

THE WORLD OF MUSIC

SEXES AND PRICES AT THE OPERA.

One thing has been clearly proven in New York this winter. It is women who love the opera. At every matinée all the tickets were sold, and in many cases twice as many could have been disposed of. Looking over the house at night, too, it was easy to see that women largely predominated.

It seemed to a casual observer that an injustice was done to the band of students and music lovers, mostly women, who pay a dollar a seat in the highest gallery. They have the poorest seats in the house, where it is difficult to see, and where the *vibration* of the music never comes. Nothing is made convenient for them. Half the time there are no programs, and yet when a gala night comes, the prices of their seats are doubled, while the people in the orchestra, to whom such expenses are presumably trifles, have only about forty per cent added to the cost of their chairs.

The Metropolitan company asked much less for seats in Boston than in New York. Where New Yorkers had to pay five dollars, the Bostonians were taxed but \$3.50—a gratifying concession of a dollar and a half to New England thrift.

A NEW OPERA HOUSE IN NEW YORK.

As was mentioned in an earlier issue of MUNSEY'S, Mr. John Schoeffel has hitherto refused to join his two partners, Henry Abbey and Maurice Grau, in the production of grand opera. He said that it was too speculative a business to expend six or seven thousand dollars for one evening's performance, with the chance of losing it if a singer had a sore throat. But the operatic bee has stung him at last, and Abbey's Theater will become an opera house after this season. It will not attempt to rival the Metropolitan, but will be managed upon the lines of the Opéra Comique in Paris, producing such operas as "Maritana," "Martha," and "The Bohemian Girl," presumably with such singers as Sybil Sanderson, whose voice cannot be heard beyond the footlights in the larger building. In many cases the librettos will have to be translated, as Mr. Grau has promised that all performances shall be in English. Arrangements are being made for the formation of a permanent company which will be at the theater most of the year. It will open an entirely new field to a class of singers who do not care to sing in comic opera, and whose voices are not equal to the great rôles. New Orleans has had something like this for a number of years, but it has never been seriously tried in New York.

NEVADA AND PREVOST IN PHILADELPHIA.

This season, for the first time, Philadelphia has had a season of French and Italian opera.

Nearly thirty operas were produced, and Mme. Nevada was seen in ten different rôles. It was evident that the Quaker City wanted "hurdy-gurdy" music. The popular operas were "Mignon" and "Trovatore," while "Sigurd" fell flat.

Compared with the work that Melba, Nordica, and Calvé do at the Metropolitan in New York, Mme. Nevada's voice is light and ineffective. It is doubtful if she could sing the modern operas. But in the parts that she undertakes she is equal to any prima donna singing today. Her voice is full of a sweetness which surpasses strength; and she looks as young and as pretty as when she was the Parisian favorite years ago. She is an actress, full of coquetties, of fresh, unwearying charm. Prevost ably supported her in most of her rôles. His *Tell* was one of the hits of the season.

AMERICAN OPERA.

Since the success of Mr. Damrosch's opera founded upon Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter," there is some talk of his organizing a company to sing American opera. We have not many native music dramas of a serious character. Only one had appeared before Mr. Damrosch's, and that was a very old one based upon James Fenimore Cooper's "Spy." But the start only needs to be made. News has come from Berlin that the very conservative and exclusive opera house of the German capital has accepted a one act piece by an American, Henry Waller. Mr. Waller is the author of a light opera, "The Ogallallas," which was produced with some success by the Bostonians. The new work is taken from a story by Young E. Allison, the libretto being written by H. L. Wilson and W. L. Hubbard. It is called "Fra Francesco; a Monastic Episode." It is humiliating that an American should go to a foreign country to ask them to produce his opera, when the artists of the world crowd to America for expression—and payment.

RECENT GERMAN OPERA.

When "Hansel und Gretel" was produced here last autumn, few people realized that it was one of the most successful German operas of the past twenty years, leaving out the Wagnerian dramas. For two decades not many good operas have come into the field. One reason is that people care more for whom they hear in opera than for what they hear. The old pieces are made new by each generation of artists.

"Hansel und Gretel" was received here as a fairy play for children as much as anything else, and while it was much discussed among artistic and musical people, the public generally did not know that with "Das Goldene Kreuz," "Die Königin Von Saba," and "Der Trompeter

von Sakkingen," it stands at the head of German opera today.

To this list may be added a new opera by Dr. Wilhelm Kienzl. It is called "Der Evangelimann." The author calls it a musical drama, as the music is distinctly intended to interpret the libretto. Like the work of one of America's popular writers, it is more or less imitative of most of the masters of music, but it is popular and pleasing. It has been heard, or soon will be heard, in every large opera house in Germany, and was lately brought out in Vienna. The composer is an Austrian by birth, his father being burgo-master of Gratz, in Styria.

The plot of the opera is interesting. It was taken from the notebook of an Austrian lawyer, whose practice had been chiefly in the criminal courts. The story Dr. Kienzl has used is that of two brothers who lived in a village on the banks of the Danube. The girl they both loved preferred the younger, and arranged to meet him one night. The elder brother fired the house where the lovers were concealed. They escaped with their lives, but the younger brother was accused of arson, and condemned to twenty years' imprisonment. His sweetheart killed herself in despair. After his release her lover became an *Evangelimann*, a sort of religious beggar, and came at last to his brother's deathbed. With this thread the composer has made some charming scenes that have proved extremely popular with German audiences.

The principal part was sung, at Vienna, by Van Dyck, who has made a great reputation as *Faust*. One of the surprises of the production was the success of an American girl, Miss Edith Walker, in a comparatively small rôle. Miss Walker has a fine contralto, and has been engaged for three years at the Vienna Opera. She was educated in Dresden with one of the famous old singers there, and spent years in perfecting her rich and beautiful voice.

RICHARD WAGNER'S SON.

Frau Cosima Wagner and her son Siegfried have already begun their rehearsals for next season's opera at Bayreuth. Walter Damrosch makes the curious observation that certain parts of Wagner's operas which formerly could always be depended upon for a startling effect, are falling flat with the present season's audiences. This is particularly true in parts of "Tristan und Isolde." It must be that the peculiar class of emotions which some parts of Wagner arouse are not entirely popular in the West, where the operas were played early in the season.

Siegfried Wagner was lately called upon by his father's old friend, Hans Richter, to lead the orchestra at the Vienna opera house. His appearance there created a sensation. The son of Wagner, and the grandson of Franz Liszt, Siegfried Wagner has an inheritance of musical genius and of striking features that gives him a remarkable personality. He conducted the "Siegfried Idyl," which was dedicated to him by Richard Wagner when he was a babe in his

cradle. As his baton rose and fell, tears were brought to his eyes by memories of his father, of whose tenderness and genius the music was created. There were tears, too, in the eyes of the older artists in the audience, who saw in the young man the strong cut features of two well known old friends.

TERNINA CRITICISES BAYREUTH.

Fräulein Ternina, who is with Walter Damrosch's opera company, first sang her famous part of *Brunnhild* under the direction of Anton Seidl in Bremen. She is a dark skinned brunette woman, strong and full of life. The singers in the German company are by no means as handsome as the galaxy of American, French, Austrian, and Polish vocalists who come to the Metropolitan Opera House, but as a rule they are infinitely better actors.

Fräulein Ternina has rather scorned the pretensions of some of the singers who feel that they have had the seal of approval set upon their ability to sing Wagnerian rôles by having been invited to Bayreuth. She says that while Bayreuth is still regarded with honor in Germany, it has by no means the prestige which it enjoyed before the death of the master. She insinuates that singers have appeared on that famous stage who were brought there for other reasons than their vocal or dramatic ability.

A ROYAL MUSIC LOVER.

Queen Margherita of Italy is a finished musician, and one of the best musical critics in Europe. She has expended great care upon the cultivation of her voice, though it has never been very strong. She plays the piano with great expression, and has composed some charming piano music, which she gives to her friends in her own manuscript.

But it is as a student of music and its history, and as a collector, that the queen is chiefly remarkable. She has gathered together a collection of musical scores that is one of the best in the world. She recently presented a number of sixteenth century madrigals to one of the Italian public libraries. The madrigal was the most popular music at the period of the Renaissance, and those of Palestrina are enjoying a sort of revival at the present moment. They were complimentary odes, written in the daintiest poetry, often by the best poets, always addressed to some lady, and set to music by famous musicians. They were written to be sung without any instrumental accompaniment, and usually for four or six voices. Later, instruments were added. Tasso, the Prince of Venosa, and many of the famous men of the day wrote madrigals, and they were sung in Italian gardens among the marble temples and clipped bushes which heard the Decameron.

CALVÉ AND TRILBY.

Mascagni says that at least fifteen hundred librettos are composed in Italy every year, and of these about two hundred are sent to him. And yet it is the old stories that are told and retold on the operatic stage. However good,

strong, and dramatic a play may be, it is always looked at askance as a libretto by those who must invest money in its production. Every man who can string rhymes thinks he can write a libretto.

The latest one by Henri Cain is said to be made on Du Maurier's irrepressible "Trilby," and it is rumored in Paris that Emma Calvé is to have the title rôle. A woman who can make herself up to look blue eyed, as she does in "Mefistofele," can look like *Trilby* or anybody else.

It is said that a manager has offered Calvé \$2,500 a night for a season of "Carmen" in America next year. The country is full of people who have heard of her incomparable *Carmen*, and every city would supply audiences to hear her.

A BELATED FAREWELL.

Patti says that a million francs have been offered her to make another "farewell tour" in America, but she refused. It is well. We do not deny that the offer has been made, but the man who made it would certainly lose money if it were accepted.

A reputation counts for a great deal in America. People with artistic tastes create the reputation to begin with, and it takes time for their opinion to make its way into the knowledge of the untaught millions who know only what they are told by those in authority. It takes about as long for the adverse decision to go down; yet when an American is distinctly bored, he may not complain, but he will find some excuse for staying away.

One of the values of a reputation was shown by a curious incident at the Metropolitan this winter. Maurel came on the stage and sang for fifteen minutes before he was recognized. When the audience at last realized that they had before them "the first baritone in Europe," they let him know that his reputation was worth something, even if his voice was not.

But the general public is not going to hear Patti any more. It has found her out. She is still a favorite in conservative England, where they continue to admire a voice because their grandfathers did; but American taste is more restless. We are still trying to tell ourselves that Jean de Reszke's voice is as thrilling and beautiful as it ever was, but even that will not last for more than a few seasons longer.

AN IRISH BALLAD SINGER.

Mr. Plunkett Greene is again in America, singing his way into the hearts of his listeners. This phenomenally tall young Irishman, who trembles like an aspen when he sings, and who appears to place his large white hands where their vibrations will be most visible, is more original than the casual listener might suppose. Take up a sheet of one of his old ballads, and the music looks most unpromising. The whole effect is in his manner of singing it.

He brought a collection of old German religious songs this year which are unique, and

in some cases tenderly beautiful. But it is in "Go and Call the Cattle Home" that the exquisite quality, not only of his voice, but of his interpretation, is most fully exhibited. In songs like this Mr. Greene gains something of the personal feeling which goes out to a favorite actor in drama or opera. He creates a scene. His sea songs, and the familiar Irish ballad in which we are asked why "all the gaiety" should "go to the laity," are full of humor, every point of which is brought out by the singer. Mr. Greene is in great demand in the smaller cities. He is an artist who does not require an artistic audience to be thoroughly appreciated and enjoyed.

A NEW POLISH PIANIST.

Miss Janotha has been a very prominent feature of the world of music in New York during the past few months. She brought to America a talent which was immediately recognized, and which had the addition of a most charming personality. She is of Polish ancestry, and like many of her nation began her musical career at so tender an age that she was looked upon as a prodigy. Through some thread of relationship she is said to be connected with the old royal house of Poland.

At the very edge of her babyhood her musical education was begun, and all of her life she has had the very best instructors. Rubinstein was a friend of her family, and was the early adviser of the child's studies. As she grew a little older she was sent to Mme. Clara Schumann. One night, at a great concert in London, Mme. Schumann was ill, and the young Janotha, with no little nervousness, went on and filled her place in the program. Instead of being merely the stopgap that had been expected, she was received with enthusiasm, and called again and again. Royalty took her up, and she became the favorite of the court of England and its many branches. The Kaiser appointed her court pianist at Berlin, and through this influence she was made an honorary member of almost every musical society in Europe. A few years ago she originated the Chopin Memorial Concerts, and helped to place a tablet to the great Polish musician in the church where he was christened.

Miss Janotha's chapel on the Isle of Wight is an object of great interest. It was arranged and cared for by her. The Pope sent it his especial blessing, and it has received many gifts from the court. She is an earnest pianist, whose head has not been in the least turned by the attention she has received. It is a mistake to say that all genius is modest, but the glamour of this young woman's fame has not blinded her.

DE LUSSAN AND ELLA RUSSELL IN LONDON.

It has been conclusively proven—so we are informed by people who see an argument in every happening—that it is women alone who patronize musical events. They place in evidence the fact that the Carl Rosa company gave its London performances this year be-

tween luncheon and afternoon tea. The innovation was due, however, to the fact that it could not arrange to secure a London theater in the evening.

Ella Russell, the American singer who was about the brightest star in the Rosa company, has lately been through a novel law suit. It was brought against a Mr. Notcutt, the editor of a musical journal, who sometimes manages concerts.

Mme. Russell agreed to sing at one of his concerts, and in the list of artists her name was placed at the top; but the next number of the journal put her below somebody else. She promptly resigned. The editor published her name again, still lower in the list, and she sued him for libel and won a hundred pounds' damages. Several of the leading musicians in London testified that an artist could not afford to take second place even for once, as it did serious injury to her professional reputation.

Elizabeth in "Tannhäuser" is one of Mme. Russell's favorite rôles. The Carl Rosa company was the first to produce this opera in England, in 1882. Another member of it is Zélie de Lussan, who is well known here. She is playing *Carmen* this year in a style that is said to be suggestive of Calvé's. Her sparkling face and vivacious manner make her an ideal gipsy. "The Daughter of the Regiment" gave Miss de Lussan another success. This opera has been out of the way for several years, and was only revived to afford de Lussan the opportunity to show her dash and humor as the *vivandière*.

THE WALTZ KING.

Johann Strauss, whose music is so full of spontaneity and life, cannot work to order. Sometimes weeks and months will go by without his touching a pen, or even a piano. He utterly relaxes himself, visits his friends, drives, and lives like any other man of leisure. When an idea strikes him, he jots it down. Sometimes his only available notebook is his cuff, and he comes home from a dinner with his left sleeve gray with pencil marks. It was in this way that "Die Fledermaus" and "Prince Methusalem" were written.

His friend Johannes Brahms goes over every line of Strauss' music, considering it not only as a lesson in popularity, and delightful, but thoroughly artistic.

A VETERAN BALLADIST.

The author of "Cheer, Boys, Cheer," and "Life on the Ocean Wave," is still living, hale and hearty at the age of eighty two. It is nearly forty years since Henry Russell, the best known of living balladists, was in this country, but the memory of his songs is still fresh. During his life he has composed and published over eight hundred songs. Among them was "The Ivy Green," which Charles Dickens wrote for him, and which was afterward published in "The Pickwick Papers." Others no less famous were "Woodman, Spare That Tree," written by the old time

American poet, George P. Morris; "Old Dan Tucker," "Buffalo Girls," and "There's a Good Time Coming."

It was Epes Sargent, the versatile Boston journalist and littérateur, who wrote the words of "Life on the Ocean Wave." The two men, who were friends, were strolling along the Battery when the idea came to Sargent. They immediately went up to a music store on lower Broadway. There the words were put on paper, and Russell sat down at the piano and rapidly picked out the tune we know today.

Mr. Russell has a pleasant home in London. His son, the Rev. Lloyd Russell, is a clergyman of some prominence, and vicar of the Church of the Annunciation at Chiselmhurst, in Kent.

SOME MUSICAL PRODIGES.

Musicians develop their talent earlier than other human beings who happen to possess a touch of the divine fire. Their gift appears to be something entirely apart from the rest of the mental constitution. It can show itself in brains otherwise totally undeveloped, while in numberless great men it has been wholly absent. It affords the strongest arguments for the theory that all genius is more or less closely akin to intellectual disease.

Émile Sauret, of whom we spoke last month in this department, was one of those remarkable children who seem to be born with the talent for music fully developed. He made a tour through Germany, playing to large audiences, when he was eight. It was when he was fifteen that de Bériot first heard him play, in Brussels. Struck with the boy's talent, de Bériot offered to take him in hand. He went to Paris and was set at work upon the technique of his art. His later success is a familiar story.

But it is not only Europe that can produce musical prodigies. Our own American West has sent at least one out into the world. Maximilian Dick, who was heard here this winter with Miss Ellen Beach Yaw, and whose steady improvement year by year gives promise of great things yet to come, was playing in concerts at nine.

A PUPIL'S VIEW OF JOACHIM.

Willy Burmester, the young violinist, will probably come to America in the autumn. He left the continent for a series of engagements in England during February and March, playing at the Crystal Palace.

Burmester studied with Joachim, but he shows himself a most ungrateful pupil. "I learned nothing from him," he says. "I got more harm than good from him. The pupil who goes to Joachim must expect to learn nothing unless he will completely sacrifice his own individuality. He is a stencil plate applied to music."

Burmester is a Finn, who was early instructed by a very clever father. After his studies with Joachim he went back to Finland and worked alone.

LITERARY WORKERS OF THE PACIFIC COAST.

THE REMARKABLE OUTBURST OF CREATIVE GENIUS THAT MARKED THE EARLY DAYS OF CALIFORNIA—BRET HARTE, JOAQUIN MILLER, AND THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE FOLLOWED THEM IN MANY BRANCHES OF LITERATURE.

AMERICAN civilization had scarcely taken possession of the Pacific slope, the "gold fever" was still in the air, and the freighter's wagon was only beginning to yield before the advent of the railroad, when the world was startled by an outburst of literary genius in the young community of our furthest West.

It appeared as if California must indeed be a land of magic. Her rocks were veined with gold, her climate was that of an earthly paradise, and she seemed to inspire her sons with a new and strange creative

power. The humor of Mark Twain—which was best when it was freshest—the matchless pathos of Bret Harte, and the fervid imagination of Joaquin Miller, were hailed as a literary revelation. These were unshackled workers in an untried field, and everywhere the eyes of hopeful observers were turned to them as to men who had found an unknown treasure.

The brilliant promise of those early days has hardly been fulfilled. Those of its founders still remain the most brilliant names of Californian literature; and of those



Ina Coolbrith.

From a photograph by Rosetti, New York.