

Music and The Drama

TALK OF THE THEATRE.

Robinson Opera company have been at the Opera House this week playing to fair business and giving considerable satisfaction. The company is not as good as many that have been here and on the other hand it is better than some that have played in the house. The comedians were not up to the standard at all and this is a great draw back in the eyes of a St. John audience. Such favorite opera as Fra Diavolo, Erminie, The Grand Duchess were played.

The Devil's Auction is in Halifax again. Coming after the Evil Eye the prospects for good business should not be bright but this is a holiday week.

Jules Murray is presenting Lewis Morrison in Frederick the Great and he sends an announcement of the fact with some flattering press notices from the newspapers of New York and Pennsylvania. Morrison has always had great audiences in St. John and his reputation will be sure to bring him big business whenever he comes. A new melo-drama 'We Uns from Tennessee' was produced at the Grand Opera house, Boston, Monday night. Lee Arthur, the author, is in the cast. The play had some ingenious episodes. One of them was a duel by camp-fire with bayonets. When a contestant fell bleeding so that he could not rise, an officer was heard coming, and in order to protect all privates present from discovery in their contenance of the duel the wounded man was propped up in his place as sentry, the antagonist holding him there from behind and presenting arms. The officer spoke to the unconscious sentry, and the other man heard what concerned him nearly.

Another incident, used for the climax of an act, was the court martial to determine who the said antagonist was. The dying soldier was brought in on his cot and made to bid each of his friends good bye. It was expected that when his enemy came he would betray it. Instead of this he threw his arms around him and hailed him a good friend: an incident which created quite as much commotion in the audience as has often been produced by scenes of carnage, exploding bombs or destructive engines.

There was also some of those comic passages which are characteristic thoroughly of the American war play. A little soubrette who had been kicking up her heels a good deal declined on the score of modesty to allow her sweetheart to carry her across a brook. She removed her shoes and stockings and forded independently. Later the same young lady came to the aid of a wounded soldier who lacked a bandage, by fishing under her frock and producing a garment not identified.

Keith's theatre in Boston took advantage of Dewey's visit to get a great advertisement. The officers and crew were present Monday night and two of the latter at least contributed to the success of the show. An interesting account, as follows, appeared in the Advertiser:

The officers and crew of the Olympia were at Keith's last evening. Seats had been reserved for them in the orchestra. Before the men had been well seated the cheering broke forth. There were cheers for the red, white and blue, for the Olympia and Dewey. The big hits were made by Press Eldridge, Mark Murphy and Leo Dervalto, the latter's sailor uniform and wonderful feat of propelling a globe up a steep incline while poised on top of it, especially appealing to the sailormen.

The special features were the appearance of Mrs. Marian Titus, who sang 2 numbers, and then 'The Star Spangled Banner,' during which the house was darkened and in the background of the stage was seen the appropriate design that had graced the Tremont St. entrance, sur-



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rounded by colored lights. During the song, the audience arose and joined in the chorus. Several views of special interest to the Olympia were shown in the biograph including pictures of the men swimming in the Mediterranean, Admiral Dewey on the deck of his ship, the sailors in the land parade at New York, etc.

Something not down on the programme was the appearance of Marine E. A. Pratt and Sailor Thomas Tooney on the stage, the first named in a couple of recitations of his own composition, and the latter in comic songs. Nothing in the show made a greater hit than did these two volunteer entertainers.

FORREST'S FOLLY

R miscellaneous of the Construction of the Actor's Castle Recently Burned.

The old Fonthill Castle of the actor, Edwin Forrest, at Mount St. Vincent—"Forrest's Folly," as it was called—which burned recently, was full of romantic interest. It was the dream of Forrest's life which he was just about to realize when it was ended by the unfortunate estrangement between him and his wife. He was always fond of the Hudson, and had decided in early life that he would build his home upon its banks, if he ever built one. In 1849, having accumulated a small fortune from his work on the stage, he decided that the time had arrived for building it. Accordingly, he purchased a large tract of land for his estate. He was passionately in love with his wife. He cared for her and her happiness above all other things in life, and everything he did was to please her. His first desire, then, in building their home, was that she should be satisfied. After his wife, he loved his profession, and was thoughtful of it even in building his home. He would build a house which, after he and his wife were both gone, should be an enduring memorial of his love for his fellow actors.

Forrest and his wife planned the house together. They decided to model it, in a general way, after Fonthill Castle in England. The architectural design was mostly the work of Mrs. Forrest. It combined the Norman and Gothic styles of the older castle, softened in detail so as to provide for the luxuries of modern improvements. The castle consisted of six octagonal towers clustered together, the battlements of some notched with embrasures, the others capped with corniced coping. The highest tower rose about seventy feet from the base. The five other towers varied in height. The basement contained the kitchen, cellar and storerooms. On the first floor were the parlor, banquet hall, study, boudoir, and library. The centre tower comprised a hall or rotunda, and above this was a picture gallery lighted from the dome. The upper floors were divided into chambers for guests and apartments for servants.

The staircase tower had a spiral staircase of granite inserted in a solid brick column rising from the basement to the top of the tower, with landings on each floor leading to the apartments. In other towers, on the first floor, were the drawing room and banquet hall, each lighted with deep, square bay windows, while those of the upper chambers and of the boudoir were of the Gothic order. In other parts of the building were to be seen the rounded windows of the Norman period with their solid stone mullions dividing the compartments again into pointed Gothic loopholes and buttresses. The main entrance was on the upper or land side. It had a fine doorway needing only a moat and drawbridge to give it the air of a fortified castle.

During the progress of the building of the castle Forrest had improvised a rude residence on the grounds, which he visited at frequent intervals, growing constantly more deeply attached to the spot and to his prospective home. On July 4, 1850, he gathered his friends and neighbors to the number of 200 or more and held a celebration on the grounds, reading the Declaration of Independence and delivering an oration.

It was Forrest's idea that Fonthill Castle should be used, after his and his wife's death, as a home for actors, to be called the 'Edwin Forrest Home' in the cornerstone of the castle he placed specimens of American coins, copy of Shakespeare and the following paper.

"In building this house I am impelled by no vain desire to occupy a grand mansion for the gratification of self-love, but my object is to build a desirable, spacious and comfortable abode for myself and my wife, to serve us during our natural lives, and at our death to endow the building with a sufficient yearly income so that a certain number of decayed or superannuated actors and actresses of American birth (all foreigners excluded) may inhabit the mansion and enjoy the grounds thereunto belonging, so long as they live; and at the death of any one of the actors or actresses inhabiting the premises, his or her place to

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be supplied by another from the theatrical profession, who, from age or infirmity, may be found unable to obtain a livelihood upon the stage. The rules and regulations by which this institution is to be governed will, at some future day, be formed by Edward Forrest."

To this charity Forrest intended to devote his entire property forever. It was his idea as the estate grew in value, as it undoubtedly would, owing to its proximity to New York, for the trustees to invest the surplus in an American dramatic school for the education of poor but worthy young Americans in the profession of the stage or in the art of writing plays.

But before Fonthill was finished, domestic trouble arose, Forrest was estranged from his wife and later divorced. He was heartbroken. The sight of the castle became distasteful to him. It was the grave instead of the monument of his happiness. He ordered the workmen to stop, and closed it and the grounds. It was not entered again until six years later, in 1857, when he sold the estate to the Sisters of Charity for a mere song. He gave them the castle as it stood. It alone had cost him \$100,000. Thus Fonthill estate became part of a convent. The castle was not adapted to the purpose of an academy and it was devoted to a museum of natural history.

CHOIR BOYS IN ENGLAND.

Better Supply of Singers and Larger Opportunities for Practice.

The choir master of a church in one of the largest cities of this country has just returned from a visit to England, during which he listened to choral services in seventeen cathedrals and learned for the first time that that there is no uniform method of training the boy choirs in England or of teaching the individual members of them how to sing. The question of producing the tones in the best way is no more settled there than in the United States, although England is supposed to be the home of the boy choir. Some masters teach the youthful singers that their voices should come from the head, while others say that chest tones produce the best effects.

This American choir master found that the three best choirs in England were at Magdalen College, Oxford; at St. Paul's Cathedral in London, and at King's College, Cambridge. These are said to represent in their services the most that can be accomplished by the choirs of men and boys' voices. The choir of Magdalen College consists of sixteen boys and ten men. There are two daily services and a rehearsal also daily for boys in the choir school. The music is without accompaniment and was praised by the American expert, chiefly for the beautiful quality of the boys' voices. This is said to be the result of the choir master's method, which insists on the use of the head tones and also in softness in singing. By the observation of the second rule, the harshness likely to come into a boy's voice, when he forces it, may be avoided, and one of the most serious drawbacks to the enjoyment of the average boy choir is overcome. No more painful use of music in divine service can be imagined than the effect created by two dozen sturdy boys singing as hard as they can, with no apparent idea of anything but volume of tone and zeal of execution.

St. Paul's in London has a choir of thirty boys and eighteen men. The enormous building demands that the maximum of

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tone shall be produced; but that is never accomplished at the cost of good music. The choristers are made to sing. They are not allowed to shout, whatever the required volume of sound may be. The boys and men rehearse daily, and, as in other cathedral choirs, there is a school especially for them. Such an advantage exists in none of the churches here which have boy choirs. Head tones are also insisted upon at the St. Pauls.

The choir at Kings College, Cambridge, consists of sixteen boys and ten men, and they are trained by their masters to use their head tones exclusively, and never to sing from their chest. The singing of these boys in their delicacy, shading and attack is said to be superior to that of any choir in England. These choirs possess advantages for rehearsal never found in this country, and their skill is never likely to be equalled here. In most of the English choirs the countre tenor is sung by the men, and there are said to be only two boys in England who sing alto. They are at Peterboro and at Wells. The St. Paul's Cathedral choir rejoices in possession of two soloists who are said to possess the finest voices in England.

The choir at Westminster Abbey is said to be the inferior, in view of the position of the Church, although some of the smaller churches in London possess the most highly trained choirs. It seemed to be the opinion of this authority that the best results were obtained from the use of head tones. Here the number of boys available for such choirs is small and there are no choir schools. In England there are not only plenty of singers to be had but there are also ample opportunities to train them by daily rehearsals.

Sir Henry Irving on the Drama.

Sir Henry Irving laid the memorial stone of a new theatre in Lower Broughton, a popular suburb of Manchester. Sir Henry said:

"I have come here to-day with the keenest pleasure to take part in this ceremony, for whenever I hear of a foundation stone of a new theatre I always want to lay it, and rejoice over it as a hen does over an egg. You will gather from this that I am a bit of an enthusiast on this subject. For many years now I have been preaching the theatre, not only from the standpoint of art, but also on sound social policy. I have always contended that a well-conducted playhouse is a centre of rational recreation, and without rational recreation no community can pretend to have its faculties in proper order. I know that when we talk about the theatre in relation to general education some wise person is sure to start up and ask whether a particular piece of stage-work—always chosen in this connection for certain defects of matter or taste—is the kind of thing on which we base the educational pretensions of the drama. The answer is very simple. We take the drama broadly—just as we take the literature of fiction—and maintain that its influence tends to provide a fund of rational amusement which, making due allowance for the imperfections of human nature, is productive of social benefit.

There is a class of people who tell you this is all very well, but there is too much human nature in the drama. If so then there is too much of it in the novel, and a great deal too much of it in the newspaper. If you are going in for the suppression of all public manifestations of human nature you had better shut up the circulating library, and make the publication of newspapers a penal offence. But really this branch of controversy is rather barren, and I am half ashamed to mention it here. I don't apologise for this foundation stone. I believe it is a real contribution to the spread of the humanities, of those artistic amenities of life which lighten the burden of daily toil with the play of sympathy and imagination. In a country like Germany this is taken for granted. Nobody there is called upon to justify the theatre, for it is intimately associated with the life and traditions of the people. In England we are not quite so rational, for I continue to receive letters from young men who tell me they are about to take part in a debate on the question 'Is play-going consistent with Christian morals?'—and ask me to supply them with arguments in support of the affirmative. Some day, I hope, play-going will cease to be a bone of contention in mutual improvement societies or become a purely historical and academic topic of discussion, like the execution of Charles I. I look to this foundation stone as means to that desirable end. The multiplication of theatres, I am glad to say goes on apace; and that you should desire a theatre here in Broughton, in spite of the counter attractions of Manchester, is a worthy tribute to your public spirit."

Juliana Ewing's Memorial.

A stained glass window has been placed in Irill church, near Taunton, Somerset, England to the memory of Juliana Ewing, who wrote so many charming children's stories.

'A Flatiron for a Farthing,' 'Jackanapes' and 'The Story of a Short Life' are



The "Albert" Toilet Soap Co's Baby's Own Soap makes youngsters, clean, sweet, and fresh.

It keeps their delicate skins in good order. Made entirely from vegetable fats, it is an emollient as well as a cleanser, and is as useful on a lady's toilet as in the nursery. Faintly but exquisitely aromatic.

Beware of imitations.

as tender and natural studies of children as we have in literature, not excepting all the delightful Alcott stories.

When our American 'Little Lord Fauntleroy' was published English admirers of Mrs. Ewing accused Mrs. Barnett of plagiarizing 'Jackanapes.' That quaint little hero had the same devotion to his widowed mother which characterized Fauntleroy, and he, too, was giving to spending his money on humble friends and holding wise conversations with his grandfather. From 'The Story of a Short Life' was devolved the Children's Guild of Play in the Bermondsey Settlement. The guild has for its motto that of the heroic little cripple who wanted to be a V. C.—'Laetus Sorte Mea.'

Exerciating Pains.

THE VICTIM A WELL KNOWN AND POPULAR HOTEL CLERK.

After Other Medicines Failed he was Cured by Dr. Williams' Pink Pills—Every Dose Counted in the Battle Against Pain.

From the News, Alexandria, Ont.

There is no more popular hotel clerk in Eastern Ontario than Mr. Peter McDonnell, of the Grand Union Hotel, Alexandria. At the present time Mr. McDonnell is in the enjoyment of perfect health, and a stranger meeting him for the first time could not imagine that a man with the healthy glow and energetic manner of Mr. McDonnell could ever have felt a symptom of disease. There is a story, however, in connection with the splendid degree of health attained by him that is worth telling. It is a well known fact that a few years ago he was the victim of the most excruciating pains of rheumatism. Knowing these facts a News reporter called on Mr. McDonnell for the purpose of eliciting fuller particulars. Without hesitation he attributed his present sound state of health to the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People. "I am," said he, "33 years of age, but three years ago I did not expect to live this long. At that time I was connected with the Commercial here and as part of my duties was to drive the buses to and from the C. A. R. station, I was exposed to all kinds of weather and subjected to the sudden extremes of heat and cold. Along in the early spring I was suddenly attacked with the most terrible pains in my limbs and body. I sought relief in doctors and then in patent medicines, but all to no purpose; nothing seemed to afford relief. For two months I was a helpless invalid, suffering constantly the most excruciating pains. My hands and feet swelled and I was positive the end was approaching. My heart was effected and indeed I was almost in despair, when fortunately a friend of our family recommended the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. I began using them in May, 1896, and had taken three boxes before I noticed any change, but from that time every dose counted. The blood seemed to thrill through my veins and by the time I had finished the fifth box every trace of the disease had vanished. Ever since then I have been working hard and frequently long overtime, but have continued in excellent health. Whenever I feel the slightest symptom of the trouble I use the pills for a day or so and soon feel as well as ever. I feel that I owe my health to Dr. Williams' Pink Pills and never lose an opportunity of recommending them to others suffering as I was.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills cure by going to the root of the disease. They renew and build up the blood, and strengthen the nerves, thus driving disease from the system. Avoid imitations by insisting that every box you purchase is enclosed in a wrapper bearing the full trade mark, Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People. If your dealer does not keep them they will be sent postpaid at 50 cents a box, or six boxes for \$2.50 by addressing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.