



MUSICAL & THEATRICAL

IN MUSICAL CIRCLES.
Our musical festival is over and I think that everyone who was wise enough to be present at these successful performances must have derived not only pleasure from them, but also profit in an educational way. First and foremost the public have to congratulate the Oratorio management in having such a trusty friend as Mr. Parker, and both the society and the public have to thank this accomplished singer for his admirable selection of the rest of the soloists. I have been told by old singers, in the singing world, that they do not remember having heard before such an admirable four sing in either concert or oratorio in this city. The chorus was large and full, though I was sorry to find that they were placed much further back on the stage than I should have thought necessary, and, as a consequence, the tenors and specially the basses, lost a great deal of their weight, through the voices going into the flies instead of into the auditorium. The individual attack of leads, and knowledge of the music, was, as a general rule, better than for some years. But there was a great lack of watching the conductor's baton, and a very poor appreciation of light and shade, the majority of the chorus work being about forte throughout. Of the orchestra I am sorry to have to say it was a failure; and an utter failure on the second evening, when I think I never heard a poorer exhibition of orchestral work than the playing of the overture to the "Daughter of Jairus." On both evenings there was some admirable playing by individuals, but even their efforts could not redeem the poorness of the rest. The management have got to get this fact into their heads; that they cannot get a scratch orchestra composed of members who are all, at other times, under different leaders, to take up such heavy work as oratorio, and any concert playing after about two months practice, specially if some of the members only attend one or two rehearsals. The Oratorio society will either have to organize an orchestra society affiliated with themselves, who will practice with them all the time, or import a string sextette for their concerts.

Mr. Bristowe, the conductor, filled a very trying position particularly well. Few men could, or would, take up the leadership of a chorus that had been trained for months by another, and after about half a dozen rehearsals, lead them in such really good chorus work as was done in the "Elijah." Musician's ideas, (and specially conductors,) of tempo and the interpretation of certain effects, vary so considerably that a conductor taking a chorus at the last minute has to throw away all his own preconceived notions and try and follow in the footsteps of his predecessor. The society should certainly pass a vote of very hearty thanks to Mr. Bristowe for helping them out of an awkward predicament and leading them on to what was vocally a splendid success.

Few people, and those only who have taken an actual part, have any idea of the great amount of labor that devolves on the man who takes charge of the actual getting up of these concerts—the correspondence as to soloists, the engaging of orchestra, the printing, the arrangement of the hall, the writing of voluminous librettos, and the thousand and one other things that require the attention of the secretary. Mr. Alfred Porter has labored for the society for a good many years now, and has proved himself to be an energetic manager. All lovers of music, and specially those who have the special interests of the society to heart, owe this gentleman a debt of gratitude that it is hard to repay.

I have given a resume of the general work of our festival, and will now refer to the parts of the performances that call for special mention—
Mrs. Jennie Patrick-Walker has a very fine soprano voice of unquestionable quality, and sings with an admirable method. Her greatest numbers were, "The recitative of the Youth—and the aria, "Hear ye Israel," in the "Elijah"—"I know that my Redeemer," from the Messiah, and the duet with Mr. Parker, "Love Divine," in the Daughter of Jairus.

Miss Carlsmith's particularly sympathetic voice captured the audience completely. A pure contralto finely trained, with a very distinct articulation, but with a slight tendency to coarseness in the lower notes, which were sometimes rather forced. Of course the two well-known arias, "O rest in the Lord," from the "Elijah," and "But the Lord is mindful," from St. Paul, she sang faultlessly. She also appeared to advantage in one of Molloy's ballads, "Home, dearie Home."
Mr. Parker has sung so often for us now that we are all well acquainted with his splendid voice and finished style. He seemed, however, to have made up his mind this year to excel his previous performances, and his singing of "Then shall the righteous shine" in the "Elijah," was one of the best pieces of oratorio work it is possible for one to hear. I was also particularly taken with the Cujus Animam, his pronunciation of the Latin being faultless.

But though the soloists mentioned excelled in their various parts, certainly the honors of the performances rested with Mr. Clarence Hay, whose rendering of the arduous part of "Elijah" was a grand effort. The possibilities of a superb baritone, thoroughly trained, were for the first time heard by St. John audience. Mr. Hay's voice is round, rich, of an even register, and he has a specially distinct enunciation. Above all there is great dramatic force in all his work, specially in oratorio. He can also arouse the enthusiasm of his audience when singing a comparatively simple love song. Of course his greatest success was the aria, "It is enough," though he was considerably hampered by the conductor and orchestra not taking any notice, at first, of the *allegro vivace* in the second part, "I have been very jealous."

The best choruses in the "Elijah" were: "Be not afraid," and "Thanks be to God." The others that have been good, if it had not been for the want of light and shade, were: "He watching over Israel," and "Behold God the Lord," the latter being almost spoilt entirely by an utter absence of pianissimo—the great essential in this chorus. On the second evening the Madrigal, "Since first I saw your face," was very well sung, but why was it obliged to be accompanied by a thumping piano? Surely the society is strong enough to sing such a simple part without accompaniment. Of the chorus work, in the Daughter of Jairus, little can be said in praise except the singing of the "Awake thou that sleepest," which went well.

Mrs. Babbitt made her last appearance, before going West, as pianist for the society, and got through her arduous labors well. She also played Chopin's Scherzo No. 2, with all her well-known brilliancy of execution, and with more expression than she generally manages to infuse into her performances.
Mr. Mayes and Mr. Hay sang the duet "The Lord is a Man of War," from Israel in Egypt, which met with a good reception.

I was not fortunate enough to be able to attend the song matinee, though I am assured by good authority that it was an afternoon of intense pleasure to the audience. The unaccompanied quartettes were specially fine. Miss Clinch accompanied the songs in a specially sympathetic manner.

I was at the sacred concert in St. Peter's church, on Tuesday evening, and heard some very good singing, and some that was very poor. I was specially pleased with some soprano solo

work by Mrs. A. McMullin, jr., who handles her powerful voice with much taste.

The City Cornet Band did not shine in their selections as they generally do. The reeds specially were much out of tune. I should hardly think that playing all the way over from the east end of the city to the church on a very hot evening would be a good preparation for the nice work required in playing in a building of that description. As a whole the chorus work of the different choirs does not seem to lack much with regard to the sopranos and altos, but the male voices are, in nearly all cases, much the weaker, and not so well up in their work.

TALK OF THE THEATRE.

That most sensational of the recent melodramas, Master and Man, was produced for the first time in this city in the Opera House, Monday evening, by the W. S. Harkins' Company. The liberal distribution of lurid lithos and the popularity of Harkins gave the opening performance of the week's engagement an audience that left few, if any, vacant chairs in the house. In the favor of the public there is no doubt that Mr. Whitecar should also be included, for, while his acquaintance with the play-going people here is not of so long standing as Harkins', recognition went out to him years ago as an actor of rare ability and power.

Master and Man appeals to the masses; it abounds in thrilling incidents, in almost impossible climaxes, in hair breadth escapes, in scenic effects, in love and jealousy, and in mirthful dialogue. In the hands of Mr. Harkins' company it was presented effectively. Harkins, in the hero part of Jack Walton was Harkins all over; as we have seen and known him, a careless, natural stage presence, easy yet mechanical in his love scenes, making at some times the most of a part suitable to him, at others permitting its opportunities to escape him. Harkins is always happiest and most natural in domestic scenes and light dialogue. In these he seldom fails to please, but, put a convict's dress on him, place him in the disguise of a watchman at the iron works, a fugitive from justice, aroused from an apparent sleep by the police, and he permits the opportunity of that portion of his part to escape him.

Of Whitecar—Humpy Logan—the man of his master, the creature who planned his evil work and carried it into effect, to wreak vengeance on the woman who refused his love, I failed to see wherein he did not make the most of everything. In his love and hate he was as passionate as need be; revenge and its outbursts were a part of his nature, even as fear proved to be when captured by the workmen and threatened with death in the furnace. All these emotions were portrayed with wonderful power—with well-nigh perfect expression, voice and gesture. I have seldom seen a more finished performance of an unpopular part—the conclusion of which was so abbreviated that it failed to do justice either to Mr. Whitecar or his role. In Master and Man, as produced by Mansfield, the closing scenes afford the greatest opportunities for acting, where Humpy Logan relapses again into the state of madness, from which he aroused in time to do justice to the heroine and lost heiress, Mrs. Walton. This scene, was almost wholly erased from the play as produced here.

Miss Husby was a trifle nervous, though on the whole, natural and pleasing. Any faults that appeared in her performance may well be excused, if I am informed correctly, that it was her first appearance in leading roles. Mr. Forrest as Mr. Carleton, the master of the works, made his villain's part so unpopular that he was fortunate in a hissing tribute from the audience. Messrs. Mandeville and Jackson in their comedy parts were thoroughly popular and laughable, and all of the company contributed their due share to the success of the performance.

The scenic effects were exceedingly realistic; every possible attention being paid to detail and the settings of the different scenes were as good as it was possible to make them with the material at hand.

Master and Man is certainly a misnamed play if its title intends to imply that it shows any relation between labor and capital or between employer and employe. Master and Servant would be far more appropriate if a less popular title. The playwright of sensational drama now-a-days is not any more particular about the application of the title to his work than is the author of the sensational novel. "Any title that will arouse curiosity and sell the book" appears to be the motto of the author and publisher and "any title that will draw" that of the playwright. Some publishers go farther and enclose an exceedingly stupid and tame novel in a cover sufficiently suggestive to attract those who are apt to be gulled by such an inducement. So the book sells.

Master and Man can be in part accused of the same deceptive qualities. It is advertised in a lurid manner to attract the laboring classes. Highly colored lithos showing the interior of iron works with the furnaces in full blast are shown, and these in connection with the title conveys the impression that the play represents a strife between labor and capital. Only those who have seen the performance can judge fully of the untruth of this. True, there are iron works and mechanics, but the play turns upon the fact that one of the masters of the works is a social villain who occupies a false position, discovers that the true heiress to his property is the fiancée of one of the engineers and tries to marry her in order to make his position secure. In this he is aided by his man, Humpy Logan, who knows the secret of Hester Thornberry's birth, but owing to her refusal to listen to his love is ready to seek his own revenge and aid his master at the same time. Thus upon the

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plots and plans of the master and his man the play hinges, and is the only excuse for the title Master and Man.

In the second performance of Master and Man, Mr. Mandeville rather spoiled the good impression he made upon his first appearance by his inclination to gush; to substitute smart lines for the correct ones and thus keep the other members of the company on a conspicuous grin. It must have been funny, for even the staid members of the company caught the infection, but I was always under the impression that a comedian's work was to amuse the audience rather than the company.

An audience, discouraging in point of numbers, greeted the first production of Bootle's Baby, Wednesday evening, with such clever people as Miss Helen Russel and Mr. Clarence Handysides in the title roles. Though the play is new to very many theatre goers here, the beautiful story of John Strange Winter is not. The dramatization of any book seldom adds to its interest, indeed it can hardly fail to lose much in adapting it to the stage. Bootle's Baby is no exception to this rule, but how difficult a task it is for any company wholly, or even in part American, to adapt themselves to the easy life, freedom, unconventionality of the life of English officers in English barracks. An Englishman who came to this country but a year or two ago laughed at their attempt, while acknowledging that their conception of the play was rarely well presented. But to me, and I fancy nearly every other in the audience, the interpretation of English life and manners was wholly satisfactory, which was probably due to the fact that we are far more American or Canadian—as you please—than English. Both Mr. Handysides as "Bootle" and Miss Russel as "Miss Grace" gave finished and artistic performances, but the honors of the evening fell to that pleasing and precocious juvenile Miss Katie Hughes as Mignon "Bootle's Baby."

The Tyrone Power company has spent the week in the city rehearsing a play new as yet to the stage, entitled, "The Sins of His Father," which will be presented Monday evening in the Opera House. Mr. Power has shown what he can do in "The Texan," and as he appears in the leading role of his new play he should, with the assistance of his capable associates, give a performance well worth going to see.

A Change of Name.

TORONTO, ONT., June 19.—The announcement has just been made of an important business change in this city, which will be noted with interest throughout the Dominion. The business of Dr. L. A. Smith & Co., manufacturers of Dodd's Kidney Pills, Anti-Dandruff and other preparations, will in future be conducted by a company to be known as the Dodd's Medicine Company, Ltd. There is no change in the management, but the formation of the company was deemed necessary and advisable because of the enormous increase of business, and the new name was chosen to identify the company with its most popular remedy, Dodd's Kidney Pills.

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