

Music and Drama.

The return of the McDowell Co. to the Grand this week was received with considerable pleasure by those who enjoyed their clever production of "The Private Secretary" on a former visit. The repertoire on this occasion was more varied, several new pieces having been presented. The audiences on Monday were so large as to necessitate the use of camp stools and other improvised seats for the accommodation of the crowd.

Montford's was well patronized last week, the attraction being the Aiken Co. in a thrilling and exciting western play. The Aiken combination is composed of several first-class performers, and the engagement was deservedly sustained. This week the exquisite and touching melo-drama of "The Streets of London" is drawing large audiences.

A Canadian Cantatrice.

It happened one Sunday morning, that Brignolia, while strolling about the streets of Albany, dropped in at the cathedral to hear the music. The choir was in the midst of a chant, and when to the well-trained ear of the famous tenor there came the tones of one "sweet voice above the rest," Brignoli was not slow to make his way to the organ-loft to inquire as to the possessor of the voice which had so charmed him.

"She is my daughter," proudly exclaimed Joseph Lajouneuse, a French-Canadian music teacher.

"Shall I present you?" he continued, recognizing the tenor.

The short acquaintance that followed led Brignoli to recommend a course of foreign study, but that was then impossible for the poor music teacher, who had to eke out her small income by singing in the choir and occasionally playing the organ. Still she was brave and did not despair. By degrees her voice made the choir locally famous, and gradually made for herself friends who, recognizing the capabilities of her voice, arranged to send her abroad for study.

In 1868, at the age of eighteen years, she started for Paris, taking with her letters to the Bishop of Paris, and to the famous tenor Dupres. After studying two years with the latter, she was sent to Lamperti, at Milan, who gave her greeting with:

"Ah! there's a fortune in that little throat!"

Hard study with this great maestro gave her absolute command of her rich voice, and when in time she was ready for her debut at Messina, she chose to make her first appearance as *Amina* in "Sonnambula." To give as much realism as possible to the part, she first visited the scene of the opera, and studied the dress and characteristics of the people.

The name Albani has no connection with Albani, as many persons fondly suppose, but was given her by Lamperti himself. In 1873, Albani who had then been three years on the stage, appeared in London, and there added another to her long string of triumphs.

Albani's voice is a rich soprano, commanding a compass of two octaves, extending to E flat. As a devout disciple of Lamperti, she disdains trickery, and like a true artist, she sings the operas as the composer wrote them. Moreover, she is a good artist.

In appearance Albani is a brunette, with black hair and eyes. She is below medium size, and is slender. Her fondness and admiration for Patti is a matter of long standing; and Patti has always reciprocated it. A devout Catholic, she remains much in her nature of the sweet simplicity which has come down to her through her father, from the dwellers in Arcadia, and yet she is not without a dash of pride in her nature. Her mother, belonged to an aristocratic Scotch family in Montreal, and when the flower of the family fell in love with her French music teacher, elopement and poverty were made her lot. When Albani's star began to be in the ascendant, the family expressed its willingness to lend assistance, but the coming prima donna replied with spirit:

"You spared my mother when she most needed your aid. The memory of that treatment compels me now to decline alike your proffered bounty and your hospitality."

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