

MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

AN event of some musical interest last month was the second annual Sngerfest of the German-Canadian Singing Societies, which was held at Berlin on the 17th, 18th, and 19th ult. It has been generally conceded that these gatherings actively stimulate a desire to cultivate the art of music in one or other of its various branches, and on this account alone, should receive the warmest support and encouragement from the public at large. The enthusiasm which the festival under notice excited among the Germans in Ontario was something remarkable; certainly nothing like it in point of unanimity and thoroughness has yet been witnessed, in connection with such an occasion, among other sections of our community. Our German fellow-subjects have but to continue their meetings in the spirit in which they originated, to attain that experience and executive ability which are necessary to a successful production of the choral masterpieces of the great composers, for it may be expected that, as the programmes of the festival exhibit a periodical elevation in character, a time will be reached when detached choruses will no longer satisfy the demands of the public, or the developed capabilities and taste of the singers.

If we divest the Berlin Sngerfest of the merry-making, the harmless conviviality, and the festivities that attended it, all of which have been accorded full justice by the daily press, there will remain but two concerts which demand notice. In the first of these, the choral music was supplied by the male singers of societies of Toronto, Hamilton, Berlin, Preston, and Waterloo, and the Berlin mixed choir. The numbers were selected principally from the compositions of Abt, Kcken, and Fischer, and were in every instance sung *con amore*. It would, of course, be idle to deny that a proportion of the material of which these singing societies are composed, is comparatively raw and inexperienced, but it has to be borne in mind that their formation is but of recent date. Nevertheless, many of the choruses were remarkably well given, and the keen interest and delight which each individual singer took in rendering his part, contrasted strongly with the listless indifference, both to the music and the conductor, so often observed in our English

Choral Unions. The professional soloists were Madame De Ryther (mezzo-soprano), Herr Warner (violoncello), and Mr. J. W. Baumann (violin). The engagement of Madame De Ryther was well judged, as the lady possesses one of those full and powerful-toned voices which was exactly what was required to fill so large a hall as that in which the concerts were given. Herr Werner, whose principal *morceau* was Vieuxtemps' celebrated "Reverie," delighted even the most critical by his masterly playing. The purity and volume of tone that he drew from his instrument, his perfect toning and stopping, and finally, the refinement of phrasing and expression, proclaimed him to be an artist of a very high order. Mr. Baumann, whose name is familiar to concert audiences in this Province, played with more than his usual care and taste, and perhaps this was most apparent in his violin *obligato* to the singing of Madame De Ryther, in Lachner's "Thou everywhere." The Toronto Musicians' Association band, and the Hamilton Artillery band, both gave rather long and noisy selections; their playing was, however, good.

The second concert, which took place on the afternoon of the 18th ult., was distinguished from the first by a number of choruses by the combined male choirs, and by the appearance of the Buffalo Orpheus Society and Sngerbund, and the Detroit Orpheus Society, the last named being an English singing society, and the only one that sang at the festival. The combined male choirs naturally produced more effect than the individual choirs at the first concert, and although the rehearsals under the musical director, Mr. Zllner, had been necessarily but few, the *ensemble* was very creditable. The singing of the Orpheus Society of Buffalo, and of the Orpheus Society of Detroit, was undoubtedly the best at the Sngerfest, and the superiority was cheerfully acknowledged. The Buffalo Sngerbund came next in point of merit. The accompanist at both the concerts was Miss Lindsay, of St. Catharines, a young lady who gives great promise of future success as a *pianiste*. The second concert practically brought the festival to a close. It is proposed to hold the next Sngerfest at Hamilton in 1877.