

Music and Drama

THERE is talk once more of a musical festival in Toronto. In 1886 there was such an event which was an artistic and financial success. There was a chorus of over a thousand voices, while an orchestra of one hundred pieces did justice to the great occasion. Madame Lilli Lehmann was one of the soloists at this feast of song and Dr. F. H. Torrington was its presiding genius.

A dramatic festival will be held at Massey Hall, Toronto, during the week of October 28th when Ben Greet's company will give "Macbeth," "Julius Caesar," "Romeo and Juliet" and "As You Like It." The famous morality play, "Everyman," in which Mr. Greet and his players first won the attention of America, is also to be presented.

"The Story of My Life," by Ellen Terry, which is enlivening the pages of M. A. P. from week to week, is decidedly amusing, if rather gushy, and contains many items of domestic news as well as accounts of dramatic success. In the number of October 12th, the veteran actress tells of her second (or perhaps it is third) marriage to Mr. Charles Wardell and also of her theatrical engagement with Mr. John Hare. In view of the latter's recent retirement from the stage, the following remarks are interesting:

"Mr. Hare was one of the best stage-managers that I met during the whole of my long experience in the theatre. He was snappy in manner, extremely irritable if anything went wrong, but he knew what he wanted and he got it. No one has ever surpassed him in the securing of a perfect ensemble. He was the Meissonnier among the theatre artists. Very likely he would have failed if he had been called upon to produce 'King John,' but what better witness to his talent than that he knew his line and stuck to it?"

The Royal Alexandra Theatre, Toronto, has introduced a novel way of taking the votes of the audience as to the plays desirable to produce. Last week slips of paper were placed in the programmes during the week for the audience to choose a play from the list of attractions. There is a dread rumour to the effect that "The Christian" was the popular choice, but let us hope for something better.

The concerts to be given by the National Chorus in Massey Hall, Toronto, on December 16th and 17th promise to be the most interesting events in which this organisation has taken part. In addition to the engagement of Mr. Walter Damrosch and his well-known New York Symphony Orchestra, the assistance of the soloists, Miss Helen Davies, Mr. Kelley Cole and Mr. Francis Rogers has been announced by the conductor, Dr. Albert Ham.

Mme. Bessie Bonsall and Miss Jessie Alexander drew a large and appreciative audience to Association Hall last week, on the occasion of a combined recital, when it was discovered that the rich contralto voice of the former and the excellent mimetic qualities of the latter have suffered no deterioration during their absence from the Canadian stage.

Mr. Channing Pollock, who has written a play or two of his own, and who indulges in occasional dramatic criticism for New York publications, took occasion to visit Europe last summer and explore the theatres. He gravely assures his readers that English plays are poor things and that the only real "successes" in London last year were "American." One of the latter is "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch," about as tawdry a performance as can be imagined. Then Mr. Pollock proceeds to pull to pieces "The Scarlet Pimpernel," which is a romantic play of light and diverting order, but which, alas! is English.

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