

## THE STAGE AND ORCHESTRA.

THE theatrical season in Toronto has come to a commonplace and an inglorious end; it has simply died of inanition. Since Christmas especially, the lack of public support to what good plays, presented by good players, have come here has been painfully pronounced. It may be a kind of negative satisfaction to be told—that I have the best reason for believing is true—that in this respect we are no worse off than other places. Still, the fact remains that Toronto has degenerated as a theatrical and musical centre, be the reasons what they may. This was most forcibly illustrated in the case of the Tavery Opera Company; last season we did not have one performance of grand opera, and yet when Madame Marie Tavery and her troupe were at the Grand Opera House they played, indeed, to a beggarly array of empty seats. Of course the "mistake"—real or intentional, matters not—of billing Chevalier Guille among the company did harm, as the Chevalier's letter repudiating any connection with the company appeared in the dramatic columns of the *Mail* on the morning of the first performance, and caused a general idea that the whole thing was a fraud. As a matter of fact, the company was an exceedingly good one, containing not one but several artists of reputation and ability, Madame Tavery being probably the weakest among them all. The operas played were "Lucia di Lammermoor," "Carmen," "Il Trovatore," "Cavalleria Rusticana," and "I Pagliacci." With such a repertoire supported by such artists as Madame Theo-Doiré, Madame Romani, Madame Letcher, Mr. Payne Clarke, Max Eugene, and Signor Abramoff, one expected to see representative audiences if not crowded houses; but what we did see at each performance was a small and commonplace crowd; and as I watched each performance I could not help feeling very sorry for the company—and very sorry for Toronto too. I quite endorse the remark made by the musical editor of the *Mail*, who said: "When two such modern operas as "Cavalleria" and "Pagliacci" fail to attract a fair-sized audience, one begins to wonder where are the hundreds of students who are being taught music in Toronto institutions. In Italy, France, Germany, and even England, musical students patronize grand opera very freely, believing that the knowledge they thereby gain is a necessary element in their education." After three weeks of darkness at the Grand Opera House the re-appearance here of Stuart Robson was an agreeable relief.

As usual, the Toronto Opera House has the distinction of closing the theatrical season in Toronto. And while I think the persistent patrons of this cosy little theatre have cause to complain of the monotonous mediocrity of the performances presented for the last couple of months, Manager Small has the satisfaction of knowing that his house is perhaps the only place of amusement in Toronto that has made money this season.

The musical events of the month are comparatively unimportant, having been chiefly amateur and local, and only of interest to the small circles immediately concerned. Not to be included in this generalization, however, is the Toronto Orchestral School, which gave its fifth annual concert at the Massey Hall. The function was noticeable both for the very satisfactory nature of the work done and the large and representative audience that assembled to hear the young