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## MUSIC AND DRAMA

### MENDELSSOHN CHOIR TO EUROPE.

IT now seems highly probable that the Mendelssohn Choir will go to Europe—some time. There has been a deal of talk about this; somewhat by over-ardent critics who cannot wait. The choir management itself is not so anxious to go before the choir is ready. At present there exists no particular desire in the Old Land to hear the Canadian choir. Until there is some curiosity across the water there should be no headlong enthusiasm here—largely because here and there a financial magnate poohpoohs and says it would be no trouble whatever to raise the funds. The time for the Mendelssohn Choir to go to Europe is the time when it can go with the greatest possible degree of prestige from this side of the water, and to satisfy the greatest possible degree of interest on the other. There are plenty of worlds for the choir to conquer before it goes abroad. Perhaps it is foolish to talk of a choir in such language at all. As a matter of truth and art—perhaps the choir should go to New York and Boston and Chicago and the Old Country, not to show people how well they can sing, but in order to demonstrate a high degree of devotion to and interpretation of choral music.

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### CANADIAN OPERA SEASON.

MR. IVAN ABRAMSON'S project for a Canadian opera season may mean much or little. Canada already has a fair season of opera—though at times very intermittent. It would be a decided advantage to have more regularity and perhaps a better high average of performance. That is, a season of grand opera, so many weeks in Montreal and Toronto and Winnipeg and Vancouver, would be a good thing for those centres to have. But on the face of it are there cities enough in Canada to warrant an entire season distributed among them? Four weeks at the outside would seem for some years to be ample for Toronto; also for Montreal; half that time in any of the other centres, where there happen to be theatres big enough and well enough adapted for the purpose. This scarcely spells an entire season. Perhaps the matter could be played in circuit with some of the border cities on the other side. In fact there seems no reason why there should be a distinctive Canadian season at all, unless Canadian talent is to be largely employed. Now in the matter of chorus there is no difficulty about getting Canadian talent enough and as good as can be got anywhere. As for orchestra, there is less prospect. The Canadian orchestras already have difficulty in recruiting and find a great scarcity of material in Canada itself. As to soloists and principals, there is little likelihood of Canadians having more than a mere look-in. We have not the talent.

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### FROM LONDON TO TORONTO.

"AN Englishman's Home," the play which has set John Bull on the alert, which has created a host of volunteers and turned frivolous young members of fashionable circles into earnest nurses, has at last come to Toronto. That centre of imperialism, in which Colonel George Denison and Inspector James L. Hughes seldom let the public forget that the drum-beat of Britain encircles the globe, gave a hearty welcome to this play of such extraordinary success. The appeal of the play is neither artistic nor literary. It is a melodrama of a military emergency in the Old Land which comes dangerously near the line of absurdity. Its "lesson" is manifest from the first act—that England is living in a fool's paradise, so far as security from invading forces is concerned.

The play is another Du Maurier stroke of fortune, the dramatist being Major Guy Du Maurier, the son of the novelist whose "Trilby" created a craze for Latin Quarter romance about thirteen years ago. The Browns are a peaceful middle-class British household, absorbed in small business cares and petty amusements, with no patriotic fervour. Suddenly, into this quiet Essex abode, there enters an invading army, from across the Northern Sea. These forces, in their perfect discipline under the foreign Prince, are supposed to contrast painfully with the unprepared islanders, who have been indulging in the dream that Britannia rules the waves, so long as *Dreadnoughts* are somewhere within a few days' sail of the English ports. The first act is the only coherent piece of dramatic work in the play. The rest is a rattle of musketry and a confusion of bewildered Britons and calmly conquering foreigners. No wonder that the play created havoc in the breasts of theatre-goers "at home." It must have been simply maddening to John Bull to survey his castle as wrecked by the impertinent forces, "made in Germany." The moment for such a production was chosen with a discrimination which marks the playwright as an excellent salesman. Even to a Canadian audience there is something painful in the sight of a quiet household being upset in the midst of their bargaining and diavolo, even though Britain is finally triumphant. The company playing in Canada has several members of decided ability, whom Torontonians have met before—notably Mr. William Hawtrey and Mr. Ernest Stallard.

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### MUSIC IN EDMONTON.

EDMONTON is beginning a huge music festival to last several days. In this festival there will be more events than have ever been known on any such occasion in Canada before. In fact the affair much more resembles a Welsh Eistedfodd than anything else. There is abundance of enthusiasm in music in Edmonton, and a number of clever musicians. Among these Mr. Vernon Barford, organist and choirmaster of All Saints' English Church there, is perhaps the most conspicuous. Mr. Percy Hook, who has charge of the music faculty in Alberta College, is another of the pushers. There is also Mr. Howard Stutchbury, who has a choir there and who used to be prominent in Toronto as a singer of baritone. Miss Webster, who has lately returned from studying in Europe, has also gone back to Edmonton, where she made a good reputation three years ago. Ever since the Klondike rush there has been music in Edmonton. Years ago they had a clever amateur theatrical company that gave exhibitions in Strathcona, and a church choir that travelled the prairie giving concerts, and a men's quartette that went as far as Banff, which is the best of three hundred miles, and gave concerts. A good deal of the best talent is English and Scotch. There is also a good deal of Welsh; a men's chorus there they call by some highly musical Celtic name.