

posure—"you hate me—why, I know not. I have never injured you—never avenged the in-expiable wrong you did me."

"Wrong!—you a man of the world! Wrong! Call it so if you will then," he added shrinking-ly, for Audley's brow grew terrible. "But have I not atoned it? Would you ever have lived in this palace, and ruled this country as one of the most influential of its ministers, but for my management—my whispers to the wealthy Miss Leslie? Come, but for me what would you have been—perhaps a beggar?"

"What shall I be now if I live? Then I should not have been a beggar; poor perhaps in money, but rich—rich in all that now leaves my life bankrupt. Gold has not thriven with me; how should it. And this fortune—it has passed for the main part into your hands. Be patient, you will have it all ere long. But there is one man in the world who has loved me from a boy, and woe to you if ever he learn that he has the right to despise me!"

"Egerton, my good fellow," said Levy, with great composure, "you need not threaten me, for what interest can I possibly have in tale-telling to Lord L'Estrange? As to hating you—pooh! You snub me in private, you cut me in public, you refuse to come to my dinners, you'll not ask me to your own; still there is no man I like better, nor would more willingly serve. When do you want the £5000?"

"Perhaps in one month, perhaps not for three or four. Let it be ready when required."

"Enough; depend on it. Have you any other commands?"

"None."

"I will take my leave, then. By the by, what do you suppose the Hazelden rental is worth—net?"

"I don't know nor care. You have no designs upon that, too?"

"Well, I like keeping up family connections. Mr. Frank seems a liberal young gentleman."

Before Egerton could answer, the baron had glided to the door, and, nodding pleasantly, vanished with that nod.

Egerton remained standing on his solitary hearth. A drear, single man's room it was, from wall to wall, despite its fretted ceilings and official pomp of Bramah *escritoires* and red boxes. Drear and cheerless—no trace of woman's habitation—no vestige of intruding, happy children. There stood the austere man alone. And then with a deep sigh he muttered, "Thank heaven, not for long—it will not last long."

Repeating those words, he mechanically locked up his papers, and pressed his hand to his heart for an instant, as if a spasm had shot through it.

"So—I must shun all emotion!" said he, shaking his head gently.

In five minutes more, Audley Egerton was in the streets, his mien erect, and his step firm as ever.

"That man is made of bronze," said a leader

of the Opposition to a friend as they rode past the minister. "What would I give for his nerves!"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE OPERA.

BY THOMAS CARLYLE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE LONDON KEEPSAKE:

"DEAR P.—Not having any thing of my own which I could contribute (as is my wish and duty) to this pious Adventure of yours, and not being able in these hot busy days to get any thing ready, I decide to offer you a bit of an Excerpt from that singular 'Conspectus of England,' lately written, not yet printed, by Professor Ezechiel Peasemeal, a distinguished American friend of mine. Dr. Peasemeal will excuse my printing it here. His 'Conspectus,' a work of some extent, has already been crowned by the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Bunkum, which includes, as you know, the chief thinkers of the New World; and it will probably be printed entire in their 'Transactions' one day. Meanwhile let your readers have the first taste of it; and much good may it do them and you!"—T. C.]

MUSIC is well said to be the speech of angels; in fact, nothing among the utterances allowed to man is felt to be so divine. It brings us near to the Infinite; we look, for moments, across the cloudy elements, into the eternal Sea of Light, when song leads and inspires us. Serious nations, all nations that can still listen to the mandate of nature, have prized song and music as the highest; as a vehicle for worship, for prophecy, and for whatsoever in them was divine. Their singer was a *vates*, admitted to the council of the universe, friend of the gods, and choicest benefactor to man.

Reader, it was actually so in Greek, in Roman, in Moslem, Christian, most of all in Old-Hebrew times: and if you look how it now is, you will find a change that should astonish you. Good Heavens, from a Psalm of Asaph to a seat at the London Opera in the Haymarket, what a road have men traveled! The waste that is made in music is probably among the saddest of all our squanderings of God's gifts. Music has, for a long time past, been awfully mad, divorced from sense and fact; and runs about now as an open Bedlamite, for a good many generations back, bragging that she has nothing to do with sense and fact, but with fiction and delirium only; and stares with unaffected amazement, not able to suppress an elegant burst of witty laughter, at my suggesting the old fact to her.

Fact nevertheless it is, forgotten, and fallen ridiculous as it may be. Tyrtæus, who had a little music, did not sing Barbers of Seville, but the need of beating back one's country's enemies; a most *true* song, to which the hearts of men did burst responsive into fiery melody, followed by fiery strokes before long. Sophocles also sang, and showed in grand dramatic rhythm and melody, not a fable but a fact, the best he could interpret it: the judgments of Eternal Deity upon the erring sons of men. Æschylus, Sophocles, all noble poets were priests as well; and sang the *truest* (which was also the divinest) they had been privileged to discover here below. To "sing the praise of God," that, you will find, if you can interpret old words, and see what new

things they mean, was always, and will always be, the business of the singer. He who forsakes that business, and, wasting our divinest gifts, sings the praise of Chaos, what shall we say of him!

David, king of Judah, a soul inspired by divine music and much other heroism, was wont to pour himself in song; he, with seer's eye and heart, discerned the Godlike amid the Human; struck tones that were an echo of the sphere-harmonies, and are still felt to be such. Reader, art thou one of a thousand, able still to read a Psalm of David, and catch some echo of it through the old dim centuries; feeling far off, in thy own heart, what it once was to other hearts made as thine! To sing it attempt not, for it is impossible in this late time; only know that it once was sung. Then go to the Opera, and hear, with unspeakable reflections, what men now sing!

Of the Haymarket Opera my account, in fine, is this:—Lustres, candelabras, painting, gilding at discretion: a hall as of the Caliph Alraschid, or him that commanded the slaves of the Lamp; a hall as if fitted up by the genies, regardless of expense. Upholstery, and the outlay of human capital, could do no more. Artists, too, as they are called, have been got together from the ends of the world, regardless likewise of expense, to do dancing and singing, some of them even geniuses in their craft. One singer in particular, called Coletti or some such name, seemed to me, by the cast of his face, by the tones of his voice, by his general bearing, so far as I could read it, to be a man of deep and ardent sensibilities, of delicate intuitions, just sympathies; originally an almost poetic soul, or man of *genius* as we term it; stamped by Nature as capable of far other work than squalling here, like a blind Samson, to make the Philistines sport!

Nay, all of them had aptitudes, perhaps of a distinguished kind; and must, by their own and other people's labor, have got a training equal or superior in toilsomeness, earnest assiduity, and patient travail, to what breeds men to the most arduous trades. I speak not of kings, grandees, or the like show-figures; but few soldiers, judges, men of letters, can have had such pains taken with them. The very ballet-girls, with their muslin saucers round them, were perhaps little short of miraculous; whirling and spinning there in strange mad vortexes, and then suddenly fixing themselves motionless, each upon her left or right great-toe, with the other leg stretched out at an angle of ninety degrees; as if you had suddenly pricked into the floor, by one of their points, a pair, or rather a multitudinous cohort, of mad restlessly jumping and clipping scissors, and so bidden them rest, with opened blades, and stand still, in the Devil's name! A truly notable motion; marvelous, almost miraculous, were not the people there so used to it. Motion peculiar to the Opera; perhaps the ugliest, and surely one of the most difficult, ever taught a female creature in this world. Nature abhors it; but Art does at least admit it to border on the impossible. One little Cerito, or Taglioni the Se-

cond, that night when I was there, went bounding from the floor as if she had been made of indian-rubber, or filled with hydrogen gas, and inclined by positive levity to bolt through the ceiling: perhaps neither Semiramis nor Catharine the Second had bred herself so carefully.

Such talent, and such martyrdom of training, gathered from the four winds, was now here, to do its feat and be paid for it. Regardless of expense, indeed! The purse of Fortunatus seemed to have opened itself, and the divine art of Musical Sound and Rhythmic Motion was welcomed with an explosion of all the magnificences which the other arts, fine and coarse, could achieve. For you are to think of some Rossini or Bellini in the rear of it, too; to say nothing of the Stanfields, and hosts of scene-painters, machinists, engineers, enterprisers—fit to have taken Gibraltar, written the History of England, or reduced Ireland into Industrial Regiments, had they so set their minds to it!

Alas, and all of these notable or noticeable human talents, and excellent perseverances and energies, backed by mountains of wealth, and led by the divine art of Music and Rhythm vouchsafed by Heaven to them and us, what was to be the issue here this evening? An hour's amusement, not amusing either, but wearisome and dreary, to a high-dizened select Populace of male and female persons, who seemed to me not much worth amusing! Could any one have pealed into their hearts once, one true thought, and glimpse of self-vision: "High-dizened, most expensive persons, Aristocracy so-called, or *Best* of the World, beware, beware what proofs you give of betterness and bestness!" And then the salutary pang of conscience in reply: "A select Populace, with money in its purse, and drilled a little by the posture-maker: good Heavens! if that were what, here and every where in God's Creation, I *am*? And a world all dying because I am, and shew myself to be, and to have long been, even that! John, the carriage, the carriage; swift! Let me go home in silence, to reflection, perhaps to sackcloth and ashes!" This, and not amusement, would have profited those high-dizened persons.

Amusement, at any rate, they did not get from Euterpe and Melpomene. These two Muses, sent for, regardless of expense, I could see, were but the vehicle of a kind of service which I judged to be Paphian rather. Young beauties of both sexes use their opera-glasses, you could notice, not entirely for looking at the stage. And it must be owned the light, in this explosion of all the upholsteries and the human fine arts and coarse, was magical; and made your fair one an Armida—if you liked her better so. Nay, certain old Improper-Females (of quality), in their rouge and jewels, even these looked some *reminiscence* of enchantment; and I saw this and the other lean domestic Dandy, with icy smile on his old worn face; this and the other Marquis Singedelomme, Prince Mahogany, or the like foreign Dignitary, tripping into the boxes of said females; grinning there awhile, with dyed mustaches and

macassar-oil graciousity, and then tripping *out* again : and, in fact, I perceived that Coletti and Cerito and the Rhythmic Arts were a mere accompaniment here.

Wonderful to see ; and sad, if you had eyes ! Do but think of it. Cleopatra threw pearls into her drink, in mere waste ; which was reckoned foolish of her. But here had the Modern Aristocracy of men brought the divinest of its Arts, heavenly Music itself ; and piling all the upholsteries and ingenuities that other human art could do, had lighted them into a bonfire to illuminate an hour's flirtation of Singedelomme, Mahogany, and these Improper-Persons ! Never in Nature had I seen such waste before. O Coletti, you whose inborn melody, once of kindred as I judged to 'the Melodies eternal,' might have valiantly weeded out this and the other false thing from the ways of men, and made a bit of God's creation more melodious—they have purchased you away from that ; chained you to the wheel of Prince Mahogany's chariot, and here you make sport for a macassar Singedelomme and his Improper-Females past the prime of life ! Wretched spiritual Nigger, oh, if you *had* some genius, and were not a born Nigger with mere appetite for pumpkin, should you have endured such a lot ? I lament for *you*, beyond all other expenses. Other expenses are light ; you are the Cleopatra's pearl that should not have been flung into Mahogany's claret-cup. And Rossini, too, and Mozart, and Bellini— Oh Heavens, when I think that Music too is condemned to be mad and to burn herself, to this end, on such a funeral pile—your celestial Operahouse grows dark and infernal to me ! Behind its glitter stalks the shadow of Eternal Death ; through it too I look not 'up into the divine eye,' as Richter has it, 'but down into the bottomless eyesocket'—not up toward God, Heaven, and the Throne of Truth, but too truly down toward Falsity, Vacuity, and the dwelling-place of Everlasting Despair. . . .

Good sirs, surely I by no means expect the Opera will abolish itself this year or the next. But if you ask me, Why heroes are not born now, why heroisms are not done now ? I will answer you, It is a world all calculated for strangling of heroisms. At every ingress into life, the genius of the world lies in wait for heroisms, and by seduction or compulsion unweariedly does its utmost to pervert them or extinguish them. Yes ; to its Hells of sweating tailors, distressed needlewomen, and the like, this Opera of yours is the appropriate Heaven ! Of a truth, if you will read a Psalm of Asaph till you understand it, and then come hither and hear the Rossini-and-Coletti Psalm, you will find the ages have altered a good deal. . . .

Nor do I wish all men to become Psalmist Asaphs and fanatic Hebrews. Far other is my wish ; far other, and wider, is now my notion of this Universe. Populations of stern faces, stern as any Hebrew, but capable withal of bursting into inextinguishable laughter on occasion ;—do you understand that new and better form

of character ? Laughter also, if it come from the heart, is a heavenly thing. But, at least and lowest, I would have you a Population abhorring phantasms ;—abhorring *unveracity* in all things ; and in your 'amusements,' which are voluntary and not compulsory things, abhorring it most impatiently of all. . . .

HIGH LIFE IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

WE gain the following glimpse of the manners of the upper classes in England, four hundred years ago, from the journal of ELIZABETH WOODVILLE, subsequently Lady Grey, and finally Queen of Edward IV. Royalty *in petto* seems to have taken, with a most refreshing cordiality, to the avocations of baking and brewing, pig-tending, poultry-feeding, and pony-catching.

"Monday morning.—(Rose at 4 o'clock, and helped Catherine to milk the cows. Rachel, the dairy-maid, having scalded her hand in so bad a manner the night before ; made a poultice, and gave Robin a penny to get something from the apothecary.

"6 o'clock.—The buttock of beef too much boiled, and beer a little stale ; (mem) to talk to the cook about the first fault, and to mend the other myself by tapping a fresh barrel immediately.

"7 o'clock.—Went to walk with the lady my mother in the court-yard ; fed 25 men and women : chid Roger severely for expressing some ill-will at attending us with some broken meat.

"8 o'clock.—Went into the paddock behind the house with my maid Dorothy ; caught Thump, the little pony, myself ; rode a matter of ten miles without saddle or bridle.

"10 o'clock.—Went to dinner. John Grey, a most comely youth ; but what is that to me ? a virtuous maid should be entirely under the direction of her parents. John ate but little, and stole a great many tender glances at me. Said women could never be handsome in his eyes, who were not good tempered. I hope my temper is not intolerable ; nobody finds fault with it but Roger, and he is the most disorderly youth in our house. John Grey likes white teeth ; my teeth are a pretty good color. I think my hair is as black as jet—tho' I say it ; and John Grey, if I mistake not, is of the same opinion.

"11 o'clock.—Rose from the table—the company all desirous of walking in the field. John Grey lifted me over every stile, and twice squeezed my hand with much vehemence. I can not say I should have much objection, for he plays at prison bar as well as any of the country gentlemen ; is remarkably dutiful to his parents, my lord and lady, and never misses church on Sunday.

"3 o'clock.—Poor Farmer Robinson's house burnt down by accidental fire. John Grey proposed a subscription among the company for the relief of the farmer, and gave no less than four pounds with this benevolent intent. (Mem) never saw him look so comely as at this moment.

"4 o'clock.—Went to prayers.

"6 o'clock.—Fed hogs and poultry.