



MUSICAL CIRCLES.

Some of the music of special services held in Trinity church of the so-called surprised choir of the city have not been up to the standard and with a view to the future of this year, with the St. George's society, the annual service of the church of England Institute et al I think that a suggestion about the same may not be out of place now. I fully know the objections that will be urged viz. the large amount of time taken up by the various musical organizations already in vogue—what with choir rehearsals, Oratorio Society, Minstrel Club, musical evenings, etc., etc.—that to suggest a new organization will perhaps be met with derisive laughter. But it is impossible to give a good musical service with three choirs who are all used to different modes of singing and chanting, having only one—almost two rehearsals before an important service. I would suggest to Mr. Strand, as organist of the leading Anglican church in the city, that he bestir himself to organize a Choral Union of the surprised choir, under his directorship, and prepare a few good services and special anthems. This could easily be done by having a fortnightly practice and do not think that this would be too severe a tax on the members of the different choirs. I am sure that my suggestion will meet with the approval of the ministers in charge of the different churches. I think that the rector of Trinity church would give permission for rehearsals to be held in his church. Mr. Strand may not think me for suggesting this amount of extra work for himself (a labor of love), but I depend on his well known church where most of these services are held to at least think of the suggestion. I of course cannot speak positively of the choir agreeing either, but I do not think that there is any impediment put in the way. Try it Mr. Strand.

Sleigh drives and suppers do not agree with some choirs. It is a risky thing for men and boys whose vocal organs are of importance to take an evening drive of two hours on a cold frosty night, especially if they howl choruses all the time they are out. The Mission church choir on Sunday last did not seem to have recovered from their Thursday evening out. The boys were conspicuous by their absence. Even the male member who presented in the morning, who can generally be depended upon, seemed to have a touch of frost in his throat. I think it would be wiser for the kind-hearted trustees to give the annual outing in the summer.

Now that I have mentioned the Mission church I will continue by saying, I have wondered for some time, who are the parties that are vested with the powers as to the music, organist, etc. Of course, in Father Davenport's time everybody knew he was musical, as well as spiritual director, but since he has left, it is of course, in different hands. —later I have come to the conclusion (for I still go occasionally for old association's sake) that the present priest in charge who has asserted, I believe, that he does not know a note of music, must have made the appointment of the organist, and also takes charge of the music. I should like to see the list of the musical services of the Mission church.

"Arcadia," the Montreal Fortnightly has a notice of Charles Santley's Reminiscences, which will induce everyone interested in musical matters to at once get hold of the book, I shall have a little to say about it, when I have been able to read the work.

I hear that the first night of the performances of the St. John Amateur Minstrels will be entirely devoted to the old time plantation melodies—There is no doubt that old timers will meet with great applause and I think it is a capital move. I hope that the management will strengthen the club with good baritone and bass soloists and not depend entirely upon their tenors for solos.

The Snowflake Minstrels gave their entertainments on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings and had fine houses. Judging from the applause, the audience were perfectly delighted with the evening's amusement. Musically (which is my department) there was much to be wished for, though one doesn't want to be hard on an organization of young men who have not had time or experience enough to give either good solos or good chorus singing to an audience.

To my idea the singing (heaven save the mark) of an end man's song does not involve the getting out of one's mouth an unintelligible lot of sounds at the top stretch of note, or at least very little, natural voice accompanied by eccentric action however good the action.

Joe Fox who has a rattling good end man's voice and is as well a good comic, spoilt it all by not pronouncing his words so that they could be heard and not singing his notes, which he can very well witness his last appearance at the other Minstrels—when he was splendid and the other end men copied him throughout. Give us the words and notes brother end men so that they can be heard by the audience and you will be capital.

Toney Racine sang very well indeed and I was much struck with the ease of his manner. A. Chip Ritchie gave a promise of a very fine voice, and with some cultivation, a few years hence I think he will take quite a lead amongst our first flight of singers. Why didn't the president of the club give a song instead of placing himself so modestly in the rear as though to escape notice?

The chorus did not sound so full as they should from their numbers, but I think Mr. Stage Manager placed them a little too far back, and so what they did do mostly went up in the flies. This would not have mattered so much if the orchestra, who were well up to the mark, and most ably led by Will Wheeler, had been behind them on the stage, instead of in the auditorium, where they managed to do a lot of drowning of the voices, in spite of their manifest efforts to keep down.

The musical gems of the evening, to me—were the duets of the Leaman Brothers—and they gave their elder "Bruders" a very strong lesson in enunciation and clear vocalization. Every word could be heard, and every note too. The smaller of the two gave a capital whistling song and proved himself to be an able little artist.

I will return to the subject of Minstrel next week, to ventilate a few, not very original remarks about our two clubs. UNDE.

Mr. Starr sang even better than usual, and "The Chorister," by Sullivan, was delivered admirably. The organ solo ("Prelude and Fugue," by Bach) was played finely, the pedal passages being especially good. "Love Divine all Love excelling," by Steiner, is perhaps one of the most beautiful duets ever composed. Mrs. Carter and Mr. Lindsay sang it very nicely; but there was perhaps a slight lack of expression; it was a pity also that Mr. Lindsay's voice broke on one of the high notes. In the accompanied passages their voices blended beautifully. The organ solo, "Grand Chorus," by Salome) was a showy piece of music, and it was fairly well played. LOUTHOEN.

Tones and Undertones. Senor Sarasate has had thirty-two watches given him at various times, several in the shape of violins.

Miss Bessie Hogarth Swann has received an offer to become first soprano at the first parish church at Bangor, which she has declined.

Johann Strauss's new operetta, "Princess Ninetta," had its initial presentation in Vienna some two weeks ago, and is spoken of as a very pleasing success.

A. Conan Doyle and J. M. Barrie are collaborating in the writing of the libretto for a new comic opera, to be set to music by Ernest Ford, and produced at the Savoy Theatre, London.

"They say" that Miss Ta-ra-ra-Boom-de-ay is bringing back with her from America, \$18,000—not a bad solution, if the fact be as stated—for singing that song. The lady has been paid, they calculate, at the rate of ten dollars a minute, which is better than the best ever achieved by the greatest of the prime donne.

TALK OF THE THEATRE.

The Snowflake Amateur Minstrels made their initial bow to the public about a year ago; afterwards they played in the Institute. This winter they were ambitious and took the Opera House.

It was thought by some that they were too ambitious, but the result has proved to the boys were and are "all right." "Good show" was the almost universal remark as the large audience streamed out upon the streets on Tuesday evening. When the curtain went up promptly on time, twenty black faces were seen upon the stage, the orchestra being in front, and the first part went off very smoothly.

The six end men showed that they had been carefully drilled, executing the march and the various movements in the opening chorus "We'll raise de roof tonight," in good style. In fact all through the circle the end men displayed a great deal of life and action, and in this respect, as indeed in some others, can give pointers to their older confreres, the Amateur Minstrels.

The jokes were mostly all fresh, and sparkling with fun; the local allusions were especially enjoyable, but then these latter came easy at this particular period in our history. Certainly the Snowflakes fell upon opportune days for their jokes.

While all the end men did creditable work Joe Rainie's was far and away the best. His singing is always good; his acting is never over-strained, and he is at all times easy and natural. This perhaps cannot be said of some of his companions on the end. Joe is also a member of the Amateur Minstrel Club, and I think, that organization would be making a popular move if it gave him a shove up nearer the front on the bone end of its circle and not keep him so far in the background.

In the olio Mr. J. C. Wild, the Boston professional, gave what was styled on the programme a new musical sketch.

The monologue portion of the sketch may have been new to Mr. Wild, but it certainly was not to the house. Some of the alleged witticisms in it were old enough to wear whiskers, and some old enough to have them dyed. The musical part of the sketch was also quite familiar to the audience. Mr. Wild brought it down from Boston with him, and whenever you see him on the stage you also hear him picking away just the same as before. That poor little mandolin solo must be tired! I wonder that he dares to expose it in this cold weather.

To me, the Leaman Brothers were the greatest hit of the evening.

The youngsters are about eight and ten years old, respectively, I should judge, and it was positively their first appearance on any stage, yet they had all the coolness of professionals. They came smilingly up to the footlights, made their little bows, danced their little dance, sang their little song, and went off perfectly delighted.

The audience too was delighted and recalled them.

Four encores were demanded, and there was apparently no exhausting their repertory, for at each recall the youthful artists gave a different selection.

"A Trip to the World's Fair, or None of the Comforts of Home," an amusing after-piece, remarkable chiefly by reason of the wonderful resemblance the characters in it bore to some of our well known citizens, sent the audience home in good humor.

Perhaps the Snowflakes will pardon me, if I suggest that they dispense with the services of the professionals, and give a strictly amateur show when they make their next

appearance, and they might also do away with the street parade. It savored strongly of the professional and was in bad taste. On Wednesday evening they gave a second performance and on Saturday there will be a matinee.

Fredericton is to be favored, I understand with a visit from the boys, and I heartily recommend the Frederictonians to go and see them.

Both Miss Hampton and Miss Burress have charming roles in "The Parvenu," which will be given on Feb. 13, at the museum.

Miss Mae Branson, in her new specialty entitled "Chappies" wears a costume, the satin of which cost \$23 per yard. There is not much of it, but it is an expensive dress.

C. B. Jefferson, Klaw & Erlanger's production of Eugene Tompkins' Boston theatre success, the "Soudan," will be shortly presented in the Bowdoin Square theatre.

Sol Smith Russell is to revive "The Tale of a Coat," a play that was written for him by the late Dion Boucault. The piece has been rearranged by Edward E. Kidder.

Miss Theresa Vaughn of "1492" has kept account of the number of times she has sung "Annie Rooney" during the run of the piece. Up to Friday night, in Lawrence, the record was 1031 verses.

The cordial indorsement which Boston has extended to Oscar Wilde's "Lady Windermere's Fan," has decided Charles Frohman, who owns the American rights to the piece to put it on tour with a capable company next season, visiting the large cities only.

Mr. Thomas W. Keene contemplates a complete change of repertory for next season. He expects to produce "King John," and "King Henry IV." he is playing Falstaff, and also Macbeth, and a new version of "Toodles," which he will give as an after part to "The Fool's Revenge."

Mr. Odell Williams will play the role of Joshua Whitcomb in "The Old Homestead" next season. As Mr. Denman Thompson will play nearly the whole season in Chicago, Mr. Williams will practically have the country to himself. Mr. Thompson has made an excellent choice, as Mr. Williams will look the part and play it finely.

On Feb. 20, at the Grand opera house, Boston, the Wilbur opera company will open an engagement, presenting a new opera of every performance. That charming little singer, Miss Susie Kerwin, heads a company of 50 people. It requires 157 trunks to transport the costumes of the company. "The Royal Middy" will be the opening opera.

Miss Jessie Milward, a well known English actress who has for some time occupied the responsible position of leading lady at the Drury Lane theatre, London, has been secured by Henry Irving to accompany him to America next season, alternating in leading characters with Ellen Terry. Miss Milward is a sister of Herbert Milward who has been in Boston for the past month in his position as manager of the Palmer stock company.

A manager in New York declares that farce comedies are working a general injury to theatrical interests: "To the legitimate theatres, because they are taking people away from them; to the public, because they are lowering standards of taste; to the variety shows, because they are being constantly recruited from them, and to the actors, as a class, because they induce a man to give up honest work and play at the gallery."

In Ellen Terry's beautiful home in South Kensington there stands ever ready a basket full of garments to be made for the poor. Whenever the intimate friends of the great actress run in for the woman's five minutes' call, which always spoils the morning, Miss Terry produces her basket, and while they chat the visitor must busy herself with knitting or sewing or crocheting. The number of garments which are sent out finished each year are the best kind of an illustration of how much time the modern women spends holding her hands.

Known in Hamilton. HAMILTON, Feb. 9.—Mrs. Ellen Brown of Toronto, who was so marvellously cured of Bright's Disease by Dodd's Kidney Pills is well known in Hamilton, having been in the Hospital here where the authorities, like those of the Toronto Institutions pronounced her case incurable. People who knew her here are surprised to learn that she is cured, as they thought she was in the Home for Incurables in Toronto, and never expected to see her outside that place again. Mr. Geo. Parke, the popular druggist of this city says that the sales of Dodd's Kidney Pills are very large and increasing, as all those to whom he has sold them are receiving a great benefit from their use. The success of Dodd's Kidney Pills over all other kidney remedies is owing to the fact that they never failed when used for Bright's Disease, Dropsy, Backache, Rheumatism, and all diseases of the Kidneys and blood.

A Prerequisite Indeed. The superintendent of a school was catechizing a number of scholars, varying the usual form by beginning at the end of the catechism. After asking what were the prerequisites of confirmation, and receiving satisfactory replies, he asked:—"And now, boys, tell me what must precede baptism?" Whereupon a lively urchin at once shouted out, "A baby, sir!"

The Poor Author—To His Own Brain. What have you done—mine ox—off? To earn this bitter road? You start with dawn, with dusk wine still, Dull Beast, beneath the goad. The summer sun glares hot and high, Hard-pressed you plod along. To urge you on I walk anigh Who loathe my goad and thong. For well I know to mend your pace There needs long rest; long breathing space; Free days to munch the cold sweet grass, While idle, slow the hours should pass. And these are not for you—nor me! The bean fields sweet, the wild grapes free, We may not pause to taste Behind us comes with even tread, With cold hands used to touch the dead, One crying—"Up and haste!" A. M. M.

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