

## Musical &amp; Dramatic Notes.

BY VIOLA.

It seems to have become quite a common thing in Toronto for amateurs to take part in dramatic and musical entertainments. The performances at which they appear are generally given in aid of some deserving benevolent institution: charity covers a multitude of sins, and in such cases the public do not expect much for their money. The invasion of the stage by the amateur is, however, attended by many evils, as I have reason to know from instances which have come under my own observation. It stands to reason that the acting of the average amateur must, from an artistic point of view, be supremely ridiculous when compared with that of the average professional; yet the latter is treated to severe and trenchant criticism, or is altogether ignored, while the former, particularly if a woman, receives the false and fulsome praise of the press, and the plaudits of fond relatives and admiring friends. I do not like to betray the secrets of my fellow journalists, but it ought to be known that the glowing notices which amateur dramatic and operatic performances receive from the press have absolutely no meaning, or, if they have any meaning, they often express views exactly the opposite to the real views of the writers. The vanity of amateurs, however, leads them to accept the chorus of praise which greets their immature efforts, and in many cases the result is productive of serious mischief. Many a young fellow, deluded by the rose-colored notices of the press and the too partial verdict of his friends, has been thoroughly convinced that he has a heaven-born talent for acting, and has adopted the stage as a profession, only to find out after perhaps a couple of years' misdirected energy and wasted time that he has not enough dramatic ability to fill respectably a subordinate role. Fortunate indeed is he if he can escape from the glare of the footlights, and follow a calling suitable to him in the healthy light of day. In the case of a young man who has to earn his own living, the result of a similar mistake is still more deplorable. The stage, it is to be regretted, attracts a large number of undesirable women to the lower ranks of the profession, and association with these, in conjunction with the bitter sting of disappointed hopes, often causes a deterioration of character. For the unsuccessful actress the stage is full of moral traps and pitfalls. I do not expect that the press will treat amateur actors and actresses on their merits. Only those who have filled editorial chairs can realise the amount of social pressure brought to bear to secure favorable notices for amateur performances. But parents will at least act wisely in refusing to allow their children to appear in public performances at theatres, unless indeed they desire that the young people should take to the stage for a livelihood. I have not touched upon the injury to legitimate companies caused by the encouragement of amateur combinations; this must be apparent to everybody. A week of amateur performances is almost invariably followed by a complete collapse of interest in matters dramatic, so enormous is the amount of energy devoted to

canvassing the public, and pulling the wires generally, in behalf of what the newspapers facetiously call "these society events."

A company under the management of Mr. Louis Dietz occupied the boards of the Grand Opera House during the latter half of last week, and produced here for the first time Augustine Daly's comedy of "The Last Word." The plot is taken from a German source, but Mr. Daly has transferred the scene of action to Washington. The central role is that of the Baroness Vera, and was taken by Miss Ffolliott Paget, a lady who had previously made a favorable impression in "Aunt Jack." The play proved attractive, and Miss Paget gave a striking impersonation of the Baroness, but neither the play nor her impersonation will bear cool analysis. To me it appeared that Miss Paget adopted the pose and manner of an adventuress, rather than of the lovable, warm-hearted, estimable woman, which the *morale* of the piece would have one infer the Baroness is. Then the bold manner in which she woos the Secretary's son, and tempts him with her lips—the vivid picture of blissful passion which she subsequently draws for him—are enough to take one's breath away, coming from a supposed modest woman. But then I must remember that the Baroness is said to be a widow, and if the old English proverb is true, that widows despise dilly-dallying in love, and are apt to take the initiative with a too tardy sweetheart, then indeed the presentation of the Baroness may be a realistic one. Miss Paget has either designedly or unconsciously imitated the manner, accent and voice of Miss Ada Rehan in this role. If the imitation is intended, it is certainly very clever. The comedy has several touches of natural pathos skilfully introduced, and Miss Paget acquitted herself admirably in those parts of the play, and proved that she could when she chose put "tears in her voice." The support was not distinguished by special talent, but it had the negative virtue of not being obtrusively bad.

The play at the Academy of Music this week has been "Kidnapped," a ridiculous conglomeration of melo-dramatic rubbish. The piece is altogether out of place at this theatre.

The concert-lecture which was to have been given last Thursday for the benefit of the Children's Aid Society by Mr. W. Edgar Buck, has been postponed till December 2nd.

A sensible British jury has awarded Mr. Crampe one farthing damages against the London *Daily Telegraph* for an alleged libel contained in a criticism of the singer's performance of *Masetto* in "Don Giovanni." Costs were refused. It is fortunate that musical critics are to be protected in honest expressions of opinion, or the press would be compelled to ignore all performances they could not praise.

The death of Mr. W. J. Florence has taken from the world's stage an actor who in certain special characters has given delight to thousands of theatre goers. Both Mr. and Mrs. Florence

were great favourites in Toronto, and their public appearances were always considered dramatic events. There are probably few of our citizens who have not received pleasure from Mrs. Florence's remarkable impersonations in "The Almighty Dollar" and "The Ticket-of-Leave Man."

A preternaturally bright American critic has discovered that Mascagni's opera "Cavalleria Rusticana" is nothing but a series of tricks. The "Siciliano" song behind the scenes is a trick, the church scene is a trick, and the celebrated duet is also a trick. From this point of view, any composition in music which produces a fine, charming or novel effect is a trick. "Der Freischutz" of Weber, the symphonies of Beethoven, and the music dramas of Wagner are nothing more than tricks. I have a shrewd suspicion that the American journalist in question when he evolved this criticism was more anxious to make a sensation than to deliver a sound judgment. Mascagni is welcomed as an opera composer, because we recognise in him dramatic force, originality of ideas, passionate expression, and the gift of melody. "Cavalleria Rusticana" is not claimed to be a great work, but it is so near to being great that music-lovers are justified in entertaining the brightest hopes of the future career of the composer.

## THEN AND NOW.

## APELLES' SONG.

BY JOHN LYLY (BORN 1554, DIED 1606).

Cupid and my Campaspe played  
At cards for kisses—Cupid paid.  
He staked his quiver, bows and arrows;  
His mother's doves and team of sparrows;  
Loses them too; then down he throws  
The coral of his lips, the rose  
Growing on one cheek (but none knows how):  
With these the crystal of his brow,  
And then the dimple of his chin—  
All these did my Campaspe win.  
At last he set her both his eyes,—  
She won and Cupid blind did rise.  
O Love has she done this to thee?  
What shall, alas! become of me.

## THE FARM AT DUSK.

BY C. G. D. ROBERTS.

When milking time is done, and over all  
This quiet Canadian inland forest-home  
And wide rough pasture lots the shadows come,  
And dews, with peace and twilight voices, fall,  
From moss-cooled watering-trough to foddered stall  
The tired plough-horses turn,—the barn-yard loam  
Soft to their feet,—and in the sky's pale dome  
Like resonant chords the swooping night-jars call.  
Then, while the crickets pipe, and frogs are shrill  
About the slow brook's edge, the pasture bars  
Down clatter, and the cattle wander through,  
Vague, pallid shapes amid the thickets,—till  
Above the wet gray wilds emerge the stars,  
And through the dusk the farmstead fades from view.

"Can you support my daughter in the style to which she is accustomed?" asked the father. "I can; but I won't," replied the careful young man. "I'm not extravagant."