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MUSIC AND DRAMA

THE Sheffield Choir has left Liverpool and Glasgow, to the tune of "God Save the King" and "O Canada" and is now on the good ship *Grampian*, with the expectation of reaching Montreal the first of November. This visit has aroused feelings of friendliest anticipation in all cities and towns where the Yorkshire singers are to appear and their coming after the stress of elections, when the people of Canada are only too glad to turn from the political turmoil to the pure consolations of music, is happily arranged. Toronto appreciates the fact that it is the most highly favoured city in the tour and the four concerts, to be given on November 5th, 6th and 7th in Massey Music Hall, already show an immense subscription list, leaving however a fair accommodation for the general public which will apply next week.

A prominent critic has recently said that Mr. Asquith has two essentials to success: he is of Yorkshire birth and is a Balliol man. Whatever may be thought of the second, it is generally admitted that the Yorkshireman is possessed of an infinite capacity for taking pains. When one considers the robustness of the northern voice, with this gift of artistic pertinacity added thereto, it is not surprising that Leeds and Sheffield have acquired a reputation in choral work, such as no other cities of the United Kingdom can boast. The Sheffield Choir's visit is an event of the highest importance to the musical reciprocity which should be maintained between Great Britain and the Dominion.

The leading soloists with the choir are Miss Emily Breare, Miss Eleanor Coward, Miss Clara North, Miss Kathleen Frankish, Miss Gertrude Lonsdale, Miss Ada Burton, Mr. Henry Brearley, Mr. Arthur Burrows, Mr. Robert Charlesworth and Mr. William Peacock.

* * *

AT the Royal Alexandra Theatre, Toronto, "The Wedding Day" has proved an attractive feature this week and will be followed by that operatic favourite, "The Chimes of Normandy." The management of the Royal Alexandra makes the welcome announcement that there is to be a revival of "classic" light opera at that theatre and Gilbert and Sullivan performances will ere long gladden the eyes and ears of those who find modern musical comedy a matter of monotony. This is decidedly good news and it is to be hoped that there will be found in Toronto a sufficient number of discriminating citizens to make this departure a success.

* * *

THE Toronto Symphony Orchestra concert, to be given in Massey Music Hall on December 8th will have as chief soloist attraction, Madame Joanna Gadski. This engagement is recognised as a proof of the organisation's laudable ambition and resolve to make the orchestral concerts among the best events of the season. Madame Gadski is one of the greatest singers of to-day, with a warmth of temperament and breadth of artistic conception such as few possess. Her singing of the Valkyrie "Fire Song" is one of the noblest achievements in modern musical art and we may hope to hear it again in December.

Mr. Welsman is to be thanked for the splendid enthusiasm he has shown in organising this orchestra and also on the liberal support he is receiving from citizens animated by the spirit of Mr. H. C. Cox, the president.

* * *

MR. ARTHUR STRINGER'S remarkably plain-spoken article in *Canada West* on the subject of "Canada Fakers" may be taken to heart by the playwright as well as by the story-teller. The drama, "Pierre of the Plains," recently seen by Canadian audiences can hardly come under the class of Canada-faking productions. The play is somewhat reminiscent of Sir Gilbert Parker's "Pierre and His People," and is not the melodramatic rendering of our Northwest, with which audiences in Chicago and New York have occasionally been entertained.

Mr. James Metcalfe of *New York Life* says of the play: "Pierre of the Plains" is at least a virile drama. Drummond, Parker, Roberts, *et al*, have brought the French-Canadian and half-breed into literature, and that distillation of French blood into North American surroundings has at last found its way to the stage. Wherever the French blood goes it brings picturesqueness of character and incident. This is valuable to a stage dominated by Anglo-Teutonic phlegm.

"Mr. Edgar Selwyn, whose recent 'Father and Son' did not get quite the recognition it deserved, has taken Sir Gilbert Parker's 'Pierre and His People' and woven it into a play which certainly arouses and holds the interest. The types are primitive ones, but they seem close to nature, and serve the primary dramatic intent of defining a stage story. If we leave Aeschylus, Ibsen, and the problem writers out of consideration for a moment, it will be necessary to admit, shamefacedly, perhaps, that in 'Pierre of the Plains,' Mr. Selwyn has given us vital drama. Also his depiction of *Pierre* is an excellent piece of acting. The devil-may-care half-breed, with his trust in the destiny of the cards, his irreligiousness, his gayety, chivalry and touches of polite gallantry, is worth more analysis than the passing notice of short space. So of the well-defined characters and good actors in the cast.

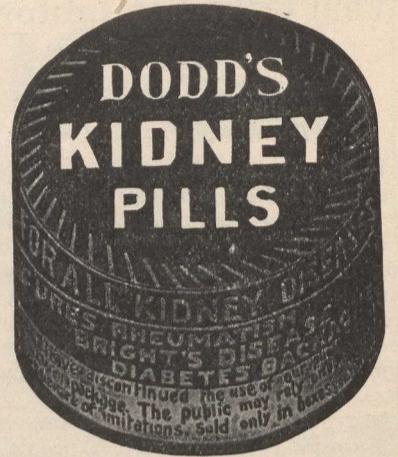
"Briefly, old-fashioned theatregoers will find 'Pierre of the Plains' a good, strong play, well acted. It will not please those who in the drama look only for morbid mentality dissected to the discovery of the most remote diseased microbe."

* * *

THE Woman's Musical Club of London, Ontario, has been reorganised this month and will probably have a successful season, as the opening meeting showed an enthusiastic interest on the part of the members. These local clubs are doing no insignificant work in raising the standard of musical taste and creating a demand for better things which assures a manager of success in arranging for a great artist's visit.

* * *

The Capital is making great preparations for the Sheffield Choir concert on Wednesday night next. It will be given in Dey's Arena and is under the distinguished patronage of His Excellency, Earl Grey.



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