

Music and The Drama

TONES AND UNDERTONES.

Mrs. Marie Zahn Lyman of Boston, has been engaged by the Germain street Baptist church as leading Soprano. Mrs. Lyman has done considerable both in church and concert work, and those who have had the pleasure of hearing her sing, state, she possesses a highly cultivated voice of excellent quality, and will be quite an acquisition to musical circles here.

Franc Alfano, a young Italian composer of whom great things were expected, recently shot himself at Monte Carlo, where he is said to have lost his entire fortune.

Herea Dardee, at the head of her Italian opera company in Berlin met with so little success that the performances were abandoned after a few nights. The Italian impresario decamped leaving the singers without funds, and the whole affair proved a distressing fiasco.

Mme. Melba has reconsidered her decision to make her first appearance in Berlin at one of the Philharmonic concerts and will sing at the new Royal Opera House, formerly known as Kroll's. She will take her own company there, including Mme. Lucia and Andrae the Italian baritone so popular in Germany.

Mme. Sembrich is to sing Marguerite in French for the first time during the winter tour Ernest Van Dyck is to join the company in Chicago and announces from London that he will sing Tristan there for the first time on Monday evening Nov. 20. In spite of the prosperity that has so far attended the company's tour it has yet to be established that the troupe of Chicago, Boston and perhaps one or two other cities than the itinerant or local companies which sing in English.

Alma Webster Powell, who has been engaged for the Castle Square Opera Company is an American singer and has reversed the usual process in such cases. She acquired her musical training here and then gained success abroad on the operatic stage. She made her debut at Frankfurt in 1895. The company at the American has frequent evidence of the interest which its performances awaken in other cities. A communication from Portland, Me., the other day contained a request that principals should be sent there for a performance of 'Faust' to be repeated during two weeks. A local chorus was to be trained for the performances. This seems like a deliberate attempt to snatch away the artistic laurels of the Maine festivals.

Elsa Ruegger, the cellist to be heard in New York the week after next, was born at Lucerne on Dec. 6, 1881. Her father was an official in the Government service. He moved to Brussels in her childhood and she studied there with Edward Jacobs, a celebrated teacher, and was also thrown into valuable association with Ant Campousky, the violinist. She appeared at a charity concert when she was 11, and two years later made a tour through Switzerland with one of her sisters, who is a pianist, and another who plays the violin. In Berlin she appeared first in 1895, and she returned to her studies afterward in Brussels, where in 1896, she took the first prize. Her career which has been highly successful, has included visits to Berlin, Cologne, Munich, St. Petersburg and London.

Another Italian musician is said to be as much honored as ever in his own country, in spite of his hostile criticism elsewhere. This is Don Perosi, who is to have a hall built in Milan especially for the performance of his oratorios. Hitherto his works have been sung there at La Scala or at the Cathedral. Now the old church, of the place, disused for many years, is to be converted into a concert hall. Don Perosi's oratorio, "The Massacre of the Innocents," on which he is at work, will be the first oratorio sung there. His "Birth of the Redeemer," sung at Como, has not yet been heard outside of Italy, and in all

probability never will be although there is in the enthusiasm with which it was heard by his country men no note of the distavor that characterized criticism in every other land. Don Perosi conducted the original production himself, and to the influence of his personality has been attributed much of the success that his compositions have enjoyed among his countrymen. "The Birth of the Redeemer" is divided into two parts, "The Annunciation" and "Christmas." The second part had to be repeated in full, the composer was called before the audience in the cathedral six times, and Kaschmann, the baritone who sang the principal share of the music, presented Perosi a crown of silver laurel wreaths. The libretto is said to be less interesting than any previously provided for him and to be deficient in dramatic as well as religious character.

A well known English novelist, expresses as follows the impressions he received from hearing Mme. Melba in 'Lucia':

'I went to scoff. I remained to pray. I confess my previous folly. A welcome change has come over my spirit of opera. The tawdriness of Covent Garden, the undisguised contempt for dramatic effect, the awful penny-in-the-slot chorus has hitherto kept me away. On my rare visits I have shut my eyes and tried to figure the singers standing before me in reputable evening dress. On Saturday night, however, I kept my eyes open as well as my ears and was edified. Mme. Melba is wonderful. Her voice lingered all through Sunday and drowned the various Salvation Army bands and other hideous kinds of music that pass my residence on the day of rest. And Mme. Melba can act. Were she not handicapped by her priceless voice she might be one of our great tragic actresses. I almost forgot the fact that Lucia in the flesh did not habitually converse with her associates in elaborate song.'—San Francisco Wave.

Mascagni's 'The Maske' will be ready for production at Milan in December, and the composer is to return from his concert tour in time to conduct the first performance. Its form gives further evidence of the struggle of the Italian librettists of the day to add novelty to their work. One of Goldoni's comedies has been taken as the basis of the work. Luigi Illica gave the piece its present form. The opening scene represents the greenroom of a theatre, and this episode has been called by Mascagni 'a scenic prelude.' The manager of the company comes to his actors, who are gathered to meet him. He tells them they are to perform a musical comedy. 'What's that?' cry the artists. 'Written by Mascagni,' continues the manager. 'Who's he?' cry the singers. Without noticing them the manager distributes the parts to the company. 'You are Rosaura,' he says to the first actress, 'and you are in love with Florindo. You are Pantaloon, her father, and, of course, know nothing about your daughter's love affairs. You are Columbine, and Brighello makes love to you. Brighello is the Doctor's manservant. You are Harlequin.' He hears the singers try a bar of the music they are to sing in the performance, and after this introduction the opera begins. It is in three acts, of which the story has already been told. The score is said to be modelled on the musical style of the last century, and includes three dance numbers, a giga, pavane and gavotte played at a masked ball, which makes up the second act.

As serenades are the composer's strong point, one is introduced; and, in accordance with the traditions of all preliminary announcements on the subject, is declared already by those who have heard it to be the most beautiful music that Mascagni has ever written. The opera closes with a scene in which all the singers bow to the audience and say good-night after the fashion of the old pantomimes. Milan has been selected as the scene of the first performance because the composer and Sonzogno were dissatisfied with the manner in which the public of Rome received "Iris."

TALK OF THE THEATRE.

Yale's Devil's Auction drew large audiences to the Opera house on four nights of this week. There are a few changes since its previous visit but as a whole the production did not equal that of last year. The dancing was good, the ladies shapely and pretty, the scenic effects artistic, and there were other excellent features but there was wanting that dash and finish, the indefinable something that distinguished the Auction on its first visit. However it pleased popular taste to a certain extent and after all that is the main thing.

Appropos of nothing, why is it I wonder that no matter how good a theatrical company may be in other towns, or how well received, it suddenly loses all prestige and glory the moment it reaches St. John. Its members may be indefatigable and untiring in their efforts to please and yet their

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best work goes unappreciated, and really meritorious performances are given to almost empty houses. Some time ago a repertoire company visited St. John and though it didn't claim to be the greatest show on earth, it was a pretty smoothly balanced company and the female star impressed me as being wonderfully bright and clever. When half a dozen people assured me that it was the "ranked show that ever struck the city" I was naturally a little puzzled for I quite enjoyed the one matinee performance I had witnessed.

The company played, if I mistake not, a weeks engagement under very discouraging conditions, and no doubt gladly shook the dust of St. John from their weary feet. Not long ago I happened to be in a neighboring American city which gets the best attractions on the road, and passing one of its theatres one day I noted that the same company was giving a matinee performance, and, a little curious as to how an aggregation that had been turned down here was being received in that city, I dropped into the theatre for a few moments. The S. R. O. sign was out and I stood through one act, just long enough to convince myself that the personnel of the company was the same as when here and that there was no change in any particular. Later on I made enquiries and found that big houses were the order of the engagement both at matinee and evening performances.

A dramatic writer on an evening paper to whom I confided my ideas as to the company's merit, remarked—"Well, for a repertoire company, I consider it pretty good. The star is one of the cleverest little women I've seen in that line for a long time, and her support is above the average." At any rate the show draws, so it can't be altogether bad. It strikes me you people want the earth for a quarter."

Culhane, Chase and Weston's minstrels will give a performance at the opera house on Monday evening and as they established themselves as favorites during a previous visit, they will no doubt get good patronage. The balance of the week the something-o-graph pictures will be shown,

the battle of Manila and other pictures of the Spanish American war, the International yacht races, and a whole lot of other interesting scenes and events being the features.

Floiliott Paget arrived in New York last week after spending the summer at her home in England.

Harry Davenport and Phyllis Rankin will soon return to the London cast of The Belle of New York.

Pol Plancon arrived in New York last Friday from Europe, and joined the Maurice Grau Opera company in Montreal this week.

Oiga Nethersole and her company left New York on Friday for Chicago, where they opened last Monday evening in The Profligate.

Z. L. Tilbury was burned severely recently by the overturning of a lamp at the residence of her mother, Lydia Thompson, at Margate, Eng.

Lilli King Lloyd, daughter of Arthur Lloyd, the English comedian, and granddaughter of the tragedian, Thomas C. King, will accompany Sir Henry Irving on his forthcoming American tour.

Sheridan Block has won an emphatic success as the Comte de Guiche in Richard Mansfield's production of Cyrano de Bergerac. A prominent Boston critic has pronounced his portrayal a well nigh perfect one.

Mrs. Augustin Daly, much improved in health, returned to New York last week from London, whither she had gone five weeks before to arrange business matters connected with the estate of her late husband.

Sir Henry Irving, Ellen Terry, and the London Lyceum company sailed from England on Sunday for this city. On Oct. 4 Sir Henry laid the memorial stone of the new Victoria Theatre, Great Clowes street, Lower Broughton.

Adelaide Norwood, of the Castle Square Opera company, made her first appearance this season at the American Theatre on last Wednesday night as Juliet. Miss Norwood took the place of Yvonne de Treville, who was indisposed, and received a cordial welcome from the audience.

Joseph Jefferson addressed Yale undergraduates at New Haven last Monday week on the art of acting and the genius of Shakespeare, and at the close of his talk answered several questions propounded by the students. He did not think the old style of English verse could be revived; thought the older plays superior to the modern; approved vaudeville as a needed form of amusement for a certain part of the public, and was of the opinion that the tendency of the modern stage was far above that of the stage of the time of the Restoration.

FREAKS OF A NEBRASKA CYCLONE.

Of Such a Nature That The Men Took to Drink.
The details of the performance of the recent cyclone at Herman, Neb., are now becoming known. Eye witnesses and photographs are the most sober testimony available. The statistician gives thirty as the number of deaths from violence, but the insurance agents are still estimating property losses. Herman is about forty miles north of Omaha. The inhabitants of



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this agricultural hamlet had provided their houses with cellars and many had built specially constructed cyclone cellars. While engaged in the day's work, a cylindrical cloud formed before their eyes from a clear sky. The cry of cyclone gave the impetus of terror to their flight and before the tempest reached the outskirts of the town every villager had gathered wife and bairns about him into his cellar. For a minute almost interminable they waited. Then the crash came and a succession of sounds resembling the explosion of giant fire-crackers told of the lifting from their foundations of house after house.

In one humble home the housewife had been accustomed to place her preserves on a cellar shelf close to the floor of the house. These jars extended some inches above the outside ground surface. When the house was uprooted like a sapling and carried a hundred feet the first investigator found the preserves intact rearing their heads above the surface. An ice house was the victim of one of the storm's pranks. The roof and half the wall were cut away from the back and deposited a quarter of a mile away, but the blocks of ice were not touched in the least. In the photograph the anxious owner is speculating as to the probable effects of the sun's rays.

Within thirty minutes from the climax of the cyclone the stricken people were seeking consolation in malt and spirituous liquors. The photograph shows a line of men to the extreme left standing before an improvised bar. The burly Dutchman to the right is pointing a man to the direction in which the latter lived only an hour before. The principal hotel of the village was not touched by the cyclone, itself, but suffered from the impact of a tree used against its wall like a battering ram. A massive boiler was gathered in the arms of the cyclone and whirled up hill 300 feet, describing about the hotel a parabolic curve and landing in a mass of household furniture. The hotel was directly in the course but it made a polite detour.

A piano, the one luxury of some home, was carried high in the air a distance of 300 yards and deposited feet downward. The front and tail boards lay beside it, torn from their fastenings. A little girl was the first to touch it in its new position, and her ears were greeted by a kitten's piteous mew. Wedged in behind the keyboard was a much disturbed kitten which had been caught there in some mysterious fashion. The children of the village are still discussing the kitten's presence in the works of the piano.

The town of Herman is now rising from its ruins with that swiftness for which the West is noted, and in a few months not a mark will remain of the blighting hand of a Nebraska cyclone.

Mr. Konomize—You have got a great deal of wear out of that broadcloth jacket, haven't you, love?

Mrs. Konomize—Yes; that's what I don't like about it.

'Wigby strokes his nose as though he loved it.'

'Yes, he's strongly attached to it, you know.'

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