

MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

AFTER a rather longer intermission than that of last year, Mrs. Morrison, a week or two back, opened the Grand Opera House for her third season. The auditorium has to some extent been renovated, and a new and well-painted drop curtain has been provided. Of the new members of the stock company, the principal are Mrs. Allen, Miss Anderson, Miss Paynter, and Miss Wright, and Messrs. Fitzgerald, Rogers, and Hudson. The two last-named are well-known to Toronto audiences, having frequently performed in this city. Among the members of the old company retained are Mrs. Vernon and Mrs. Marlowe, and Messrs. Sambrook, Vernon, Semblar, Roberts, Stokes, and Humphreys. The prospects for the season are exceptionally brilliant, the list of stars whose appearance is promised including Neilson, Janauschek, Agnes Booth, Jane Coombs, Kate Claxton, Eliza Weathersby, Dion Boucicault, Owens, Raymond, Chanfrau, Dominick Murray, Sir R. Roberts, Mr. and Mrs. Florence, and other well known names, besides Mrs. Oates's Comic Opera Troupe.

The performance on the opening night was under the patronage of the Lieutenant-Governor, and consisted of a new three-act comedy, entitled, "A scrap of Paper," and the familiar comidietta "A cup of Tea." "A scrap of Paper" is one of the latest successes in London, where it is still running with undiminished popularity, and is a charming adaptation from the French. The nationality of its authorship is unmistakable; no one but a French dramatist could have manufactured so many telling situations, and spun so much brilliant dialogue out of materials so slender. So far as scenery, stage-setting, and costumes are concerned, the play was admirably mounted. Indeed, in completeness of detail and beauty of effect, the studio scene in the second act, and the conservatory scene in the third, surpassed everything of the kind ever witnessed in Toronto. The acting also, was excellent. Mrs. Morrison, who on her entrance was greeted with a very warm welcome, never appeared to better advantage than as *Mlle. Suzanne*, acting throughout with charming vivacity and spirit. Had her make-up been somewhat more youthful in face and figure, but little fault could have been found with her performance. Among the other characters, *Louise de la Glacière* (Mrs. Allen), *Prosper Couramont* (Mr. Fitzgerald), and *Brismanche* (Mr. Hudson), were also excellently played. During the week following the opening night the attraction was Mr. Dominick Murray, who appeared in two plays, neither of them being worthy of the powers of this really admirable character actor. One was "Escaped from

Sing Sing,"—the very title is redolent of ruffianism and crime—the demerits of which we had occasion to animadvert upon when it was produced here last season. There is one passage—that in the second act, between Karl and the "pretty waiter girls"—which it is surprising that so scrupulous a manager as Mrs. Morrison should allow to be presented before a refined audience, composed largely of ladies. The other piece was "Willy Reilly," an American sensational play belonging to the same category as "Escaped from Sing Sing," though it does not quite descend to the same low level. Plays of this description afford no scope for acting, and are really not amenable to criticism from a dramatic point of view, so that the less said about them, the better. The only redeeming feature in "Willy Reilly," is the character of *Audy*, an exaggerated portrait of a servitor who tyrannises most despotically over his master. It was played with much humour by Mr. Rogers. During the present month, Sir Randall Roberts, Mr. Chanfrau, and Miss Claxton, are expected to appear.

During the past month, Mr. McDowell's "Shaugraun Company" gave three weeks' performances at Mr. French's Royal Opera House. The troupe is a remarkably good one, strong in numbers and talent, and very well balanced. The selection of plays was varied and excellent. Tragedy was represented by "Othello;" the "society" play, by Mr. Howard's "Diamonds;" the romantic drama, by "Alixé," and Mr. Lester Wallack's charming play, "Rose-dale;" the sensational, by "The Two Orphans" and "Rose Michel;" and the romantic-sensational by Boucicault's "Led Astray" and "The Shaugraun." These pieces were all very well put on the stage—scenery, costumes, and accessories all being carefully attended to. The only plays new to Toronto audiences were "Diamonds," "Alixé" and "Rose Michel." The first named is a feeble specimen of its class; the dialogue (upon which society plays mainly depend) is clever at times, but too often degenerates into mere farce. "Alixé" is a favourable specimen of the French romantic drama; but "Rose Michel" has an unpleasant flavour throughout, and is not by any means so strong, either in plot, in character-drawing, or in dialogue, as "The Two Orphans." This latter play, however, is one of the best of its kind; indeed, the last act is as exciting, not to say as thrilling, a piece of sensationalism as has ever been witnessed on the stage.

It would take us beyond our limits to notice in detail the acting in the different characters of each of these plays. All that can be done is to briefly refer to some of the principal parts. Mr.