

the following—Martha, Mme. Mapleson; Nancy, Mlle. Thea-Dorri; Lionel, Sig. Barron; Plunket, Sig. Satori. This act was given in costume and with scenery and on the whole was successful. Mme. Mapleson was attractive as Martha, and the others sustained their parts in a way befitting the music, and action, and were applauded by a delighted audience.

It is a pleasing task to write of Mr. Luckstone's abilities as musical director, accompanist, and piano soloist. He provided himself a thorough artist, having an immense technique, good tone, and a touch artistically developed and regulated. Besides the accompaniments—which were well rendered—he gave a spirited and dashing performance of Liszt's 7th Rhapsody and received a hearty encore for his effort. We should enjoy hearing the company in comic opera, with a full orchestra, as they undoubtedly would give a good account of themselves in really artistic performances.

## CONCERTS NEXT WEEK.

Miss Neally Steven's piano recital in St. George's Hall, April 11th at 8 o'clock.

## FALKA AT THE GRAND.

The ordinary critic will always prefer a good amateur performance to a professional, because he knows everybody taking part is heartily in earnest. Some men even like the emotion of witnessing a really great effort, even though partially successful, better than a brilliant triumph, and it is really a question from a point of genuine interest and entertainment whether they are not right. The performance of "Falka" by the Harmony Club both at the dress rehearsal on Monday and on the regular advertised days, was, on the whole, very praiseworthy. It was not difficult to pick holes in the general case, or to find flaws in the reading and rendition of the score, but both the conductor, Mr. Schuch (who conducted with lots of swing and spirit) and the performers evinced throughout a genuine desire to make this difficult opera as artistic as possible, and as far as possible, to disarm criticism. Perhaps enforced sonority, dynamic contrasts, and "the light and shade" of the opera, were not sufficiently attempted. The grouping in parts, especially in the choruses of the second and last acts was not sufficiently easy and natural to make the presentation thoroughly finished. A little more rehearsal would have improved it. The "Falka" of course was well played. Miss Gaylord fulfilled the expectations she had raised at recent performances in this city, and is by all odds the most popular lady actress in the province to-day. She has plenty of voice and is extremely musical, and if her phrasing is at times a little outlandish, she makes up for every defect by her charming and vivacious manner, which, without being too stagey, "is nevertheless free from 'mauvaise honte.'" Miss Beach in the counterpart was in fine voice and sang splendidly. Mrs. Peterson by her artistic and finished performance as Edwige gained many admirers, as did also Miss Jardine Thomson, who acted very gracefully throughout. Mention should also be made of the charming "Alexandrina" of Miss Seymour, who in her very modest part acquitted herself to the delight of the audience, in spite of her evident nervousness and anxiety. Among the other ladies Mrs. Nicholson, Miss Merritt, Miss E. Howard, and Miss Thomson, were all good in their respective parts. Mr. W.E. Rundle as "Arthur" was at times a little disappointing, but only to call forth unequivocal praise at others. E. Wyley Grier as "Boleslas," and his counterpart J. F. Kirk were, of course, very clever and finished performers. Geo. Dunstan as Tancred was, perhaps, the most striking of all the male characters and entered into his part with such zest and spirit as to make one believe he loved playing quite as much as the spectator liked to watch him. Messrs. Ricketts and R. Donald as "Pelican" were everything that could be desired. On the whole, the performance was delightful, the costumes

were extremely pretty and in good taste, and the music clever. Seldom, indeed, is "Falka" played with such a blaze of animated colour as was witnessed in the merry choruses here. The Harmony Club is to be congratulated on its very ambitious attempt to make a very difficult and classic opera presentable,—and we believe this is the very first time that an amateur company has ever tackled "Falka" in the Dominion of Canada. We expect another year to have the pleasure of hearing an even more finished rendering of Mozart's "Don Giovanni," or something of that class. Mr. Albert Nordheimer on whom the brunt of the whole business seems to have rested, is deserving of special thanks, for the whole thing went off without a hitch. It is not necessary to allude to Mr. Schuch's invaluable services as musical director, as the performance itself was proof of the infinite care and pains he must have taken in the direction. The managers were deservedly rewarded by crowded and fashionable audiences who applauded heartily their special favourites.

## LIBRARY TABLE.

THE RAGPICKER OF PARIS. By Felix Pyat. New York: Worthington and Co.; Toronto: P. C. Allan. 1893.

This powerful story is founded on M. Pyat's play of the same name; but the author has, of course, greatly expanded the original material. "A play," he remarks, "is a work of concentration; a book, a work of elaboration. . . . Thus the drama of the 'Ragpicker,' is necessarily only an act, an episode, in the life of Father Jean. The novel of the 'Ragpicker' shows his entire life." We have said the story is powerful, it is also painful, horrible. We suppose that it represents phases of Parisian life; but it must surely exaggerate and distort them. The representations of the French Clergy seem to be even worse, sheer falsehoods. Still the state of things must be bad before such stories can be concocted and read.

THE STORY OF MARY WASHINGTON. By Marion Harland. Price \$1.00 Boston; Houghton Mifflin and Co., Toronto: Williamson. 1893.

This is a slight, but a very charming story. It is rather strange that so little should be known of this charming woman, the mother of the great President. But we are told enough to let us know that here there is no exception to the rule, that great men come from great mothers. Lafayette, who at least had an eye for the picturesque, declared that she reminded him of the Roman matron; and this little volume shows clearly that to the strength and dignity implied in the phrase she added much of feminine sweetness. The illustrations are of service as helping us to understand the lady and her surroundings, and the writer is not too severe on the country which has allowed her tomb, begun by private affection and liberality, to remain unfinished.

FIRST DAYS AMONG THE CONTRABANDS. By Elizabeth Hyde Botume. Price \$1.25 Boston; Lee and Shepard. 1893.

The contrabands here described were the negroes who escaped from the Southern Provinces during the war. Their owners demanded that they should be returned under the "Fugitive Slave Law," then General Butler declared that, under the peculiar circumstances he considered the fugitives "Contraband of War." For a long time after emancipation slaves were known as contrabands. The lady who writes this book went to South Carolina as a teacher of the negroes, who were regarded by the Northerners generally as unteachable. Miss Botume got to know the negro, not as he is generally represented or imagined, but as he actually was—childish, undeveloped, often with the cur-

ning of weakness, yet capable of being improved. Incidentally we have some sketches of the war, and of the treatment of the negro during the war and at its termination. Miss Botume describes a state of things which has passed away, and her book, which is excellent reading will be of permanent interest and value.

ESSAYS FROM REVIEWS. By George Stewart, D.C.L. Quebec: Dawson and Co.

In this selection from Dr. Stewart's contributions to English and American magazines we have a collection of essays which cannot fail to strike the reader as being most appropriate in their relationship. Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes and Whittier by common accord are and have been the greatest voices on this side of the water. Exquisite and marvellous as were the gifts of Poe, he was wanting in the power of sustained effort which the New England galaxy of song possesses so abundantly. Bryant alone of all other American singers gave American poetry a stamp of greatness, yet beyond a few pieces it is doubtful if he ever held an audience, and certain it is, his fame, some ten years after death, has not grown to any large proportions outside his native land. In his preface the author modestly hopes that Essays from Reviews, may serve as an introduction "to the great New England quartette of singers, whose work has done so much to make literature in America what it is to-day." Different and varied as the characteristics of these singers are, they fully represent the many sided possibilities of song in a country where external influences seem opposed to the growth of any striking variety of chord. It is not one of the least remarkable features in their genius that each is in a wide sense wholly different in quality, and this too when we reflect that they were born and bred, wrote and were influenced under conditions of life peculiarly similar. That the influence of some dominant spirit of the number is not traceable in the others is one of the marvels which can only be explained by accrediting to each an equal measure of strength and purpose. In reviewing their lives, and the great work they have given us, Dr. Stewart has detailed in a brief and lucid narrative all that can assist the student to a general and comprehensive idea of their work. No critical study of their art or speculation as to the several places they will hold in the choir of American song, is attempted, much less intended, the purpose being a discursive treatment of their lives and labours, of the influence and bearing to their surroundings upon their poetry and the growth of song amid difficulties and sorrows. In this Dr. Stewart displays a fine sympathy and brings to his work a carefully arranged and intimate knowledge of their lives and work. Easy, graceful and vigorous in treatment, there are apt quotations and well told tales and incidents running through the pages, which make them most entertaining as well as instructive reading. The book is a credit to our growing Canadian literature and the publishers are to be congratulated on its form and appearance. It is dedicated in friendship to Dr. Bourinot, whose good work to Canadian letters, although in a different field from the author's, claims the gratitude of all who appreciate the brightest and best of Canadian thought.

QUABBIN: The Story of a Small Town: with Outlooks upon Puritan Life; By F. H. Underwood, LL. D. Price \$1.75 Boston: Lee and Shepard. 1893.

Here is not only a pleasantly written series of fictitious sketches drawn from real life, but a really valuable record of a state of things which is passing away, if it has not actually passed. Any reader