THE ITALIAN OPERA SEASON.

SUCCESSFUL OPENING LAST NIGHT.

BOTH TEMPLES OF MUSIC WELL PATRONIZED.

The season of Italian opera for this winter was opened last evening at the Metropolitan Opera House and at the Academy of Music. The new house was filled with a brilliant audience, representing much of the wealth and beauty of New-York. The Academy of Music also had a full attendance, and Mr. Mapleson expressed himself as well satisfied. The performances at both places passed off smoothly.

MR. ABBEY'S FIRST NIGHT.

In its social aspect, the opening of the Metropolitan Opera House last night was brilliantly successful. In its artistic, it was full of pleasure for the moment and of pleasurable promises for the future. All expectations were not realized to the critical among the auditors and spectators, but it is agreeable to be able to note that all the managerial promises were kept. The accessories to the opera-house were not all finished, but the audience room and vestibules and corridors were and they were all in this department that were needed to make the first night a success. The audience crowded the house; the interior glowed with light and blossomed with gay toilets; there was a reasonably prompt beginning, and though the waits were long and the performance of "Faust" lasted five hours, there was so much to talk about that this was easily forgiven.

Whatever may be the merits of the opera-house in other respects it is a question of taste whether it is a success as a setting to a brilliant audience. Its colnring is soft and subdued, and in perfect harmony with the architecture—it has a lightness and airiness about it that seem to lift one's spirit and make one forget anything like business or care. to put one just in the mood to listen to the music or to be as sociable with his neighbors as the laws of a music room will allow, but it would not seem as if it were not calculated to show off beautiful dresses and fair faces to advantage. From the orchestra chairs last night the boxes that encircle the room tier above tier had the appearance of cabinet frames half open, revealing brilliant living pictures—almost embedded in flowers—but the background to these was not dark enough to show half their loveliness. Golden heads seemed to blend with the old gold of the silk chrtains, and the pale ivory tint that prevailed elsewhere failed to emphasize the soft silks and satins that rested against them. Diamonds glittered in all directions like crystals upon snow; but there was not that flashing and blazing of rays that come from a darker setting. Everybody was in full dress and in the glorious good spirits that a consciousness of elegant clothes inspires. When the opening notes of the overture sounded through the house there was a momentary hush, and then as if everybody had made his bow and done his duty by that everybody turned to his neighbor and began to chat in the liveliest manner, or turned completely around in his seat to get a full view of the house. A more sociable gathering it would be hard to imagine. Everybody seemed to know everybody and everybody seemed to have something to say. But when the curtain arose the conversation ceased at once and from that time forth, except between the acts, the audience was attentive to that which was taking place upon the stage, applauded heartily, if not with the greatest enthusiasm, and seemed to be generally satisfied with everything.

The performance of the opera was on the average plan of performances of the same work by Mr. Mapleson and his admirable artistes—not better as a whole nor worse as a whole. The fears which had been generally felt that Sig. Campanini would not show a complete amendment of the faults which were so conspicuous during his last season at the Academy of Music were unfortunately realized. Occasionally the old-time sweetness and again occasionally the old-time manly ring wire apparent in his notes but they were always weighed down by the evidences of labor, and the brilliancy of the upper tones with which he used to fire an audience into uncontrollable enthusiasm, was gone. The rest of a year which he has taken has not repaired the ravages of the last five years. Such a result is peculiarly unfortunate in Gonouds' music. The third act speaks the very exstacy of passion; given the voice and no music ought to be sung easier. Its sentiments crowd forward eagerly for utterance, and every phrase is impassioned eloquence. One could think that the singers would only need to open their mouths and the entrancing sounds from the orchestra would lure the melodies out. When, instead of suc spontaneity the music is given with indications of hard work, the life is gone out of it at once. This weight rested on much of the love music last night, and whenever it did the spirit took flight and the melodies and harmonies were of the earth earthy.

Of Mme. Nilsson's *Margherita* there is little to be said that has not been said over and over again. For the transformation which the poetical character has undergone, not she, but the authors of the opera are responsible. The villiest controversy that could be carried on concerning the comparative excellence of the impersonations of such singers as Nillson, Patti, Lucca and Albani, is as to which is the nearest the ideal of Goethe. A very near approach to the ideal is out of the question; the bar was put up at the outset by Barbier nda Carre, and though Gounod has put an exstacy of expression into some of *Margherita's* words in all respects worthy of Goethe's original, he has not been able to reproduce her. Some of the tender grace of the unfortunate child is in the Frenchman's creation, but there is none of the simplicity, none of the rusticity, none of the coarser fibre, which make *Gretchen* a national type. That which Goethe's *Gretchen* does with deliberation Gounod's *Margherita* does in a moment of passion, and there has not been wanting even a German critic to place the Gallic maiden on a higher ethical plane than the German because of this fact. All that Mme. Nilsson sings, as all that she does, is so imbued with a current of sympathy that there is no resisting her whether she be reproducing the ideal of the author or giving instead her own conception of character. We would not that Goethe's sweet child should do as Nilsson does, but we would not that Nilsson should do otherwise. Yet the verities of art are not violated, for opera is such an incongruous and irrational art form that it makes and shifts its standard with every new production.

Madame Nilsson's triumph came in the jewel song, where it was expected, for it is the golden link with which last year she established the connection between her concert room and the memorable night at the Academy when she first sang her way to the hearts of the people. After she had sung it last night the last film of ice that had held the public in decorous check was melted, and an avalanche of plaudits overwhelmed the fair singer. Bouquets rained from the boxes and baskets of flowers were piled over the footlights till it seemed as if there was to be no end. In the midst of the floral gifts there was also handed up a magnificent velvet casket inclosing a wreath of gold bay leaves and berries, ingeniously contrived to be extended into a girdle to be worn in the classic style, and two gold brooch medallions bearing the profiles of Tragedy and Comedy with which to be fastened. The donor was not mentioned, but an inscription told that the gift was in commemoration of the opening of the Metropolitan Opera House. Signor Campanini was also remembered in profuse flowers and other marks of kind appreciation, and Mme. Scalchi, who did the most artistic singing of the evening, was not forgotten through her guerdons were not commensuate with her merits. For Mlle. Louise Lablache, who took the place of the mother who was under the ban of the law, and did her work cleverly, and for Signors Del Puente and Novara, we have time only to chronicle a performance of work of the high degree of merit to which they in part have accustomed us.

Of the mechanical parts of the performance nothing is to be said except words of praise. The pictures were beautiful all of them. Nothing was shirked, and the highest skill and most delicate ingenuity seemed combined in constructing scenes of fascinating beauty and almost perfect illusions.

Among the few regrets that the evening caused was this, that in spite of the magnificent apparatus which Mr. Abbey and his musical director have at their disposal they did not go beyond the conventions in the manner of the production in anything except the stage settings. It would have been a pleasure, for instance, after so many years of the incongruous in the presentation of "Faust" to have seen the proper order maintained between the church scene and the murder of *Valentine*. It is the same spirit that cuts up the drama of to-day into acts one scene long and calls down the curtain upon a studiously arranged tableau that has changed the order of the two scenes in "Faust." Originally the fourth act closed with the scene in the church as the progress of Goethe's argument requires; now the scene is almost frequently universally placed before the death of *Valentine* in order that the more sensational *finale* may be gained. Gounod has himself sanctioned the change. Applied to a few years ago for his views on the question, he said to the director of a French theatre, "I have no choice in the matter—both readings are possible and good. As a musician I prefer the death of *Valentine* as a *finale;* if you make it to precede the church scene you will be more in harmony with Goethe-choose." This has always seemed to us a mistaken judgment on the part of Gounod. If a dramatic climax is the need, there is surely more power in *Gretchen's* agonizing "Nachbarin! euer Flaschchen!" and her swoon amidst the pomp of the holy office, than in the vulgar killing of a brutal soldier. But the composer's embarrassment grew, perhaps, out of the fact that the librettists had already robbed the episode of all its purpose, character and sentiment by exchanging the "evil spirit" in which the poet personified *Gretchen's* tormenting conscience, with *Mephistopheles*, who disguises himself as a monk to upbraid the maiden, and then appears in all his ridiculous scarlet like a bug-a-boo to frighten the child into a faint. After such a travesty of the original it is no wonder that Gounod was willing that it should be put anywhere in the performance.

So far as a single performance under such circumstances could demonstrate the fact, the new house was shown to be not only satisfactory, but really admirable in its acoustic properties. The fear of failure in this respect is one which weighs like a nightmare on conscientious architects, for nothing is more generally and frankly admitted nowadays than that in this province the architect is wholly the slave of chance. All the authorities on acoustics, from Pythagoras down to Tyndall, have failed to lay down a rule which might insure to designers of theatres even an average or moderate degree of success. This was most ingenuously conceded by M. Garnier after he had made the discovery that his masterpiece, the Grand Opera in Paris, was in the van of all the theatres of Europe in respect of acoustics. In his book on the subject he disclaims all credit for the accomplishment. He confesses that he trusted entirely to luck, like the acrobat who closes his eyes and clings to the ropes of an ascending balloon. "Eh bien!" he concludes, "Je suis arrivé! The audience-room of the Grand Opera has good acoustics, the best, probably, of all theatres; the credit is not mine, I merely wear the marks of honor." But not recklessness or ignorance led the French architect to this course; it was simply the outcome of a world of study which he had given to the subject in all the years of his career that preceded his great work.

"It is not my fault," he remarks, "that acoustics and I can never come to an understanding. I gave myself great pains to master this bizarre science, but after fifteen years of labor I found myself hardly in advance of where I stood on the first day. True, out of books and from my colleagues I learned that sound is propagated thus and so, and that strings vibrate in such and such manner. I saw that grains of sand strewn on a glass plate formed themselves into certain figures when the plate was rubbed with a fiddle-bow, and knew that the air is the ordinary medium through which the sound is conveyed. I was as well posted in these things as most masters of science and thought that when later I should want to put my acoustical book-learning into practice a few simple formulas would do the business easily enough. I had read diligently in my books, and conferred industriously with philosophers—nowhere did I find a positive rule of action to guide me; on the contrary, nothing but contradictory statements. For long months I studied, tested, questioned everything, and after all this travail I made finally this discovery: A room to have good acoustics must either be long or broad, high or low, of wood or stone, round or square, and so forth."

Thus deserted by his teachers Garnier abandoned theory for practice, and made an inquisitorial pilgrimage to all the European theatres, but only to find that best results were obtained in one place from wood construction and in another from masonry, and that rooms built after the same model were widely different acoustically. Chance seemed as supreme in the theatre world as it was in the dream world into which Hafid entered in the story printed in the reading book of childhood.

Whether Mr. Cady mortified his flesh with much of this study into the nature of this elusive something we do not know. Probably with the example and confession of Garnier before him he was content to follow in the main, the conventional lines of theatre interiors and trust to chance for a happy result. If so he can echo his colleague's "Eh bien! Je suis arrivé!"

It is to be hoped that Signor Vianesi will speedily give an adequate test to Mr. Cady's innovation in the matter of the orchestra. With the earnestness which was shown last night in the scenic department there should be consorted equal earnestness in the musical. There are a great many things traditional to the opera houses of Italy which American audiences are willing to forego. In all matters of art this country has shown itself decidedly progressive, because so little hampered by conventions and traditions, and so important an event as the opening of the Metropolitan Opera House ought to be signalized by the adoption of such devices as will ennoble and dignify the art to which the house is dedicated. No æsthetic want is supplied by the exhibition of the band. As a rule, musicians, whether Italians or Germans, are not beautiful to look upon; and if they were, such a view of them as one gets during a performance would hardly satisfy an æsthetic desire. Miss Maud Morgan, in a Grecian robe and fillet, plucking the strings of her harp, is a picture to delight the soul of a classical lover; but not so Herr Bassgeige engaged in a desperate wrestle, catch-as-catch-can, with his double-bass. And it is questionable whether even the features of an Apollo would be attractive when distorted with the grimaces that seem necessary to compel mellifluous sounds from the stubborn brass and reeds. The ancient, artistic lawgivers invented the *chorbia* for the purpose, it is thought, of concealing the grimaces of the flute-players; what would they have done with the big-paunched tuba and trombone?

Moreover, while the band does not add to the interest of the spectacle framed by the proscenium, it does distract the attention of the audience and mar the illusion of the play. It was this consideration which led Wagner to construct the "Mystic Gulf" in his Bayreuth theatre, and the reform is conceded by even fanatical opponents of his art to have yielded most beneficial results, both spectacularly and acoustically. Mr. Cady did not go to the extreme of a wholly concealed orchestra. He adopted a plan similar to that tried in the Munich theatre before the erection of the theatre in Bayreuth, and amplified it by a device to improve its resources. He sank the floor of the orchestral space far enough to conceal the players from all the spectators except those in the topmost tiers, and then to make up for the possible loss of volume, he at great expense built under the floor a large elliptical round chamber of masonry. The musicians were ranged on a series of rising platforms so that all might have a direct view of the conductor, who was to sit in a neat stand which he was to reach by a winding staircase. A brief test made in the hurry and noise of the last days of construction convinced Signor Vianesi of what his prejudices had already prompted, probably, namely: that the arrangement was problematical. Mr. Abbey was of a mind with the directors of the Opera House Company, it is said, that the new feature should be retained if it should turn out to be a practicable one, but he was unwilling to take any risk on his first night, and the gulf was bridged over. One result of this was to put the drums and brass outside the orchestra-rail, and ruin the view from one or two of the baignoirs. We hope, in the interest of the reform to which Mr. Cady gave so much care and the directors so much money, that the sunken orchestra will be tested soon at a performance before an audience, so that the acoustical conditions may be complete, and that if it be not found seriously wanting it be retained.

So far as the orchestra is concerned there is no reason why Signor Vianesi should insist on keeping it sprawled on a level with the auditorium. The highest pitch of praise cannot be sounded with relation to the quality of the band, though it has many admirable features; but it surely is sufficiently powerful to be effective even though some of its sound be cut off. In the upper portions of the house there were some complaints last night that at times the band overbalanced the singers and that the body of tone which ascended was not perfectly balanced and homogeneous. This was neither helped nor hindered by the arrangement of the band, and inasmuch as the volume was always sufficient it is fairly open to belief that had the somewhat obstreperous brass and the unmusical drums been placed in the pit designed to receive them the general effect would have been better. The band has a noble volume of string tone, but its wood is thin. The distribution of instruments is as follows: Violins, 23; violas, 8; violoncellos, 9; double-basses, 9; flutes, 2; oboes, 2; clarinets, 2; bassoons, 2; horns, 4; cornets, 2; trombones, 3; harp, 1; and the usual battery. It will be noticed that the distribution is not that of a symmetrical symphony orchestra, and if it is feared that the inequality would be intensified by sinking the players out of sight the proper remedy would seem to be to improve the weaker portions of the orchestra.

PEOPLE WHO WERE THERE.

The audience in the Opera House was a fine one, every box being filled, besides every seat in the parquet and balcony, and all but the uppermost in the family circle. Nearly every one was in full dress, and the ladies made a brilliant showing. Lord Coleridge was probably the most distinguished guest of the evening. He occupied a seat in the box of W. H. Vanderbilt. Others in that box were Mrs. Vanderbilt and Mr. and Mrs. Elliott F. Shepard. With Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt were Mr. and Mrs. Ogden Mills and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Cushing. Mr. and Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt were accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Fernando Yznaga, Miss Mamie Smith and Mrs. Holland. With Mr. and Mrs. Henry Clews were Mrs. Paran Stevens and Harry Stevens. Egerton L. Winthrop was in Mrs. Marshall O. Roberts's box with the Misses Endicott, and Buchanan Winthrop was with Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Kernochan. In Ogden Goelet's box were Miss Frazier and Miss Callender. Mr. and Mrs. Frederic Bronson and Mr. and Mrs. Hugo Fritsch were in No. 3. Mr. and Mrs. James Wilson, Miss Wilson, Miss Moffat, Ward McAllister and Miss McAllister occupied boxes.

In box No. 20 were Mr. and Mrs. Robert Goelet, Mr. and Mrs. Lorillard Spencer, George Flaving and Mr. White, the architect. In G. H. Warren's box, No. 5, were Mr. and Mrs. Warren, G. H. Warren, jr., Miss Warren and John Munro, the banker, of Paris. In No. 18 were Mr. and Mrs. Frederic Neilson and Miss Beckwith. Mr. Alfred Youngs was with Mr. and Mrs. G. G. Haven, and Mrs. James B. Potter, and Mrs. Charles F. Livermore with Mr. and Mrs. James Harriman. Miss May Bird was with Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Fellows, and Mr. and Mrs. Lanier were with J. Pierpont Morgan. With H. G. Marquand were Miss Marquand and Mr. and Mrs. F. A. Marquand. With Mr. and Mrs. Joseph W Drexel were Judge and Mrs. C. P. Daly and Dr. Fordyce Barker. Mr. and Mrs. George Kemp had the Misses Kemp, the Messrs. Kemp, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Kemp.

Others present were Miss Leigh, Madame Sembrich, John Kean, Mr. and Mrs. T. B. Musgrave, H. Victor Newcomb, Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Moss, Miss Moss, Mrs. C. E. Leland, Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Keene, Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Andrews, Miss Andrews, Mr. and Mrs. D. O. Mills, Mr. and Mrs. Whitelaw Reid, G. P. Wetmore, Mrs. Watts Sherman, Mrs. Frederic Neilson, Miss Corse, Dr. and Mrs. Seward Webb, Mrs. William Kingsland, Mr. Brayton Ives, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Kemeys, Samuel D. Babcock, Mr. and Mrs. H. D. Babcock, Mr. and Mrs. James L. Waterbury, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Morgan, Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Morgan, Mrs. Spotswood Schenck, Creighton Webb, Walter Webb, Mr. and Mrs. C. J. Osborn, Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Wocrishoffer, Mr. and Mrs. J. Milbank, General and Mrs. Winslow Smith, Miss Clift, Mr. and Mrs. Clift, David Dudley Field, Mr. and Mrs. Cyrus W. Field, Commodore Vansantvoord, ex-Mayor and Mrs. Grace, F. Gray Griswold, Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence, Turnure, Miss Turnure, Arthur Leary, R. Suydam Grant, Mr. and Mrs. Terry, William Butler-Duncan, C. C. Baldwin, John Jacob Astor, Commander Gorringe, E. Randolph Robinson, Mr. and Mrs. Luther Kountze, Mr. and Mrs. George Rives, Mrs. Henry C. Eno, Mrs. William Phelps Eno, Mr. and Mrs. Edmund C. Staunton, Mr. and Mrs. William Rockefeller, J. Cleaveland Cady, the architect of the building; Mrs. Del Monte, Mrs. E. N. Dickerson, George F. Baker, Mrs. Ayer, Miss Ayer, Frederick Beach, B. C. Porter, of Boston; Dr. Hague, Colonel and Mrs. Delancey A. Kane, Mr. and Mrs. Oscar R. Meyer, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Rosener, Russell Sage, Jay Gould, George Gould, Mr. and Mrs. T. A. Havemeyer, Miss Rhinelander, Mr. and Mrs. Oakley, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Tillinghast, Mr. and Mrs. E. Luckemeyer, Mrs. Kernochan, Miss Pell, Mr. and Mrs. Ogden, Mlle. Aimee, Mlle. Angele, M. Capoul, Signor Brignoli, James A. Roosevelt, Mr. and Mrs. Adrian Iselin, Mr. and Mrs. Columbus Iselin, Mr. and Mrs. A. Iselin, jr., Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Iselin, Miss Iselin, Miss Grace Stebbins, Miss Merritt, Dr. Dawson, Mrs. Henry Morgan, Mrs. Street, Mrs. Post, Mr. and Mrs. Robert G. Remsen, the Misses Remsen, J. V. Parker, Townsend Martin, Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Fahnestock, George F. Baker, Mr. and Mrs. Lucius Tuckerman, Mr. and Mrs. Sedgwick, George W. Drexel, Mrs. Walter Shillito, J. L. Breese, W. L. Breese, Mr. and Mrs. S. B. French, Mr. and Mrs. Dunlap, Mr. and Mrs. C. M. Depew, George Loveday, Henry F. Gillig, Mr. and Mrs. John Hoey, Joseph Mora, William O'Brien, of New-Orleans; Mr. and Mrs. Del Calvo, Miss Mears, Mr. and Mrs. Rives, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Roosevelt, Judge Ingraham, Mr. and Mrs. John G. Heckscher, Wright Sanford, General Sickles, J. H. Rutter, Mr. and Mrs. L. M. Bates, Dr. W. A. Hammond, Professor R. Ogden Doremus, William Steinway, L. D. Suydam, Dr. James B. Gilbert, Austin Corbin, Washington E. Conner, J. P. Parrish, Charles Crocker, Amos Cotting, James D. Smith, Henry Knickerbocker and Isaac Bell, jr.

THE ACADEMY OF MUSIC.

GERSTER IN "SONNAMBULA."

The fact that one of the largest opera houses in the world was opened to the public for the first time and under exceptionally favorable circumstances seemed to have no perceptible influence either upon the size or the spirits of the audience which gathered in the old Academy building last night to witness the opening performance of Mr. Mapleson's Company. Long before the first notes of the overture had marked the beginning of another opera-season the house was filled to overflowing with an audience which was ready to bestow its enthusiasm upon the performers on the slightest provocation. The opera selected was "Sonnambula," with Gerster as *Amina*. A happier choice could hardly have been made by the management. The part seems to suit the lively temperament of this artist, while the music gives her ample opportunity to display the admirable technique, exquisite finish and daring execution which distinguish her performances. Mme. Gerster's impersonation of the character of *Amina*, of course, is well known to the lovers of opera in New York. Her singing last night only served to confirm the judgment long ago arrived at by critics, that her voice in its upper and middle registers is one not only wonderfully sweet and sympathetic, but also of a singular strength and clearness, qualities which place her in a position where few could rival and none, perhaps, surpass her. It would be difficult, indeed, to select for particular praise any one of the scenes in which she distinguished herself, or in which she succeeded in carrying away her audience. Where everything is so uniformly good it is difficult to choose. If measured by the degree of enthusiasm or the volume of applause which the singing of *Ah! non giunge* evoked, this was undoubtedly the crowning effort of the evening. The purity of the tone, the brilliancy of the execution, the perfect self-control, the exquisite taste evinced in every note and in those passages especially where a less experienced artist might feel tempted, perhaps, to conquer by a vulgar display of brilliancy, was admirable and deserved the unbounded applause that greeted her. Scarcely less beautiful was her performance of the aria "*Sovra il sen*" in the first act; and the same must be said of the difficult part which follows the sleep-walking scene of the last act.

The public were also given an opportunity to hear two new artists, Signor Vicini, who took the part of *Elvino*, and Signor Cherubini, who appeared as *Il Conte Rodolpho*. Signor Vicini possesses a tenor voice which, without being extraordinarily winning in the quality of its tone, is of sufficient strength to command respect. It gives evidence of thorough training, and is capable of showing to better advantage, perhaps, than it did last night. Signor Vicini has the unfortunate habit of singing, one might almost say, with clenched teeth, a defect which is scarcely counterbalanced by a singularly clear and distinct enunciation. The basso, Signor Cherubini, has a voice which will make its owner a useful member of the company. The part of *Rodolpho* is scarcely adapted to display the powers of a singer, and it would be rash to pronounce judgment upon this artist without having had an opportunity of seeing him in some other part which will give his talent a wider range. Of the other artists that participated in the performance it must be said that they acquitted themselves, on the whole, very creditably, and the same may well be said of the chorus, which showed precision and vigor in a degree quite unusual for the first night of a season. It is needless to say that the offerings of flowers, bouquets, etc., seemed at times to transform the stage into a hot-house, out of the midst of which the head of Arditi (who, by the way, came in for a good share of the enthusiasm and applause of the night) shone like a resplendent sun.

WHO MADE UP THE AUDIENCE.

The audience which greeted Madame Gerster and signified its approval of the new tenor at the Academy of Music last night was numerically as strong as managerial heart could wish, but taken as a whole the quality seemed hardly up to last season's work. The boxes were filled with their usual occupants, all the stockholders being present, with the exception of Adrian Iselin, who naturally was at the other house, and the Astors, who are still in the country. Mrs. Paran Stevens was the first box-holder to arrive; and as one after another of his old adherents took their seats, Mr. Mapleson's spirits rose higher and higher until before the curtain rose he was jubilant to a degree. The directors shared his good spirits to all appearance and congratulated each other on having such a house despite the counter-attraction of the gigantic novelty at Thirty-ninth-st. "I was talking to an old opera-goer as I came down," said John Hoey, "and he prophesied that in a week Mapleson would have the real musical audience. 'Abbey has the house,' said he, 'but Mapleson has the singers,' and I believe he was right." Mr. Mapleson himself held forth on the situation spasmodically between his frequent rushes behind the scenes and all over the house. "Abbey is a nice fellow and a good fellow," he said, "but he hasn't been an operatic manager for thirty-two years. He has fired off all his big guns at first instead of waiting till the season was well started. Now I have all my great attractions to come, and I feel confident I shall draw the public." In the lobbies between the acts most of the old faces were to be seen, though of course some were missing; among them General Sickles, Wright Sanford, Professor Doremus and Judge Daly.

The chat in the lobbies, it need hardly be said, turned principally upon the prospects of the two rival houses and the operatic war generally. It seemed to be the generally expressed opinion that, though the Academy would certainly suffer to some extent, yet the musical fare, to judge by the first instalment provided by Mr. Mapleson, would in great measure discount the attractions of the new building. Vicini was thought to be nervous to an extreme during the first act, but the finale at the end of it seemed to meet with general approval, which warmed into enthusiasm during the second act. A friend of Madame Gerster said she had received a letter from Mme. Patti, though they are not personally acquainted, which was couched in the warmest terms. Mme. Patti said that though by her contract the first performance of "Lucia" was to be her own prerogative, she would gladly waive her right in Gerster's favor, as she thought they ought to do their best to sustain the fortunes of the house. Charles Mapleson, who was as usual ubiquitous, found time to say that his father had received a cable dispatch from Franchi, Patti's agent, saying that he had secured passages on the Gallia, which sails next Saturday.

In the proscenium boxes were Israel Corse and family and Mr. and Mrs. H. Fales, Robert Cutting, Mr. and Mrs. R. L. Cutting, Mrs. Brockholst Cutting, Walter Cutting and Mr. and Mrs. W. Jaffray, August Belmont and Mrs. Belmont, August Belmont, jr., and the Misses Wright, H. A. Coster and Mrs. Coster, Grenville Snelling, F. Hillhouse and Mr. and Mrs. W. Duer, Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Dinsmore, Mr. and Mrs. E. Leavitt, Mr. and Mrs. H. Leroy, Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Beckwith, Mr. and Mrs. Pierre Lorillard, Colonel and Mrs. Van Rensselaer Cruger, Mr. and Mrs. F. M. Von Hoffman, the Marquise de Mores and Mrs. Penniman, Mr. and Mrs. James Barden, Mrs. Griswold Gray, Ex-Postmaster-Gen. James, I. Kirkpatrick, Judge Arnoux, Mrs. Paran Stevens and Lord and Lady Carington. Among others present in the boxes and orchestra stalls were J. Coleman Drayton, Mr. and Mrs. W. S. Gurney, S. de Mendozà, Madame Balfe, W. R. Travers, Mrs. Maitland, John Hoey, Dr. Damrosch, Theodore Thomas, Miss Emily Faithfull, Mr. and Mrs. Haley Fisk, Dr. Gerster and Mrs. Gerster, Postmaster Pearson, Judge Shea, Surrogate Rollins, General Horace Porter, Joel B. Erhardt, Royal Phelps, the Misses Carroll, Judge Brady, Justice Gedney, Clarence A. Seward and Mrs. Seward, Stuart LeRoy, General Foster, Samuel French, Dr. Valentine Mott, Nugent Robinson, Judge Van Brunt, Mrs. Wakefield, D. Bixby, Mrs. Woolsey, A. Goodwin, Mr. and Mrs. Redmond, Mrs. F. B. James, Miss Bean, Dr. Guernsey, Major Terry, Colonel Drake, Dr. Woodruff, Clark Bell, Colonel Bliss, J. McVickar, Mrs. Frank Leslie, Major Cooney, Mrs. John Bigelow, Mr. and Mrs. W. Duer, Theodore Havemeyer and Mrs. Havemeyer, Mrs. J. N. A. Griswold, Ward McAllister, Max Strakosch, Henry Cranston, Dr. Clymer, G. R. Read, A. L. Brown, Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Rich, Mrs. C. Hempstead, Miss M. Hackett, J. McKeane, Colonel Marshall, Dr. Clinton Wagner, C. Wheeler, J. O. Proudfit, S. Barker, Duncan Cryder, Sylvester Ashley, J. J. Coleman, H. W. Brevoort, R. W. Swift and Mrs. Swift, R. W. Edgar, T. Webb, Mrs. Emmett, H. A Johnson J. F. Tams, Montague Marks, Mrs. J. H. Mapleson and Mrs. Swift.

NEW CODE MEN VICTORIOUS.

THE RESULT OF THE ELECTION AT THE COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY.

The hall of the Young Men's Christian Association was crowded last night by the members of the Medical Society of the County of New-York. Fully 800 physicians were present. Many members who had delayed paying their dues seized the opportunity at the opening of the meeting to perform a ceremony indispensable to their registration as voters.

The Chair announced that the election was in order and appointed as tellers, Drs. Henrry J. Piffard, W. T. White, W. T. Alexander and E. F. Ward. Dr. Flint called attention to the report of the Comitia Minora. "Eighty odd members," said he, "have been admitted to-night to the society. I ask merely for information whether those gentlemen will be allowed to vote." The Chair replied that they were now members in full standing. Dr. Flint moved that the minutes be read a second time, and upon a vote being taken his motion was declared by the Chair to be lost.

Dr. Abendorfer then rose, to a question of privilege. "I wish to ask," said he, "whether an attempt to bribe is sufficient cause for challenging the vote of a member of this society." The Chair replied: "Certainly." "Then," said Dr. Abendorfer, "I wish to challenge the votes of all the members admitted to-night."

Dr. Piffard demanded that the gentleman's words should be taken down and that he should be called upon to apologize. It was an insult, he said, that members of this society should be charged with having been bribed.

"That is not true," exclaimed Dr. Abendorfer. "I did not say that. But I am willing that my words should be taken down."

"They have been taken down," said the secretary.

After this exciting passage the tellers took their places. The ballot-box was procured, and the vote proceeded with the following result: President, S. Oakley Van Der Poel; vice-president, Andrew H. Smith; secretary, Wesley M. Carpenter; assistant secretary, Charles H. Avery; treasurer, Orlando B. Douglass; censors, F. R Sturgis, David Webster, Daniel Lewis, F. R. S. Drake, Joseph Howe.

The victory of the New Code men was complete. Out of a total of 589 votes, their candidates received from 375 to 385 votes each.

MATTHEW ARNOLD HERE.

A TALK WITH THE POET AND ESSAYIST.

HIS PLANS AND OPINIONS—LECTURES HE WILL DELIVER—DESIRE FOR CRITICISM.

Matthew Arnold, the distinguished English poet and essayist, arrived by the steamship Servia yesterday. A TRIBUNE reporter called upon him last evening at the Windsor Hotel. Mr. Arnold has hardly anything poetical in his appearance, but is a plain English gentleman. There is about him, however, the polished ease and high breeding which mark a man of refinement and culture. In conversation he is most undemonstrative—using no gesture—but his eye kindles as his remarks grow more earnest, and the emphasis is expressed by the deepening tones of a musical voice. Those who have seen portraits of his father, Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, so familiar to readers of "Tom Brown's School Days," would instantly recognize him. He has the same solid looking head, and thoughtful cast of countenance. Nothing can exceed the graciousness of his manner. He is as simple as a child.

"It affords me pleasure to converse with journalists," he said, "but you must not ask me to deliver oracular opinions about things of which I am ignorant. For instance *The Herald* reporter in London asked me what I thought of American institutions. How could I answer when I am come to get some information about them. I hope I shall like this country; but after all I think there is no place to live in like dear, smoky old London. How vast the hotels are here, and how lavish the hospitality, but I fear I shall not get at the heart of real American life. My first lecture is to be entitled 'Numbers.' I don't propose a mathematical theory, but to expound some ideas, political and social, after a somewhat original way. Afterward I shall lecture on 'Emerson,' and then upon 'Education and Science.' I have been asked to lecture to several universities and I think the latter subject will be more suitable to them.

"*The London Times*, which has never been friendly to me, came out with a thundering article on my coming here. Lowell, whom I know very well, told me that I had already an audience here among the cultivated. I felt a little doubtful about my reception, because some people choose to associate me with irreligious opinions, whereas I am only investigating truth all the time. Some of my friends wanted me to bid for Irish support by lecturing on 'Celtic Literature,' but I thought it inadvisable. I have always been well received by Catholics, and in my lecture on 'Numbers' there will be matters touched upon that will deeply interest them. Cardinal Newman has written the kindest things to me.

"I am amused to find that many people here think that Edwin Arnold is my brother. He is no relation whatever. His book, 'The Light of Asia,' seems to have taken a great hold here. It seems to me quite unintelligible, and not to be compared with the great work of St. Hilaire, 'La Buddha.' It is like the character of Christ written by a Jew. One prefers to go to more authentic sources.

"I thought of going to Concord before lecturing on Emerson, but I hear it is a dreary journey, so I have given it up. I have already remarked some things here which seem great improvements on our English way. For instance, tipping seems unusual here, whereas it has become a nuisance at home. But the cost of things appears to me astonishing. Regarding my lecture, the Catholics need not fear that I shall be in any way aggressive. I think Froude made a mistake. I trust the public will not object to my reading my lecture. You know my father and Newman both read every word.

"The position of the clergy here seems strange compared with England. With us the parish clergyman is sometimes the one cultivated person in a parish. They have always been my supporters. It is only the Dissenters that made an outcry against me when Mr. Gladstone proposed to do something for me, and after all the School Inspectorship was no great thing, but rather irksome and laborious.

"What a reception Coleridge has had? I think these things are doing much good in uniting the two countries. The Americans I know in London struck me as most English-like, and I am told that there is an increasing tendency toward the development of English ideas. I expect fair criticism here and care not how much there is of it. I respect it, and get good out of it."

CAPTAIN MAYNE REID DEAD.

LONDON, Oct. 22.—Captain Mayne Reid, the well-known novelist, died at his residence in London last evening, after a short illness. He was sixty-five years of age.

Captain Mayne Reid was born in the North of Ireland in 1818. His father was a Presbyterian clergyman whose labors among the poor people of his native country have been highly spoken of. Captain Reid was educated for the ministry, but his love of adventure and desire for foreign travel soon led him to throw aside his theological studies and seek a more congenial occupation. From his youth he was fond of books. The stories which he read of America and its resources caused a desire to visit this country. When only twenty years of age he sailed for New-Orleans, where he began life as a trader. His business interests were of such a nature that he was obliged to make long journeys into the interior of the country. He made friends with the Indians of the Red River territory, and spent many months in learning their customs and enjoying the scenery of their picturesque camping-grounds. Night after night he sat with the braves about their blazing camp-fires, and listened to the legends and tales of the medicine men. It was from these Indians that he obtained the materials for those well-known stories, "The Scalp Hunters" and "The White Chief."

After spending five years upon the prairies and among the mountains of the western and southern States he settled in Philadelphia, where he began to contribute to the newspapers and magazines stories and sketches of travel. When the Mexican War broke out in 1845 he obtained a commission in the United States Army and served during the entire campaign. A few years later he sailed from New-York at the head of a body of volunteers for the purpose of aiding the Hungarians in their struggle for independence. The party had hardly arrived in Paris when Captain Reid received intelligence that the Hungarians had been compelled to lay down their arms. The volunteers were dismissed and their leader took up his abode in London, where he soon began to attract public attention by his thrilling stories of Western adventure. Novel after novel came from his pen in rapid succession. "The Rifle Rangers; or, Thrilling Adventures in Southern Mexico," his first works appeared in 1850. Following this came the "Scalp Hunters," "The English Family Robinson" and "The Deserted Home." His books found great favor among the boys and young men of England. Among his later stories are "The Young Voyageurs," "The White Chief," "The Wood Rangers," "The Tiger Hunter," "Cliff Climbers," "Boy Slaves," and "Afloat in the Forest." Captain Reid started a daily paper in London called *The Little Times*, but the venture was a financial failure. In January, 1869, he started in this city a monthly magazine bearing the title *Onward*. It was published for a few months and was then suspended. The last few years of his life were devoted to magazine writing. Among his most recent literary work was a series of sketches published in THE TRIBUNE under the general title of "Rural Life in England."

THE WEATHER REPORT.

GOVERNMENT INDICATIONS.

Synopsis for the past twenty-four hours.

WASHINGTON, Oct. 22.—The temperature has fallen in New-England, the South Atlantic and Gulf States and Tennessee, and risen in the Lake region, Upper Mississippi and Missouri Valleys. Northeasterly winds prevail in New-England, Middle, South Atlantic and Gulf States, Tennessee and the Ohio Valley and the Lower Lake region; easterly winds in the Upper Mississippi Valley; elsewhere the winds are variable. Local rains have fallen in the Middle Atlantic, South Atlantic and Gulf States, Upper Lake region, Upper Mississippi and Missouri Valleys. Key West reports 5.76 inches of rainfall during the past twenty-four hours.

Indications for to-day.

For the Middle Atlantic States, cloudy weatherand local rains, nearly stationary barometer, stationary or a slight rise in temperature; easterly winds.

For the South Atlantic States, local rains, northeasterly winds, stationary barometer, stationary or a slight rise in temperature.

TRIBUNE LOCAL OBSERVATIONS.