

## Musical &amp; Dramatic Notes.

BY VIOLA.

In reference to the Birmingham Festival I have another fact for the consideration of Mr. Torrington, of which I was not aware when my last comment on the subject appeared in THE OBSERVER. The London *Musical Times* is authority for the statement that of the five thousand pounds which the Festival secured for the General Hospital, three thousand came in by way of donation. By the way, in reproducing in last week's issue Mr. Torrington's quotations from the *Daily Graphic*, the amount handed over to the General Hospital was misprinted £500.

The London *Daily Chronicle* states that Ibsenism is a growing influence in England. If this is a fact, it is one which can hardly be regarded with equanimity by well-wishers of the drama. Ibsen is doing for the drama what Zola has done for the novel. In other words, Ibsen gives us photographic pictures of the worst aspects of human nature. Meanness, cowardice, hypocrisy, sensuality, adultery, the shameful legacies of vice in the transmission of nameless diseases—these are the themes which Ibsen illustrates on the stage. I fail to see that these morbid studies can be productive of anything but evil. There are unhappily many loathsome physical diseases afflicting humanity, but no one advocates that the general public should be called in to investigate them, this unpleasant duty being left to medical men. I am conservative enough to think that in like manner the study of the phenomena of diseased mentality should be left to the psychologist, the superintendents of lunatic asylums and the administrators of criminal law. It is doubtful if Ibsen has created a single character which can command respect or admiration. His gospel is one of hopeless pessimism. According to him there is no escape from the remorseless influence of heredity, and he always shows us the influence of heredity for evil and never for good. In one sense he preaches a most uncompromising system of predestination. One deplorable result of this doctrine will be that many men who may accept it will cease to struggle against their evil instincts. The late eminent dramatic critic, Mr. Dutton Cook, said that the mission of the modern drama was to amuse and not to instruct, as in the old days. If this be so, what kind of people are they who can find amusement in the horrible nightmares of Ibsen and his school?

Messrs. Suckling & Sons announce that they have engaged the celebrated solo pianist Paderewski for one concert in Toronto on the 12th of next month. Paderewski has created so great a sensation in New York and Boston that if any solo pianist can draw a crowded house here at this season of the year, he is that man. The plan for reserved seats is now open at the music store of Messrs. Suckling, and I would advise amateurs who wish to get good seats to apply for them as soon as possible.

Speaking of the alleged exhaustion of the

melodic combinations of music, which was gravely discussed at the recent meeting of the Canadian Society of Musicians, Mr. W. Elliott Haslam, I am told, got off a very good joke the other day. He was speaking in a well-known music store and remarked audibly, "We need be under no fear that melody will be exhausted so long as there are music publishers. They will take good care that the combinations of music are not exhausted."

Although repeated failures have marked the essays of Mrs. Scott-Siddons in the profession of her distinguished great-grandmother, Mrs. Siddons, she does not appear to have learned the lesson of experience. This reflection was forced upon me when at the Grand Opera House on Monday night, when Mrs. Scott-Siddons and her company appeared in a weak adaptation of a French play entitled "Check and Mate." Mrs. Scott-Siddons made her debut as an actress, I believe, in 1867, at the Haymarket Theatre, London, as Rosalind, in "As You Like It." The experiment was not successful, and her engagement was soon closed. It will be remembered that some years ago she appeared at the Royal Opera House in a round of plays and that the verdict of her London audiences was echoed here. As a reader, Mrs. Scott-Siddons has gained deserved distinction, but many of the qualities which have contributed to her success in that line have helped to still further increase her limitations as an actress. She has a thin and unmusical voice, totally unfitted to express the accents of passion or highly-wrought emotion; she is painfully conscious of the presence of her audience, lacks repose, and her acting is constrained and artificial. On the other hand, her work is always lady-like, refined and intelligent, and she has the advantage of having an attractive personality. Unluckily, it is in very essential qualities she is lacking; and it is strange that at this late period of her career she should court mortification and disaster in a role for which time has proved she is unfitted.

On Monday night the Kelly Concert Company, which has been recently organised under the management of Mr. Lindsay, of Collingwood, gave a very successful concert to a large and enthusiastic audience in the Auditorium. The star of the company is Mr. Charles Kelly, who it may be remembered made quite a reputation in this city some four years ago. Mr. Kelly has really a powerful bass voice of very fine quality, and his organ has, if anything, become more mellow and refined during his four years of absence from our midst. He has, moreover, made a marked advance in the art of vocalisation, and his work is in every way more matured and artistic. He created quite a furore on Monday night, and he received repeated recalls. To his vocal ability, Mr. Kelly adds the accomplishment of being a very excellent guitar player, and he contributed several solos on that instrument which were highly appreciated by the audience. With Mr. Kelly and his company are associated Miss Louise de Loramier, a young and talented elocutionist, Miss Carita Martini, a soprano of more than average ability and charm of voice and manner, and Miss Minnie Martin, a

rising young pianist, who acts as accompanist. I understand that the company are going on a tour throughout the Province, in which case they ought to have a very brilliant season.

"Night and Morning," which has been running at the Toronto Opera House this week, is an appalling compound of melo-dramatic rubbish. It is surprising that Mr. Arden, who is the star of the piece, should be willing to lend his name to such a tissue of nonsense. The plot is almost incomprehensible, the dialogue inflated and unmeaning, and the action disconnected. One remark made by the hero was almost blasphemous. I refer to the scene where, when ordered to be tied to a cross, he makes an irreverent comparison between himself and the Saviour. Some people have no idea of the eternal fitness of things. It speaks well for the good taste of the public, that they largely kept away from the theatre during the engagement.

The London *Daily Telegraph* says Mascagni's new opera, "L'Amico Fritz," is brimful of interest and beauty. The story is taken from Messrs. Erckmann-Chatrians "L'Ami Fritz." The work illustrates the composer's extraordinary tact in providing scenes and situations with music which appears naturally belonging thereto. It is said, moreover, that Mascagni shows a power of characterisation, which if not equal to Mozart's is of the same order.

I have been looking over a copy of the libretto of "The Mountebanks," Gilbert and Cellier's new opera. The London correspondent of the *New York Tribune* says that the libretto is sparkling with wit and humor in the old time Gilbertian style. Perhaps my sense of humor is dull compared with that of Mr. G. W. Smalley, the *Tribune* representative, who, being in London, must naturally have his perceptions sharpened by the prevailing fogs there, but to me a good deal of the libretto appears arrant nonsense. What do my readers think of the following specimen:—

Pretty maidens—roguey-pogueys,  
Tempting both to youths and fogies—  
Pretty pipsy-wipsies!  
Tender little kiddies!  
Tiddy-iddy-iddies!

If you'd learn, O maids discerning,  
Words of wisdom, words of learning—  
Listen, I beseech you,  
Listen, while I teach you,  
In this village forum,  
Rules of true decorum.

I am very glad to hear that Mr. Douglas Bird won success in the tenor solos at the recent production of "The Messiah" by the Ottawa Philharmonic Society. Mr. Bird appears to be scarcely more than a lad, and it is highly creditable to him, and speaks well for his future career, that he should be able to render satisfactorily standard oratorio music. Mr. Bird is an Englishman, but as he has taken up his residence in Toronto, we can claim him as "one of our very own."