

the time of the Republic in France, at Douay, a small town in La Vendée. The niece of the mayor is betrothed to a republican soldier; but to protect her foster-brother, a royalist marquis, who seeks refuge in the house, she persuades him to assume the name of her lover, and is, in consequence, almost forced by her uncle into a marriage with the wrong man. The death of Robespierre, which occurs just at the right time, at once solves the difficulty, and enables the happy bride, who is now restored to her betrothed, to express her joy in the usual florid *finale*. Presuming that this is the first work of a young composer, there is every hope for his future. A ten years' residence in Paris has evidently had its effect in creating a love for the fascinating sparkle of the French school, and consequently in distracting the mind from that earnest and conscientious study without which the highest rank in art can never be attained; but he has done wisely in writing within his powers, and there is a feeling for dramatic effect throughout his operetta which keeps the attention alive. We shall be glad to find in a second work that he relies more upon himself, and that the influences outside the art are not suffered to cramp the natural flow of his ideas. We must at once say that his songs are the weakest part of his music;—not that they are destitute of grace, but that they are not sufficiently original to command attention. Mr. Harrison's ballad, "Look, this is joy," is merely the inevitable commonplace string of passages to which we have latterly been so accustomed in English opera, that the intelligent amongst the audience have almost begun to look upon the first tenor as their natural enemy. Beyond these prefatory remarks—made in all kindness of spirit—we have little but praise. His dramatic writing evinces a talent which must some day develop itself in a more important work. The trio in which the mayor is led to believe that the marquis is the republican soldier to whom his niece is betrothed, is excellent throughout, and the laughing *finale* elicited a well-merited *encore*. The quartet, "Fie, for shame, sir," is also very cleverly written; and the duet for soprano and tenor, "What'er may be our fate," has a smooth and vocal melody with which the accompaniment of the chorus is skilfully combined. Miss Louisa Pyne as *Fanchette*, sang extremely well, especially in the solo, "How sad all nature seems to be," the *encore* to which was, however, chiefly owing to the long concluding *cadenza*, with flute obbligato. Mr. W. Harrison acted with spirit the part of the marquis, and sang the sentimental music in his usual sentimental style. Mr. H. Corri played the part of the fussy mayor with much humour; and if he could only find out where character ends and caricature commences, he would prove most useful in comic opera. The same may be said of Mr. J. Rouse, as *Pierre Poulot*, the republican soldier, who is betrothed to *Fanchette*, and Mr. Aynsley Cook, as the corporal, both of whom should take a lesson from the French stage, if they wish to know how to be humorous without being obtrusive. We must not omit to mention that the overture is spirited and melodious, and that the instrumentation throughout the operetta is clear and generally free from exaggeration. Mr. Levey was called for at the fall of the curtain, and received the well-merited applause of the audience. On the whole, we have much pleasure in recording a success which will, we trust, bring profit to the establishment, and act as an incentive to increased exertion on the part of the young composer. We are glad to find that Mr. G. A. Macfarren's opera, on the subject of *She stoops to conquer*, is already in an active state of preparation.

#### HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

ON Saturday, the 23rd ult., *Faust*, translated into English, was produced at this establishment; and as no other opera has been mentioned in the opening prospectus, we presume that the firm hold it has taken of the public, added to the novelty of its English costume, has induced

the management to venture on a "Faust season." Judging by its reception on Saturday evening, we see no reason to doubt the success of the experiment; and the admirable manner in which the opera was sung throughout, with English vocalists in four of the principal parts, must still more confirm the views we have so often expressed, that the materials for native opera, with an audience eagerly ready to appreciate, lie within the grasp of any manager who feels that a fair hearing for the English composer is the one thing wanting. The part of *Margarita* is admirably suited to Madame Lemmens-Sherrington; and although we miss the power of Titiens, where power is essential, she invests the part with so much of that artless grace inseparable from our own ideal of the beautiful peasant girl, that with a voice admirably trained, and a fair knowledge of the stage, so even a performance of this difficult character is presented, as to leave a thoroughly satisfactory impression on the audience. The "bijou" song was deliciously sung; and in the garden scene, where she plucks the flower as the well-known love-test, the tenderness which she threw into her maidenly accents of doubt in the truth of *Faust*, added an infinite charm to the delicate music of this most beautiful of all love-scenes. Mr. Sims Reeves has already played the part of *Faust*, and we need scarcely say that he sang the very arduous music of the character with his accustomed care and finish. A certain hardness in his acting, which appears only to arise from want of practice, has yet to be conquered; and in the present dearth of tenor singers, we should be glad to find that, instead of the meteoric appearances which he has hitherto made on the stage, he had really resolved to devote his fine voice to the service of the lyrical drama. Much as we admire Mr. Sims Reeves in the concert-room—and especially in the sacred concert-room—we cannot consent that he should become only an occasional member of an operatic company. Of Mr. Santley, who played *Valentine*, we have little new to say, singing and acting as he does in every part with the conscientious zeal of a finished artist; but on this occasion a new cavatina, written for him by M. Gounod, gave an additional importance to the character. This cavatina, based on the major subject in the orchestral prelude to the opera, occurs naturally enough in its situation, and materially heightens the effect of the scene. Signor Marchesi sang the music of *Mephistophiles* carefully throughout; but the part has no material points of attraction, and we fear that all singers will find it a somewhat thankless character. We have but space to record the success of Madlle. Florence Lancia in *Siebel*, who sang extremely well, but nervously; and of M. Dussek, in *Wagner*, a small part, but one important to the general effect. Madame Tacani resumed her old character of *Martha*. The opera was well placed upon the stage, the scenic effects being duly studied and arranged. We should however have preferred the organ, in the fourth act, which is so evidently intended as a feature by the composer, to have been brought out with greater fulness of tone. The effect was so exceedingly weak, that the dramatic intention was almost destroyed. The English version of the opera, which its author, Mr. H. F. Chorley, tells us is not to be accepted as a translation, is unnecessarily harsh in many parts; so much so, indeed, that the vocalists—whether with or without the author's permission, we have no means of knowing—continually substituted other words, as good for the sense, and infinitely better for the sound, than those in the printed copy. There is feeling, however, in much of the poetry; and as the excuse of its being a literal translation cannot be urged for its defects, we trust that a little revision may be given to the book, so that it may become a standard English version of one of the most successful operas of modern times. The principal singers were continually called on during the progress of the opera, and greeted with the loudest applause from a house crowded in every part.