

**Music and
The Drama**
TONES AND UNDERTONES.

Important steps have lately been taken toward the realization of a Wagner theatre for England, and a definite plan will be published soon. The new opera house although, following the Bayreuth idea, will by no means be confined to Wagner performances, but will also be available for model representations of Shakespearean and other plays, and for musical festivals. A plot of land has also, it is said, been secured for the erection of a Wagner theatre in a southern suburb, and an Austrian millionaire is credited with the intention of building an opera house on a large scale in the neighborhood of Sloane Square.

At fourteen of the forty-six Italian theatres are being played French operas. At several opera houses the oratorios of the Abbe Peri are, moreover, to be performed, and at the Milan Scala they announce Verdi's "Pezzi Sacri." In via II Trovatore protests that "our theatres are being turned into churches." The oratorios pay, and that is sufficient. Other composers will also inevitably follow the Abbe Peri. Already a new oratorio is announced by Signor Parodi, and a "Marrriage of St. Cecilia" by Signor Tebaldini.

Dr Dvorak is about to celebrate his silver wedding. He had to wait several years before he was able to marry the girl he was engaged to, as he had not enough money to support a wife. In 1873, however, he was appointed organist in a Prague church at a salary of \$1.50 a year, and this, combined with what he could earn by teaching, enabled him to marry. When, two years later, Brahms recommended him for a stipend worth \$2.50 a year he considered himself rich at Croesus. While he was director of the National Conservatory in New York Mrs. Thurber paid him \$15 00 a year.

The complete Wagner cycle is to have two representations in New York this winter, the first beginning on Thursday evening, at the Metropolitan Opera house with a performance of 'Das Rheingold.'

Is there any difference between the audiences in various cities? asked a New York Sun interviewer of Emil Paur. He replied: 'Yes, indeed! In Germany they are much warmer and more demonstrative than they are in this country. In Austria they are still warmer. Among the American cities I have visited Philadelphia is the most enthusiastic. The audiences are much more responsive than they are in New York or Boston.'

Macagni is at present engaged upon the composition of an opera called 'The Comedy of Art.' The familiar figures of the Harlequin, Pantaloon, Columbine, etc. are represented. It will be an opera like 'The Barber of Seville.'

TALK OF THE THEATRE.

The Paul Cazeneuve Company opened an indefinite engagement at the Opera House on Monday evening in 'The Strategists,' a bright little piece abounding in laughable situations, all sorts of funny mistakes and mix-ups of one kind and another. The individual work was good throughout and the performance was sprinkled with plenteous applause by the audience. Later in the week the company played Don Caesar de Bazan, What Happened to Smith, and The Violin maker.

The opera house begins the new year under the most favorable conditions and though the past year was not a record breaking one in the way of business it was very successful financially—and from other standpoints particularly so. Some of the latest plays were produced here last summer by people well up in their profession, plays which night after night drew crowded houses for weeks at a time in other cities not larger than St John. Enterprise on the part of the opera house management however, does not meet with the reward that would naturally be expected; and the indifferent encouragement extended to any really good thing must be disheartening in the extreme to both players and management, and of course is an explanation of why good organizations do not care to repeat a first visit to this city.

The management is earnest and indefatigable in its efforts to give the people the very best that can be procured in the way of popular amusement and good healthy plays, but unless the action of the piece proper is interspersed with vulgar songs, stale jokes and questionable witticisms, the best efforts of a company count for nothing and the finest play ever written is accounted flat, stale and unprofitable. I have it on excellent authority that during the past two years several of the finest organizations in America have offered to come to St John, but the local management was obliged to decline, past

**ECZEMA
ON
BABY**

My little six-months old girl had Eczema. We used all kinds of remedies, but she kept getting worse. I used to wrap her hands up, and to dress her, had to put her on the table. I could not hold her, she would kick and scream, and when she could, she would tear her face and arms almost to pieces. Four boxes of CUTICURA (ointment), two cakes of CUTICURA SOAP, and CUTICURA RESOLVENT cured her, and no traces are left. Feb. 7, '98. Mrs. G. A. CONRAD, Lisbon, N. H.

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experiences having made those concerned feel that they could not afford to take any chances. This is somewhat of a reproach to St. John people, and those who are interested in good wholesome amusements must certainly regret such a state of affairs. Historical plays educate, and create a desire to know more of the famous persons represented in them; and who is not the better in another sense for watching a pure bright comedy enacted; try it sometime when everything seems going wrong and see if after a good hearty laugh you won't go home feeling that the world isn't such a bad place when you've had the cobwebs brushed away.

Next week the Cazeneuve Company will give a change of repertoire, and there will be the usual Wednesday and Saturday matinees at popular prices.

Olga Nethersole began an engagement at Wallack's Monday evening, appearing in "The Termagant." Later on she promises a new satirical comedy by Max O'Rell.

"Zaza" came to the Garrick Theatre, New York, this week, with Mrs. Leslie Carter as the heroine.

This week will witness the production at the Irving Place Theatre, New York, of Hermann Faber's "A Happy Couple." The play has been performed in Germany with great success.

"On and Off" will be succeeded at the Madison Square Theatre, New York, on January 16, by Mr Gillette's play, "Because She Loved Him So."

"Cyrano De Bergerac" recently reached its three hundredth performance at the Porte-St-Martin, Paris.

Sarah Bernhardt intends giving the Theatre des Nations her own name when she takes possession of it next month.

Signor Novelli has appeared as Shylock in Paris with great success, the part being considered by the French critics as one of his best.

According to the London Era, Hall Caine has accepted a commission to write a new play for Maude Adams.

G. P. Bancroft has read his new play, with which Edward Terry begins his London season, entitled "What Will the World Say?" It promises to be a really good play.

Although "La Poupée" is still going very well on its revival at the Prince of Wales' Theatre, the new opera by H. J. W. Dam and Justin Clerice is being rehearsed daily. There will be something quite Spanish in it, we are told.

John Hare will respond to the toast of "The Drama" at the fifteenth annual dinner of the Playgoers' Club, which will be held on January 29, at the Hotel Cecil, London.

Sir Henry Irving, J. M. Barrie, Beerholm Tree, A. W. Pinero and Henry Arthur Jones have joined the committee for raising a fund to help Mrs. Harold Frederic and her children.

A "Smoking room for ladies" will be one of the novel features of the remodeled St. James' Theatre in London.

Kienzl has completed a third opera which will also be brought out at Berlin. Zangwill's dramatization of "The Children of the Ghetto" will be first produced in the Broadway Theatre, New York, in October next.

Sutton Vane's latest production of "The Crystal Globe," an adaptation of "La Joueuse d'Orgue," which has just been produced in the London Princess Theatre seems to be in his characteristic style. Murder, robbery, sudden death, hypnotism, arson and a superannuated hurdy gurdy form its leading features.

There is to be produced at the London Court Theatre a rendering by Messrs. Aubrey Boucicault and Osmond Shillingford of "Les Premieres Armes de Richelieu," one of the pieces given by Dejazet, whose favorite it was.

Bernard Shaw is writing for Forbes Robertson a play founded upon a supposed early flirtation between Julius Cæsar and Cleopatra.

Henry Arthur Jones has signed an agreement to write a new play of modern life for Beerholm Tree. The latter will soon make his first appearance as Achille Talma Du'ard, in "The First Night," a character associated with the names of some famous French and English actors, notably M. Ravel and Alfred Wigan.

The London Globe and the Savoy have both reopened, with John Hare at the former, with "School," and "The Merry Monarch," rewritten, with new music by Ivan Caryll, and rechristened "The Lucky Star," at the Savoy.

'Le Berceau,' of M. Brieux, which has just been produced at the Theatre Francais, has for its object to prove that divorces ought not to be granted where there are children. M. and Mme. Chantrel, who have been divorced, meet by accident at the bedside of their sick child, with the consent of the lady's second husband. After hovering on the brink of the grave for many anxious days the child recovers, and the parents, in a paroxysm of feeling, throw themselves into each other's arms. The second husband naturally is not well pleased with the situation, especially when the lady admits that her old love for her first husband has revived. For a time there is a prospect of a duel between the two men, but the woman solves the problem by declaring that hereafter she will have nothing to do with either of them, but will devote herself to the care of her child. And this is the situation upon the fall of the curtain.

The new Century Theatre purpose producing a new play in January by H. V. Esmond, called 'Grierson's Way.'

Leoncavallo has nearly finished his 'Rondo di Berlino,' which Emperor William II ordered. He announced his intention of shortly commencing work on 'Zaza.'

Sometimes the letters received by the singers at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, are more remarkable than persons unaccustomed to see them would ever believe. It is understood generally that actors, singers and other figures in public life receive many strange letters. Persons write to beg for money, for interviews, for pictures, for autographs. Requests for autographs, indeed, are the most numerous. There is little or nothing flattering to the artist in these requests for autographs. Some of the artists drop the cards that are usually inclosed ready for the name into the waste basket. Others who are more patient write their names. But the autograph hunter is one of the least tolerable of all the other writers, as he appeals to all of the artists and cares no more about one than another, so long as he get their names for his book.

Next to the autograph seekers, the beggars are the most numerous. They want money in the majority of cases, although their ways of begging for it are varied. One example of their methods occurred in the case of Mme. Marcella Sembrich and Edouard de Reszke. One day Mme. Sembrich received a note from a Pole who lives somewhere in the far eastern side of the city. It was registered, as most of these begging letters are. In it the writer said that he possessed a voice which would make him a reputation in the world if he could only afford to cultivate it. It was a baritone, according to the letter, which said that a teacher in whom he had great confidence would give him a series of lessons for \$50 and that he would then be able to get a place in a church choir and make enough to support himself and continue his lessons in singing. The writer said that Edouard de Reszke had promised to pay for half of this course if Mme. Sembrich would pay for the rest.

It happened, unfortunately for the writer, that Edouard de Reszke was at Mme. Sembrich's house when the note arrived. She read it through, and handed it to him. Immediately he recognized the handwriting. The letter was identical with one that had come to him, the only difference being in the matter of the names. In the letter to Edouard de Reszke the writer had said that Mme Sembrich had promised to pay half the \$50 if M. de Reszke would pay the rest. The Pole got nothing.

It has been said frequently that the De

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Reszkes have more calls made on their bounty than any of the other singers, and that they respond to them with greater liberality. It is true they have always been most generous in responding to the calls of their countrymen, and not always with agreeable results. In one young Polish artist Jean de Reszke took an especial interest. He went so far as to fit up a studio for him and call the attention of all his friends to him. After this was done the young man reproached him bitterly for not having paid the rent of his studio for a year in advance, so that his mind might not be troubled in the meantime with the necessity of making money enough for that. Edouard, who is just as generous, gives liberally to his compatriots who live here and who appeal to him for charity. These calls on him are frequent, and there is scarcely one that is not rewarded to some extent. One of his beneficiaries was a man to whom Edouard had given money with considerable regularity for some time. His tales of woe were always eloquent and realistic. It was only by accident that Edouard learned how unworthy his pensioner was. Edouard rewarded him regularly under the impression that he was a struggling artist with a family. It was the agent of a Polish charitable society who proved to De Reszke that the man was an inveterate gambler who spent all that he had in the east side gambling houses. Edouard's faith was a little shaken by this episode, but he is still liberal to his correspondents. As a rule he never sees them. The letter comes, the money goes, and sometimes there is a note of thanks but not always that.

Mme Sembrich receives the customary letters from her compatriots begging for money, but the most remarkable of her correspondents is an American girl, who wrote singing herself after her name "dram. sop." The letter came from a town so small that it is to be found only on a very large map. The letter was written on paper that bore the advertisement of a small village hotel. These words "dram. sop." were puzzling for a while. But the letter cleared up the mystery. The writer said that she was a dramatic soprano. She inclosed a photograph which looked dramatic. The woman lived in a small town in the interior of the state. She had been to New York and had not heard Mme. Sembrich sing, as she was not on the programme during the time that the writer's excursion ticket lasted. That was only an incident of the letter. Several years ago the writer brought a photograph to paint on a brass plaque. The picture was one of Mme. Sembrich. She wanted the singer to see it, and suggested that she come to visit the prima donna for a while, bringing the brass plaque with her. She was willing to act as companion or maid during that time, and, indeed, she was willing to serve in any capacity that would take her every night to the opera. That was of course, one of the letters to which no answer could be made. The writer was exigant, however. She wrote several times, and then sent a registered letter to the proprietor, asking if the former letters had been delivered.

The singers receive all sorts of requests to sing for old ladies' homes, Young Men's Associations, and no end of equally inappropriate charities. Unless these are accompanied by some very influential letters they are merely disregarded. Several weeks ago a woman who was a cripple came to New York from a Southern city. She wanted a benefit. She wrote a note to Mme. Emma Eames, whom she addressed as "Madame Aimes." That was astonishing enough. But when she said Mme. Melba had given her a letter of introduction, that was more surprising, as Mme. Melba and Mme. Eames are not supposed to have any close social relations, and this was an unfortunate suggestion. After having interviewed Mme. Sembrich and found her equally opposed to any such plan, the woman returned to the South, quite puzzled that the great opera singers should take so little interest in her plan for a benefit performance in which they should all take part. One curious invitation sent to Mme. Eames was to attend a newsboys dinner given on Christmas Day in Pittsburg. The attention was appreciated, but Mme. Eames' arrangements at the Metropolitan made it impossible for her to accept.

Most of these begging letters are thrown aside without being read. Sometimes they contain a particular note that appeals to the person, and they may receive attention. Persons who have written to the great singers and received no answer may take it that their letters did not contain the appealing note. Many of these letters never reach the person for whom they are intended. The husbands, agents or managers throw them away. Many come from the proud parents of promising youngsters. "I have a daughter," runs the thing usually, "who is very musical. She sings very sweetly and has so far had few lessons. I took her once to the opera to hear you, and she has always talked of the impression your singing has made on her. She has taken much more interest in her music ever since she heard you. It would gratify me so much if you would consent to hear her some day. I should so like to get your opinion on her voice. We think her teacher is a good one, but are not certain."

This is the customary form of the mother's letter. Sometimes it comes from the girl herself, but the form is usually the same. In nine cases out of ten these are wholly ingenuous letters written by people who wonder why in the world they never get any answers to them. If the principal singers in the company spent their time answering these letters there would be little time for anything else. So they have to go unnoticed. The men singers have the same experience. Jean de Reszke is constantly importuned to hear throaty young tenors, and Edouard, who listened to a baritone in Chicago, and gave him some advice, received a visit from him here. He had travelled all the way for more advice and encouragement. Albert Saleza recently told how he had recovered his

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voice after some very faulty instruction from one of the professors of the Conservatoire. The day following he received a letter from a man living in New York, who wrote that he was not a professional singer himself, but wanted to be one. He was anxious to have M. Saleza give him some instructions as to the way he would best set about recovering so much of his voice as he thought had teachers had deprived him of. M. Saleza had too much on hand to undertake the instruction of this modest applicant.

Beating letters make up the majority of the correspondence, however, that comes to the well known singers. Everything from tickets to money is to be found among the requests. The extent to which these are answered depends entirely on the particular disposition of the artist to whom the letters are sent. It is needless to say that many letters are unanswered and that some of the singers never respond to these appeals for help. Possibly they are the wisest. The economies of some singers have frequently been the subject of comment. In many cases they have been ridiculous. But when one considers that they are looked upon as the legitimate prey of many persons who would not dare to ask of others, their prudence is highly creditable, and they can be excused readily for refusing to grant every request made to them, merely on the ground that they happen to have won fame in their profession.

The Sense of Direction in Animals.

I am an old reader of the Spectator, and should like to be allowed to add one to the many interesting stories you have collected about the traits of animals. Mine relates to a paradise duck which had become domesticated, and lived at a sheep station twenty-one miles from Timaru, in the provincial district of Canterbury. It belonged to the housekeeper, who had clipped its wings, and it spent its life between the homestead and a small pond close by. In course of time its mistress left for the neighborhood of Christchurch and she carried the duck with her in a basket. Her journey was by train twenty-one miles to Timaru, then by changing to another train for ninety-five miles, and finally by coach or cart for about ten miles. By and by the duck disappeared from his new home, and was looked upon as lost. Then its mistress returned to her previous domicile some time after—how long I have not discovered—and to her intense surprise found the duck had revisited its old haunts, and was settled on the pond as before. It could not fly, and no one was known to have carried it, so the only remaining hypothesis is that it walked for one hundred and twenty miles, threading its way by many crossroads, over bridges, and across streams, through a country which presents a great variety of contour in hill, valley and river.—J. M. Ritchie in London Spectator.

Fashoda a Paradise for Sportsmen.

Big game is said to be plentiful in the region of Fashoda. The river swarms with crocodiles and hippopotami, while great herds of antelopes of various kinds and giraffes are frequently met with them. The latter fact is particularly interesting, as most of the zoological gardens of the world are in want of a specimen of the North African giraffe, which they have been unable to obtain, owing to the closing of the Central Sudan for so many years.

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