

Week-End

RACHMANINOFF.

Mr. Rachmaninoff began his recital at Queen's Hall yesterday with the Bach-Liszt Fantasia and Fugue in G minor. The fugue he took at a pace that was astounding in more ways than one, but his passionate rhythm, his unfailing control, the vitality of his tone, the white heat at which his mental conception seemed to pass to his fingers—all this made an intoxicating effect. He seemed scarcely to be playing at all. If we hold that Mr. Rachmaninoff is great in an obvious way it is because he does not demand such imagination from his audience as those do who strive for the impossible—to perfect themselves, as Spengler would say, not their performances. It is for this reason that Mr. Rachmaninoff is no Beethoven player. An even more celebrated pianist than he once confessed that the op. 109 was his favourite because of all Beethoven's sonatas it was the one that most resembled Chopin. Yesterday Mr. Rachmaninoff went further, and turned it into the "Prelude, Tarantelle, et Variations Brillantes" he himself had not composed. But in Chopin—in the F minor Mazurka and the E flat Rondo—he played miraculously. The Rondo is sorry stuff; no one but Rachmaninoff would dare to play it, let alone delight us with it.