

Mr. Chesterton went so far as to say he should not object to the Municipal Council passing on the eligibility of a play.

The late John Davidson left a written request that all persons happening to possess copies of certain plays and adaptations of his making should destroy them, and that these pieces should never be produced; the titles of the plays being as follows: "Queen Fiammetta," "The Children of the King," "Fanny Le Grand," "Phèdre," "Lancelot," "The Game of Life."

R. L. Stevenson's story, "The Suicide Club," which has been produced with grisly effect at the Grand-Guignol in Paris, under the title "Les Nuits du Hampton's Club," and was acted by that company on its English tour of season before last, is in process of dramatization for English production by Seymour Hicks.

The London Afternoon Theatre began its season at His Majesty's Theatre on November 11. A two-act opera by Joseph Holbrooke, with a libretto by W. E. Grogan, "Pierrot and Pierrette," was produced, as also J. M. Synge's Irish comedy, "The Tinker's Wedding."

M. Antoine promises for production at the Odéon this season a dramatization of "David Copperfield," by Max Maurey. Other pieces announced are an adaptation by André de Lorde, from Guy de Maupassant; an historical play by Maurice Donnay of the Academy; "Parrain," a four-act play by Pierre Veber; "L'Impasse," a five-act piece by Emile and Philippe Moreau; "L'Ornière," by Charles Desfontaines, and "Reines de rois," by Léon Hennique and Johannes Gravier.

## Music.

### OPERATIC EXTENSION

Beginning last Monday, and continuing five months, New York will have fifteen or sixteen operatic performances a week. Not many years ago one company singing five times a week was found quite enough, sometimes more than enough. When Oscar Hammerstein built the Manhattan Opera House there were few who believed that he would be able to hold his own for even one season against the millionaires who control the Metropolitan Opera House. Last week he entered his fourth season with brighter prospects than ever. Some of his achievements have even had their influence on the production of opera abroad, and they have done much toward stimulating that general interest in opera throughout this country which is one of the most notable phenomena of the day.

Observers of musical conditions in this country have long considered it anomalous that, whereas in Italy, Germany, and France every large city has a long opera season, nearly always by a local company, American cities, including some numbering over a million inhabitants, have hitherto been content to

take their annual allowance of opera in a festival lasting a week or two, during which so much is offered that the feast degenerates into a gorge. As many music-lovers persistently refused to patronize such performances, the impression was created that the American public, outside of the metropolis, which is semi-foreign, did not care for grand opera. Obviously, there was something wrong about this conclusion. Is not opera everywhere more popular than concerts and do not concerts flourish surprisingly in American cities? The great European artists come over here for their most abundant harvests; the operatic prima-donnas earn even more by giving recitals than they do at the Metropolitan and Manhattan; and a number of cities, among them Philadelphia, Boston, Pittsburgh, Chicago, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Washington, St. Paul, Milwaukee, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Seattle, have permanent orchestras of their own. Is it not a foregone conclusion that opera, because of its more direct appeal not only to the masses but to those who have most money to spend, will flourish in our cities if homes are built for it and local companies installed?

Philadelphia always seemed to have as much opera as it cared for while it got one performance a week from our Metropolitan singers. When Mr. Hammerstein built his opera house in that city, those who believed he was doing an unwise thing were again in the majority, but they were mistaken. The appetite for opera grows as it is catered to. Two weeks ago the Philadelphia season was opened by the performance of the same opera—"Aida"—by both the New York companies; and both the houses were filled to their capacity. In its dependence on borrowed companies, Philadelphia is behind Boston; which has achieved the distinction of having an opera house and a company of its own—our only non-metropolitan city, if we except New Orleans with its French company, of which this can be said. The eagerness with which Boston took up the project of having a real opera house and home-made opera is indeed quite amazing. Although it was understood from the beginning that more reliance would be placed on good ensemble than on the engagement of "stars," all of the boxes and the parquet seats were taken for three seasons before the first had begun! To satisfy the demand Mr. Russell actually had to enlarge his scheme by adding Thursday and Saturday to the opera nights. Besides its fifteen weeks of home-made opera, Boston will also have two weeks of German opera by our Metropolitan artists and two by the French and Italian singers at the Manhattan, so that her season will fall only a week short of ours.

Details regarding their scheme of

operatic expansion have been furnished recently by MM. Gatti-Casazza and Dippel. The Boston company is affiliated with our Metropolitan, which lent Mmes. Nordica and Homer for the opening night and will help on other occasions, getting the occasional services of Boston singers in return. This is only one of many arms which the Broadway octopus is stretching out in all directions. Another one takes in Atlanta, the inhabitants of which, though numbering only 150,000, have engaged the Metropolitan forces for a whole week next May. The guarantee called for was subscribed in one day and a completely equipped stage is to be made ready. St. Louis, which formerly did not seem to care for opera, has begged to be included in the next spring tour. Baltimore is to be favored with a series of weekly performances instead of a festival. In Chicago Mr. Dippel has rescued the Auditorium from the low level to which it had sunk, and it is to be once more the home of grand opera. Seidl, Nordica, De Reszke, and the other Grau artists used to look forward to the Chicago visits on account of the Auditorium's excellent acoustic qualities, which are now duplicated in Boston's new opera house.

It is Mr. Dippel's intention gradually to take all our leading cities into his circuit, and thus to extend the opera season from five months to nine. Chicago is to have its own company, affiliated, like that of Boston, with the Broadway house; and other cities, it is expected, will soon follow these examples. But the most extraordinary aspect of this policy of extension is the inclusion of Paris, which is to be visited next spring for a series of Italian evenings which, with Caruso, cannot fail to be successful. Nor can there be any doubt as to the outcome of the German nights to be given there the following year, for the Parisians, though they are Wagner enthusiasts, have seldom if ever heard his works as well given as they are here. Mr. Hammerstein also has engaged a Parisian theatre for a series of French performances. He will not be carrying coals to Newcastle, but simply cause the best Parisian singers, nearly all of whom he has, to return for a visit to the scene of their former triumphs.

It is because our American managers have corralled nearly all of the world's greatest artists that they can thus enlarge their plans to international dimensions. Various advantages will result, so far as America is concerned. Heretofore American students have been compelled to go abroad because, in Germany and Italy alone there are a sufficient number of opera houses to offer them a start. As our own buildings multiply, this will no longer be necessary. American composers are more likely to get the encouragement they deserve; and as for foreign composers, they are already looking to America as the best

place for producing novelties, because we have the best singers. Puccini is writing his new opera, "The Girl of the Golden West," for the Metropolitan, and Humperdinck will soon cross the Atlantic to let us enjoy his "Children of the King" before even the Germans have heard it. New York is destined to become, operatically, what Paris was in the days of Meyerbeer.

Quite unexpectedly, in view of rumors that had been circulated, the acoustic properties of the New Theatre proved to be not only tolerable, but exceptionally good for operatic performances. The test was made on Tuesday night with Massenet's "Werther." The strings and woodwind had a delicious sound, while the brass actually came out too loud in some places. Two previous attempts are on record to float this opera, but they were made in the Metropolitan, the vast spaces of which proved fatal to its delicate charms, even though the cast included Jean de Reszke and Emma Eames. In the New Theatre, the opera is sung by Geraldine Farrar, who presents some lovely pictures in it; the popular French tenor, M. Clément; beside Miss Gluck and M. Dinh Gilly, all of whom made successful debuts. "Werther" has at last found its proper surroundings, and, judging by its reception, it is likely to succeed at last.

In the days of Hans von Bülow the Russian music of the period was regarded as the limit of the allowable in the matter of dissonance and general defiance of the conventional. The trouble with those composers was that they had little to offer besides dissonance and defiance, and so their works have been consigned to oblivion. The men who survived were the melodists, Tchaikovsky, Rubinstein, and Rimsky-Korsakoff, whom the cacophonists scorned. At the present day no composer is more prominent in Russia than Sergei Vassilievich Rachmaninoff, who made his New York debut on Saturday afternoon by playing his second pianoforte concerto with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. It is well known that Brahms owed the beginning of his fame to the Hungarian dances he had arranged and published. Rachmaninoff, similarly, might have remained unknown to the general public had it not been for a prelude which became a "best seller," and, strange to say, deserved all the vogue it got, for it is good music. His concerto had been played here before more than once, but he showed that there is more in it than had previously been suspected. It is a pleasure to add that he is not a cacophonist; Russia has apparently recovered from that disease.

From Rome we learn of the presentation, at no remote date, of the new operetta by Ruggiero Leoncavallo, which is called "Malbrouk," and the libretto of which is by Maurice Vaucaille. The opera will be offered this season to the German as well as to the Italian public. Its subject is allegorical, and it is said that the hero has nothing in common with the Malbrouk of the old French song. Signor Leoncavallo's Malbrouk is derived, rather, from Boccaccio, and from such analyses of the piece as are available, one gathers the impression that the new opera is of the merriest.

Ludwig Schytter, the Danish composer,

has died in Vienna, his place of residence in recent years, in his sixtieth year. His songs and compositions for pianoforte number about 110, and he wrote also a one-act opera, "Hero" (1898), and a comic opera.

News comes of the death of Nicolo Spinelli, winner of the second prize in the Sonzogno competition of 1890, when Mascagni won the first with "Cavalleria Rusticana." A later opera, "A Basso Porto," has been successfully produced in Italy, as also in Germany and at London.

## Art.

### THE BOSTON ART MUSEUM.

On Monday the Boston Museum of Fine Arts opened its new building to the public. It is the first structure of the sort that has taken into account the remoter growth of the collections it houses, and it is, as well, the first museum that makes a logical division between display and storage of its treasures. Though it has two and a half times the floor area of the abandoned building in Copley Square, it is still but a scant half of the greater museum that it is to be. The façade expresses clearly the double function suggested above. A well-lighted lower story is largely given up to administration, study rooms, and objects in storage exhibition; the higher upper story is devoted to exhibition galleries containing the objects of most general value and appeal.

This scheme has imposed difficult conditions upon the architect, Guy Lowell, and his advisory committee, Messrs. E. M. Wheelwright, D. Despradelle, and R. G. Sturgis. It was a question of a front 500 feet long with a height of only some forty feet. The trustees had determined to avoid that excessive height which, affording monumental opportunities to the architect of a museum, imposes in bad lighting and ill-proportioned gallery walls, a permanent discomfort upon the visitor. The lower story also must be generously pierced for light, and could not serve merely as a base. The architect frankly accepted the situation and carried the second-story windows down to the string moulding by brackets—or one might say a false balcony—thus making the lower windows a kind of sash for the more ornate upper opening and thereby gaining, with a vertical motive, a sense of height. Again, the squatness of the front is dissimulated by bringing the wings forward 120 feet towards Huntington Avenue, and providing both them and the central entrance with slender Ionic porticos. By proper landscape gardening of the vast forecourt thus inclosed—and this, naturally, will take time—the building will gain in seclusion and dignity.

It has seemed well to go rather fully into this matter of plan, because on

no other basis can the merits of the building be appreciated. The design is absolutely a structural one, being directed throughout by the inner requirements. Great ingenuity has been shown in drawing architectural profit from the cramping conditions. What is even more remarkable in the whole thing is the fidelity with which the architect has applied his science and taste to the essential matter in hand. He has caught the spirit of the Museum, and has expressed it for all time. When one thinks of the specious libraries that are put up irrespective of the service they must render, of museums that belittle and crush the beautiful objects they contain, one is tempted to require a monument for Mr. Guy Lowell and his associates.

One enters by a massive staircase in three flights to reach the elliptical rotunda, which eventually will be the distributing centre of the pile. At the front of the staircase well is the reference library and collection of photographs, approaching which one may look into the balconied courts which contain the casts. Later these facsimiles will have a hall of their own, and the courts will be used for originals. Turning to the right at the head of the steps, one passes two small galleries and reaches the great hall devoted to the Egyptian collections. The walls, as generally in the museum, are of plaster carefully glazed, and very lively in effect. The remarkable Mastaba tombs with painted reliefs, which have been long in storage, are now set up entire and divide the early from the middle period. They supply a broad record of Egyptian life. Hunting, warfare, commerce, the handicrafts—all are represented. The wooden images and limestone reliefs exemplifying the earlier dynasties are famous. These are set up with abundant space, and fragments of two colossal statues in alabaster have been added. Probably nothing in America so completely expresses the gravity of this early style.

Passing to the left from the Hall of Late Egyptian Art one may make the round of five halls in the east wing, beginning with archaic Greek and finishing with Greco-Roman art. Again the walls are treated in grayish roughcast subtly toned. In this department the advantages of an elastic and humane system of exhibition appear conspicuously. The aim has been to give an anthology of classic art century by century, and nothing has been omitted that could add to the veracity and interest of the picture, nothing omitted that is merely repetitious and tedious. Thus the archaic room, which contains the famous Assos reliefs and a fragmentary funeral slab, really gains its effect from a splendid vase of the type of Douris, and even more from a central case containing a small group of those austere little bronzes which represented the so-called