment, when I say that I think some of the male organists of the city, might learn a few lessons from her.

The oratorio society were kind enough to loan the music for the occasion, and everyone's thanks are due to them for so doing. I am of opinion that this is one of the ways in which the oratorio society will aid their own endeavors in promoting the better appreciation of the higher class of music.

There was also a musical service at Germain street baptist church on Sunday evening, but I could not be in both places at once. I was told that Mrs. Worden sang some solos in her usually finished manner and that the quartette sang well.

I am not sorry to find that the Snowflakes have become defunct. If the St. John's can get hold of the best men, it will mean some additional strength, tho' from my point of view viz. the musical, there was very little talent amongst them. Mr. Will Wheeler will be a decided acquisition.

After all, the Native African choir pays a visit to St. John and will appear at the Mechanics' Institute on the 29th and 30th of this month. The choir consists of sixteen well educated natives, representing seven distinct tribes. The musical director is Mr. Jas. H. Balmer, R. A. M., a musician of ability, who studied the voice under Signor M. Garcia. He has travelled largely in Africa and formed this choir while journeying in Cape Colony. The organization has not only appeared before the Queen, but in most of the celebrated houses of the nobility in England. They have also toured through England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. "Unique is the word," is the quotation from the London Pall Mall Gazette, of June 19th, last year. St. John people will no doubt give them the warmest of welcomes, apart from the merit of the performance, the object for which they travel is a laudable one, viz. the accumulation of funds for the promotion of the technical education of the Kafirs.

Tones and Undertones.

Herr Otto Goldschmidt, the husband of Jenny Lind, has received from the King of Sweden the order of "Commander of the North Star."

Signor Mascagni will conduct the first performance of "I Ranzau" in London this year, and Signor Leoncavallo's "I Pagliacci," which is also to be given there, will probably be directed by its composer.

Queen Victoria was so charmed by a piece of music recently played in public by the band at Osborne that she sent an attendant to learn the name of it. He returned with the information that it was entitled "Come Where the Booze is Cheaper."

The presentation of Berlioz' "La Damnation de Faust" as an opera at Monte Carlo

seems to have been extraordinarily successful, and Sir Augustus Harris will probably give the work in the same form at Covent Garden. M. Jean de Reazke, who takes the part of Faust, has entirely recovered his voice.

Antonio Dvorak's quartet for pianoforte and strings in E flat, op. 87, which has recently been performed for the first time in London is highly praised by the critics, as being in every respect worthy of the Bohemian master, as in parts characterized by a degree of sentiment rather unusual with Dvorak, and as "the work of composer of genius in its ripe maturity."

Welshmen have long been celebrated for their attention to choral singing. In addition to the establishment of a triennial festival. Cardiff seems to be advancing rapidly in appreciation of high class music. Classical Chamber concerts in which eminent performers take part, are frequently given, and Herr Joachim has recently made his first appearance in Cardiff.

Miss Anna Hegner, a sister of Otto Hegner, the young pianist who divided Josef Hoffman the interest of the musical public a few years ago, is the latest addition to the list of youthful performers. She gave a violin recital in London recently and, although only 11 years of age, she possesses, it is said, an excellent tone, and her execution proves that she shares her brother's precious ability. He, too, has been playing in London with marked success.

Madame Patti is said to be writing her autobiography. Apropos of this, is this story: The old German Emperor was his greatest favourite. When singing at Homburg, the then king sent her a message requesting her to walk with him in the morning while he drank the waters. "Certainly not," was her reply to the bearer; "I get up early for no king in Europe." In later years, however, when a short time before his death his Majesty sent word to her to visit him in his box, apologizing for being unable to go to her behind the scenes, she said, with tears in her eyes, "Oh, now, sire, I would run anywhere to see you."

TALK OF THE THEATRE.

The Wallace Hopper Comedy Company opened its season at the Opera House on Monday evening to a fair audience. The houses since, have not been so good, and it is difficult to give a reason for this as the Company is not at all a bad one, and is giving a very creditable show for the money. To class it, I should put it in between the Boston Comedy Co. and the Josie Mills Co.; a trifle better than the former, a trifle worse than the latter. Mayhap Lent will explain the light business: perhaps the fulsome advance notices have had something to do with it. For instance, listen to this re-published in one of the morning papers from the Burlington Vt. Standard. "The Reclaimed Company which played here last evening was the best dramatic company we ever saw. We make no exception." The editor of the Standard either had a fat bit of job printing for the Company, or was highly enthused when he used his pass.

Monday evening "Reclaimed" was put on for the first time in this city, and it afforded a favourable opportunity for judging the capabilities of the Company. Mr. Hopper is a conscientious worker, a fair comedian, and generally has the gods with him. As a singer he does not shine, but he knows the words of his song all right. Miss Robinson is a versatile little leading lady, and Mrs. Cutler does the old woman very well. Mr. Mills, who has been here before with H. Price Webber, has in some respects improved. If he could cure his bad habit of rapid talking, it would be an improvement appreciated by his auditors, and if he would get one of those light suits, which he uses in his heavy villainous parts, dyed, it would be a pleasing relief to the eyes. Tuesday evening "Hazel Kirke" was the bill.

Effie Ellsler and C. U. Coudock are also producing "Hazel Kirke" at Hawlin's Theatre, Chicago, this week.

Wednesday night "Little Ferret" was played, with a nameless farce as an after piece. It will be just as well for the House, and for the Company if, for the balance of the season, no more farces are done.

The native African choir which is proving a great drawing card in Halifax this week, is billed for the Institute for the 29th and 30th.

The Amateur Minstrels will give their performances in the Opera House on the 13th and 14th of April.

Will W. Robinson has succeeded John W. Luce as Boston correspondent of the New York Dramatic Mirror.

It is said to be a fact that there are in Paris 200,000 well-to-do persons who habitually obtain free admission to the theatres.

W. S. Cleveland's minstrels have been on the road without interruption for 16 months. Next season's company will be an entirely new organization, and will begin its tour in the early summer.

Miss Eleanor Moretti has been engaged to create the leading role in Henry Guy Carleton's new play, "A Bit of Scandal," which is soon to be produced under the direction of Mr. Charles Abbott.

Henry Irving has accepted from Conan Doyle a pathetic little piece, entitled "A Straggler of '15," in which the eminent actor intends to play the part of an aged veteran of Waterloo, who expires from the

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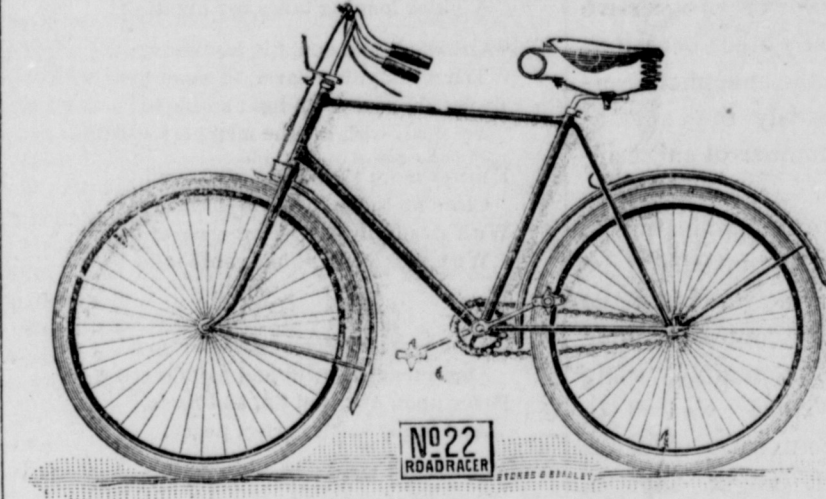
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emotions caused by seeing a body of troops pass his window.

A handkerchief carried by Modjeska in "Henry VIII," is one of the rarest pieces of old Spanish lace in existence. It is said to have once been the property of Queen Isabella, and Modjeska has been asked to exhibit it at the World's fair.

"Thomas must be doing splendidly on the stage," remarked a gratified mother; "he writes me that he appears every evening as a villager, a gypsy, and two kinds of soldiers—while Mr. Hamlet, the star, you know, only performs one part."

Samuel French, the dramatic publisher, says that the most popular farce is "Box and Cox"—of which the copyright will be out in five years. Maddison Morton, who wrote the play in 1847, having died the year before last—and the most popular play is the "Lady of Lyons." He sells thousands of these every year on both sides of the Atlantic.

The name and fame of "Shore Acres," now successfully running at the Boston Museum, have found their way all over New England, and the residents of Boston and vicinity are filling the time-honored house at every performance. Those who have already witnessed this charming play can readily understand the enthusiasm it has created. Its story is natural, and at the same time so very entertaining, that it is like a refreshing sea breeze after a succession of dull productions with which the modern stage has been surfeited.

Nineteen Boxes.

BRANTFORD, March 20th.—The Expositor last week published an article on the case of Archie Rymal of this city, which has caused considerable excitement in Brantford and district. It appears Mr. Rymal has had more than his share of suffering during the past few years, so far as he had run down from kidney disease that he had lost the power of his limbs and back. He could only get around with the aid of two crutches, or when assisted by kind hands. His death was daily expected. On the advice of his wife he tried Dodd's Kidney Pills, and took in all, nineteen boxes. His improvement was marked from the second box. He is now completely cured, and a living testimony of the curative powers of that wonderful remedy.

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