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A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Toy Symphonies are coming into vogue on the other side.

THE year just closed has been a marked one in the musical history of our fair city; we have had more and better concerts, etc., than ever before. 1886 also witnessed the birth of THE MUSICAL JOURNAL.

LADY Folkestone has an orchestra composed entirely of ladies, which she is said to conduct with marked ability. Performances are given for the benefit of prominent charities.

WE have seen a sketch of a plan for the rebuilding of the Pavilion in the Horticultural Gardens, which seems to promise well. If those who have the matter in hand only "work in" a good organ, they will be public benefactors. One of the needs of Toronto is a good "secular" organ.

THE Directors of the Shaftesbury Hall Company announce a series of Saturday concerts at popular prices, the object being to provide good music for the masses at a nominal cost. The first concert will be held on Saturday evening, Jan. 8th, under the direction of Mr. J. Churchill Arlidge, assisted by Misses Corlett and Berryman, and Messrs. Sims Richards, E. W. Schuch, and R. J. Hall. We trust that success will attend this laudable undertaking.

THE great event of the coming musical season, at La Scala, Milan, will be Verdi's new opera, *Othello*, founded on the tragic story of the loves of the unfortunate Desdemona and the jealous Moor. Already seats have been telegraphed for from all parts of the world, at fabulous prices, and it is confidently expected by the management that this occasion will prove the crowning triumph in the life of the celebrated Italian writer. Verdi will conduct in person, if all is well; Pantaleoni will be the prima-donna (soprano); Tamagno, the tenor; and Maurel, the baritone.

THE following compositions have been selected by the Examiners for performance at the concerts to be

given in connection with the coming convention of the Ontario Music Teachers' Association:—By Arthur E. Fisher—*Magnificent*, for chorus and organ; and a Madrigal, "A Message to Phyllis," for male voices. J. Davenport Kerrison—*Gloria in Excelsis*, for chorus and organ; Part Song, for mixed voices; and a *Gavotte*, for string quartette. Mrs. Moore, of London, Ont.—Part Song, for mixed voices. Mr. Foot, of Goderich—a *Te Deum*. Dr. Strathy—an Overture and Funeral March, for the Piano; and an *Andante*, for organ. It is to be regretted that the rules of the competition practically excluded amateurs, as there are several in the Province who would otherwise have been glad to take part in it.

MR. TORRINGTON'S AMATEUR ORCHESTRA is probably the youngest musical organization in our city. To the conductor, Mr. F. H. Torrington is due the credit of forming this orchestra, which we trust will prove a good training school for our amateur instrumentalists. The membership is already large, (for a society of the kind) numbering some fifty performers, six of whom are young ladies. Some half dozen rehearsals have already been held, in the Philharmonic Hall, and the progress made, all things considered, has been very satisfactory. Mr. Torrington proposes to introduce his orchestra to the public some time in the course of the coming year, at a concert which he has promised to give in aid of the Y. M. C. A., and if the members of the orchestra do as well in the future as they have in the past, in the matter of attending rehearsals, etc., we may safely predict an agreeable surprise for our musical public. While the music taken is well within the powers of amateurs, it is not of that "light" (a word so misused now-a-days, that to our mind it is almost synonymous with *trashy*)—description, too often heard even at concerts given by professionals, where technical difficulty should not be an excuse; and it is proposed to raise the standard, if possible, as the executive powers of the performers increase. We wish the conductor and his young friends every success in their laudable undertaking, and can assure them that if they will only keep free from internal discord and pull all in the one way, they will meet with the hearty encouragement they deserve at the hands of Toronto's lovers of music.