

## Music and The Drama

IN MUSICAL CIRCLES.

During the current week, there was an event of much musical interest in the fact that the new musical society, to which has been given the name "The St. John Vocal Society," held its first rehearsal. Between forty and fifty ladies and gentlemen were present who were quite enthusiastic over the occasion, delighted with the music selected, and sang with a verve and spirit that indicated delight in the fact of the institution of the new vocal society. The list of officers of the society for the first year has been secured and is as follows:

His Honor Mr. Justice Barker, Honorary President  
 Charles Holden, M. D., President  
 George C. Coster, Vice President  
 Fred C. MacNeill, Secretary  
 W. Edgar Buck, Conductor  
 Miss Shreve, Accompanist

The Committee of Management is as follows:

Mr. J. N. Sutherland, Mr. George McSorley,  
 Jas. Harding, J. Fred Fowler,  
 Wm. Starr, Dr. F. Dyson Walker,  
 Mr. E. Perkins.

The society meets every Tuesday evening in their room over Hall's Book Store King Street, and there is little doubt but that it will be successful here as similar societies have succeeded in other Canadian cities. Already some of the best voices in this city are among the members and others have expressed their intention of joining. Tuesday evening has been selected for the rehearsals in order as I am informed that there may be no conflict with any other society. The intention is that the rehearsals shall begin at eight o'clock and close at half-past nine. The prospects are most favorable for the new society and ere long its membership will easily be doubled.

Rehearsals for the approaching production of "The Privates of Penzance," by the Amateurs are actively continued and every indication points to an entertainment not in any way less successful than the performances of "The Mikado" recently given. I think this idea of Amateur Opera is a good one and since like productions are made a success in Halifax there seems to be no reason why they should not succeed here.

The Maine State Musical festival is over and has been an occasion marked with the greatest enthusiasm. Nordica was there, Carl Duffit the basso was there and Evan Williams, the tenor was there. These soloists severally made great hits as was expected. The people simply went wild over their singing. This tenor Mr. Williams, is to appear here in concert for the first time, about the first of December next. He certainly has a great reputation in the United States.

### Tones and Undertones.

A new two act opera entitled "The Prisoner of War," will be produced this season at the Vienna Court opera. It is written by Goldmark and the libretto is taken from the Greek mythology.

Humperducks' new opera "The Children of the King" was a partial failure when produced at the Court theatre, recently with Cissy Loftus in the cast. It is an adaptation of Ernest Kosmer's German fairy tale.

Maurice Grau will next season produce at Covent garden, Leoncavallo's "La Boheme" with Madame Calve and Van Dyke in the cast.

Mascagni has secured by purchase all the rights in an opera called "Lisetta" and will produce it next season in Geneva. The opera is by Nini Belacci, a pupil of Mascagni.

The Bande Rossa (Red Band) has arrived in New York from Italy and have already made an appearance in concert at the Metropolitan opera house. They were most favorably received their playing being considered superior to Gilmore's band when at its best.

An opera called "I Pelli Rose" recently given at Milan produced a fiasco. It is by a lady and is said to be the work performed in the Pompeian theatre in the Milan exhibition in 1894.

Miss Sibyl Sammis continues to be the soprano soloist with the Chicago Marine Band.

Next Monday evening, Frank Daniels in "The Wizard of the Nile," will begin an engagement at the Broadway theatre, N. Y.

A new opera entitled "Meister Roland" will soon be performed and for the first time at the Opera house in Budapest. It is by Count Geza Zichy, who wrote the text.

De Wolf Hopper with his opera "El Capitan" is playing at the Tremont theatre Boston, this week.

Guilman the world famous organist will

arrive in New York the end of November or early in December next. He will give but two recitals in New York, as his plans now are.

A series of ten chamber concerts has been arranged under the auspices of Harvard University. They will all be given in Sander's theatre, Cambridge. The first of the series was given last Tuesday evening. They are open to the public.

A new comic opera entitled "The Maid of Marblehead" was given a first production at Plymouth, Mass., Monday evening by an organization called the "Colonial Opera Company." This company intends producing the work in a number of the more important towns in Massachusetts.

The Grau Opera Company, somewhat in the same form as it is remembered in St. John, was playing in New Orleans, La. quite recently.

The New York Philharmonic Society, which always gives good concerts, for which there is always reasonable demand, has decided to increase the number of its entertainments from twelve to sixteen, for this year at least.

It is estimated there will be seventy-five Orchestral Concerts given in the Manhattan borough this season, and eighteen or twenty in Brooklyn. These concerts will furnish music of the greatest, classic and romantic writers.

There is a rumor afloat, that Jessie Bartlett Davis will retire from "The Bostonians" after the present season, and "star" on her own account, in a new musical session of the Sardou-Brenhardt plays, possibly "Gismonda."

### TALK OF THE THEATRE.

Well trained animals of the species to which Darwin attributes the origin of man, are furnishing entertainment at the Opera house this week.

Bennett and Moulton's dramatic company begin a return engagement at the Opera house on Monday next.

William Redmond an actor well known here is playing in support of Frederick Warde, the tragedian. They are now appearing in a new romantic drama entitled "Iskander." It is said to be founded on a novel by D'Israeli.

Miss Julia Arthur had but given a few performances as "a star" in "A Lady of Quality" when the theatre took fire and all the scenery and costumes were destroyed. Miss Arthur has suffered great loss but she is not dismayed. She will give the play at Wallack's theatre, New York, on the 1st of November. Such pluck ought to win success. The play created a most favorable impression.

Miss Frances Drake, the attractive young leading lady, who played the role of the Schoolmarm in "A Midnight Bell," when produced here by Lytell on his last visit, has been engaged as leading lady for the new Columbia theatre, St. Louis.

The death is announced of Carrie Turner an actress of much cleverness and who, a few years ago, was a very popular favorite. She created several roles in new productions among them "Niobe," which was a great success. She was twice married, her first husband was Albert J. His, a Swiss merchant with whom she did not live happily, and separated in consequence, obtaining a divorce. She married John Mack of Albany about three years ago and retired from the stage.

Forbes Robertson, the English actor has recently made a sensation in theatrical circles in England by his interpretation of Shakespeares "Hamlet." The critics are aroused and each one is having his say pro and con.

Thomas W. Keene, the tragedian, who has been seen in this city—now some time since—has a new play it is said. The title of the play is "An American Emperor" and Aaron Burr is the central figure in the piece.

Harry Clifford, a once well known actor died recently in Bellevue hospital, New York, in seeming poverty, but a subsequent search through his squalid apartments revealed bank books showing deposits of more than \$4,000. He was about sixty-five years of age.

Miss Louie Freear is the triumph of the hour in London. She is acting at the Royalty theatre in a new three act comic play entitled "Oh, Susannah." Her character is a London lodging house slavey of the usual type. Clement Scott the great English dramatic critic, compliments her highly and credits her with "that simplicity of comic art, that absence of effort, that weirdness that divides pathos from fun by merely the breadth of a hair." And again he says of her role "It is a master piece of original comic acting. Throughout the play the actress never raises her voice. She detects point-making. She abhors a situation."

The American play "Secret Service" which has been such a success in the United

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### BABY HUMORS

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States and in England has been a comparative failure in Paris.

Every one who has heard of Gilbert in connection with "Pinafore" does not necessarily know much about his life as a dramatist and therefore the following sketch may prove interesting. This was evolved by Davenport Adams, dramatic editor of the London Globe (Eng.) and as a consequence of the production of a new play by Gilbert entitled "The Fortune Hunter." He says in a recent issue of the Globe: "It must be remembered that it is just thirty years since Mr. Gilbert began to write for the stage. His first efforts were burlesques of the Talfourd and Byron type—"Dulcamara," "The Merry Zingara," "The Pretty Druidess" and so forth. His first comedy—"An Old Score"—dated from 1869; his first fairy extravaganza, "The Palace of Truth," from 1870; his first verse comedy-drama, "Pygmalion and Galatea," from 1871; his first prose comedy-drama, "Charity," from 1874. It was, in fact, between 1870 and 1877 that Mr. Gilbert had most practice in drama containing serious interest. He gave us in 1870 "The Netherworld," in 1879 "Gretchen," in 1884 "Comedy and Tragedy," and in 1888 "Brantingham Hall," but of these only the third can be said to be in the current theatrical repertory. "The Palace of Truth," "Pygmalion and Galatea," "The Wicked World," "Sweethearts," "Broken Hearts" and "Dan'l Druce" have been revived of late years in London, but usually only for single performances on special occasions. It is a humorous, not as a serious dramatist that Mr. Gilbert has had most vogue; and most influence since 1877.

### THE RETIRED BURGLAR.

A Very Lively Experience Following a Visit To a Farmhouse.

"As a general thing," said the retired burglar, "I stuck close to my legitimate line of work, and never took anything but what I could carry off myself and dispose of easily, but occasionally when I was hard pressed I would take bulky things and do the best I could with them. But it never paid, and something happened once that made me give that sort of thing up.

A farmhouse that I was looking over one night had no body in it, not a soul. They hadn't gone for long, that was plain enough. Everything was left just as it was. They'd just gone off for the night somewhere maybe to a party or something of that sort but they was just as far away now as they'd been in China, and I might have carried the house off and they not know it, and that's what I did, pretty near.

"There was scarcely any small stuff worth carrying off, and after I'd looked around a little I thought I might as well take a load. I could dispose of it for something. I got together in the hall a wagon load of stuff, trunks and one thing and another all ready to load. I had been around to the barn previously to see if there was a horse left, because I didn't

know but what they might have taken the only one, but there was a horse there. He was a big solid-looking horse, nothing particular about him one way or the other, except he looked like a strong horse that could pull almost anything. I got the harness on him and hooked him into a farm wagon and got him around to the side of the house. I suppose I might just as well have taken him to the front, but there was no use of being reckless about it.

"Well, I loaded the wagon with the trunks and things till I'd got a pretty fair load, about all I thought I could carry and make time with, and then I started, and we jogged along the road comfortable as could be for a quarter of a mile or so, when there was a squirrel or chipmuck or something run across the road, and I'm blessed if it didn't scare the old horse, and in about a second and a quarter he was running away. And I sat there hangin' on to the reins and yankin' and sawin' and tryin' to hold him up, and havin' just about as much effect on him as though I'd been a baby.

"About a quarter of a mile further on—I knew it because I had come that way—there was a bridge over a brook that ran across the road, just a common little bridge with barked poles on each side for a railing; there was a road on one side of the bridge, too, through the water. There was a house just the other side of this brook and I was afraid if the old horse went across the bridge hammering in that still night he'd wake up folks and rouse the neighborhood, maybe, so I tried to steer him off through the brook. I thought he'd make less noise going through the water and I thought maybe the cold water would sober him too, and make him stop; and I got a twist on the reins and a brace on the dashboard and pulled, and I did get him turned off a little at the fork toward the brook and I thought I had got him started for it all right; but he sheered again for the bridge and I couldn't begin to stop him.

"The bridge railings were supported in crooked sticks; and from these railings there were poles along the little approach on each side of the bridge, the ends of these poles being in lower crooked sticks. When the old horse sheered back from the ford road he got the approach to the bridge all right himself, but he swung the wagon just enough to throw the hind axle over the end of the pole protecting the approach, and it jammed in somewhere between the pole and the crooked stick supporting it, and busted the reach of the wagon and tore off the hind axle and wheels before you could think; and the old horse went pouncing across the bridge and half a mile further yet, with the tail end of the wagon trailing on the ground and scatterin' trunks and comfortable and I don't know what not, all along the road. When I finally got him held up I was sitting in an empty wagon with the dashboard up in the air and the floor sloping down to the ground.

"I might have got another wagon and gone back and gathered up the goods, but there was too much risk in that; maybe I could have taken the horse along and got something for him, but I might have been taken up for horse stealin', and I didn't fancy that; so I just turned the old horse round and started him for home and then I started myself; and that's the last try I made on bulk goods."

### CHINA HOLDS TO HER WAYS.

Her Ancient Customs Not Changed to Suit Progress.

SHANGHAI, Sept. 20.—Many curious instances of the spread of foreign customs and the absorption of European ideas are found in the English and vernacular newspapers of China. Reforms are adopted very slowly in China. The law remains as it was 1,000 years ago, and all the customs that pertain to the worship of ancestors and the upholding of paternal authority cannot be altered by so much as a hair's breadth without provoking a storm of protest which not even the highest authority could afford to ignore.

A case illustrating the remarkable hold that superstition has even on persons of wealth and intelligence comes from a place south of Canton. It seems persistent ill-fortune of a respectable family of some wealth was traced to the fact that they had selected an "unpropitious" site for the burial of the bones of the head of the house. The Chinese custom is to exume the coffin after three years, and to wash the bones and put them in a large jar. This jar is then buried in a shady place, usually under a tree, and over it the sons do ancestral worship that assures the happiness of the departed. The son of this unfortunate family dug up the two jars containing ancestral bones, cleaned them carefully and then reburied them. But recently a neighbor by chance exhumed the jars while he dug for something else. This was regarded as a bad omen and the jars were taken out and cleaned for another removal.

The wisacres of the town said that several misfortunes which had befallen the family were due to the inpropitious site selected for these jars, and when the European who records this incident visited the

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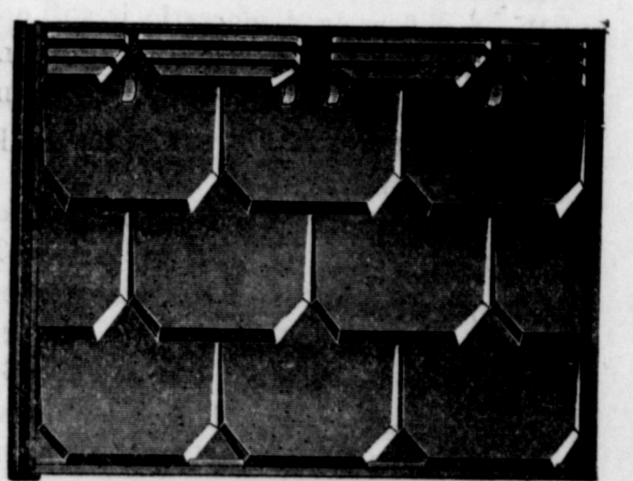
village he found the relatives and friends engaged in solemn discussion of the proper place to rebury the bones. This family belonged to the respectable, educated class, yet believed in these gross superstitions as fully as any ignorant coolies.

Paternal authority is still supreme in China, and when the old family law comes into conflict with the State law it is the State that must yield. An incident illustrating this comes from Hunan. A doctor named Liu was found dead on the highway. All the evidence of a deliberate murder were present. But while an inquest was being held the dead man's father appeared and coolly declared that he had slain his son because of the young man's unfilial conduct. It seems that the son had beaten the father, as well as other members of his family, and he had even chastised several elderly men of his clan who had gone to remonstrate with him. So the father had killed him, as the law empowered him to do. The magistrate referred the whole case to the Board of Punishments, as he did not feel authorized to condemn the father, especially as the gray-beards of the Liu clan testified that the son had received only his due.

Another recent case of the punishment of a rebellious son was recorded in the Peking Gazette. In this case the Empress Dowager meted out the penalty. The offender was Prince Tsai Shu, the eldest son of a widow. He showed open contempt for his mother's wishes by feigning illness when her birthday anniversary festivities occurred. To cap the climax of his offences, he failed also to return thanks for the Empress Dowager's birthday gifts to his mother. The matter was referred to the Empress Dowager, who prescribed eighty blows with the rattan and the perpetual imprisonment of the un dutiful son 'within the four walls of an empty room. The Emperor confirmed this edict, so the son will have ample leisure to repent of the offence.

The Shantung Peninsula, on which were the fortifications of Wei-hai-wei, and which was overrun by the Japanese in the late war, is the last place one would look for evidences of foreign improvements or inventions. Yet a letter from Wei-hai-wei says that the interior of the province fever rages among the wealthy natives, and no fewer than 200 American wheels have been imported. With great ingenuity some native gunsmiths and blacksmiths have turned out imitations of the foreign wheels, and these are said to do good service. Instead of the pneumatic tires of these Chinese wheels have solid tires of platted hemp covered with rawhide.

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