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MUSIC AND DRAMA

THE Mendelssohn Choir Executive find it necessary, in connection with their annual cycle in February, to announce an additional concert for the evening of Thursday, February 11th. The important step has been rendered imperative on account of the unprecedented demand for seats from the public generally, and particularly from outside points in Canada and in the United States, where these annual concerts are now regarded as of international interest and significance. For this extra concert the committee has been successful in securing the services of the Theodore Thomas Orchestra, which will therefore assist the choir on four successive evenings. The programme which Dr. Vogt and Mr. Stock have arranged will be in character and brilliancy fully equal to the others of the series. As the orchestra is due in Chicago the next day for its regular weekly concert, the management only consented to their remaining in Toronto for the fourth evening, in order to enable the Mendelssohn Choir to reward the subscribers to the series who have so generously supported the enterprise of Dr. Vogt's society this season. It is most gratifying to the committee as reflecting a healthy and sincere growth in our musical taste, that this year's large subscription was obtained in four weeks' time and without any extra effort having been made. The programme details of the five performances of the week of February 8th, will be announced at an early date. It is interesting to learn that the three concerts in which the society is to participate in Chicago in March, are attracting the musical people from as far south as Nashville, as far west as Denver, and as far north as Winnipeg, from which point a special train is to run to Chicago.

* * *

THE Imperial Opera Company is no longer at the Royal Alexandra Theatre, Toronto, having completed its performances with a highly successful week of "Jack and the Beanstalk." During this week, the dramatised version of "Mr. Crewe's Career," Mr. Winston Churchill's political novel, is an attraction well worth seeing, and next week, the David Belasco triumph, "The Warrens of Virginia," will be seen at the Royal Alexandra. Written by Mr. William C. de Mille, produced by Mr. David Belasco, and interpreted by a cast of decided talent, this play should appeal to such theatre-goers as appreciate a romantic drama. This is a war play, with a story of love and daring which appeals to the human interest in both Cupid and Mars. Mr. Belasco's wonderful success with former productions has been repeated in "The Warrens of Virginia," which ran in New York at the Belasco and Stuyvesant Theatres successively for more than a season.

The interest in the announcement shows that the name of the producer is one to conjure with. The Royal Alexandra is so admirably adapted for the production of a play with picturesque and varied background, that this drama depicting the war scenes of more than forty years ago should be well-patronised.

* * *

IT is extremely unfortunate, says the London (England) *Daily Mail*, that circumstances nearly always seem to combine to prevent the British composer and the British musician from having a thoroughly satisfactory chance in their own country. The well-known publishing firm of Ricordi

offered, in 1905, a prize for the best opera composed by an Englishman. The Covent Garden Syndicate offered to produce the work chosen, and it was generally understood that the opera would be produced in the English tongue during the summer of 1907. However, the arrangement fell through. It seems that there are insuperable difficulties, not very clear to the average man, about producing an opera in English without more than half a year's preliminary preparation, though a German, French, or Italian work can be staged at short notice. Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, one of those who adjudicated on the operas submitted for the prize, has been complaining in print of the procedure of the Covent Garden Syndicate. The selected work, entitled "The Angelus," is to be produced some time next year, but it will not have the *eclat* which it would have gained if it had been brought out during the season. It was a condition of the competition that the libretto should be in English, and now the opera has been "side-tracked" because "the book" is not in a foreign tongue. A little less subservience to the tradition of foreign domination would be a most wholesome symptom in British impresarios.

* * *

WHEN Miss Eleanor Robson played in Toronto last month, it was generally recognised that "Vera the Medium" was a poor play—especially for Miss Robson. The part of "faker," however distressed, is not one which sits gracefully upon this actress with the plaintive voice and honest eyes. The late Frank Stockton wrote a whimsical story about a young author who composed so good a story that no editor would receive his later efforts, because, forsooth, they were not quite so satisfactory as the brilliant achievement of his early days. The author finally overcame the difficulty in true Stocktonian fashion. It is possible that Miss Robson's remarkable success in "Merely Mary Ann" furnishes a comparison which is virtually a handicap. Every paper admits that her "Vera" is well-sustained but sighs for the days of "Merely Mary Ann." The latter play was highly unsatisfactory to those who were familiar with Mr. Zangwill's story as it originally appeared, since it had been wrenched sadly in order to give it the happy ending which an indiscriminating public demands. The reader of the novel may dumbly protest at the spoiling of the tale, but he is forced to admit that Miss Robson as the little slavey with a poet's soul is a delight to ear and eye. However, the actress herself must begin to wonder if "Mary Ann" is to haunt her future efforts, for already she has stood in the way of the Jerome heroine, in the path of the "Salome Jane" and beside "Vera the Medium," plaintively mocking their would-be charms.

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