

MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

THE only events in the musical world which we have to chronicle are prospective ones. On Monday, the 11th instant, the Toronto Philharmonic Society will give a performance of the most popular of all oratorios, "The Messiah," at Mrs. Morrison's Opera House. Under the circumstances, the selection of this place of amusement for the performance, rather than the Music Hall, was a wise one. The latter is much too small for the purpose. In the Cathedral towns in England, the Cathedral is always utilized for oratorio performances, and it would have been better to have followed the example here; but we understand that St. James's Cathedral was not available for the purpose. The associations of a theatre such as that of Mrs. Morrison are perfectly unobjectionable, but still they are of a character *different* from those which ought to surround the rendition of sacred music. For this reason, it is a matter for some regret that the Grand Opera House is the best available place at present, and for hoping that before long Toronto will be in possession of a Music Hall adequate for oratorio performances. This is the more to be desired because, until we have such a hall, we cannot hope to have a first-class organ, an instrument which aids so greatly in the effective production of sacred music.

Another noteworthy musical event *in prospectu*, is the advent of the great Hungarian prima donna, Mdle. Ilma de Murska and her concert troupe, who will give one performance at the Grand Opera House, on Friday, the 8th instant. Mdle. de Murska is surpassed in the matter of voice, and as a dramatic artiste, by Adelina Patti, Christine Nilsson, Pauline Lucca, and Albani; but for vocal facility, florid execution, bravura—in short, for everything that is implied in the word *vocalism*, she has probably no living equal. Among her troupe are two artists whose names are familiar in Toronto, Mdme. Carreno-Sauret, the pianiste, and Signor Ferranti, the buffo-baritone. Besides these excellent performers, there will be the celebrated violincellist, Signor Braga—who on this particular instrument, is probably equalled only by the world-renowned Piatti—and the violinist, M. Sauret.

Among other items of musical gossip, it is stated that Toronto will be favoured before long with visits from Max Strakosch's Opera Troupe, with Mdle. Albani, the celebrated Canadian cantatrice, as prima donna; and from Miss Emily Soldene's English Opera-Bouffe Company.

At Mrs. Morrison's Opera House, the most noteworthy performances during the past month have been "The Cricket on the Hearth," Goldsmith's "She Stoops to Conquer," and Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream," brought out as a Christmas spectacle, with Mendelssohn's beautiful music. "The Cricket on the Hearth," for excellent acting all round, was, we think, the very best thing that the stock company, *unaided*, has yet given us. Especially good were Mr. Couldock, as *Caleb Plummer*, and Mrs. Marlowe, as *Tilly Slowboy*. "She Stoops to Conquer," was also very pleasantly acted, and nicely put on the stage as regards costumes and accessories. "Midsummer Night's Dream," is admirably adapted for being produced as a Christmas spectacle, and the management made the most of the opportunity. The scenery throughout was very pretty, the costumes were admirable, and the dances and marches all very well executed. The acting, however, was not so uniformly good, as in "The Cricket on the Hearth." Mr. Couldock and Mr. Rich were both very amusing as *Quince* and *Bottom* respectively, as also was Mr. Sambrook, as *Thisbe*, though a little less exuberance in the movement of his legs would have been an improvement. It is quite possible for a man to take a woman's character in a sufficiently ludicrous manner, without being vulgar. Mr. Lawrens was tame and cold, as *Theseus*, and neither Mrs. Linden nor Mrs. Marlowe were satisfactory as *Hermia* and *Helena*. Miss Egbert looked the part of *Titania* charmingly, and Miss Whittle was a vivacious *Puck*. Miss Rich, as *Oberon*, and Miss Ware, as *Second Fairy*, sang the duet, "I know a Bank," very nicely, and the orchestra, under the able leadership of Prof. Müller, did full justice to Mendelssohn's music.

At the Royal Opera House, on King Street, Mr. Joseph Murphy filled a very successful engagement a couple of weeks back, appearing in a number of characters, American, Irish, German, and Negro, in the protean dramas, "Help" and "Maum Cre." Mr. Murphy is a remarkably fine actor, thoroughly natural, and irresistibly comic, without the least tinge of vulgarity. He is probably the very best stage "Irishman" ever seen in Toronto. On Monday, the 4th instant, the English actress, Miss Katherine Randolph, was announced to appear as *Juliet*, in "Romeo and Juliet." Miss Randolph comes with the highest testimonials to her powers as an actress, and will doubtless attract large audiences during her engagement.