



THE QUINLAN OPERA CO.

The enthusiasm with which the above company was originally received remains unabated and has, as a matter-of-fact, gradually increased, until it has reached the high pitch which it has now attained. The Standard Theatre is nightly crowded, with hardly a vacant seat, which is highly satisfactory not only from a financial point of view but also as a striking proof of the homage which the public pay to the great artistes in the company. For that we have such in our midst has from the very first become apparent to the many thousands whom the performers have delighted by their splendid singing and artistic acting. The present week was occupied with repetitions of "Carmen," "The Girl of the Golden West," "Faust," and "Aide," whilst to-night "La Bohème," and to-morrow night "Lohengrin" will be staged. Surely a selection which should, and no doubt will, satisfy the most fastidious among us. This week we will deal more particularly with Puccini's latest opera,

'THE GIRL OF THE GOLDEN WEST.'

as we had no opportunity of doing so last week. The composer evidently belongs to the super-Italian, super-Wagnerian school, for it is no easy matter to find one's way through the chaotic music which pours into the ears of the attentive listener. In this respect it does not compare favourably with either "La Bohème" or "Madame Butterfly"—taking only those works of the same composer which have been produced here by the Quinlan Company. The opera under review is more of the nature of one vast recitative with only here and there a set solo or part song. It seems a pity that a composer like Puccini should have so wasted his eminent talent upon so flimsy a plot, so poor a libretto; for, although the story may lend itself admirably to a drama, or even melodrama, it entirely lacks the qualities which go to make it suitable for grand opera. "Have a whisky and soda" and "Let's play a game of poker," such dialogue set to operatic music is indeed a novel experience, and would cause Richard Wagner's hair to stand on end, not to mention Mendelssohn, Weber, Beethoven, and scores of other composers. In the first and third acts the chorus predominates, whilst the second act, as is the case in most of Puccini's works, is the most dramatic and also the most attractive from a musical point of view. We have repeatedly referred to the splendid work which the chorus of this company has put in, and this is most apparent in this opera. "The Girl of the Golden West" is an opera with only one woman in it, and if we state that this rôle was taken care of by the eminent artiste, Mme. Jeanne Brola, we have thereby stamped upon it the hallmark of the highest possible efficiency, both from a musical and histrionic point of view. In the rôle of Dick Johnson Mr. John Coates had greater opportunities for his talent as an actor than a singer, but wherever and whenever his beautiful tenor sounded through the theatre, it was listened to with rapt delight and attention. Mr. Robert Parker, the Sheriff, had a comparatively big part, and played and sang in that exquisite manner in which we have learned to admire him. Mr. Charles Macgrath, Mr. Sydney Russell, and other eminent soloists of the company had in the opera under review only minor parts, of which they made the best. As usual the orchestra, conducted by Signor Tullio Voghera, did yeoman service and was instrumental to a great extent in making this opera a big success.

HANDEL'S MESSIAH.

On Friday, April 5th (Good Friday), a performance of this famous oratorio such as has never been given before in this country, will take place at the Wanderers' Hall. For this special occasion, the Quinlan Symphony Orchestra will combine with the local Philharmonic Society; the chorus will number no less than 160 trained voices, and as soloists there will be the famous English festival quartette, Agnes Nicholls, Edna Thornton, John Coates and Robert

Parker. The performance will thus indeed be unique, and we strongly advise readers to book at the earliest possible opportunity at Mackay Bros., where the plans are now open. The organisers are ensuring artistic success in every way, and we are asked to state that owing to the rehearsals for the oratorio that are being held there will be no symphony concert given next Sunday evening by the Quinlan Orchestra.

QUINLAN SYMPHONY CONCERT.

Encouraged by the success of their first concert, the Quinlan Orchestra gave a second grand concert on Sunday night last in the big Wanderers' Hall before a crowded house, filled by an enthusiastic, select and appreciative audience. This orchestra, under the combined leadership of their three conductors, Messrs. Knoch, Voghera and Bath, have become deservedly renowned on account of their beautiful and artistic playing in the Standard Theatre. The programme submitted on this occasion was in no wise behind the previous one for its excellence and variety. The "Leonora" Overture No. 3, by Beethoven, is the finest of three overtures of the same name composed by this famous composer, and is generally played before the second act of "Fidelio," by that maestro. It is one of his masterpieces, and has in sweetness and tonation hardly an equal. It was rendered with great perfection by the orchestra and was enthusiastically applauded. The overture to the "Merry Wives of Windsor" forms a great contrast to the preceding work, but appealed, nevertheless, very favourably to the public. The next orchestral piece was Dvorak's "In the New World" symphony, which was heard here for the first time. It has many leanings towards Wagner and other present-day composers, but it requires repeated hearing to fully understand and appreciate it. The second portion included the ever-popular "Pomp and Circumstance," and the "Peer Gynt Suite," one of Grieg's most popular compositions which was played with an unsurpassed correctness and wonderful precision, that roused the audience to prolonged applause. Then followed that prince of overtures, the "Tannhäuser," so well-known by now to patrons of the Quinlan Opera Company, which was listened to by the vast audience with rapt attention, being conducted by Herr Knoch with supreme majesty, the audience, after the finish, signifying their appreciation with rapturous applause. Finally—and we may say last, but not least—the concert was brought to a conclusion by Tchaikowsky's grand overture "1812," which was played on this occasion by special request. Although many, perhaps most of those present, were acquainted with this superb work, the rendering of it by this orchestra must have come like a revelation to them, for it was played with a perfection of detail which has locally never been reached. The soloists on this occasion were two very prominent members of the Opera Company, Miss Agness Nicholls and Mr. John Harrison, both of whom came in for a goodly share of the evening's applause.

THE EMPIRE.

The good company form a powerful attraction; so much so that in spite of the numerous other "shows" at present appealing to Johannesburg audiences, there are good "houses" every night at our popular music-hall. The Miles-Stavordale Quintette are a perfect host in themselves and it is with the greatest difficulty and only after repeated encores are given that the audiences allow them to leave the stage. It may be said without the slightest exaggeration that the Quintette give a beautiful and unique performance, and thoroughly deserve the long-continued plaudits of their hearers. The Sisters Bradford, especially the one acting as the lady dancer, give a wonderful exposition of the terpsichorean art. Jean and Josie continue to thrill the audience with their almost uncanny contortions and twistings. Mlle. Ayoe is as winsome and charming as ever in her songs; Will. H. Kuming is very entertaining with his imitations. The Frank L. Gregory troupe are quickness and agility themselves in their hoop-juggling act. Miss Beth Tate is as obliging as her songs are popular, whilst her dresses are the admiration of the stern, and the envy of the fair, sex. Miss Lizzie Glenroy, Mr. Phil Parsons and, last but not least, the bioscope, complete a programme that taken all together is one that would do credit to even the well-known London music-halls.

THE GRAND.

More than ever this week the enterprising management of the Grand Theatre have excelled themselves with the company they are at present submitting to large and enthusiastic audiences. Monday night witnessed the *debut* of one of London's most novel music-hall stars, Will van Allen, the "musical tramp," and all who love mirth, merriment and music should make a point of visiting the Grand during his performances there, for if ever there was a combination of "the three m's" it is to be found in Will van Allen's "turn." He plays with great skill the banjo, saxophone and a one-string viola, and not only does he extract beautiful music from these instruments, but from everything that comes to his hand—knives, forks, etc.—he produces musical sounds. This turn is interspersed with very amusing patter. In short his whole performance is one that places Will van Allen on a very high rung in the ladder of music-hall reputation. Miss Dora Gordon is another new "turn," and has already proved herself a very popular comedienne. Bert Williams is a ventriloquist of a high order of merit and capability, and he chats and sings with his doll "Ted" in a manner that freely deserves for him the long-continued applause of the appreciative audiences. Miss Flora Cromer, Impressionist, is in the second week of her season, and is a strong favourite with the Grand's audiences. The "alarum" raised by certain members of the public against her Yiddisher song was only another example of *viel geschrei um nichts*. The pictures were all, as usual, very fine ones, including an excellent production of Thackeray's "Vanity Fair."



IN OTHER LANDS.

(Jewish News and Items of Jewish Interest from all parts of the World.)

ENGLAND.**The Rabbinate.**

Our readers have been kept informed in these columns of the disagreement between the United Synagogue and the Federation of Synagogues regarding the Chief Rabbinate question and with the latter's appointment of a Chief Minister, in connection with which Lady Swathling held a series of afternoon receptions. Well, in mail week, a meeting to protest against the attitude of the honorary officers of the Federation of Synagogues with regard to their withdrawal from the sub-committee appointed by the United Synagogue to appoint a Chief Rabbi, and to their action in connection with the election of a Chief Minister for the Federation was held in London. There were fifty delegates present, representing sixteen synagogues. The following two resolutions were carried unanimously:—

(1) "That this meeting of delegates strongly protests against the attitude taken up by the gentlemen appointed by them to represent the Federation on the committee of the United Synagogue appointed for the election of a Chief Rabbi, inasmuch as these gentlemen have withdrawn from taking any further part in the matter without consulting or informing the delegates as to their intentions. That this meeting desires to place on record its entire confidence and satisfaction with the very fair arrangements made by the United Synagogue in their method of election of a Chief Rabbi, and that the delegates of the Federation do not wish to interfere with these arrangements. If, therefore, the Federation representatives persist in the attitude they have assumed in withdrawing, they must make way for the gentlemen to be appointed who will be willing to act as the members of the Federation desire."

(2) "That this meeting of delegates of the Federation of Synagogues strongly disapproves of the action of the officials of the Federation in proceeding with the election of a new Chief Minister for the Federation without consulting the delegates in any way whatever. That this meeting desires to express their full confidence and respect for their present Chief Minister, the Rev. Dayan Chaikin, who they feel confident is able and willing to continue to act as their Chief Minister, a position he has always occupied to the satisfaction of all concerned. It is hoped, therefore, that the officials of the Federation for the sake of all concerned will not proceed further with this matter."

RUSSIA.

The *Novoe Vremya* has published a telegram from Kieff, announcing the despatch of a Nationalist Memorial to the Ministers of the Interior, Finance, and Commerce against the Kieff Jewish merchants (whose expulsion is desired by the reactionaries), and it was signed by the "Chief of the District, Trepoff." This is the title and the name of the Governor-General of Kieff, and surprise is expressed everywhere at the phenomenon of either a high official communicating to the press party protests against views supported by the Premier, or of a correspondent being permitted to assume the name of so high an officer of the State. The memorial itself is a bitter attack on the Jews and the State Bank. After a plea for the Russification of commerce, the Jews are accused of killing M. Stolypin for trying to bring into effect such just schemes, and the State Bank is blamed for taking Russian money and supplying it to Jews to convert Kieff into a Jewish city and to make good the losses suffered by the Jews during the popular outbreaks (the pogroms). Kieff and its officials, according to the Nationalists, are in Jewish hands in spite of all restrictions. "The Jews even build for their money orthodox churches," they wrote, "and they wish to make real the statements of a book circulated among them, that Southern Russia was bequeathed to their ancestors, and that the Dnieper was a Jewish river." The reference to Jews building churches is undoubtedly intended for a well-known Kieff Jewish philanthropist, who could only obtain official consent to a Jewish charitable scheme on condition that a donation were sent to a Russian church fund. M. Afanasyev, a special friend of the Russian Premier, round whom the Nationalist attack centred, made a most effective reply. Although severely libelled, he stated that he declined to take the Nationalist course of instituting proceedings against deputies for statements made in the Duma, as he believed in freedom of speech in the House. His expert statement showed that the anti-Jewish restrictions did seriously harass Jewish traders, who, far from monopolising the State Bank, only constituted 10 per cent. of its customers. That the State Bank did not lose by dealing with Jews, he proved by the excellent financial position of the branch, the clear profit of which now amounts to a million roubles a year, as against 400,000 roubles per annum gained before his régime. "As a matter of fact," he said, "the Nationalist Mutual Credit Society obtains ample support from the State Bank. They cannot forgive me, however, my help to the Jews who suffered in the 1905 pogrom, and my article in an official organ describing the misery created by the massacre. They are angry because I am not one of their partisans."—The Director of the Kieff Volga-Kama Bank stated that the measure advocated against the Jewish merchants in Kieff would do as much harm as the last pogrom. Similar views were expressed by the chief broker of the Kieff Exchange.

TURKEY.

It is stated that the Turkish Council of Ministers having declined to accept the resignation of the Chief Rabbi Haim Nahum—as reported in our last week's issue—it is probable that the National Assembly will be convened. It would seem that the statement in the Constantinople Jewish press that the Chief Rabbi has taken steps for the withdrawal of his resignation is true. The formal refusal by the Government to accept his resignation is likely to have been preceded by an understanding with the Chief Rabbi. It is at present impossible to foresee how the differences within the community will be solved, and especially what the relations will be between the Chief Rabbi and the *Ashkenasic* Community and the Consistory (Lay Council).

From another source we learn that the Council of Ministers, in refusing to accept the resignation of the Chief Rabbi of Turkey, has authorised him to exercise all the prerogatives which the firman of his nomination granted him, and to bring to reason, with the support of the Government, all who contravene the laws and organic statutes of the community. The Prime Minister, in communicating to the Chief Rabbi the decision of the Cabinet, requested him to communicate to the Jewish Consistory the Government's disapproval of its action. Through this step, the prestige and authority of the Chief Rabbi will be augmented, and, fortified by the concurrence of the Government, he will adopt an energetic line of action in the management of communal affairs. His first act will be to invite the Consistory publicly to annul all its recent decisions that were taken without his knowledge, and are contrary to the organic statutes of the community, which have a binding force.