

John Hare, the delightful comedian who appeared at the Grand quite recently, is one of the most charming men imaginable. His popularity in London may be imagined when it is known that he is the frequent guest of the Prince of Wales and is the personal friend of half the distinguished nobles in the United Kingdom. The service he has rendered to the stage has indeed been a striking one. As the man who introduced the genuine elegant atmosphere of refined domestic life into the theater he is an innovator of the best class. No doubt, in the past, many plays were written which dealt truthfully with the life in an English home; but the old-fashioned resources of the stage did not permit the complete expression of their atmosphere in the theater. John Hare did away with all the dust and tinsel and artificiality. In "A Pair of Spectacles," which he presented here, he expressed all the comfort, the taste, and the domesticity of a happy English home. Stage setting, costuming and acting all bore out the illusion.

Toronto has reason to be proud of the Thespian Club. One of its members has recently dramatized Marie Corelli's "Thelma" and the club produced it a few nights ago at St. George's Hall. Mr. Sowdon, who took that most difficult character of *Sigurd*, the half-witted hunchback, deserves our highest praise. Miss M. Millar, as the sweet and noble *Thelma*, acted with true professional ease and grace, while Mr. G. Deacon, Mr. Sandon and Mr. Campbell showed themselves to be actors of real merit. When we consider that the actors were all amateurs, that the play, by no means an easy one, was rehearsed only in recreation hours apart from their daily duties, we feel and regret that stageland is deprived of so much dramatic talent.

H. C.

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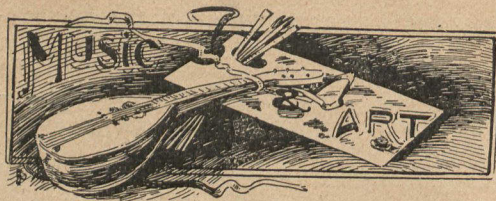
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CONSCIOUSLY or unconsciously, we compared Albani with Melba, and the Canadian queen of song lost in the comparison. The fresh, unstrained voice; the notes dropping full, liquid, even, controlled; the rich, melting tone, the wealth of reserve,—all these belonged to the young Australian cantatrice.

Albani is still wondrous in her volume and braviture, but the music has gone a little out of her voice; the fatal hardness that tells of wear and tear and strain is creeping in.

It was a splendid audience that greeted her, and a Toronto audience in evening dress assembled in the beautiful Massey Hall is worth a journey to look upon, especially when viewed from a stage or box. There is no hall approaching this in beauty or capacity in Canada.

There was a thread of sadness woven into all the beauty of sight and sound on Albani night, caused by the little black border about the program, and the knowledge that Mr. H. Massey, the donor of the magnificent gift to the city, lay even at that moment white and still, awaiting the cortège that should bear him to his solemn sleeping place.

It would like a requiem through the sweet notes of violin and flute, the ringing tones of Albani, and the soft, bell sounds of the contralto. The splendor of the gift—this vast hall with its cultured audience, soft lights and echoing melody—and the cold, white coffined face of its donor, contrasted strangely and movingly in our thought.

Madame Van der Veer Green won much favor, her voice was superbly rich and soft—perfect in modulation. She was given many recalls, and nothing could have been sweeter than her last little "lullaby."

Mr. Norman Salmond has an excellent bass voice and dramatic delivery. He gave excellent renderings of old English songs.

A tenor voice would have been a welcome addition to the company.

The concert was delightful; the only defect being the generous response to encore in a lengthy program. Two and a half hours should be the outer limit for any musicale, since human ear and brain refuse to be kept too long on strain.

Albani wore crown, necklace and pendants of superb diamonds. Her dress was of cream brocade satin and lace en train, with garnishings of deep crimson roses.

She was presented with two rose baskets—crimson and white. Her manner is charming and amiable as usual; success has never spoiled Albani; she is simply the cordial, unaffected, warm-hearted woman; honored by her Majesty with personal friendship, the intimate of many noble ladies; yet quick to give all kindly courtesy and cordiality to the most unknown of her countrywomen.

We all love Albani!

The concert given by the Mendelssohn Choir on February 11th was worthy of all praise. Critics are disposed to look for faults in our local musical organizations; in this one there is nothing to condemn and much to laud.

Mr. A. S. Vogt deserves high encomiums for his admirable conduct and management of the Mendelssohn Choir.

He succeeds in securing fine effects in tone and phrasing, while the parts are perfectly balanced.

Perhaps the favorite selections in a really fine program were the choral transcriptions, "Last Night," by women's voices, and "Venice Waters," by men's voices.

The two-part songs were also well received; while "Bold Turpin" won a merry and enthusiastic applause.

Mrs. Bloomfield-Zeisler is one of the first pianistes of the day, and was received with the favor that always attends her in Toronto.

The programs were æsthetically gotten up on tinted blotting paper, with decidedly artistic effect.

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On March 10th the distinguished pianiste, Rafael Joseffy, will give a recital in the Massey Music Hall.

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Buffalo is to have a three days' carnival of music on March 9, 10 and 11, when four performances of grand opera will be given under Messrs. Abbey, Schoffel and Grau. The peerless Melba, Nordica, Calvé, Bauermeister, Schalchi, Mons. Jean and Ed. de Reszke, and other brilliant operatic stars will present "Les Huguenots" on the first evening. "Carmen," "Faust" and "Aida" will also be given on successive evenings.

The prices will seem high, but when one considers the cost of these first artists of the musical world, the charge of \$5, \$4 and \$3 per ticket is really moderate.

Toronto would be favored by the opportunity of hearing such a company, and surely we are as musical as Buffalo.

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