

# Musical and Dramatic.

## IN MUSICAL CIRCLES.

The American Grand English Opera Company is entertaining the opera house patrons this week and with a bill of fare meagre enough in quantity where the advanced notices are considered, yet of quite good quality. "Il Trovatore" was selected for the opening night and the performance as a whole was highly satisfactory. Miss Delaport, the prima, has a fine stage presence, a pleasing face and a figure not unbecoming. More to the purpose, she possesses a good voice which, in spite of an evident cold, she uses to marked advantage in all her work, especially that portion of it which makes demand upon the higher register. She has also much dramatic power, as she manifested in the "Misere or Prison" scene, in Verdi's great creation. Mr. Taverner is the tenor of the company, and while his voice is not so young or fresh as it has been, gave a good interpretation of his role. His solo work received merited applause and the same with Azucena, (Miss Katherine Rosa) the gipsy. When "Back to our Mountains" was sung, it was so really well done that its reputation was insisted upon in a very pronounced manner.

The chorus work particularly in the "Anvil chorus" was very uneven, and the choir in the Misere scene, was both too loud and unbalanced, as well as noticeably out of tune. "Faust" which drew a larger house than the opening night, gave Mr. Taverner further favorable opportunity. He sang "In a dwelling pure and holy," and "Oh, tender moon" very evenly and well. Mr. Dudley was the "Mephisto," and his interpretation of the role is a good one, and his voice is always in tune. His make up and general work differs materially from that of Lewis Morrison in the drama "Faust"—the electric feature not being in the opera—but he is thoroughly capable in the part. By the way, it would be well for this gentleman to change the sword he wears in "Mephisto," because as the villagers protect themselves from him by holding up their cross bearing a sword with a bit of like form. I would suggest also to the management, that although photographs of pretty women are nice to look at, they should actually be members of the company they are exhibited to advertise. Neither Fannie Johnston nor Annie Sutherland are members of this company, yet their photographs appear among those shown in the interests of the American Grand English Opera Company.

Mr. Ford's chamber concert in the Stone church school room, last Tuesday night, was a very enjoyable affair, and successful in every way. The room was comfortably filled, with a thoroughly appreciative audience, and the programme was so well arranged that an even and pleasant impression was made from first to last. The cello solos of Herr Ernest Doering, of Halifax, showed not only the skill of the artist but the wonderful capacities of the cello when in the hands of a master. His rendering of the cradle song, composed by himself, and of the Spanish dance were particularly successful in captivating the audience. Herr Bernhard Walther, of Halifax, did some excellent execution on the violin, though not to the extent of taking the laurels from Herr Carl Walther, with whose thoroughly artistic achievements the people of St. John are familiar. One reason for this, undoubtedly, was that there was a marked difference in the tone of the violin used by Carl Walther last week and that used by Ernest Walther this week. Mr. Ford on his accompaniments to all the numbers showed admirable taste, and at times, as in the last trio, from Beethoven, accomplished more than was evident to the listeners. Miss Massie has appeared to better advantage, but she is a pleasing singer and was very heartily applauded. Mr. Lindsay's song, Mendelssohn's "On wings of song I'll bear thee," was deservedly encored.

The Mission church organ has been going from bad to worse lately, and it is a question "whether it will not be better to tear it down and rebuild, rather than to keep on tinkering at it with such unsatisfactory results."

The Amateur Minstrels have begun the practice of "Pianofore," to be given immediately before Lent.

The Thursday night concert in connection with St. Paul's church and the German street baptist church, took place too late in the week for special mention in this column.

## Tones and Undertones.

It is said that Miss Marie Tempest will head an opera company of her own next season.

"1492" received its 200th performance at Palmers (N. Y.) theatre last Monday night. The appropriate souvenirs distributed on the occasion were bronze statuettes of Theresa Vaughn as the street singer.

An amusing story of Schumann is told by a veteran critic. The composer once accompanied his wife, who was even then a celebrated pianist, to the palace, when she went to play before the king of Holland, and was gratified by the monarch's compliments of her performance. The composer was somewhat surprised, however, when the king turned to him and courteously inquired: "Are you also musical?"

"Ta-ra-ra Boom-de-ay," played during last Sunday evening's services at the Grand View Avenue Methodist church, Dubuque, Ia., has caused a split in the congregation. The Rev. Mr. Wheat, the former pastor, arose in meeting and said the temple was profaned with such music. The pastor, the Rev. Mr. Wilkinson, announced that he was running the church and advised Mr. Wheat to mind his business. The younger members of the church side with the pastor.

Sir Joseph Barnby, of the Guildhall school of music, recently received at the hands of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha the Coburg order and cross of arts and science. Sir Joseph may be said to have begun his great musical career at the early age of eight, as a chorister at York Minster. He was born in the latter-named city (in 1838) and educated principally at the choir school there—afterwards studying at the Royal academy of music. In 1872 he succeeded the late Charles Gounod as conductor of the Royal Albert hall choral society.

In modern music contralto is the voice intermediate in quality and range between soprano and tenor, having a usual compass of about two octaves upward from the F below middle C; it is the lowest of the varieties of the female voice. In mediæval music, in which the melody was either in a middle voice or passed from one voice to another and utilised only male singers, the upper voice was naturally called *altus*. As music for mixed voices developed, that female voice which was nearest the *altus*, and thus contrasted with it, was called *contralto* and *alto*.

A short time ago it was hinted that a member of the Royal family had been discussing the musical quality of the concertina. Quickly there followed the statement that the fashionable instrument of this year would be the concertina. Apart from this fallen status, there is no reason why this

almost obsolete instrument should not be reintroduced, for it is much maligned. There is a well known conductor and composer for the London stage who has a great command over the concertina, and can produce most exquisite tones from it. In fact, at one time in his early career, he played nightly a solo at a West-end theatre and although everybody admired the sweet music, no one guessed that the unseen instrument was the much despised concertina.

## TALK OF THE THEATRE.

A revival has begun in the theatrical business in the United States, a consequence of an improvement in business generally.

According to the latest British census there are more actresses than actors in England, the former numbering 3,696 and the latter 3,625.

A grand-daughter of Lord Nelson, in the person of Miss Tredway, has become a member of a dramatic company playing in the English Provinces.

Some half-dozen ladies of London, Ont., made their debut on the stage as dancing girls in the third act of Parnassus, recently produced in that town by Robert Mantell.

The dresses in one of the scenes in the Drury Lane pantomime—a procession of all the kings and queens of England since the Norman conquest, with historical events—cost over £3,000.—Ex.

Miss Edith Crane, who will be remembered here as leading lady of Tyrone Power's company has joined the stock company of the Lyceum theatre (N. Y.) playing "Kate Rodney in 'Our Country Cousins.'"

W. Riley Hatch, who played here last summer in Rehan's company has been engaged to create the leading male role in "A piece of Steel" a new American drama in four acts, written by J. Reinhart and A. P. Seilhamer.

The London Post, in its criticism of Mr. Daly's production of "Twelfth Night" at his Leicester Square Theatre, says the Sir Toby Belch of Mr. James Lewis was "extremely effective and played with true Shakespearean drollery."

Leonard Boyne, the English actor, who is making his first season in America, has decided upon a play which he will produce at a Broadway theatre next April. The production will be directed by T. Henry French, and as the principal female role is particularly strong Miss Julia Arthur has been engaged to play it.

Mr. Henry Arthur Jones, the dramatist, says that when he first taught himself how to write plays, it was his custom to witness the same piece six nights a week in order to learn the "technique." He keeps a stock of characters, plots, scenes, incidents and themes, all lying ready for use, and simmering in a dramatic stock-pot.—Ex.

The marriage of Miss May Nannery, a native of this city, to her manager, Mr. W. R. Dailey, at San Francisco, Cal., on the tenth inst., has been anticipated for some time. Miss Nannery, who is a great favorite on the Pacific Slope, had been playing at Sacramento, Cal., and her father's consent to the marriage having been obtained, she arrived with her future husband on the morning of the tenth, was married quietly at St. Bernard's church in the presence of her relatives and a few friends at two o'clock, and returned to Sacramento in the evening of the same day. A California paper says of Miss Nannery: "The lady carries with her the best wishes of all who know her. She is a truly good woman, who has not only been a comfort to her parents, but a credit to her profession, in which she has won eminence by industry and ability."

## Ellen Terry and the Critic.

Miss Ellen Terry, having once received special courtesy from a newspaper critic, offered to introduce him to Mr. Irving; but unfortunately, when the opportunity of doing so presented itself, she had utterly forgotten his name. Naturally, however, she thought it would be a poor compliment to tell him so. Her ready wit did not forsake her in this trying emergency, and she promptly said to him:—

"Do you know that I've made a wager with Mr. Irving, and you can decide it? He says you spell your name one way, and I say another. Write it for me."

All unaware of the trick that was being played on him, the gentleman wrote down his name and handed it to the actress. She glanced at it hastily, laughed, and said gaily:—

"I've won the bet!"

It was such a realistic bit of acting that the newspaper man, although it was his business to criticise plays and players, never detected it.

## They Paid for the Voice.

A young gentleman who rather fancied his tenor singing, attended service at church in the North, and in the responses gave rather too free vent to his feelings. But in the midst of one ejaculation he was suddenly brought to a standstill by the verger, who, tapping him on the shoulder, said in a whisper loud enough to be heard all over the church: "Here, young fellow, ho'd thi noise; we pay men to dew that here!"

## How the Piano Was Lowered.

Catalani, a gifted songstress and a lovely woman, was the idol of society and the favourite of fortune. She had neither knowledge nor culture, and her ignorance made her stumble into ludicrous mistakes. Catalani's husband a handsome Frenchman, was even more unintellectual than his wife—he was stupid. Once, having found

the pitch of the piano too high, she said, after a rehearsal, to her husband— "The piano is too high; will you see that it is made lower before the concert?" When the evening came, Catalani was annoyed to find that the piano had not been altered. Her husband sent for the carpenter, who declared that he had sawed off two inches from each leg, as he had been ordered to do. "Surely it can't be too high now, my dear!" said the stupid husband, soothingly.

## THE QUEEN'S MESSENGERS.

What Their Duties Are and How They are Carried Out.

Ordinary communication is maintained from day to day between the court of the Queen and the government offices in Whitehall by means of a service of special messengers, of whom there are four, each in receipt of a salary of £300 a year.

The Queen's messengers wear no livery, and when travelling are indistinguishable from ordinary silk-hatted, black-bagged "commercials."

When the Queen is in residence at Windsor, every day there are two journeys to be made to and fro, and two of the messengers, therefore, sleep at Buckingham Palace, while two sleep at Windsor Castle. In the early morning, a messenger, taking with him the Buckingham Palace despatches, if any, enters his cab, drives rapidly to Whitehall, Marlborough House, York House, and so forth, collecting, (unless he has done so overnight) answers to letters left the day before. When his many commissions have been executed, he drives to the railway station, where he deposits his baggage in the guard's van, the responsibility for the Queen's despatches being thus transferred for the time being to a servant of the railway company. The messenger himself takes his seat, usually in a second-class compartment, like any other traveller, and on reaching Windsor, superintends the transfer of his bags and boxes to a cab, which conveys him to the Quadrangle, where, at a private door by the side of the Queen's entrance, he descends, and proceeds upstairs to render an account of his errands to the Private Secretary.

Ordinary messages are deposited in long boxes, somewhat after the fashion of glove boxes, and every packet is either locked or sealed. A slip label, protruding from the lid, intimates its source and destination. The boxes, when of this size, are placed together into a strong, brown canvas bag, of the material used in the general postal service. But sometimes the bag will be of larger dimensions, and will weigh at least a hundredweight and a half, while on occasion her Majesty will require a new dress, or an article of apparel especially pertaining to a Court pageant, to be brought down from town. There may also be books to exchange or purchase at the libraries for the Princess Beatrice and others. Thus, while on some occasions the messenger has under his charge only a tiny bagful on others the whole interior of the cab, and also the roof of it, will be crowded with baggage of all shapes and sizes.

An orderly is in attendance on the arrival of the messenger to convey to the cavalry barracks any communication that may have arrived from the Horse Guards. During the residence of the Court, in fact, two orderlies keep their mounts in constant readiness in a stable just outside the Castle gates, nominally to be prepared at a moment's notice to summon the Household Cavalry to the Queen's assistance.

Letters may also have arrived for Cumberland Lodge, in which case they are always transmitted by special messenger, and their contents may even be telegraphed or telephoned over the private wires existing between the Castle and the lodge.

The first messenger reaches the Castle at noon. The other, who does not begin the task of collecting in town until after luncheon, arrives at the Castle at half-past five, and takes with him the results of the day's work in the Government offices. The return despatches leave the Castle at half-past four, and again at half-past eight, and her Majesty is frequently engaged in indicating despatches, in reply to the afternoon arrivals, as late as eight o'clock in the evening, when she retires in order to prepare for dinner. Thus, a document from the India Office or the Treasury, submitted for signature on Tuesday, may be dealt with the same evening, and be back in Whitehall on Wednesday morning on the arrival of the departmental chief.

The same number of journeys is made on Sundays, but the time varies with the ordinary train service. The messengers

arrive from town at eleven and three, and leave about ten minutes after the hours at which they leave on the other days of the week.

It goes without saying that, besides the State despatches conveyed by this means, there is a vast correspondence that reaches the court through the ordinary postal system. In recent years the volume of the Queen's mail has vastly increased.

It was at one time the practice when the court was in the Highlands, for two of the messengers to reside continuously in the north and two in town. They travelled over one of the railway systems until they reached a half-way station, where they exchanged mails and returned to their starting point. By this means each messenger was able to keep in touch with his own work.

When the Queen leaves the country for a sojourn in the south of Europe, there is only one mail each way per day. The messenger travels to the coast, and places the precious archives in the charge of the commander of a royal yacht, by which they are conveyed across channel to a port where the royal homeward mail from Florence or Genoa is picked up.

While the mails are supposed to arrive and depart at fixed periods, there are occasions of exceptional political activity when the messenger is met at the railway station by an official of the court, who himself takes charge of the despatches just arriving from town, in order to enable the messenger to jump into an outgoing train and rush back to town again, merely to deliver a single letter in Downing street or Whitehall.

The correspondence thus dealt with is under the charge of the private secretary and his assistants, who themselves keep such copies and precis of them as are customary, and make up and seal the several packets. They are conveyed direct into the custody of the messenger by the secretary on duty, and the responsibility of them is thereby strictly defined.

When the Court is in the Highlands, in the Isle of Wight, or on the Continent, despatches are occasionally placed in the hands of a Gentleman Usher of the Privy Chamber. There are four or five such functionaries, each of whom receives £200 a year, but his services are very slight. For instance, immediately after the Appropriation Bill early in 1893, the fact was communicated to her Majesty, who was then in Florence, by Captain Conway Seymour, who, by-the-by, is seventy years of age.

The documents relating to each of the great departments of State are kept in separate despatch boxes in the Queen's official room. As the papers are dealt with and signed they are placed in a silver salver, whence they are taken by the secretary on duty and arranged in boxes ready for the messenger's arrival. At Balmoral, the correspondence is always done in a sitting-room inside the castle, and during the winter the same rule applies to Windsor. But on summer mornings, both at Windsor and Osborne, the Queen does her work in a summer house in the grounds.

When at Windsor a couple of mounted grooms are kept busy riding between the summer house and the castle with the despatches as they are completed. When on the Continent, the correspondence is frequently done in a tent, erected in a secluded part of the grounds of the house in the temporary occupation of the Queen, there being on such occasions a special detective service to protect her Majesty against unauthorized intrusion.

## How They Marry in Germany.

German weddings are conducted on an entirely different plan from English ones. First of all, the engagement is publicly announced. Then the lovers devote a day to driving about among their acquaintances. Cards are sent to all the out-of-town friends of the families. Both the man and the woman wear rings on their left hand, and after marriage on the right. The bride provides all the linen, glass, and furniture, except the appointments of her husband's office or study.

The wedding ceremony is a double affair, the civil contract taking place in the registry office early in the morning, and the religious one several hours later in church.

At the early ceremony the bride wears black, but at the later one she is adorned with all customary bridal finery. There are rarely any bridesmaids. The bride and bridegroom enter the church together, and the guests all wear tall evening dresses. A wedding breakfast follows the ceremony, but wedding cake is an unknown delicacy.

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