

THE ARTS AND THE STAGE.

MESSRS. CASSELL AND COMPANY have given a fifth exhibition of the works in black and white which have been executed for the various periodicals and serials published by them. It is full of excellent material, and is the best possible evidence of the artistic energy thrown nowadays into book illustration, to which Sir John Millais referred in a recent speech. Among the most interesting drawings were Miss Dorothy Tennant's clever sketches of street arabs, Mr. Railton's Windsor series, Mr. Blair Leighton's costume studies, and Mr. Alfred East's landscape, "By Tranquil Waters," which reminds us that one if not quite the loveliest landscape in this year's Academy is by that talented artist. It is called "The Land Between the Lochs," and an excellent engraving of it appears in the September *Magazine of Art*, which is only marred by a crudeness in the cloud forms, and on the opposite page is to be seen that charming painting by E. J. Poynter, "A Corner of the Market Place," which was shown at the Grosvenor, and met with universal commendation amongst the unlimited criticisms bestowed upon both exhibitors. As reproduced, it is evidently a brilliant and highly realistic piece of work; the female figures with their classic draperies and graceful lines, the rounded dimpled child, the garlands and wreaths of flowers, the marble basin and pillars, form a picture which make us long for the necessary accessories of light and colour. The copyright belongs to the Berlin Photographic Company, and we are told that the painting of the various textures, especially the dark marble of the fountain and the draperies of the figure, leaves nothing to be desired.

THE Queen has accepted an album, presented to her by Mr. Whistler, as president of the Society of British Artists, Suffolk Street, on the occasion of her Jubilee. The volume is magnificently bound in white morocco, and contains a number of etchings by Mr. Whistler, taken at the late Naval Review, and some of the streets of London on the day of the Jubilee. The artist has destroyed the plates of these etchings, which are consequently unique. Her Majesty, as a token of her appreciation of the merit of the exhibition under Mr. Whistler's presidency, has conferred upon the Society of British Artists the right to call itself Royal.

MR. JOHN WANAMAKER, the Philadelphia merchant millionaire, whose name has been lately associated with a certain sum of money paid to a Hungarian painter, does not evidently intend to encourage native talent, as we hear he has spent \$150,000 lately on European art purchases for his extensive country house at Jenkinstown, near Philadelphia; a rival of his in this line is Mr. Alfred C. Gibson, who has one of the finest art collections in the Quaker City. His latest prize is a portrait of Galileo by Murillo which, the story goes, was stripped from the walls of the Escorial by General Massena during the occupation of Spain by the French troops. Both these gentlemen, however, are left behind by Mr. Henry G. Maynard, who has just paid \$50,000 for a piano-case which, by all accounts, must be a very wonderful work. It has legs of porphyry, and panels of lapis lazuli; is inlaid with garnets, amethysts, sapphires, beryls, etc., enough to set a jeweller up in trade. It is embellished with designs in the precious metals, garnished with gems, and the cover bears a painting by Alma Tadema, one of England's most costly artists. We are not surprised to learn that the piano is without works at present. Music would seem to be quite a secondary consideration in this unique creation; besides, strange as it may appear, better works can be made in the States than abroad, where more attention is paid to the beautiful than the useful. We fear that Mr. Maynard's piano-case will be to him as the proverbial white elephant, and that when it reaches America it will involve a fire and burglar proof room as an addition to his mansion, which seems hardly a fitting shrine for such a treasure.

MDLLE. NIKITA, the protégée of Mme. Adelina Patti, whose career we sketched in a recent issue, appeared in the end of August at one of the promenade concerts at Covent Garden under Mr. Mapleson's direction. We are told that to a very pleasing presence she adds vocal gifts of a very agreeable and attractive though not astonishing order. Her voice is still light in quality, but is fresh, sweet, and sympathetic, and her intonation is invariably true. She created a very favourable impression, and met with enthusiastic applause.

MR. ALFRED CELLIER's comic opera, *The Sultan of Mocha*, which had singular success at Manchester some years back, and which was afterwards produced at St. James's Theatre, is about to be revived in London. Miss Lydia Thompson has taken the Strand Theatre, and purposes opening it up with this work, for which a new libretto has been written by Mr. W. Lestocq. Among the artists secured are Miss Violet Cameron and Mr. E. Birch, a new baritone singer, said to be of considerable promise.

THE operatic soprano, Mdle. Sigrid Arnoldsén, who created such a favourable impression at Drury Lane during Mr. Augustus Harris's recent season of Italian opera, has just left England for a professional tour through Norway and Sweden under the direction of Mr. Strakosch. The artist is accompanied as pianist by Mr. Luigi Arditi, son of Signor Arditi, the well-known conductor of Her Majesty's Opera.

THE centenary performance of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, to which attention was directed last week, was given at Salzburg, the composer's native town, with great success, the theatre being profusely decorated for the occasion, and filled to overflowing with a most appreciative audience.

MISS MARY ANDERSON's season at the Lyceum commenced on September 10 with the gorgeous revival of *A Winter's Tale*, for which great scenic preparations have been made, and costumes specially designed by Alma Tadema.

A RUSSIAN version of Signor Verdi's *Otello* is to be produced at St. Petersburg on the 15th November with Signor Figuer in the title rôle. The original Italian version of the work is also, it is rumoured, to be brought out in America next winter by Mme. Giulia Valda at the New York Academy of Music, and also by Signor Campanini, the operatic tenor, who it appears is likewise about to turn impresario.

DURING the last week in August Mr. John A. Sevens, the American actor and author, produced *A Secret Foe* at the Opera Comique. His company includes Miss Dorothy Dene and Mr. Julian Cross.

THE Théâtre Français opened in Paris at the beginning of September; the first great play of the season will be *La Souris* by Pailleron, which is announced for November. Some hesitation was shown by the committee as to the advisability of accepting a piece with only one masculine character and no less than seven female parts; but the wishes of M. Claretie prevailed, and M. Worms will give the cue to Mesdames Reichenberg, Bartet, Blanche Pierson, etc. Mme. S-gond Weber is to make her début at the Comédie in *Hernani* and *Les Faux Menages*.

THERE is an idea abroad that Mme. Sarah Bernhardt is about to pose as a penitent. Owing to imprudence and exposure she has entirely lost her voice while sojourning at her country place in the south of France. Sardou is in great trouble, as rehearsals of his new play, *Deborah*, were arranged for the middle of September, and the actress cannot speak above a whisper; indeed it is feared she has suffered some permanent injury to the vocal cords. It is said that the priest who officiates at the Grotto of Lourdes received a note recently requesting him to ask the congregation to pray for an artist who had lost her voice, and might be cured by the miraculous water. A slender figure dressed in deep black, and carrying a lighted taper, was seen gliding down the aisle in the direction of the grotto. This same figure took a carriage, and drove away in the direction of Bernhardt's country place which is not far distant from Lourdes. However this may be, Mme. Sarah arrived unexpectedly in Paris, and proceeded at once to her physician; she has remained in the house ever since, and all Paris is speculating whether her ultimate destination is to be a nunnery.

E. S.

CURRENT COMMENT.

RENÉE was not a success upon the boards. When the curtain rose for the first scene of the play which had been written for her, she looked like a perfectly good little Circe in the midst of deliberately wicked swine. She was fascinating and sweet, and her support was third-rate and coarse. A villain who was a villain, and a lady friend whom Renée would not have bowed to on the street, struck a chill at once upon the audience. Renée herself showed unavoidable crudities, although shot over by beams of promise which time alone could bring to supremacy. Besides, the child had not obtained her full magnetic growth; she looked slight, and did not fill the stage, small as it is, with her presence. Applause that is not genuine is the worst device in the world. We all helped toward Renée's destruction by *encores*. At last she became angry, and acted ten times better, and we really had some hopes of her; but next day the newspaper critics were very clever over it all, and it was clear that the girl's career had begun, as all are, at the foot of the ladder.—Mrs. Rose Hawthorne Lathrop, in *The American Magazine* for September.

ONE of the most potent attractions that enrolment in the militia holds out to the young man with strength enough to handle a rifle, and nerve enough to shoot straight with it, is the system of firing competitions, which is about as complete as it well could be. It begins with each company in a regiment having its annual competition, which is confined to its own members. Then the whole regiment unites for a competition on a larger scale. Then each province gathers its riflemen together into one general contest, at which substantial prizes are held out to the successful shooters. Finally, the Dominion authorities every autumn summon to Ottawa the picked men from each province, and these compete with one another on the Rideau Rifle Range, Ottawa, for really splendid prizes in trophies and money, the latter ranging from sums like \$250 down to \$5, while the former comprise some costly works of art. Tempting as these prizes are, however, there is honour which the contestants value more highly than the best of them, and that is to be among the top twenty in the grand aggregate; for this means being one of those lucky fellows who will the following year be sent by the Government across the ocean to try their skill in marksmanship against the riflemen of Great Britain, India, and Australia, upon the historic Wimbledon Common.—J. Macdonald Oxley, in *The American Magazine* for September.

WHEN the editor of a French paper wishes to be exceptionally enterprising and to "cut out" a rival, he does not send special correspondents abroad for a supply of latest intelligence or engage a few additional reporters to hunt up local matters, or put more energy into any of the ordinary branches of newspaper work; he simply publishes an extra feuilleton or two. The feuilleton, or, to be more precise, the roman-feuilleton, is the fortune of the French press, and the only thing over which the newspapers do any advertising on their own account. "We give more attention to our feuilletons," observed the manager of a popular Paris paper to me the other day, "than to any thing else. It is on the feuilletons, not on our news and politics, that our circulation depends. We are very particular, therefore, about our selections. A good feuilleton sends up the sale several thousands, while a bad one—that is an unpopular one—brings it down and damages the reputation of the paper. We very soon hear whether a story pleases or not. If it draws we instruct the