

Music and Drama.

Jean de Reszke is giving vocal lessons at Paris, for the modest fee of £10 per lesson.

An Australian paper says that when "Tapu" is produced in England a caricature of Mr Chamberlain is to be substituted for that of Mr Reid. This is sheer nonsense; the Censor would not allow it.

Some reminiscences of the late Mme. Antoinette Sterling, written by her son, Mr M. Sterling Mackinlay, the well-known singer, will appear in the August and following numbers of the "Strand Magazine."

The Way We Criticise Now.—A critic in a "David Garrick" notice deferentially asks: "But will Miss Mary Moore think me unkind if I say that I found the utmost difficulty in catching her words? The first essential of acting is to make oneself heard."

Dr. Elgar's work, "The Apostles," scored a great success at the Cologne musical festival. The composer was called for, and received with tremendous enthusiasm.

Miss Hilda Spong has been engaged by Mr Charles Frohman for the American season of "Joseph Entangled," and "Nice and Men."

Mr Maxim Gorki, the Russian novelist, has just completed a new drama, entitled "Summer Visitors," which represents the life and manners of the upper classes in Russia. It is to be performed first in Moscow.

Ever Thine, C. Stine, the New Zealand empressario, was asked his opinion of Westralia (from a theatrical standpoint) to-day. He said: "The first week you're blown up like a balloon to an enormous size. Next week—next week, they stick a pin into you and you bust!"

The most recent strong-man feat is being done in the Old World by a person named Spadoni, who throws a sledge hammer into the air off a spring-land with his foot, and as it falls, catches it on his shoulders and back. One of these times he will catch it on his head.

The jubilee of Crystal Palace was celebrated on June 11th by a great concert, with a chorus and orchestra of 3000 performers, under the direction of Mr. Auguste Manns, now in his 79th year, who founded the Crystal Palace Orchestra in 1855, and last April conducted the last concert of the forty-fifth series. The programme included Mendelssohn's "Hymn of Praise" and Sullivan's "Golden Legend."

Florence Hauser and Wilfred Draycott, of Williamson's Comedy Co., were at one time members of the theatrical company run by the Marquis of Anglesey, who was recently forced to assign his estate through his fondness for buying jewels to display on his own blue-blooded person, and through other expensive tastes.

Miss Olive Evans, of Mr George Stephenson's company, deprecates from her experience the use of the childish voice on the stage. "From thirteen to eighteen years of age," says the lady, "a child either a girl or boy, ought not to sing on the stage, as it strains the voice, and a singer should never dance. The voice cannot be developed to its full power by a dancer. There is more money in a good voice than in the best dancing ever created. The greatest dancer doesn't get the salary of a prima donna."

In Mr Pinero's early days, says Mrs Alice Tweedie, he wrote "Two Hundred a Year" in an afternoon; "Dandy Dick" occupied him three weeks; but as time went on he became more critical of his work. He spent 13 months in completing "The Notorious Mrs Ebbsmith," nine months over "The Second Mrs Tanqueray," and six months over "The Gay Lord Ques," helped in the latter drama, as he said, by the invigorating exercise of his bicycle. He is one of the most painstaking men alive, and over "Latty" he spent two years.

The Williamson Comedy Company are now playing in the larger townships of the North Island prior to the Wellington season. His Excellency the Governor, with which the company finished in Auckland, is a capital specimen of fantastical comedy, joyous nonsense of the intellectual order such as only Gilbert Barrie and Lewis Carroll have previously given us. That it will be caviers to those who can only appreciate the rough and tumble hilarity of such plays as "Tom, Dick, and Harry" or "Charlie's Aunt," but to those who appreciate gentle satire, witty dialogue, and excellent acting, "His Excellency the Governor" will certainly appeal.

According to the critics, Paderewski's piano-thumping makes the listener imagine anything from a no-confidence motion to a balloon ascent. All the criticisms are written in the one style. A sensitive Kansas (U.S.A.) journal said of the Pole: "He reaches out slowly and strokes the piano like a man brushing a girl's hair. You see the moonlight and you're there with your girl, but somehow she doesn't love you. You know the sorrow of that, and that's why we don't like Paderewski." The critic who wrote that, says the "Adelaide," evidently had a girl that didn't love him. What's more, he'd evidently brushed her hair in the moonlight, and its darned unfair on Paderewski to send to his recital a critic who has brushed the hair of a maiden, knowing she loved him not.

The latest thing in biographies is at present on its way out to Australia consigned to J. C. Williamson. The machine has a photograph attachment, and is burdened with the fearsome name of Phonobio-tableau. The machine arrives in the West next week, and will begin to startle Australians at Colgar. The latest picture of the Russo-Japanese war will be shown, and an Australian tour has been arranged under the management of W. J. Lincoln. The contrivance will strike Adelaide about October 1 next.

Though M. Parlofitz, the pianist accompanying Mr. Watkin Mills, is of Polish descent, he was born and educated in London, where his father and uncle, friends of Rubinstein, resided after leaving their own country. At an early age he studied at the Guildhall School of Music, and was the youngest student who ever secured an associateship of that institution. This feat he accomplished before he had attained his thirteenth year. His first tour as a pianist was with the late Madame Antoinette Sterling's company five years ago. M. Parlofitz has twice toured Canada and the United States with Mr. Mills, and has appeared throughout England with Madame Alice Esty and the Meistersingers.

Mr Kyrle Bellow writes, apropos to the "death of plays" question: "A false sense of politeness often induces managers to pay compliments to authors on returning their manuscripts—as a kind of salve to their feelings—for the rejection of their works. Such insincere civility is not only wrong, but also cruel. I have made it a rule, from which I never depart, to receive manuscripts for consideration only on the condition that I offer no opinion on their merits or demerits unless I accept them for production. If one has to offer an opinion, let it at least be a true one."

Miss Antonia Dolores received very eulogistic notices from the London critics on appearing recently at St. James' Hall. The London "Times" identifies her with "Antoinette Trebelli," and adds that "her voice is as fresh as ever, her method is perfect, she has gained maturity of style, and such musicianship as is most rare among singers of high technical accomplishment. Whether in bravura passages or in those requiring more breadth of style, the singer's natural ease of diction, her flexibility of execution, the beautiful quality of the voice, and her artistic intelligence, are alike remarkable." The "Daily Telegraph" remarks: "It was plain from the first that Miss Dolores was an artist of the foremost

rank," and compares her with the once famous Mme. Sontag. The "Standard" is astonished at the improvement made in the ten years' absence. "She is perfect in every branch of vocalisation. Her voice is even throughout, from the highest of her very pure top notes down to the lowest tones, which are richer than is usually found in an organ of such delightful flexibility."

The 11th open evening for visitors in connection with Mr W. H. Webb's School of Music, Grafton-road, took place on Thursday evening last. The programme was, as usual at these concerts, a very interesting one, especially for pianoforte students. The opening item, Schubert's "Symphony," was played with fine finish by Misses A. Dawson, L. Burns, V. Henderson and Mr F. Morton. Another piano quartette, Mozart's "Don Juan," was excellently rendered by Misses E. A. McDonald, J. Heath, A. Jeavons and Mr Webb, as was also the piano duo, Huber's "Sonata," by Miss A. Dawson and Mr Webb. Little Misses Dorothy Nicol and Bertha Cleave each played their solos with considerable taste. Miss E. A. McDonald played carefully a movement from a Beethoven "Sonata," while Mr F. Morton gave a very pleasing performance of "Minuet à l'antique" (Beaupuis). A charming "Mennette" by Grieg was expressively played by two of the juvenile pupils, Misses Dorothy Henderson and Dorothy Nicol. Miss H. Evans and Mr M. Hamilton Hodge contributed vocal items, which were well received, particularly the latter. Mr Webb acted as accompanist.

The Clement Scott matinee at His Majesty's Theatre, London, realised £1300—something like a benefit. Sir Henry Irving played the veteran corporal in "Waterloo," and Mr George Alexander as a villain in the Florentine tragedy, "Flower of the Rose."

"The Rose of the Riviera" continues to ripple along with all the sparkle and splendour of a Catherine wheel, at the Princesses', and one good thing succeeds another, each clever, smart, or amusing, as the case may be. "It is foolish, yet I never laughed so much in my life," an up-to-date woman was heard to declare, says "Melbourne Table Talk," and this is the opinion and experience of everyone. From a dramatic point of view, it is foolish, and the plot is vague, but it strings together a brilliant galaxy of clever turns, cleverly executed, lovely dances, and pretty songs.

A gentleman, who describes himself as a friend and admirer of Bland Holt, writes to the "Bulletin": "In friendship to Blandolt, and with no disrespect to his mummery, I would suggest that he engages a spare hero, heroine and villain. In the brain cell where I store theatrical impressions all Holt's plays have merged into one solid mass, and

when hunting back for any particular play, I simply cut out a stratum composed of Baker, Norman, Miss Rose, Miss Ireland, and Sytan, glued together by memories of 'Oit and 'OH's other half. Call it "The Smashing of the Draught," or "The Fatal Cards harper," it's all the same. It is very handy for the man who writes up theatrical reminiscences, for he can never make a mistake when on Holt's productions, but it gets tiresome. The impression of the last drama simply lies down on top of the others, and having no particular individuality, it is swallowed up like a four-act grindstone in a quicksand. If there was a spare hero, villain and heroine, they could be put on alternately with Baker and Co., and this might make a dividing line of some sort. A still greater idea is that Bland should do the hero occasionally, and let Baker or Norman and Miss Rose be the comic relief, while Mrs Holt, as heroine, is thrown out into a cold world by heavy father Sytan."

The secret of badness has been discovered, and it appears to lie with music. In a recent address at the Actors' Home, States Island (U.S.), Mrs Amelia Holbrook read a paper in which she asserted that certain kinds of music prevented the hair falling out, while other kinds produced badness. "This is startling news," remarks "The Stage," and we trust that its advent in the middle of the opera season will not have a disastrous effect on the audiences. If only the lady had stated whether the "preventive" music was to be found in the tuneful strains of Gounod's "Faust," in the harmonies of Wagner's "Meistersingers," or in the

technical excellence of some of our music-hall ditties, our composers would know in what direction to turn in order to ensure immortal popularity. The idea is one of great possibilities. One can imagine the struggling barber engaging a full band and advertising it as the latest tonic.

Ada Reeve, the charming little song-and-dance actress who helped to make Australia a hard road for second-raters to travel, is just now playing lead in an orthodox comedy. Ada is a "star" on her merits as an artist without introducing variety turns. When she used to work so hard in the Williamson shows this country only dimly knew what a good thing it was getting. We will have to wait a long time before J.C.W. picks up another Ada Reeve (and Bert Gilbert) at an English provincial theatre.

The theatrical slump in London has an exact equivalent in New York, where the playhouses have had a season, absolutely unparalleled for its losses. As a sign of the dreadful business that has been done, it is stated that on one evening at the height of the season the takings at one of New York's most fashionable theatres amounted to only thirty shillings. How bad things have been this season in London may be gathered from the fact that recently a West End theatre took under £30 during a whole week, while at another the week's receipts did not reach £70. A musical comedy, with all the expense of chorus and orchestra, in one evening had takings that just passed £25.

Maud Chetwynd, the pretty dancer of J. C. Williamson's No. 1 Comic Opera Company, leaves the stage shortly, giving up a salary of £1 a week, to marry Mr Arthur Longden, a widower, who is a prominent figure in Melbourne mining circles. As a preliminary to her freedom, Maud, whose name was Gannon before she married in 1896, at the age of 18, Charles Hugh D'Arcy Singleton, obtained a divorce in the Victorian Divorce Court on August 3. The marriage was contracted under peculiar circumstances. It was Dr. Singleton, the old philanthropist, who arranged it, on condition that after the ceremony the pair should separate for ever. All that and a great deal more was stated by Mrs Singleton in her affidavit, on the strength of which Justice A'Beckett granted the divorce. Young Singleton, who was a medical student at the time of his marriage, is in America. Old Dr. Singleton, of Home fame, has fallen on bad days, and is an inmate at the Melbourne Hospital. Maud has had a hard life, having to pay a maid out of her salary, and also maintain her parents and a crippled brother. Her father is 84. Now at the age of 26 she is free again, and marries a wealthy man.

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