

MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

MR. McDONNELL'S operatic romance of "Marina," which was on the boards at "the Grand" during the latter portion of last week, was hardly, we think, seen to advantage or received with the respect due to the musical talent displayed by its composer. Assuredly the defects in representation were many. The voices were to a large extent inadequate, the pitch would be considered exhaustingly high even for skilled professional singers, and much of the acting was either wooden or hap-hazard. In this latter respect, however, there were several exceptions. Mr. Frank Nelson, as "Harry," was generally good, though at times he had an air of telling the audience that he could do better if he were to try. Miss Essie Barton's "Anna" was satisfactory, in spite of an occasional lack of earnestness. Agreeable, both from a musical and a dramatic point of view, were the "Sir Richard Ford" of Mr. Harry Russell, and the "Lady Ford" of Miss Amy Collins, except in the scene of the sudden home-coming of Captain Dick, in which we cannot but think the performers might have done as well had they been sleep-walking. Miss Collins has a strong rich voice, and the beautiful duett "See the Dawn of the Fair Bright Morning" was sung by herself and Mr. Russell with excellent effect. This duett was cordially encored. Miss Bertie Bowen, as "Marina," was lifeless, and her obvious inclination to smile at unseasonable times created an air of unreality. "Marina" seemed desirous, in a manner, of letting the audience a little bit into the joke. Two or three of the situations, especially that attendant upon the reprieve of Stephen, when all fall upon their knees in devout thankfulness at the close of a jovial song by the Queen's Messenger, could only be saved from a suggestion of the ridiculous by sincere and skilful acting, which was not at the time displayed. There is snap and liveliness in Act 1, the termination of which, with march of the Grenadiers around the stage, gave the audience something over which it was easy to wax applaudive. The quickstep to which they marched is a spirited and effective piece of composition. In the construction of the opera there are many points which might be altered to advantage, omitting superfluous dialogue and introducing more action; but the strength of the work lies in the beauty of the airs. A proof of this may be drawn from the ease with which they lend themselves to effective orchestration. The song of Anna "How sad, how sad," is very fine in its direct and keen pathos; and the part song "Beauteous summer weather," is undeniably good. But the bright song of the "Queen's Messenger," which was well delivered by Mr. Murphy, is marred by a very perceptible reminiscence of "Buttercup." The libretto is altogether inferior to the score, as is usually, if not invariably, the case. It is hardly worth while looking for either beauties or defects in a libretto, but we will point out one of not a few defects and one of the not numerous beauties. Anna, in a moment of anguish, is made to sing vociferously "I scarce can speak, I scarce can speak," which sounds uncomfortably funny. On the other hand, in the quite unremarkable words of one of Marina's songs we find such a beautiful and imaginative touch as this:—

"The lark on high, in the blue sky,
Seemed like a singing star."

We should like to see this work, which is entirely a home production, revised and better finished by its author, and then presented by a stronger cast of performers.

JOHANN STRAUSS, the composer, has been suffering from poisoning by nicotine, the result of smoking strong cigars to excess.

IN 1883, 251 dramatic compositions and twenty-two operas were addressed to the General Intendant of Theatres at Berlin for acceptance.

THE hymn beginning "The consecrated cross I'd bear" had just been sung, and in the momentary quiet that followed, the perplexed youth turned to his father: "Say, pa, where do they keep the consecrated cross-eyed bear?"

WE have received from Messrs. J. Suckling & Sons, of this city, a composition for the piano-forte by a young Toronto musician, Mr. T. C. Jeffers. It is simple in movement and not greatly varied. But the melody is pleasant, the harmonizing effective and characteristic.

MISS ELLEN TERRY'S daughter, a tall, graceful girl of fourteen, has already developed considerable histrionic ability, and will make her *debut* at the Lyceum Theatre on the return of Miss Terry and Mr. Irving from their American Tour. Her stage name will be "Ailsa Craig," in memory of her mother's pleasant recollections of that rocky islet.

MINNIE HAUCK was born in New York thirty odd years ago. At the age of three she went to New Orleans, and returned with her parents when she was about fifteen. Miss Hauck first appeared in public in Christ Church, as soprano in the choir, at the age of eighteen, and two years afterward sang at the Academy of Music in the opera of "Crispino." In 1868 she made her *debut* at the Italian Opera House, London, England, as Amina, in "La Sonnambula."

A STRANGE sort of festivity took place on Jan. 11 at the Hospital St. Louis in Paris. A comic opera, written and composed by the young surgeons attached to the establishment, was performed for the amusement of the patients. Fifty years ago Charles Fourier, the celebrated philosopher, who used to say man would only be perfect had he a tail with an eye at the end, wrote: "One day medical science will endeavour to overcome the sufferings of patients by amusing their minds. Hospitals will be filled with flowers, and music and plays will be performed there."

LITERARY GOSSIP.

ON DIT that Charles Reade is engaged upon a work of fiction "with an object," for Harper Brothers.

MR. ROBERT BROWNING has finally consented to have a cheap edition of his poetical works published.

IN *The Current* for Feb. 2, Mr. J. E. Bourinot, of Ottawa, begins a series of papers on "Some Old Forts by the Sea."

"THE Massacre of Protestants in Ireland in 1641" is promised at an early date. Mr. Froude is engaged writing the preface.

IN the "Eminent Women" series a place will be given to Susanna Wesley, whose life is being written by Mrs. Sarah Clarke, one of her descendants.

LONDON *Truth* says that in the autumn we may look for a volume in which will be recorded Mr. Arnold's "impressions" of the United States and their inhabitants.

AT a meeting of the Canadian Institute on Saturday evening, a paper was read by Professor Campbell, of Montreal, on "The Khitan and Aztec Languages," and one by Dr. McNish, of Cornwall, on "Celtic Topography."

LADY BRASSEY is getting ready an account of her recent voyage in the *Sunbeam*, its purport being a chronicle of a fourteen-thousand-miles' tour "In the Trades, the Tropics, and the 'Roaring Forties.'" Messrs. Longman will publish the book.

A number of enterprising young *litterateurs* are starting, for Glasgow, a new university-magazine, on somewhat the same lines as the *Oxford Magazine* and the *Undergraduates' Journal*. It will be called the *Glasgow University Review*, and will be published monthly.

AN article on "Dartmoor and the Walkham" in the January number of the *English Illustrated Magazine* is illustrated with sketches by the President of the Canadian Academy, Mr. L. R. O'Brien. The drawings are of unusual excellence, full of poetic feeling, and in two cases, of fine atmospheric effects.

THE forthcoming number of *Manhattan* will contain a paper on the Egyptian question, by Gen. W. W. Loring-Pasha, who conducted the campaign against the Abyssinians under Khedive Ismail for ten years. An illustrated article on "Dartmouth College," by the editor, will also appear in the same number.

How strongly characteristic of the possibilities of life in America, and in what sharp contrast to the average artisan career in England, is the fact that Mr. Campbell, a member of Congress from Pennsylvania, commenced life as a type-setter, was afterwards a Mississippi River boatman, a California "forty-niner," and Brigadier-General, and the Surveyor-General of Pennsylvania!

COLONEL HIGGINSON, in the *Woman's Journal*, thus illustrates the folly of literary gossip: "It was stated in the newspapers that when Mr. Emerson's daughter told Mr. Arnold that her father was sorry not to see him when in England, he answered, 'Yes, I was told that he wished to see me.' Insolent—"Yes, but the fact was, as a lady who heard the remark told Mr. Higginson, that Mr. Arnold said, 'Yes, I was told that he did me the honour to wish to see me.'"

THE Saxon slinger of ink has provoked his Gallic rival and got himself into a serious row. One of the London weeklies having lashed severely Paul de Cassagnac in an article, the fiery editor of the *Pays* sent a friend, whom the Londoner, with little valour but much wisdom, handed to the police. At least half-a-dozen victims of Cassagnac's sword are limping about Paris. As Sir Toby says, "his incensement is so implacable that satisfaction can be none but by death and sepulchre."

ALMOST simultaneously with this issue of *The Week* the Queen's new book was published. From the advance sheets it would appear that Her Majesty honours the late John Brown by writing of him as her "devoted personal attendant and faithful friend," and gives full particulars of the duties he performed. The royal writer also makes frequent reference to the various members of the family, but not giving prominence to the Prince of Wales's name. A strong preference is implied for the late Lord Beaconsfield as compared with Mr. Gladstone. Napoleon III. and his widow also receive high eulogium. The impression made by the book in England is varied, the Radicals being inclined to deride it. The first edition of 100,000 is already sold. A French edition will be out next week.

THE following story is told of Mr. Gilbert the writer of "Princess Ida" and a score other popular comic operas. Miss Finney, who has played in several of Mr. Gilbert's pieces, some time ago engaged herself to be married to a Mr. Quilter, and wrote Gilbert announcing that fact. Mr. Gilbert wrote a polite and cordial reply. A few weeks after he received another letter from the lady saying that her engagement with Mr. Quilter was broken off. The reply was a little more difficult this time, but Mr. Gilbert was equal to the occasion, and expressed the greatest interest in the lady's happiness and confidence in her judgment. A few days elapsed and then came another letter from Miss Finney, announcing her engagement to Lord Garmoyle. Then Mr. Gilbert's spirit of fun overcame him, and he wrote a letter in his oddest vein of topsy-turvydom. It congratulated the lady on her approaching marriage with — and then came a blank space with an asterisk referring to a marginal note, thus conceived: "Here insert the name of the happy man." All London has laughed over this at once innocent and piquant bit of pleasantry, at the expense of the lady who hoped to become the Countess Cairns.