

MUSIC AND DRAMA

THE dramatic evening given under the auspices of the Women's Art Association in Massey Music Hall last week was of unique attraction. For the first time in Canada, Mr. W. B. Yeats' Celtic drama, *Deirdre*, was produced. It was followed by Mr. Arthur Wing Pinero's *The Money Spinner*, which made a sparkling contrast to the gloomy beauty of the Irish poet's tragedy. Mr. Douglas A. Paterson, who was manager for the occasion, deserves commendation for the thoroughly professional manner in which the two productions were staged, although Massey Hall does not afford an adequate background. The tale of *Deirdre* comes from the misty ages of Erin's romantic past and, indeed, forms a literary cycle almost as enthralling as the Arthurian. It is the world-old story of lovers fleeing from a betrayed one and of the revenge of the forsaken. *Deirdre* and her lover *Naisi* are finally captured by the outraged *Conacher* who finds his victory a poor triumph since *Deirdre* chooses death with her lover. Mr. R. S. Pigott as *Naisi* and Miss Brenda Smellie as the first singing-woman admirably interpreted the mystic sorrow which, throughout the drama, foreshadows the final tragedy. Miss Evelyn Bliss made a stately *Deirdre* and Mr. Paterson a convincing *Conacher*. The Pinero play was an acceptable second feature in the bill, Mrs. H. C. Osborne taking with spirit the part of *Millicent*, the girl who plays a desperate game to save her husband's fortunes. Altogether the evening was most successful and it is to be hoped that more of Mr. Yeats' productions will have presentation in Canada. The universities ought to take an interest in such dramatic enterprises.

MISS MARLOWE'S return to Canada is the most important event of the theatrical season and the Princess Theatre, Toronto, will probably be crowded this week for every performance in which she appears. A Toronto lawyer was recalling with enthusiasm this week the first occasion on which Miss Marlowe played in Ontario's biggest city and the profound impression she created as *Rosalind*. The students were especially demonstrative in their appreciation of her artistic work. The years have but touched her grace with deepening effect and there never was a time when Miss Marlowe's genius had more charm than it exerts to-day. Perhaps her rare distinction is all the more refreshing, for the evil days of musical comedy and trashy vaudeville which have befallen us. There are all too few who have avoided these inartistic depths and, to such as Julia Marlowe, those who can appreciate something beyond a ballet performance are deeply grateful. Mr. Louis De Foe, one of the best-known dramatic critics on the continent, says regarding Miss Marlowe's indifference to the ordinary tricks of theatrical advertisement:

"Nevertheless the American stage in tragedy has not known her equal since the days of Mary Anderson. In poetic comedy no actress has excelled her since the brilliant course of Adelaide Neilson was cut short by deplorable and untimely death. It is tenable to place her genius in comparison with either of these two remarkable women because her range encompasses both. Moreover, Miss Marlowe has come into her present enviable position during a time when conditions in her profession are discouraging to the highest and finest

development of histrionic art. These are the days when personality looms large in the public eye and clever advertising paves the path to popular favour. And these are the two aids which Miss Marlowe has most studiously avoided."

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THAT enterprising London (England) journal, the *Daily Mail*, has recently announced that Miss Maud Allan, a dancer who has lately appeared before English audiences, is of Canadian birth, having, according to the London paper, been born in the city of Toronto. Miss Allan's achievements are of a rather startling order, especially that, when, "veiled in black gauze, she danced to Chopin's Funeral March and perfectly embodied the fine pathos of it." The Salome dance in which this fair creature indulges is also erratic to a degree and the Archdeacon of London has very properly protested against the "bringing of John the Baptist's head on to the stage." The British theatre-goers apparently take a tremendous interest in the public dancer and devote space in lavish paragraphs to such entertainment. It is significant to note that Mlle. Genée, the danseuse who was so popular in London, has failed to make a favourable impression on the New York critics. Can it be that London taste is degenerating, that drama of the nobler type is being supplanted by dancing and drivel? According to Mr. Stead such is the case. However, Chopin's Funeral March with Terpsichore and black gauze accompaniment is not a cheer-fur composition to consider.

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THE concert of the People's Choral Union in Massey Music Hall on Tuesday night closed Mr. H. M. Fletcher's season of strenuous conductorship. The work of this organisation is thoroughly accomplished and local interest is strongly manifested in the excellent audiences which assemble annually to hear the result of the season's training. Mr. Fletcher is always at pains to secure the best available soloists and this year's choice was especially acceptable:—Madame LeGrand Reed, Madame Bessie Bonsall and Mr. Ruthven McDonald. The former has been associated with Mr. Fletcher's organisations in several concerts and her pure, flexible soprano is always a source of lyric pleasure. Madame Bonsall's voice is a rarely rich contralto which won the admiration of Canadian audiences years ago when the Ovide Musin Company included the young Canadian singer in its membership. Since then Madame Bonsall has had the advantage of several years' training under such foreign masters as Randegger and Sir Charles Santley with most pleasing artistic result. The singer, unlike the prophet, has honour in her own country and Toronto audiences appreciate their own choral conductors and soloists in hearty fashion.

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VICTORIA, British Columbia, has a musical organisation worthy of strong local support in the Arion Club, a male chorus of thirty-six voices which has just closed its sixteenth season, having been founded in 1892. The programme for the second concert of this season is assurance of the good taste of the conductor, Mr. E. Howard Russell. The nine choral selections are largely of the militant order, such rousing numbers as Banck's setting of Browning's *Cavalier Songs*, Dudley Buck's *The Signal Re-*

(Continued on page 22)

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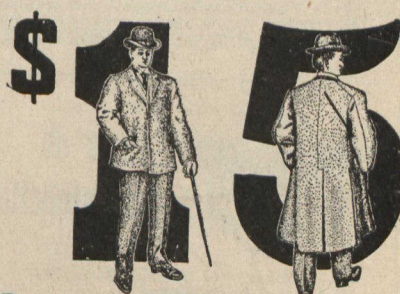
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