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BERLIN

In remembrance of her visit, which she recently paid to the American Church on Motz Strasse, the Empress has presented the church library with a copy of an interesting work published some months ago, viz. the first part of Queen Victoria's letters, in three volumes. This work has been published after King Edward himself had carefully selected the letters written by or to his mother. Beginning with her childhood they cover the period up to the year of 1861, inclusive. In her accompanying letter the Empress states that she was greatly pleased with everything she had seen in the American Church, and that she will continue to take great interest in the welfare of the church.

The Exhibition of Old English Masterworks in the Royal Academy of Arts, Pariser Platz 4, is so crowded every day that the management was compelled to raise the admission fee for Sunday to five marks, instead of two marks. But on week-days the regular price of two marks will be maintained. Last Friday the Crown Prince and the Crown Princess visited the exhibition.

Just in time for the big American Minstrel Show, which is to help to finance the American Benevolent Fund, the Board of Management have published their annual report to show the working and the needs of this fund. The financial status is as follows: including last year's balance of $\text{M} 2,075$ the total receipts during the last calendar year amounted to $\text{M} 7,031.28$; the main item being subscriptions to the amount of $\text{M} 3,227.25$. The expenses were $\text{M} 4,900.90$ spent for relieving people in distress, $\text{M} 499.5$ for general running expenses, and $\text{M} 1,500$ which were invested as a sinking fund.

The working of this committee cannot be better described than in their own words. The report says on that subject:

"The foundation-idea of this Fund was to raise, at the beginning of each year, by voluntary subscriptions from among American business-houses and American individuals temporarily or permanently resident here, an amount of money large enough to relieve all worthy cases of Americans in distress in Berlin during the year. You will be surprised to learn that subscriptions in 1907 were made by only 86 persons and firms—a figure out of all proportion to the total number. We therefore not only earnestly invite last year's subscribers to renew their subscriptions for 1908, but to induce their friends and acquaintances in the American colony to give us their support, in order that the burden of affording relief may be distributed and not borne by the comparatively few.

Attention is once more called to the fact that no relief is granted except after the fullest possible investigation of the applicant's worthiness. The special "Committee of Investigation" has been most conscientious and painstaking in its efforts. It held no less than twenty-four meetings during the year, at which applicants were personally cross-examined and the merit of their representations established before assistance was given. The following special Report gives an idea of some types of cases relieved:

"The investigating committee has acted upon all important cases coming before it requiring a consensus of opinion; it has sent back to their adopted country many German-Americans and especially mothers and children, who have found themselves stranded in Germany without any means of support; it has also sent back a veteran of the Civil war and pensioner of the United States government; it has afforded assistance to a German who fought in the war mentioned and is also a pensioner; it is at present affording assistance to an American woman with eight children, the eldest sixteen, for whom a situation was found in an American firm; in dispensing which aid, however, the committee has endeavoured to save the self-respect of the persons helped and assisted them solely to help themselves. In the special case mentioned the committee received practical aid from two ladies of the American colony. One American woman in Berlin who had got into difficulties was, by a timely loan, enabled to re-instate herself and is now again self-supporting. In every case aid has been given with a sole view to assisting the persons to help themselves and not become a burden on the community."

Assistance has been given in all cases as "loans." One must reckon with the average ingratitude encountered in charity work and with the nonchalance with which promises made in stress are broken in prosperity, but it is gratifying to note that no less than 1,091 marks was paid back to the treasurer during 1907. Many of these repayments were from students, who found themselves in financial straits pending the delayed arrival of remittances and from other causes, and were saved from the pawn-shop and the "loan-shark."

(Continued on page 2.)



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GENERAL NEWS.

ENGLISH NEWS.

THE CROWN JEWELS MYSTERY.

Sir Arthur Vicars, the custodian of the Crown jewels that were stolen from Dublin Castle some months ago, has been dismissed from his office as Ulster King of Arms, his successor being Captain Nevile R. Wilkinson.

General dissatisfaction prevails at the action of the Government throughout this matter, and it is understood that questions will shortly be asked in Parliament, and a demand for a thorough investigation brought forward.

THE "RING" IN LONDON.

That the "Ring" performances at Covent Garden, so far as they have gone, have been a triumphant success, is admitted by those best qualified to judge, and it is not surprising to learn that for the second cycle all reserved seats were sold, with the exception of some orchestra stalls, a few boxes, and places in the gallery slips, where one always sees a craning crowd when a Melba, a Caruso, or a Tetrassini is singing. Throughout the week, says the *Globe*, the performances have been carried on in that Bayreuthian darkness which the master held to be necessary to the full enjoyment of his work. The problem of showing persons to their seats after darkness has fallen—in other words, when the curtain has gone up—has been solved by providing the attendants with electric torches. Everyone who heard Mr. Walter Hyde as *Siegfried* in *The Valkyrie* last week is loud in praise of the performance.

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DRESDEN

We regret to record the death of Edward Benzler, Esq., in London, on Friday, January 31st. His family had been connected with Russia and Dresden for many years in the past, and he himself made Dresden his residence until, quite recently, health considerations induced him to seek a milder climate in the winter. He was deeply esteemed by all who knew him for his sincerity and generosity of nature, and especially by the congregation of All Saints' for his munificent liberality and devoted attachment to the English Church.

Countess von Hohenthal und Bergen will resume her receptions today (Tuesday) and will hold them as heretofore, until further notice, every Tuesday from 2 to 5 p. m. at the Minister Hotel, See Strasse 18, with the exception of March 3rd.

Grand Sacred Concert by the Lehmann-Osten Choir. In the Martin Luther Kirche on Sunday afternoon a grand sacred concert was given by the Lehmann-Osten Choir for the benefit of the sick and poor in the parish. That was certainly a praiseworthy object, and the fairly large attendance should secure to those in whose interests the concert was given a considerable alleviation of their needs. In view of the benevolent purpose of the concert-givers criticism must not be too strict. The programme was a varied one, the gold of real works of art being marred by the tinsel of pieces of little merit. Harmless dulness, as in Wermann's "Frühlingsgruss," one can put up with, but the want of taste evinced in the arrangement of Beethoven's majestic stage-song "Die Ehre Gottes in der Natur," or of Bizet's "Agnus Dei," for the cornet-à-piston challenges the sharpest objection, even when they are sonorously rendered, as they were by Herr Wiggert. Thank Heaven! the exquisite art of Frau Nast made ample amends for such unsavoury morsels; to listen to the wonderfully sweet tones of her voice, the absolute beauty of which was penetrated and animated by so much warmth of heart, was a pure and quite unearthly delight. Besides Frau Nast, another artist of rank was heard—Frau Bauer-Ziech, whose extraordinary harp-playing is so well-known that nothing new need be said of it here. But in this church Frau Bauer-Ziech had to contend with the tricks of the changing temperature, and could not keep her instrument in perfect tune. The concert-singer Herr Enderlein afforded pleasure with his fine resonant baritone voice, which, however, is not as yet fully cultivated. Consequently he could not do full justice to the meaning of his solo songs. His singing was most effective in Reinhold Becker's admirable composition "Wo du hingehst". In this his sonorous baritone mingled in the happiest manner with the voices of the ladies' choir, and the effect was very good. The choral numbers showed careful preparation and a rich volume of tone throughout. In particular, the 4-part Chorale "Ich weiss, mein Gott", by Max Reger, for *à capella* Choir, left a deep impression. Herr Richard Schmidt, in his playing of the E-flat Sonata of Bach, showed considerable skill as an organist but had not full scope for his art owing to the limited capabilities of the instrument.

M. N.

Concerts arranged by the firm of F. Ries are as follows:—

Dr. Henry Thode will give a lecture on February 8 in the Vereinshaus entitled "Richard Wagner and the Tragic Stage in Bayreuth" for the benefit of the Richard Wagner *Stipendium*, as has already been announced. The complete programme for Ida Pepper's vocal concert in the Neustädter Kasino on Saturday February 8, is as follows: Giordani's *Caro mio ben*; Pergolesi's *Se tu m'ami, se sospiri*; Martini's *Plaisir d'amour*; Schubert's "Sehnsucht", "Das Echo", "Im Abendrot"; Brahms' "Acht Zigeunerlieder"; Strauss' "Ruhe, meine Seele", "Wiegenlied"; Wolf's "Gesang Weyla's", "Der Freund". Accompanist Herr Karl Pretzsch.

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