

## THE STAGE AND ORCHESTRA.

DURING the month just closed there has been an apparent lack of theatrical entertainment, owing to the Grand Opera House having been "dark" on two or three occasions, and the Princess's Theatre having practically closed for the season at the end of the first week in April. But if we regard the quality of the "shows" we have had here, the month has been by no means barren of notable events, both dramatically and musically. On the stage, we have had Madame Sarah Bernhardt, the opera company of Miss Della Fox, the Artists' Model Company (practically an opera company), E. H. Sothorn, Francis Wilson, and I suppose we must count in Hanlon's "Superba;" while the chief musical functions were Paderewski, Miss Yaw and the Innes band. That these events have been (with one exception) well patronized, in spite of the unpleasant fact that times are hard and money scarce in this city, proves satisfactorily that Toronto is still, in professional parlance, "a good show town" for any good attraction that comes along. The fact is worth insisting on, because we hear just now so much pessimistic talk about the decadence of our city, when the truth is, we are suffering no more comparatively than the majority of cities everywhere on this continent, and certainly far less than some of them. I have ascertained this from the statements made to me by the agents of different professional organizations visiting Toronto, who have found better financial results here than in many cities across the line with much larger populations than ourselves. And I know of no better all-round test of the comparative prosperity of cities than is to be found in the financial results of the amusement business.

In order of importance, the performances of Madame Sarah Bernhardt come first. To say that the famous Frenchwoman "plays better than ever,"—as was said the other day—appears to me as superfluous as attempting to gild refined gold. I saw this lady years ago in Paris and London; I saw her at the Academy of Music in this city some four or five years back, and I attended both performances at the Grand Opera House the other week. As she was always to me the most perfect artist, in her especial line, that I have ever seen, I am according the highest praise in saying that the lady is as conscientiously careful and as perfect in her work to-day as she has ever been; and this is no small thing to be able honestly to say of an actress who has worked so hard and so constantly, and has been so long before the public, as has Sarah Bernhardt. The French company accompanying Madame was a suitable one for so illustrious a star; there were no weak spots in it, thus ensuring the premier artist adequate support. The scenery and costumes were admirable. The two plays produced—"Izyl," by Armand Sylvestre and Eugene Morand, and "Gismonda," by Sardou—were tragedies of the most approved blood-spilling type, but especially suited, of course, to display to full advantage the characteristic genius of the great tragedienne. The Grand Opera House was well filled at each performance, though not crowded, but the audiences were fashionable, appreciative and demonstrative; and as ordinary prices were trebled, the financial result was, I should suppose, by no means unsatisfactory.

"The Artist's Model," by the author of "The Gaiety Girl," was one of those light, cheerful, taking things which appear to be increasing in popularity every year. Almost devoid of "plot," "The Artist's Model" was brimful of lively