

## THE GLOBE'S CRITICISM.

FOR a long series of years the *Globe* has been conspicuous for its want of feeling for Art of any kind. Once in a while it would blaze out in some high art criticism (probably contributed) concerning some talented but transient artist, while side by side would appear a notice (nota criticism) of some local affair carried out wholly by amateurs, unskillful as presumptuous, in which the same laudatory language, minus criticism is used. This is not so much the fault of the local reporter (styled musical critic), who in his ignorance of the subject is carried away by his individual taste and writes according to the dim light of his small knowledge, as it is that of the editor or proprietor who fails to see, not only the incongruity but the absurdity of such a state of things. When Miss Jukes and John Snooke find that the same excellence is attributed to them as to Gerster or Campanini they naturally presume upon it, and that portion of the public whose tastes are uninformed, looking to the press for light on the subject, are misled. When, as appeared in a *Globe* notice of an amateur concert not long since, a lady is spoken of as an "eminent pianist and composer," (her works known to the world, consisting of a galop or so, in which the tonic and dominant chords about make up the whole). What shall we say of Liszt, Rubinstein and Joseffy. Alas, we can only add, *so are they!* No, we mistake, for although the latter has written many excellent compositions he is not entitled to rank as an *eminent* composer. During our professional career of over twelve years in Toronto, the *Globe* has been uniformly courteous to us, personally. Our remarks are therefore not attributable to anger or irritation on our part, and indeed since we are not Atlas we should be very sorry to have that (in every other respect eminently able paper come down upon our shoulders simply because we have been courageous enough to say, not only what *we*, but also what every other *musician*, whether professional or *diletanti*, both says and thinks. Toronto aspires to be a metropolis, a new era is opening in the world of Music, Art and Literature in Canada, and such a state of things as that of which we complain, may be laughed at and excused in a Western country town, but is disgraceful to a city of the size and pretensions of Toronto. It may be argued that the great dailies cannot give that attention to matters of art which they demand, and that it falls within the province of art journals to attend to those things. This is very true, and where there is no competent critic on the staff of the paper, it would therefore be far safer to publish only a notice of the facts, without any opinions of the reporter as to the merits or demerits of the performers, or the performance.

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A wealthy Cincinnati packer, who attended the theatre recently, said that he could not understand why it took so long to dress a certain actor, when he could dress a hog in eight minutes.

## ROSSINI.

II.

An important step in Rossini's early career was his connection with the widely known impresario of the San Carlo, Naples, Barbaja. He was under contract to produce two new operas annually, to rearrange all old scores, and to conduct at all of the theatres ruled by this manager. He was to receive two hundred ducats a month, and a share in the profits of the bank of the San Carlo gambling-saloon. His first opera composed here was "Elisabetta, Regina d'Inghilterra," which was received with a genuine Neapolitan *furor*. Rossini was feted and caressed by the ardent *diletanti* of this city to his heart's content, and was such an idol of the "fickle fair" that his career on more than one occasion narrowly escaped an untimely close, from the prejudice of jealous spouses. The composer was very vain of his handsome person, and boasted of his *escapades d'amour*. Many, too, will recall his *mot*, spoken to a beauty standing between himself and the Duke of Wellington: "Madame, how happy should you be to find yourself placed between the two greatest men in Europe!"

One of Rossini's adventures at Naples has in it something of romance. He was sitting in his chamber, humming one of his own operatic airs, when the ugliest Mercury he had ever seen entered and gave him a note, then instantly withdrew. This, of course, was a tender invitation, and an assignation at a romantic spot in the suburb. On arriving Rossini sang his *aria* for a signal, and from the gate of a charming park surrounding a small villa appeared his beautiful and unknown inamorata. On parting it was agreed that the same messenger should bring notice of the second appointment. Rossini suspected that the lady, in disguise, was her own envoy, and verified the guess by following the light-footed page. He then discovered that she was the wife of a wealthy Sicilian, widely noted for her beauty, and one of the reigning toasts. On renewing his visit, he had barely arrived at the gate of the park, when a carbine-bullet grazed his head, and two masked assailants sprang toward him with drawn rapiers, a proceeding which left Rossini no option but to take to his heels, as he was unarmed.

During the composer's residence at Naples he was made acquainted with many of the most powerful princes and nobles of Europe, and his name became a recognized factor in European music, though his works were not widely known outside of his native land. His reputation for genius spread by report, for all who came in contact with the brilliant, handsome Rossini were charmed. That which placed his European fame on a solid basis was the production of "Il Barbiere di Siviglia" at Rome during the carnival season of 1816.

Years before Rossini had thought of setting the sparkling comedy of Beaumarchais to music, and Sterbini, the author of the *libretto* used by Paisiello, had proposed to rearrange the story. Rossini, indeed, had been so complaisant as to write to the older composer for permission to set fresh music to the comedy; a concession not needed, for the plays of Metastasio had been used by different musicians without scruple. Paisiello intrigued against the new opera, and organized a conspiracy to kill it on the first night. Sterbini