



and Drama.

AMY SHERWIN IN AUCKLAND.

Madame Amy Sherwin, assisted by a talented company, gave her first concert of the present season at the Y.M.C.A. Hall on Monday evening. She was most enthusiastically welcomed by the audience, who insisted on having an encore after every solo she sang. Her first number was Gounod's fine scena, 'O, Divine Redeemer,' which she interpreted splendidly, her magnificent highly trained voice delighting the hearers. A very successful song was Allen's 'Little Bird so Sweetly Singing,' with flute obligato, which contains some long difficult shakes and gave the singer an admirable opportunity of displaying the extraordinary flexibility of her voice. Her other solo was Gounod's celebrated serenade, 'Quand tu Chantes,' with violin obligato, the encore being George Clutzam's effective 'Lullaby.' Madame Sherwin also sang in the trio, 'I'm Not the Queen,' from Balfe's 'Rose of Castille,' with Miss Kitty Grindlay and Mr Arthur Deane. This number must have brought the Carandinis before the minds of some of the older concert goers. Needless to say that it received a piquant interpretation, and was warmly applauded. Miss Grindlay, who has a fine contralto voice, at once established herself as a favourite with the audience. Her contributions were 'The Promise of Life' (Cowen), 'In Sweet September' (Hope Temple), which received a fine impassioned rendering, and 'The Land of the Leal,' besides two encore numbers. She also sang in two duets, 'The Shepherd's Roundelay' and 'What's to Do,' from Flotow's 'Martha,' with Mr Deane, who has a very fine powerful baritone voice. His solos were 'The King's Minstrel' (Pinsuti), 'The Pilgrim' (Stephen Adams), and 'Long Ago in Aulca' (Messenger). He was warmly applauded, and had to submit to the inevitable encores. Mr Stoneham, the well-known flautist, with Mr Szezebanowski, gave a musicianly rendering of Terschak's Flute and Pianoforte Sonata, and Mr Albert Zelman contributed violin solos by Alard, Raff and Wieniawski. The accompaniments were ably played by Mr Szezebanowski, and the concert was in every way a success.

FRANK THORNTON'S SEASON.

Frank Thornton is now in Auckland, amply fulfilling the promises which rumour had made concerning him. He has lost none of his mirth-provoking powers, and there are associated with him a company and a repertoire of plays which add immeasurably to those powers. As his opening piece on Monday evening last he selected 'The Strange Adventures of Miss Brown,' a farcical comedy which was a great success at Home, in America, and in Australia. It is a piece built on somewhat the same lines as 'Charley's Aunt,' and in some respects is even more ludicrous and funny than that famous production. When a captain of the Fourth Lancers has perforce to dress up as a boarding-school miss and play that innocent role among a bevy of girls, and under the Argus eye of a stern lady superintendent, it is not difficult to imagine that he will give occasion for merriment to those who comprehend the inwardness of the situation. That Mr Thornton interpreted the leading part successfully was abundantly proved by the almost continuous laughter which greeted and remained with him while he was on the stage. Mr Fred Shepherd as Major O'Callaghan makes a capital Irishman, full of fun and resource. The production owes much of its raciness and 'go' to his spirited acting. Mr Haygarth as the old lawyer, Mr Cochrane as the German music teacher, and Mr Carey as Sergeant Tanner of Scotland Yard, are all excellent impersonations of amusingly conceived characters; while the ladies—Miss Monfield, Miss Carew, and Miss Pelham—all their respective roles with great success. The piece will run till Thursday evening, when 'The Private Secretary' will take its place.

During the last few years of his life the tenor, Nicolini, was so changed by illness that when he passed through Dieppe, on his way to France to die, he hid himself from even his most intimate friends for fear they would be shocked at the ravages sickness had made in his former good looks.

Even Duse could not make a success in Rome of the great Italian dramatist D'Annunzio's new play, 'The Dead City' and really, when one learns the story, the result cannot be regretted, for it tells of a brother's unlawful love for his sister. It is to be hoped that the advisers of the great actress will not allow her to present this work in London, says a dramatic critic; they alone stand between us and the piece, for the Censor takes no notice of nastiness when the work is in a foreign language.

At the Albert Hall, Leipzig, popular symphony concerts have been organised, to take place every Sunday afternoon. The price of admission is fixed at 25 cents, all over the hall. For the first concert, which was almost entirely attended by working men and their families, there was a demand for 4,000 tickets of admission, whereas the hall only seats 3,000 persons. The orchestra engaged is excellent and the programmes, given away free, contain excellent explanatory notes of the music performed.

An ingenious stage waterfall has attracted attention at the Paris opera halls. It is made of tulle stretched on frames imitating the curves of a fall. Behind it little streams of water are discharged through perforated pipes against a metal plate, so as to throw a spray upon the tulle. When the electric light is played on this the effect is magic.

The project of an American theatre at the Paris Fair of 1900, as evolved by George A. Blumenthal and capitalised by Mr Liechtenstein and others, seems to take the fancy of American actors that Goodwin and Mr Mansfield have given their approval, and Lillian Russell has decided to go, as will Sousa and his band.

No other large city is as quiet as Berlin. Railway engines are not allowed to blow their whistles within the city limits. There is no loud howling by hucksters, and a man whose wagon creaking is loose and rattling is subject to a fine. The courts have a large discretion as to fines for noise making.

Strangest of all piano playing is regulated in Berlin. Before a certain hour in the day and after a certain hour in the night the piano must be silent in that musical city. Even during playing hours a fine is imposed for mere banging on the piano.

Novelli, who is really the greatest of the Italian actors, is to go to Paris and has selected a repertoire of plays familiar to that public. He has several times been approached in reference to a visit to the United States, but he has always demanded terms which made such an undertaking impossible. He is a great favourite in South America, where he makes a fortune at every visit. His versatility is remarkable and some idea of it may be gained from the fact that he has played in 'King Lear' on one evening and in 'Charley's Aunt' the next.

The Town Council of Paris held a special meeting the other day to deal with the question of the Chatelet Theatre. A considerable number of Councillors were in favour of turning it into a theatre of municipal history. By this they meant of municipal republican or revolutionary history. The subject led to a hot debate. It was finally agreed that the future lessee should accept no drama hostile in trend or essence to modern democratic principles; that he is once a year to bring out a study of civic and social morals in the form of a play; and that he is to mount any drama to which the city of Paris may give a prize at an open competition. Councillor Levraud remarked that as the cost of these plays would fall on the city, the mounting of any of them should not come to more than £800 each. To this it was answered that a set of dresses for Mme. Sarah Bernhardt would cost more.

'Julius Caesar' has been translated into German nine times, into French seven, into Italian six, into modern Greek three, into Latin and Swedish twice, and into Croatian, Danish, Dutch, Friesian, Polish, Roumanian, Russian, Magyar, Portuguese, and Yiddish. There are seven or eight Eng-

lish acting editions of the tragedy. But one attempt actually to alter and improve it has ever been made. This was in 1722, when John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, divided it into two parts at the death of Caesar, calling it 'The Tragedies of Julius Caesar and Marcus Brutus,' and made many other changes.

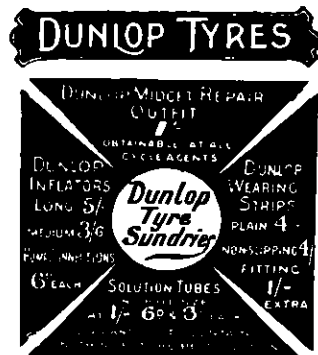
Puccini, the composer of 'Manon Lescaut,' is busy on his new opera, 'Trilby,' which he writes avowedly for Gemma Bellincioni, who is to create this part in Milan this season. A Milan paper says that the libretto of this opera will be a great surprise, for the staging 'Trilby' is an infinitely more sympathetic character than the heroine of Du Maurier's novel, of whose wonderful voice so much is spoken, but which is never heard. The final act with Trilby's death scene is simply wonderful and a master work of lyric music. Leoncavallo is also composing an opera, 'Trilby,' the libretto of which he wrote himself. His 'Roland of Berlin' the opera which he writes by special request of Emperor William of Germany, is also nearing completion, and will be performed for the first time on any stage at the Royal Opera House of Berlin.

The news of Miss Alice Corrick's success in Australia on the concert platform will give her friends in Christchurch unbounded pleasure, as it is so commonly felt a great future is before this talented girl, for she is only in her teens yet, and had, one might say, only the barest training. Her voice, considering her age, is phenomenal, so is her cultured style.

The Nelson Harmonic Society gave their first concert this year on Friday, April 29. Certainly the Society is to be congratulated on the increase of singing members, and, in consequence, the general improvement of chorus. The concert opened with a Grieg sonata, opus 8, for piano and violin, by Mr Maughan Barnett (Wellington) and Herr Handke. This item for the popular taste was too long; there certainly did seem an unnecessary number of repeats. Schubert's cantata, 'Song of Miriam' came next. Mrs Percy Adams took the solo parts, and Herr Handke conducted. Mrs Adams was in good voice, and although it must have been a difficult and tiring part to sing, she certainly added another success to her already long list. The chorus was uncertain in parts, especially where it began, 'God no more her tide restraining;' but in the difficult fugue towards the finish they acquitted themselves creditably. The second part opened with four pianoforte soli by Mr M. Barnett, two of his own composition and two by Schubert-Liszt. His playing was indeed a treat, especially the Schubert 'Serenade.' He received a tremendous encore, that alone must have showed him how much he was appreciated. He good-naturedly responded by playing a charming little composition of his own. The last item was 'A Song of Empire,' written and conducted by Mr M. Barnett. Mr A. C. Maginuity was vocalist, but he was evidently suffering from a cold, which naturally affected his voice and ear. Mr Barnett, although a stranger to the chorus and orchestra, evidently had them all completely under his control, and the way the chorus managed the madrigal was very dainty. It is to be hoped Mr Barnett was as pleased with Nelson as Nelson was with him.

Donna Quixote.—Mr Justin McCarthy, M.P., tells a curious story regarding the heroine in his novel 'Donna Quixote.' The character, a rich young widow, full of impracticable philanthropic schemes, was entirely his own creation; but a short time after the book was published he received a letter complimenting him on the clever portrait of Mrs _____, who, the writer was glad to know, was a common friend. A year or so later the novelist made the acquaintance of Mrs _____, and found that she was really a living picture of his heroine.

Isaac Disraeli.—There are probably few authors from whom so much is taken with so little acknowledgment as Isaac Disraeli. His books are a mine of curious information, and an incredible amount of this information is being constantly retailed to the public in the pages of the daily and weekly press. It is the fate of most miscellanies to be read only by the few and afterwards to be given in fragments to the many.



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'CYCLING.'

After three years' trial, the use of bicycles by letter carriers in Louisville, Ky., has been found to be a failure, and the wheels have been abandoned. The men say that very often, instead of being a help to quick delivery, they have been a failure, owing to bad weather, muddy and crowded streets and breakdowns.

A method of obtaining the approximate speed at which a rider is cycling is suggested by a cycling paper as follows: The rate of speed is ascertained by noting the number of revolutions which the pedal cranks make in a given number of seconds, the number of seconds in every instance depending upon the gear of the bicycle. For example, a rider whose wheel is geared at 66 goes as many miles per hour as his pedal cranks make revolutions in 11.78 seconds. The following gears and seconds to correspond in this method are given:—Gear 54, seconds 9.04; gear 60, seconds 10.72; gear 66, seconds 11.78; gear 72, seconds 12.84; gear 78, seconds 13.92; gear 84, seconds 15; gear 90, seconds 16.08; gear 96, seconds 17.14. Inasmuch as the ordinary rider would be unable to split seconds with the requisite fitness for this table, the method is good only for a rough calculation.

I am glad to learn, says a writer in the 'Ladies' Own Magazine,' that the proposed Rational Dress League, inaugurated by the members of the Ladies' Cycling Association, has met with far greater response than was anticipated. Some 250 circulars were issued to persons interested in the cause, most of which have been warmly responded to. Lady Harberton is to be president, and an influential committee will be appointed. Provincial branches are to be established, and the whole thing undertaken in a workman-like manner. A gratifying fact is that a number of the sterner sex are tendering hearty support, and that walks and cycling runs are being arranged. A well-known ladies' tailor is preparing some smart costumes for league members.

A cycling writer says: I had occasion recently to warn my readers against a certain class of machines which are being put before the public in plausible advertisements of a catch-penny character; but one of my correspondents whom I advised to steer clear of such machines writes to tell me he is very disappointed with the advice I gave him, as in his opinion, although they are listed at £6 or £7, they look quite equal to others for which he is asked £18 or £20. Well, if my correspondent likes to take the risk, by all means let him buy one. In six months' time I shall be glad to hear if he has altered his views. By the same post that brought his letter I had a complaint from another reader, who says: 'Some eighteen months ago I purchased a machine from one of these firms. I was never able to ride it with any pleasure, the machine was simply flung together, and the material was as soft as bedstead iron. I took it back, but got no redress. About the same time a friend of mine purchased a similar one from the same firm, and the frame all worked loose; it was not made true. The bearings fitted so badly that one could see the balls from the outside.' I give publicity to this as a warning