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Criticism of To-day.

It is a remarkable fact that the best actors and actresses are always dead or retired from the stage. Old play-goers tell us that it has been so from the beginning. There never was a time when the reality of the present was not insignificant compared with the recollection of the past. Even Mrs. Drew we only entirely admire in the parts that she has ceased to play. When she played them, people were wont to say that the palmy days of genteel comedy were past. It is but a very few years since reminiscences of Helena Faucit and Ellen Tree were thrown in the face of every young woman who essayed one of Shakespeare's younger heroines, and Adelaide Neilson was a vulgar upstart. Since Adelaide Neilson is dead it is discovered that she was the only genuine interpreter of Shakespearean comedy and all others are counterfeits. For anybody else to attempt *Rosalind* is an outrage. We won't have it. Fifteen years hence we shall be saying to young play-goers, "Ah, but you should have seen Modjeska play *Rosalind*!" This we call criticism—*Philadelphia Times*.

Kellogg's Favorite Song.

The song "Good Bye," by Tosti, which Miss Kellogg has sung with so much success during the past year, has a sad story connected with it, writes "Brunswick" to the *Gazette*. The words were written by the dashing and romantic Whyte Melville. One day he mounted his coal black steed—Katerfello, in all probability—and set out for a hard ride, for he was a good horseman, and the harder he rode the more he enjoyed it. The worst accidents seem to happen to the best horsemen. He was thrown and killed, and his dead body was brought back to the room he had so recently left in such high health and fine spirits. On his table lay his pens and paper just as he had left them. There was one sheet of paper with the writing on it scarcely dry, and the words "Good Bye," as he had just composed them. Paola Tosti set them to music and he seems to have been inspired by the incident, for he never wrote anything more beautiful. I think Miss Kellogg must have caught some of the inspiration of both words and music, for she sings that song with a passion that has surprised a great many people. She knows the words and music perfectly, but she never goes on the stage without the sheets of the music in her hand. She has carried the same copy for over a year, and it is torn and battered so that I doubt if she could read it if she tried. I said to her the other day, "Why do you carry that old piece? let me send you a new one." She looked quite hurt as she replied, "Please don't. I would rather not have a new one. I carry this for association's sake, and could not sing unless I held it in my hand."

In the cross suits between the manager and actor for breach of contract, both parties were non-suited, but Mayer had to pay the costs. C. Quelin appeared as his own advocate, and created great amusement in the crowded court.

The Frightened Diva.

HOW AN UNKNOWN ENEMY OR "CRANK" SCARED PATTI.

Among the numerous letters from unknown persons which Mme. Patti every day receives, there was one on the 18th which caused considerable excitement among the members of the Mapleson Opera Company, now in New York. It was written in French, in a woman's hand, and, translated, read as follows:—

MADAME PATTI:—If you sing this evening then you are lost. Take my good advice.

Your friend, * * * * *

Madame Patti herself was frightened at the letter, and her Secretary, Mr. Franchi, was sent to the 18th Precinct Police Station to invoke the aid of Captain Clinchy. The Captain immediately went to see the prima donna, and assured her that he would take every precaution for her safety. And he did. A detective was stationed behind the scenes at the Academy of Music, and the watchman at the stage door was instructed to let in, on no pretext whatever, no one not employed there regularly or belonging to the opera company. The opera for that evening was "Faust," and as the audience began to gather there came in with them a number of detectives in citizens' clothes, and a number of policemen in uniform. These officials stationed themselves in different parts of the auditorium, and closely watched the faces and movements of the people in the audience. If any one had put his hand into his pocket suddenly, or made any other suspicious movement, he would have been pounced upon by the officers in a twinkling. No one did anything of the kind, however, or if he did he was not caught at it, and the audience listened to the opera in blissful ignorance of the sensations that may have been hovering over them. When Madame Patti came on the stage, she naturally did so with considerable trepidation. Colonel Mapleson assured a *Tribune* reporter that "her hands were as cold as ice, she was so frightened." She sang through her part, however, and no pistol shot interrupted her. If fear made her voice tremble a little, the audience took the tremblings as extra trills, and were delighted. When the opera was finally ended, it was much to the relief of Madame Patti and all who knew about the threatening letter. Colonel Mapleson says that he is unable to account for the letter unless it came from a "crank," or some disappointed singer. Captain Clinchy says that he believes that it was from some crank, though possibly it was merely intended as a joke. The letter was mailed at Station D on Sunday, the 12th.

Correct Instruction for the Reed Organ.

To those persons who are familiar with the works of Mr. W. F. Sudds, it would be unnecessary to say anything in praise of his latest production, "NATIONAL GUIDE TO REED ORGAN PLAYING"; but as the work will doubtless be inspected by many who are unacquainted with his famous book, "National School for the Piano-Forte," we desire to say that National Guide to Reed Organ Playing stands without a rival; it contains everything necessary for teacher and pupil, and it is so plainly and progressively compiled that it may truthfully be called a self-instructor. The book is divided into two parts, as follows: Part I leads the pupil very gradually, by means of easy, melodious and technical exercises, through all the keys. Part II introduces music of a more decided organ character, giving simple and comprehensive instruction in part playing, choir accompaniment, etc., and finally initiates the student into fugue playing. The book is also replete with choice organ music selected from the best productions of popular and standard authors. To all who desire a correct and practical organ instructor, we unhesitatingly recommend "National Guide to Reed Organ Playing."

—MADAME ALBANI will be with us early next year. Mr. Ernest Gyo telegraphed to Mr. Mapleson that he had completed all arrangements for her appearance here. She is expected in the second week in January, and will appear in "Sonnambula." She will probably appear in "Puritani," "Sonnambula," "The Flying Dutchman," "Le Nozze," and "Mephistofele," and take part in the Cincinnati Operatic Festival. The festival commences on Monday, January 29th, and continues throughout the week. There will be eight operatic performances, as follows: On Monday, "Traviata," with Mme. Patti; Tuesday, "L'Africaine;" Wednesday night, "Sonnambula," with Mme. Albani; Wednesday night, "William Tell;" Thursday, "Semiramide," with Patti; Friday, "The Flying Dutchman," with Mme. Albani; Saturday matinee, "Don Giovanni," with Mme. Patti, and the final performance, "Lohengrin," with Mme. Albani, Mme. Scalchi, Miczwinski and Galazzi.

Tributes of Worth.

TO A BOOK OF WORTH, BY MEN OF WORTH.

If there lingered in the mind of any one a single doubt regarding the merit, the efficacy or completeness of "National School for the Piano-Forte," the opinions of three of the greatest of American musical authorities should at once dispel any such misgivings. Below are given verbatim the unsolicited criticisms of the gentlemen alluded to:—

From DR. LOUIS MAAS of Boston, Mass.

"After a careful survey of 'National School,' I am glad to tell you that I think it one of the very best books of that description that has been brought under my notice. It is simple, comprehensive and yet exhaustive—containing everything that can be sought for in anything of its kind. I shall be glad to commend and use it as far as it is in my power."

And in the same earnest tone comes the approval from DUDLEY BUOR, Esq., of Brooklyn, N. Y.

"I have examined 'National School,' and am glad to say that I think you have compiled a good work, covering all essential points of piano playing and which, properly made use of, cannot fail to produce good players. I trust that you will be rewarded for the labor and pains you have evidently taken."

While MR. W. S. E. MATHEWS, Chicago, Ill., says:

"I have examined your 'National School for the Piano-Forte' with care, and regard it as by far the most comprehensive work of the kind yet issued. It cannot but do good wherever adopted. Hoping it may meet the success it deserves,

I am yours, truly,

W. S. B. MATHEWS.

Besides these distinguished endorsements, the publishers of "National School" have received commendations from both press and profession throughout the United States and Canada. In a word, it surpasses any other piano instructor in existence, and as such we recommend it to the trade, the teacher and the pupil.

—A BALTIMORE author is at work on a musical comedy for Alecta Johnson, in which the lady will star next season. A well-known Baltimore hotel man, it is rumored, has taken quite an interest in the lady, and rumor has it that he is soon to lead her to the altar. Her father, Stuart Robson, has recently purchased a handsome New York residence, which will be deeded to the daughter on her wedding day.

—MINNIE HAWK, who is so well known in opera, made her first appearance in concert in Philadelphia on the 20th, in Mr. Pugh's Star Course. She sang "Angela's bright and fair," "Eckert's echo song and the Habanero from "Carmen," and with Miss Lauri, of the Mapleson opera troupe, the serene duo from "Mefistofele." Beside Miss Lauri, the contralto, who is an excellent artist, Signor Claudio, tenor, and M. Durat, bass, and Mr. Sternberg, pianist, took part in the concert.

—SAYS the London *World*: "That the audience signify their delight to hear a great artist again, is flattering for the artist; but to insist with such obstinacy as a right on making him repeat is discourteous and unfair. If they go to a restaurant and find a dish splendidly cooked, would they get an 'encore' for nothing? They pay to hear a programme which is laid before them and conscientiously given. Why should singers be forced, whether it try their organs or not, to do what they never bargained for?"

—THE multiplicity of his engagements in New York has hitherto prevented Dr. Damrosch from acceding to the many requests received from various parts of the country to give a series of concerts with his orchestra. This season, however, he has arranged to do so, and opens the campaign at Cincinnati on the 21st inst., from whence he proceeds to Louisville (2 concerts), Indianapolis, St. Louis (3 concerts and a matinee), Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, Hamilton and Toronto, returning to New York again on December 8.

—A STRANGE STORY regarding Brignoli comes from Fort Wayne. He was to appear the other night with Miss Fannie Kellogg, in Italian opera. During the first act the audience discovered that he was intoxicated. At the close he staggered back, leaving the audience in the greatest state of uncertainty as to whether the performance would go on. Miss Kellogg was beside herself with indignation. Finally she appeared before the curtain and denounced Brignoli. Manager Bachert rushed out and offered ten dollars to any one who would give the tenor a sound thumping. Brignoli subsequently denied that he was intoxicated, but said he refused to sing because Miss Kellogg and company were incompetent to support him in *Il Trovatore*.