



IN MUSICAL CIRCLES.

If the principals of the Gilbert Opera Company had been as excellent as the chorus and orchestra were, we should have had quite a musical treat the early part of this week. I have seldom heard a chorus and orchestra of such small numbers so carefully selected. All of the members of these parts of the company were thoroughly up to their work, and the parts well balanced. Mr. George Purdy, the director, kept everything well in hand, those under him answering promptly to his clever conducting. Of the principal roles in Bait's Bohemian Girl, (which, by an evening paper, was most amusingly stated to be the most difficult of Gilbert and Sullivan's operas) the same praise cannot be given. In the case of Arline, in which Miss Carvell appeared, the old saying that one must learn to walk before one can run seemed to come forcibly to one's mind. The great singers who have appeared in this part in the principal English sections of the globe proved that it is not an easy creation, and requires more than an actress at the outset of her career should undertake. Miss Carvell has a very fine organ, which under proper tuition and training will no doubt develop into a first class voice, but she is at present quite over-weighted with the undertaking of first roles in legitimate opera. She sang at her best in "I dream that I dwell," and in the duet with Thaddeus in the second act. She dresses charmingly, has a nice stage presence and must have been gratified with the generous reception accorded to her. I was much pleased with Mr. Lloyd, the tenor, who has a fine voice, with a very distinct enunciation. He sang with good style, his best efforts being "When other lips," and "When the fair land of Poland." Mr. Lon P. Brine made a good Count Arban. He has a heavy rich voice, which he does not seem to have under careful control, possibly from an excessive use of the vibrato which makes his intonation very indistinct, making one almost accuse him of singing out of tune occasionally. I liked his performance of "The Heart bowed down," which improved with every encore verse he sang, the last one being the choicest, as the fault I have before noted was not very apparent. Mr. Marston's Devilshoof was a fair performance, though he was not quite note perfect. The Queen of the Gypsies was entrusted to Miss Dana, whose voice was not at all suitable, the music being quite out of her compass. As to the Forestin of Mr. Gilrain it was a very poor performance.

One of the prettiest numbers in this beautiful opera, as everyone knows, is the quartette "From the Valleys and Hills" sung by Arline, the Queen, Thaddeus, and Devilshoof. This went very well and was deservedly encored. Taken all round we have had many a worse performance of this fine work, which is so often murdered by comic opera companies. I was not able to hear Maritana, but I should think that Mr. Lloyd must have shown to much advantage in "Then let me like a soldier fall."

I cannot say anything of Oratorio this week as my notes have to be in before these performances take place.

Talk, talk, talk, but no action. This is the position of the band for the public good, and seems likely to be, as the weeks are slipping away rapidly and the best part of the season will soon be gone. Perhaps the ladies of the non-success of the agitation is that the reason was not been appealed to. "They generally get their own way when they make up their minds. Ladies, please agitate!" UNDE.

Tones and Undertones.

One peculiarity in the career of the youthful composer, Mascagni, seems to have escaped notice. First operas have been declared on high authority to be like first puppies—fit only to be destroyed. Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini, Verdi, Meyerbeer, Auber, Gounod, Bizet, Wagner, failed with their first operatic venture; and most of them failed several times before making any marked success. Mascagni, on the other hand, succeeded from the very beginning.

Dr. Antonin Dvorak, the great composer reiterates his opinion of negro melodies, which are, he announces, reflected in his new symphony. He says: "It is my opinion that I find a sure foundation in the negro melodies for a new national school of music, and my observations have already convinced me that the young musicians of this country need only intelligent direction, serious application and a reasonable amount of public support and applause to create a new musical school in America. This is not a sudden discovery on my part. The light has gradually dawned on me."

Bernhardt is to have a theatre in Paris all to herself when she returns from her South American tour next September, where for three years she will have free play. She feels the need of being "baptized anew" in her beloved city. The Theatre de la Renaissance has been taken for three years by M. Grau in her behalf, and it will be opened about Oct. 15 with a great flourish of trumpets, and a new piece, probably by Sardou. The repertoire of the new theatre is to consist exclusively of new plays inspired by Bernhardt and written by the pick of the dramatists and poets. She left for South America for a three months' tour a week ago.

Lottie Collins met with a nasty accident a couple of nights after her reappearance in London, and all for trying to live up to the triumph of her "Ta-ra-boom-de-ay" dance. She appeared with a new song, "Queen of Gay Paris," accompanied with a new dance, a riotous, high-kicking, elbow jerking affair, designed to satiate the audience's thirst for a climax to "Ta-ra." But at the end of the dance a couple of nights after its first exhibition, in putting her whole soul into a final masterpiece of a kick, she overbalanced, her foot slipped, and she upset and came down flat on her back on the stage, spraining her ankle quite badly. She had to be carried off, and the doctor said she would be laid up at least two weeks. The dramatic critics called it "the inevitable catastrophe."

Madame Wagner reigns as a kind of queen in Bayreuth, where she lives in an ugly brown house, at the back of which her husband is buried under a tombstone formed of a block of granite ten feet square and a foot thick. Strangers are permitted to walk through the grounds and inspect the tomb. Madame Wagner is a comely, pleasant-faced woman, always dressed in black. Though she is the daughter of Liszt, the ex-wife of von Bulow, and the widow of Wagner, she plays on no musical instrument, but is thoroughly acquainted with the science of music. She has, it is

said, an idea of writing a history of the famous musicians with whom she has been brought in contact. She has expended about \$150,000 on the production of "Tannhauser" at Bayreuth, according to her late husband's ideas and directions.

TALK OF THE THEATRE.

A big house is not always an indication that the box office receipts are proportionately large. Theatrical managers have growled a good deal lately about the shower of "paper" that meets them in St. John. They do not object to the press tickets, but the unending requests for litho privileges eat a big hole in the seating capacity of the house. Everybody thought that Power had a big opening house for the "Texan." There was a good crowd there but only a little over \$100 in the box office. The receipts fell about \$15 a night for the next two nights.

This company put on the light—very light—comedy, the "Two Roses" after the "Texan" and it failed to give much satisfaction. The fault was not so much with the people as with the play. I understand that Power proposes to give the northern provincial towns a visit. One would hardly imagine that it would pay such high-priced artists to put in their time in small towns.

A pleasant feature of the tour of the Gilbert Opera Company in Maine was their appearance in the churches Sunday, where they assisted in the musical portion of the services. In one church they furnished both organist and choir. Their business in St. John was good, everything being considered. In addition to the Oratorio rehearsals and performance which took a large number of musical people, there were two fashionable evening weddings, and a counter attraction at the Opera House, Monday evening.

H. Price Webber is in Augusta, Maine, and in a private letter from that city he says some things that will intensify the sympathy felt for him and his company in their misfortune. He says:—

The fire at Truro was disastrous. The members of the company with myself had eleven trunks filled with costumes and all my scenery was there, too—in the Opera House. The whole of the lot was burned, not a vestige of the contents of the eleven trunks, together with my whole travelling set of scenery, my properties, seven plots, prompt books, over 100 orchestral selections for full orchestra and even the leaders violin, together with the new and beautiful special scenes for the "Sea of Ice," painted at the beginning of the season by Artist Couch, of Boston. The alarm of fire was given at ten minutes past seven, Tuesday morning, June 5, and at 40 minutes past seven, the Opera House was flat—not a person being able to get inside the building on account of the terrible heat and quickness with which the whole house was burned. Four of the members of the company did not have anything more than their street clothes were consumed. There was no fire in the stoves in the building the night before; it was lighted by electricity; the main current was turned off at eleven o'clock Monday night; the flames were first seen fifty feet from the stage. Some people wanted to persuade me the fire caught from a cigar or cigarette, thrown down carelessly when lighted. But it seems strange that if it were the cause, some smoke or smouldering should not be seen—as it had been day-light for nearly four hours previous, and over eight hours had elapsed between the time the hall was closed the night previous and the alarm, and I think you will agree with me, it must have been a peculiar cigar stub that would be able to set fire to a building and burn it down clean in less than an hour. Surely, if there had been any sign of fire it would have been seen, if the cause had been a lighted cigar or cigarette smouldering for over eight hours. But whatever the cause, we are the sufferers. The many kind offers of assistance received have made us all feel grateful; and although none of the many friends have been called upon, the good will shown in our hard experience has done much to help us bear the severe blow.

There is now upon the American stage no one to fill the void his death has created. There are a score of aspirants but not one of them whose professional training, experience and mental quality are of that school whose graduates find place upon the lotter plane of dramatic art.—N. Y. Despatch.

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