

Critics

Are a various and peculiar class. They may be divided into two general kinds: those who exercise destructive criticism, and those who aim at productive criticism. Of the former it has been said that they work themselves as well as others harm. Goethe says that destructive criticism is so easy, as one has only to set up in one's mind some standard, some model, be it ever so narrow, assert boldly that the work of art in question does not tally with it, hence is worthless, and the matter is once and forever settled, and one is quit of all gratitude to the artist. Productive criticism aims at something else than fault finding. Whatever is good in a work is set forth in as favorable a light as possible, and that which the educated and capable critics deem inharmonious and weak are referred to in kindly terms, and suggestions thrown out which may help to give the author ideas whereby to make the necessary improvements in his creation. What a difference!—*Courier*.

Wagner's "Nibelungen Ring."

The London *Post* thinks that the most important event in the musical world in London within the memory of the present generation is a series of performances of Wagner's "Nibelungen Ring." Since 1870, when London for the first time heard an opera of Wagner, to the present date, the appreciation of the great composer has increased steadily. "The Rheingold" was received with the greatest enthusiasm. The house was packed from top to bottom with people of all nations. All applause was checked during the progress of the play, but allowed full expression at the end of each scene. Everything seemed new and fascinating. The scenery and dresses were those employed at the original representation at Bayreuth, and were lent by the king of Bavaria for these performances. All the artists, the directors and even the machinists were imported for the occasion. The cast was efficient. Herr Vogt assumed his original character of *Loge*; Scaria was *Wotan*; Wiegand, *Donner*; Burger, *Froh*; Schelps, *Alberich*; Frau Kindermann, *Fricka*; Fraulein Schreibe, *Freia*, and Frau Reigler, *Erda*.

The Philadelphia Germania Orchestra.

How much good work the Germania Orchestra is doing is well known to those who attend its weekly rehearsals yet even they scarcely recognize how much and how great a variety of the best music they have had the opportunity of listening to until they try to count over some of the prominent features of the programme of the season.

It is doubtful if any other American city can show so good a record of popular classical concerts. There is, indeed, no other city where weekly orchestral concerts of this high grade and at popular prices have been successfully established. It has required persistent earnestness and industry, in the face of indifference, doubt and positive antagonism to accomplish this result, but it has been well accomplished, as is testified not only by the crowds that attend the rehearsals at the Academy of the Fine Arts, but by the progress the orchestra has made in organization, discipline and musician like skill and understanding. Mr. Stoll and his fellow musicians can look back with great satisfaction over the work of the past two or three years, and forward with confidence to the future. By sticking right to their work they have commanded the recognition and respect of those whose recognition and respect are of value, and they have now come to a point from which their advance as an artistic organization need be limited only by their studious devotion to their art.

The announcement that in addition to the weekly rehearsals the Germania will give six evening concerts at the Academy of Music during the coming winter will be received with general satisfaction. This announcement was made, indeed last winter, when the success of the two symphony concerts at Horticultural Hall had shown that the orchestra was ready for larger enterprises, but Mr. Stoll is now able to state his programme more definitely. The first concert will be given on Saturday evening, November 11th, followed by one on December 16th, and so on monthly through the winter. These concerts will not be more isolated performances, nor are they projected as a business enterprise. They will be the artistic development of the regular work constantly done by the orchestra and carried on in its weekly rehearsals, which have done so much to educate the community in a knowledge of good music that we have not only the musicians to give but the public to enjoy such a series of classical concerts.—*The (Phila.) Times*.

—THE author of "The Two Medallions," the new comic opera which is about to be produced at Tony Pastor's Theatre, is now announced as a Mr. Morris of New York City.

—VERDI has given the girl violinist, Teresa Tua, his portrait, with the inscription: "A token of my deep admiration of one who, though so young, is already so capable."

—WHEN Donizetti was in his most industrious "form," he wrote the "dots" of his score with lightning-like rapidity, and put the "tails" to his notes in his more leisurely moments.

—THE St. James Hotel, in Boston, will be turned into a music hall for the New England Conservatory of Music. Part of the building will be kept as a hotel for the accommodation of scholars.

—EDMUND GERSON has secured for the Kiralfys the right to produce the latest London spectacle, "The Bottom of the Sea." The scenic effects and ballet in this production are said to be very gorgeous.

—LYDIA DENIER has been engaged to play the daughter in "Only a Farmer's Daughter" next season. Edward Wodiska has received and is considering an offer to act *Harold Lennox* in the same piece.

—It is said that in the event of Mr. J. H. Haverly getting a theatre in London, Mr. Edwin Price is to be the manager, and Miss Fanny Davenport the leading lady. Miss Davenport is a native of London.

—It has been definitely settled that Fred Schwab is to have the management of the new Casino at the corner of Broadway and Thirty-ninth Street. In about four more weeks the place will be ready for opening.

—If a man can write a better book, preach a better sermon or make a better mouse-trap than his neighbors, though he builds his house in the woods, the world will make a beaten path to his door.—*Emerson*.

—A NEW comic opera, "Robin Hood and Rosalind," is to be produced in Chicago next season. Mayor Andrew Bent and Mr. E. A. Barron, of the *Inter-Ocean*, are the reputed authors and composers of the work.

—A BIOGRAPHER says that Rossini wrote the score of "The Barber of Seville" in fifteen days. Modern composers say that the biographer is a story-teller, and that the mechanical labor alone must have occupied at least double that time.

—THINGS one would wish to have expressed differently: Musical maiden—"I hope I am not boring you, playing so much? Enamored youth—"Oh, no! Pray go on. I'd so much sooner hear you play than talk."—*London Punch*.

—MISS LAURA JOYCE, of the Comley-Barton Opera Company, volunteered to sing at a service in the Mormon Tabernacle, Salt Lake City. The fact was announced, and it is said that Miss Joyce sang before an audience of 10,000 persons.

—GEORGE A. COXLY, the noted basso, who was recently drowned near Brattleboro, Vt., was a Philadelphian by birth; he served in the Union army during the late war, and was much esteemed by all who knew him. He left a wife and three children.

—PATTI has been offered £450 pounds a night for six concerts in the English provinces, but has refused. The prima donna is said to be in bad temper about her London reception and will on the 22d retire to that "Welsh Castle" until the end of October.

—MISS JENNIE SARGENT, a Boston vocalist, is meeting with success abroad. In Malta, recently, she closed her engagement with a benefit, at which she received an ovation. Doves flew about the auditorium with photographs of the beneficiary attached to them.

—WE are promised a new American soprano in the person of Miss Dora Lanning, a recent graduate of Bennington Seminary. The young lady, who is said to be the happy possessor of a voice of rare sweetness and power, hopes to appear in New York during the Fall season.

—THE ACOUSTIC PROPERTIES. The stage manager of an operatic company was rehearsing his artists in a certain theatre when he said to the local manager:

"I have my doubts about the acoustic properties of this theatre. In fact, I'm afraid it has none!"

"Is that so?" asked the manager. "Well, now I think of it, I discharged my last property-man for stealing. I'll bet he stole the acoustic properties with all the rest!"—*Musical Record*.

—HERR SOLOMON last month sang *Faust* for the 200th time in Berlin, and his voice is said to have been as fresh and his acting as spirited as when he originally portrayed the part in 1863. The occasion was made a sort of jubilee, and Emperor William presented the vocalist with a diamond ring.

—IN England the price paid for popular song-poems, of three or four stanzas, ranges from £100 to £160. In America there are no verse writers who receive \$500 for their productions. The Britishers evidently appreciate the value of good words, in fact, they are as essential to the success of a song as a well-written libretto is to the success of an opera.

—BOSTON HANDEL AND HAYDN SOCIETY. The following named are the new officers of the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston: President, Mr. Charles C. Perkins; Vice-President, Mr. Geo. H. Chickering; Secretary, Mr. A. Parker Bowne; Treasurer, Mr. M. G. Daniels; Librarian, Mr. John H. Stickney; Directors, Messrs. Josiah Wheelwright, George E. Brown, R. S. Rundlett, D. L. Laws, J. E. Andrews, E. B. Hagar, W. S. Fenellosa and W. F. Bradbury.

—BOSTON APOLLO CLUB. The following are the names of the newly elected officers of the Boston Apollo Club: President, Robert M. Morse, Jr.; vice-president, Henry Mason; clerk, Arthur Reed; treasurer, Charles T. Howard, librarian, John N. Danforth; musical director, B. J. Lang, committee on music, Warren Davenport, for three years, committee on voices, John H. Stickney, William P. Blake, Edward C. Moseley, Henry M. Aiken.

—A GEM OF ART. An Austin lady who is very anxious to acquire the prevailing art of painting plaques, brought some of her drawings to a cynical artist for examination. "Ought I to put a coat of varnish on the plate before I transfer this drawing to it?" "No, miss," responded the artist, looking at the badly-drawn picture, "you ought to put the varnish on afterwards. It would make the plate look better." When the lady shut the door it made such a noise people thought it was burglars blowing open a safe.—*Texas Siftings*.

—A BIZARRER performance of "L'Africaine," recently given in Cleveland, was announced as follows: "L'Africaine, or the Rich Romance of the Royal Roses—opera in seven acts and tableaux at discretion. Produced with microscopic details and oriental disregard of expense; costumes imported direct from Yum Yum by Suez and Welland canals; properties worked by Sig. Eastman; costumes furnished by Herr Hans Krausellini, at the enormous expense of \$5,000,000, more or less—less."

—MME. ALBANI was one of those who attended the "Ring" performance in London, and the upshot was that the next day a proposal was made that the distinguished British artist should give one or two representations in German of *Elsa* in "Lohengrin," with the Neumann orchestra, chorus and principals, either at Her Majesty's or at the Royal Italian Opera. The proposal, which was accepted by Herr Neumann, awaits Mr. Mapleson's decision. If the performances be given at Covent Garden, we shall witness the extraordinary phenomenon of German opera at each of the three great Italian opera-houses.—*Figaro*.

—MISS JULIA GYLFORD, the young prima donna, Kate Claxton, and Marie Wainwright are said to be clergymen's daughters.

—A PRIVATE letter from Warsaw, in Poland, tells an interesting incident in connection with Mme. Modjeska. She herself is of plebeian extraction, but her husband's family are of long and noble descent. They were intimately concerned in the Polish insurrection in 1863. Some were murdered, some were exiled, and all had their property confiscated by the Emperor of all the Russias. Mme. Modjeska has been making an effort for three years to get the confiscations decreed against the family remitted. She had made pretty fair progress under the administration of Alexander II, but his sudden death brought it to an end, and the feeling in Russia against the Poles was greatly embittered at the time. It was not until this summer that Mme. Modjeska dared to make any new move. While in London she had made the acquaintance of a high Russian dignitary, Schouvaloff. I believe. At any rate, he advised her to go straight to the Empress of Russia, and promised to get her a special audience. She started for St. Petersburg, but when there, in spite of Schouvaloff's influence, she being a Pole excited suspicion in the minds of the timid officials. Never daunted she tried and tried again, and at length was admitted to a private interview with the Empress, at which the Emperor was present. Two days after a decree was published granting amnesty to the relatives of her husband and restoring their estates.—*Times*.