

MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

THE principal events of the past month in the operatic and dramatic world have been the performances of the celebrated Kellogg Opera Troupe, in the one sphere, and those of the well-known English comedian, Mr. Toole, in the other. The troupe which Miss Kellogg's excellent abilities as a manager have enabled her to bring and keep together is unquestionably the finest operatic company on this continent; and their short season in Toronto gave those whom the high prices of admission did not debar from the pleasure, an opportunity of seeing serious opera performed in a style such as has never before been witnessed here. The troupe is a very complete one, numbering altogether some seventy performers, including a very fine orchestra and chorus. Among the solo performers there are no less than four or five prima donnas, Miss Kellogg herself, Madame Van Zandt, and Madame Julia Roswald (*sopranos*); Miss Beaumont (*mezzo-soprano*); and Miss Annandale (*contralto*). The male element is almost equally strong, including Mr. Maas and Mr. Castle (*tenors*); Mr. Carleton and Mr. Hall (*baritones*); and Mr. Coily (*bass*). The *répertoire*, as performed here, was a varied one, embracing Verdi's "Ernani" and "Il Trovatore"; Ambroise's Thomas's "Mignon"; Flotow's "Martha"; Balfé's posthumous opera "The Talisman," and for the Saturday *matinée* a selection consisting of the second act of Gounod's Faust and the last two acts of Balfé's "Bohemian Girl." Miss Kellogg herself appeared only in two characters, *Mignon* in "Mignon," and *Edith Plantagenet* in "The Talisman." The production of the latter opera, for the first time in Canada, was the event of the week. As regards *mise en scène*, costumes, and accessories, it was magnificently put on the stage. In a musical and dramatic point of view, however, the opera is somewhat uninteresting, and we doubt if it will secure a permanent place on the lyric stage. Like all Balfé's operas, however, it has several tuneful numbers; the principal being a plaintive love story "The Lady Eve-line" for *Edith*, and the Rose song for *Sir Kenneth* (Mr. Maas), in the first act; a quaint and pretty romance "La guerra appena" for *Queen Berengaria* (Miss Beaumont), and the Ring duet between *Edith* and *Sir Kenneth*, in the second act; and a brilliant *bravura* "Radiant Splendours" for *Edith*, in the last act. These five numbers, however, are hardly sufficient to carry the opera through successfully; so that—the rest of the music being for the most

part somewhat heavy and tame—it dragged a good deal at times, especially during the first half; a fact, however, no doubt due also in a great measure to the libretto, which is unmistakably dull and lacking in dramatic interest. Miss Kellogg sang the music of *Edith* very finely, being encored in the duet with Sir Kenneth, and in the air "Radiant Splendours," which, latter, however, she declined to repeat. Dramatically, the part of *Edith* is an insignificant one, but it was gracefully acted by Miss Kellogg. Miss Beaumont is fortunate in the possession of a very fine stage presence, and she looked the part of *Queen Berengaria* admirably. She also sang the romance in the second act so well as to secure the first encore of the evening. Mr. Maas, who has a magnificent tenor voice, sang Sir Kenneth's music very finely, but the part is one which affords little little scope for acting, and was rendered tamer by Mr. Maas's lack of histrionic power. Mr. Carleton is a fine singer and actor, and did full justice, in both respects, to the arduous part of *Richard Cœur de Lion*.

Thomas's "Mignon" is a much more interesting opera, dramatically speaking, than "The Talisman," and here Miss Kellogg's excellent qualities as an actress had full scope for display. Miss Kellogg is not a great lyric artist; we cannot imagine her carrying away an audience, or exciting them to enthusiasm, after the manner of a Nilsson or a Patti. Her powers fit her more for light parts, such as *Mignon*; and she sang and acted it admirably. She was ably seconded by the other leading soprano of the troupe, Mdme Van Zandt. This lady has a very fine voice, equally powerful and brilliant; and she sang the bravura music allotted to *Filina*, in splendid style. Mr. Castle's vocal powers are somewhat impaired, but as the hero, *Wilhelm*, he sang and acted like a genuine artist. Mr. Hall acted the part of *Lothario* well, but appeared to be suffering from hoarseness.

Mdme Van Zandt's best impersonation, however, was unquestionably the title rôle in "Martha," in which she sang and acted really delightfully throughout. Though this lady's *forte* is evidently in comedy parts, she nevertheless displayed a good deal of dramatic power in the tragic rôles of *Elvira* in "Ernani," and *Leonora* in "Il Trovatore," especially the latter. Madame Van Zandt came to Toronto unheralded and almost unknown, but long before she left she had firmly established herself as a genuine favourite, and will, no doubt, be very heartily welcomed should she ever revisit us. The