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DRAMATIC NOTES



Miss Agnes Cain-Brown,
Prima Donna, Imperial Opera Company, Royal
Alexandra Theatre, Toronto.

THE theatrical season in Toronto has been marked so far by light and airy musical comedy at the two leading theatres, although the play, “Pierre of the Plains,” presented at the Princess Theatre last week, which is founded on one of Sir Gilbert Parker's early romances, belonged to a more serious order of production. “The Gay Musician” and “El Capitan” are the attractions at the Princess and the Royal Alexandra this week, with Roger Brothers and “The Belle of New York” respectively to follow. The Imperial Opera Company at the latter has made a favourable impression on the public and has a varied array of interesting productions on the list for this season. The prima donna of the company is quite worthy of the title and we reproduce on this page one of her latest photographs. There were persistent rumours during the summer that the Royal Alexandra was to become a vaudeville theatre but it is a pleasure to announce that such is far from the intention of the management of this highly

popular resort. Two members who have recently joined the company, Miss Carrie Reynolds and Mr. Carl Haydn, have added materially to its attractions. The latter is a tenor of romantic type who made his first appearance last Saturday in “El Capitan.”

* * *

REV. THOMAS DIXON created somewhat of a sensation several years ago by a novel, “The Leopard's Spots,” which dealt with the negro problem from the Southern States standpoint. Later books by this author made a successful appeal to the public, while one of these, “The Clansman,” has been dramatised and was played last year in both northern and southern towns. The story is intensely dramatic and is a presentation of the horrors of life in the South after the war, when ignorant negroes dominated the proudest people on the continent. The Ku Klux Klan was an organisation, lawless in certain aspects, which endeavoured to assert the Anglo-Saxon supremacy and which punished effectively certain brutal criminals. This play is declared by many to be an offset to “Uncle Tom's Cabin” and if it manages to keep before the public as long as *Eliza*, to say nothing of the blood-hounds and *Little Eva*, it will bring the creator of the “Clansman” world-wide fame and magnificent royalties. The first appearance in Canada will be made at the Victoria Theatre, Victoria, on the fifth and sixth of October. British Columbia may be more in a position to appreciate the problems presented in such a play than any other province of the Dominion.

* * *

FOR two years, the competitions for the Governor-General's trophies in musical and dramatic contest have been held in Ottawa. The first year, the judges sent one trophy to Winnipeg and the other to Quebec. The second year, the trophies were won by societies in the capital. It was decided, in the interest of all concerned that it would be well to vary the scene of competition and to hold the latter in a less trying month of the year than February. Travel in that month is not conducive to good voice-production and the month of April has been chosen for the time for the competition of 1909, while the place is to be His Majesty's Theatre, Montreal. This change of season will be a welcome announcement to all aspiring amateurs.

* * *

WHILE Victoria, B.C., is to be favoured with a play presenting the horrors of negro domination, Winnipeg's best theatre, the Walker, has fallen back on “Uncle Tom's Cabin” for rest and refreshment. That ornament (!) to the stage, Mr. James J. Corbett, has lately appeared at the same theatre in “Facing the Music.” Really, the decadence of the drama appears to be more than a phrase when one considers the fact that an audience can be found for such an apology for an actor. The Walker Theatre, with its handsome modern equipment, could surely afford to omit such “shows” from its list of attractions and leave them to such places as exploit a form of entertainment which no stretch of courtesy could call “drama.”

* * *

THE Canadian actor, Mr. Henry Miller, has lately filled an extended engagement at the Van Ness Theatre, San Francisco. The play by Mr. William Vaughn Moody, “The Great Divide,” in which Mr. Miller and Miss Anglin won a great metropolitan success, proved as attractive in the West, although Miss Anglin is no longer associated with the company. Mr. Miller's return to New York is marked by the production of “Mater,” a play by Mr. Percy Mackaye which was not especially liked by the San Francisco public but which may win New York's approval. Mr. Mackaye's dramatic work is decidedly poetic in spirit and such production no doubt finds it difficult to appeal to a materialistic people. Mr. James M. Barrie, however, has proved that the age is not entirely oblivious of the things which are spiritual.

* * *

MELBOURNE, Australia, says the *Argonaut*, has a new theatre called the “King's,” capable of seating two thousand people. Only five months intervened between foundation stone and completion. This is claimed to be the world's record. Two hundred men worked on it night and day and on public holidays as well.

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