

## MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

AT the beginning of November the Grand Opera House "posters,"—apt emblems of fickleness,—lent their conspicuous superlatives to the announcement of the performances of Mrs. D. P. Bowers, assisted by Mr. J. C. McCollum. Mrs. Bowers is an actress of established American reputation, which has, in its day, fallen but little short of celebrity. She is, perhaps, somewhat *passée* now, but the indications of this are less in any positive failure of power, than in the impression which her acting leaves upon us, that it must be judged as it is,—that its faults and merits are alike stereotyped, or, at any rate, can alter only for the worse. The two historical dramas of "Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots," and "Elizabeth, Queen of England;" Brougham's dramatization of "Lady Audley's Secret;" and the elder Colman's comedy of "The Jealous Wife," had sufficient diversity to constitute a very fair test of her depth and versatility. The "Mary" and "Elizabeth" are both "hack" versions from the Italian, miserably lacking in strength, and murdering historical, without gaining dramatic, sequence. The text makes the "Mary" of necessity a very sombre performance; but, even with this fact in view, we are inclined to think that Mrs. Bowers neutralized the character too completely under the depth of shading she gave its sorrow. *Elizabeth*, painted here in colours that would disgust Froude, gave her talents more scope, and she rendered admirably the queenly strength of mind that is continually being carried away by the undercurrents of vanity and caprice. In the last act, Mrs. Bowers was especially fine, and the contrast between the haughty autocrat of the earlier scenes and the palsied, querulous old woman of this, was really wonderful, and not a little horrible. The touches by which she gave evidence of the survival of a ghastly coquetry, were subtle and telling; while her spasmodic efforts to regain self-command, her grovelling terror of death, and her desperate tenacity of her crown and sway, were most powerfully portrayed. The rôle of *Lady Audley* brought out some of Mrs. Bowers's best qualities, among them a reserve of force in emotional passages and a resulting concentration of passion, that mark an actress of finish and experience. But in this, and the lighter part of *Mrs. Oakley*, in "The Jealous Wife," there were more noticeable a certain deliberation and stiffness in her acting, which, with a

laboured, although correct, elocution, deprived it of spontaneity and gave it a tendency to staginess. Mr. McCollum acted creditably as *Essex* in "Elizabeth," but carelessly as *Robert Audley*. He has a fine stage presence, but a jerky and vicious enunciation, and, altogether, does not rise above mediocrity. The company barely passed muster; but praise is certainly due to Mr. Rogers for his *Luke Marks* in "Lady Audley's Secret," and his *Paulet* in "Mary Stuart;" while Mrs. Allen acted intelligently in the latter play as *Elizabeth*, a part, however, not quite in her line.

During the following week, Toronto was amused by Mr. John T. Raymond, who has identified himself throughout the United States with the speculative *Colonel Mulberry Sellers*, who sees "millions" in prospective, and *en attendant*, borrows ten cents because he has on his "other pants." The dramatization of the "Gilded Age," in which he appears, is a string of five straggling and colourless acts, which does injustice to the novel, and of which the only *raison d'être* is evidently the introduction of the Colonel and his eccentricities. Mr. Raymond has made a speciality of this character, as Sothorn has of *Dundreary*, Jefferson of *Rip Van Winkle*, and Owens of *Solon Shingle*. It is doubtful whether he has any remarkable capacity as a general actor, in parts which require the discarding of personal peculiarities instead, as does this, of their exaggeration. But that is beside the question; it is as Colonel Sellers that he claims notice, and as Colonel Sellers he is inimitable. The part fits him as if it had been written from him as the original. It is a broad and amusing caricature of a sort of Americanized Micawber, possessing, instead of an "admirable passivity," the national activity, which leads him to turn up every scheme that is visionary, instead of "waiting for something to turn up" of itself. It has not escaped the taint of vulgarity that seems inseparable from any product of American humour, and in the fourth act Mr. Raymond fell little short of coarseness in his rather realistic portrayal of intoxication. However, it is a thankless task to criticise too closely a performance brimming over with such hearty fun as Mr. Raymond's impersonation of so genial an oddity as Col. Sellers.

There was more justice than mercy in a severe paragraph that appeared recently in a New York dramatic paper, concerning Miss