# PRISONERS OF POVERTY.

## WOMEN WAGE-WORKERS, THEIR TRADES AND THEIR LIVES.

BY HELEN CAMPBELL.

XIX.

### DOMESTIC SERVICE AND ITS PROBLEMS.

At last we have come to the problem to which there has necessarily been incidental reference here and there, but which has otherwise bided its time. That these pages or any pages written by mortal hand in this generation can solve it, the writer doubts, the solution being inextricably involved with that of other social problems of which time is the chief key. State the question as we may, there is always a fresh presentation to be made, and replies are as various as the minds of the sta ters. It is the mistress with whm such presentation has thus rested; a mistress thorned beyond endurance by incompetence, dirt, waste, insubordination; all the evils known to ignorant and presumptuous service. For such mistress, smarting from a sense of wrong and hopeless and faithless as to remedies, the outlook is necessarily bounded by her own horizon. She listens with indignant contempt to the story of the thousands who choose their garrets and semi-starvation, with independence, to the shelter and abundance of the homes in which they might be made welcome. She may even aver that any statement of their suffering is stupid sentimentality; the gush and maudlin melancholy of "humanitarian clergymen and newspaper reformers."

For her as for most of her order, in whom, as yet, no faculty for seeing both sides of a question has developed, there can be no reply save in words already spoken. These women, working for wages that keep them always just above starvation point, have no power left to think beyond the need of the hour. They cannot stop, they dare not stop to think of other methods of earning. They have no clothing in which they could obtain even entrance to an intelligence office. They have no knowledge that could make them servants even of the meanest order. They are what is left of untrained and hopelessly ignorant lives, given over to suffering born in part from their ignorance; and for a large proportion of such cases there can be merely alleviation, and such slight bettering of conditions as would come from a system into which justice entered more fully.

With this army of incompetents we have at present nothing to do. Our interest lies in discovering what is at the bottom of the objection to domestic service; how far these objections are rational and to be treated with respect, and how far they may be obviated. The mistress's point of view we all know. We know, too, her presentation of objections as she fancies she has discovered them. What we do not know is the ground taken by sensible, self-respecting girls, who have chosen trades in preference, and from whom full detail has been obtained as to the reasons for such choice. In listening to the countless stories of experiment in earning a living, the passage from one industry to another and the uncertainties and despairs before the right thing had shown itself, the question has always been asked:

"How did it happen that you did not try to get a place in some good family?"

The answers were as various as the characters of those who replied; some with indignation that they should be supposed capable of this degradation, but most of them thoughtfully and reasonably. In time they arranged themselves under heads, the occupations represented by the various respondents being over seventy. They were chiefly above the ordinary domestic in intelligence and education, their employments being of every order from paper-box making to typewriting and stenography. But the trades predominated, American being the nationality most largely represented, Irish born in this country ranking next, and German and a sprinkling of other nationalities following. These replies are precisely of the same nature as those given some months ago, during an investigation made by the head of one of the first guilds for working-women established in this country, objections being practically the same at whatever point they may be given. They were arranged under different heads and numbered in order.

In the present case it seems well to take the individual testimony, each girl whose verdict is chosen representing a class and being really its mouthpiece.

First on the list stands Margaret M., an American, twenty-three years old and for five years in a paper-box factory. Seven others nodded their assent, or added a word here and there as she gave her view. Two of them were Irish-Americans who had had some years in the public schools.

"It's freedom that we want when the day's work is done. I know some nice girls, Bridget's cousins, that make more money and dress better and everything for being in service. They're waitresses and have Thursday afternoon out and part of every other Sunday. But they're never sure of one minute that's their own when they're in the house. Our day is ten hours long, but when it's done it's done, and we can do what we like with the evenings. That's what I've heard from every nice girl that ever tried service. You're never sure that your soul's your own, except when you are out of the house, and I couldn't stand that a day. Women care just as much for freedom as men do. Of course they don't get so much, but I know I'd fight for mine."

"Women are always harder on women than men are," said a fur-sewer, an intelligent American about thirty. "I got tired of always sitting and took a place as chambermaid. The work was all right and the wages good, but I'll tell you what I couldn't stand. The cook and the waitress were just common, uneducated Irish, and I had to room with one and stand the personal habits of both, and the way they did at table took all my appetite. I couldn't eat, and began to run down, and at last I gave notice and told the truth when I was asked why. The lady just looked at me astonished. 'If you take a servant's place you can't expect to be one of the family,' she said. 'I never asked it,' I said. 'All I ask is a chance at common decency.' 'It will be difficult to find an easier place than this,' she said, and I knew it, but ease one way was hardness another, and she couldn't see that I had any right to complain. That's one trouble in the way. It's the mixing up of things, and mistresses don't think how they would feel in the same place."

Third came an Irish-American whose mother had been cook for years in one family, but who had, after a few months of service, gone into a jute mill, followed gradually by five sisters.

"I hate the very words service and servant," she said. "We came to this country to better ourselves, and it's not bettering to have anybody ordering you round."

"But you are ordered in the mill."

"That's different. A man knows what he wants and doesn't go beyond it, but a woman never knows what she wants and sort of bosses you everlastingly. If there was such a thing as fixed hours it might be different, but I tell every girl I know: "Whatever you do, don't go into service. You'll always be prisoners and always looked down on. You can do things at home for them as belongs to you, that somehow it seems different to do for strangers. Anyway I hate it, and there's plenty like me."

"What I minded," said a gentle, quiet girl who worked at a stationer's, and who had tried household service for a year, "What I minded was the awful lonesomeness. I went for general housework because I knew all about it, and there were only three in the family. I never minded being alone evenings in my own room, for I'm always reading or something and I don't go out hardly at all; but then I always know I can, and that there is somebody to talk to if I like. But there, except to give orders, they had nothing to do with me. It got to feel sort of crushing at last. I cried myself sick, and at last I gave it up, though I don't mind the work at all. I know there are good places; but the two I tried happened to be about alike, and I shan't try again. There are a good many would feel just the same."

"Oh, nobody need to tell me about poor servants," said an energetic woman of forty, Irish-American, and for years in a shirt factory. "Don't I know the way the hussies'll do, comin' out of a bog maybe an' not knowing the names even, let alone the use of half the things in the kitchen, and asking their twelve and fourteen dollars a month! Don't I know it well, an' the shame it is to 'em, but I know plenty o' decent, hard-workin' girls too that give good satisfaction, and this is what they say. They say the main trouble is the mistresses don't know no more than babies what a day's work really is. A smart girl keeps on her feet all the time to prove she isn't lazy, for if the mistress finds her sitting down she thinks there can't be much to do and that she doesn't earn her wages. Then if the girl tries to save herself or is deliberate, they call her slow. They want girls on tap from 6 in the morning till 10 and 11 at night. 'Tisn't fair. And then, if there's a let-up in the work maybe they give you the baby to see to. I like a nice baby, but I don't like having one turned over to me when I'm fit to drop scrabbling to get through and sit down a bit. I've naught to say for the girls that's breaking things and half doing the work. They're a shameful set and ought to be put down somehow, but it's a fact that the most I've known in service have been another sort that stayed long in places and hated change. There's many a good place, too, but the bad ones outnumbers 'em. Women make hard mistresses, and I say again I'd rather be under a man that knows what he wants. That's the way with most."

"I don't see why people are surprised that we don't rush into places," said a shop-girl. "Our world may be a very narrow world, and I know it is, but for all that it's the only one we've got, and right or wrong we're out of it if we go into service. A teacher or cashier or anybody in a store, no matter if they have got common sense, doesn't want to associate with servants. Somehow you get a sort of smooch. Young men think and say, for I have heard lots of them: 'Oh, she can't amount to much if she hasn't brains enough to make a living outside of a kitchen.' You're just down once for all if you go into one."

"I don't agree with you at all," said a young teacher who had come with her. "The people that hire you go into kitchens and are not disgraced. What I felt was, for you see I tried it, that they oughtn't to make me go into livery. I was worn out with teaching and so I concluded to try being a nurse for a while. I found two hard things; one, that I was never free for an hour from the children, for I took meals and all with them, and any mother knows what a rest it is to go quite away from them, even for an hour: and the other was that she wanted me to wear the nurse's cap and apron. She was real good and kind, but when I said, 'Would you like your sister, Miss Louise, to put on cap and apron when she goes out with them?' she got very red and straightened up. 'It's a very different matter,' she said. 'You must not forget that in accepting a servant's place you accept a servant's limitations.' That finished me. I loved the children, but I said: 'If you have no other thought of what I am to the children than that, I had better go.' I went, and she put a common, uneducated Irish girl in my place. I know a good many who would take nurses' places, and who are sensible enough not to want to push into the family life. But the trouble is that almost every one wants to make a show, and it's more stylish to have the nurse in a cap and apron, and so she is ordered into them."

"I've tried it," said one who had been a dressmaker and found her health going from long sitting. "My trouble was, no conscience as to hours, and I believe you'll find that is at the bottom one of the chief objections. My first employer was a smart, energetic woman, who had done her own work when she was first married and knew what it meant, or you'd think she might have known. But she had no more thought for me than if I'd been just a machine. She'd sit in her sitting-room on the second floor and ring for me twenty times a day to do little things, and she wanted me up till 11 to answer the bell, for she had a great deal of company. I had a good room and everything nice, and she gave me a great many things, but I'd have spared them all if only I could have had a little time to myself. I was all worn out, and at last I had to go. There was another reason. I had no place but the kitchen to see my friends. I was thirty years old and as well born and well educated as she, and it didn't seem right. The mistresses think it's all the girl's fault, but I've seen enough to know that women haven't found out what justice means, and that a girl knows it many a time better than her employer. Anyway, you couldn't make me try it again."

"My trouble was," said another, who had been in a cotton mill and gone into the home of one of the mill-owners as chambermaid, "I hadn't any place that I could be alone a minute. We were poor at home and four of us worked in the mill, but I had a little room all my own, even if it didn't hold much. In that splendid big house the servants' room was over the kitchen, hot and close in summer and cold in winter, and four beds in it. We five had to live there together, with only two bureaus and a bit of a closet, and one wash-stand for all. There was no chance to keep clean, or your things in nice order, or anything by yourself, and I gave up. Then I went into a little family and tried general housework, and the mistress taught me a great deal and was good and kind; only there the kitchen was a dark little place and my room like it, and I hadn't an hour in anything that was pleasant and warm. A mistress might see, you'd think, when a girl was quiet and fond of her home, and treat her different from the kind that destroy everything, but I suppose the truth is, they're worn out with that kind and don't make any difference. It's hard to give up your whole life to somebody else's orders, and always feel as if you was looked at over a wall like, but so it is and you won't get girls to try it till, somehow or other, things are different."

Last on the record we shall use to-day came a young woman born in Pennsylvania in a fairly well-to-do farmer's house.

"I like housework," she said. "There's nothing suits me so well. We girls never had any money nor mother either, and so I went into a water-cure near the Gap and stayed awhile. Now the man that run it believed in all being one family. He called the girls helpers and he fixed things so't each one had some time to herself every day, and he tried to teach 'em all sorts of things. The patients were cranky to wait on, but you felt as if you was a human being anyhow and had a chance. Well, I watched things and I said it was discouraging sure enough. I tried to do a square day's work, but two-thirds of 'em there shirked whenever they could; half did things and then lied to cover their tracks. I was there nine months, and I learned better'n ever I knew before how folks ought to live on this earth. And I said to myself the fault wasn't so much in the girls, that hadn't ever been taught; it was in them that didn't know enough to teach 'em. A girl thought it was rather pretty an' independent and showed she was somebody to sling dishes on the table, and never say ma'am nor sir, and dress up afternoons an' make believe they hadn't a responsibility on earth. They hadn't sense enough to do anything first-rate, for nobody had ever put any decent ambition into 'em. It isn't to do work well. It's to get somehow to a place where there won't be any more work. So I say that it's the way of living and thinking that's all wrong, and that as soon as you get it ciphered out and plain before you that any woman, high or low, is a mean sneak that doesn't do everything in the best way she can possibly learn, and that doesn't try to help everybody to feel just so, why things would stop being crooked and folks would get along well enough. Don't you think so?"

How far the energetic speaker had solved the problem must be left to the reader for whom there are still certain unconsidered phases, all making part of the arraignment, scouted by those who are served, but more and more distinct and formidable in the mind of the server.

# SOME BUSY AMERICANS.

## NOTES OF WHAT THEY ARE AT WORK UPON.

When Assistant Postmaster-General A. D. Hazen was recently in New-York he spoke somewhat exultingly about savings that had been made in his branch of the Post Office Department in the cost of supplies, notably postage stamps. The cost of the last yearly supply to the Government was about $130,000. The contracts are of four years' duration. This year the cost, even with the increased number of stamps used, will be only about $100,000. The country uses hundreds of millions of stamps annually. The Government postage stamps years ago were printed in Philadelphia, the cost being 18 cents per thousand. It was gradually cut down by competition until by the last contract it was about 10 cents. The present contract price is a trifle over 6 cents. Thereby hangs a tale. The Bureau of Engraving and Printing in the Treasury Department was for a long time barred from competing for this work in the Post Office Department. Under Secretary Folger the Bureau secured the privilege of offering bids. This brought another competitor into the field, and when the day arrived for making the awards a triangular fight seemed imminent. The American Bank Note Company, the Homer Lee Bank Note Company, and a Bureau representative were present when the Postmaster-General received the bids. Bidders for Government work have generally four or five bids prepared at different prices and put in at the last moment the one which judgment dictates may be the lowest. The Homer Lee Bank Note Company had recently carried off by competition the Government work of printing the postal notes, and when its representative boldly handed a large envelope to the Postmaster-General, the other bidders made haste to put in their powest bids. When the Lee envelope was opened it was found to contain only a letter to the Postmaster-General, inquiring about certain specifications and details of the work. The other bidders were "paralyzed" and indignant, as they had cut away under cost, but the lowest bid was accepted and thus the total saving of $120,000 for four years of which Mr. Hazen boasted was effected.

While the saving to the Government has been comparatively large, there has been a perceptible decline in the quality of the work, which is in keeping with the reputed saving in other departments of the Government. There seems, indeed, to be an idea prevalent in the several departments that cheapness is preferable to excellence. This is not an idea which will stand with the public. This is a nation of letter-writers. Postage stamps carry American letters to every nation on the globe. The character and quality of a postage stamp are in some measure a means by which to judge the Government that emits it. In this direction the Government might suffer more simply in loss of good opinion among the peoples of the globe by poor quality of work than the saving of $30,000 a year for four years would in any sense repay. This applies somewhat to every class of Government certificates, as well as stamps.

In a talk the other day with ex-Governor Cameron, of Virginia, he referred to two large industries of his State by saying that Virginia raises more peanuts than wheat and that sumac gathering has assumed a leading position as an industry. The sumac grows wild and is gathered by the colored people at a time of the year when they have nothing else to do. They pick the blossoms in great bags which they carry to the cities where the sumac is dried and pulverized for chemical and medicinal uses. At Petersburg, Virginia, which is the centre of the sumac growth, the production amounts to a million dollars a year.

A man with "an idea" who is going up and down New-York trying to put it into permanent execution is ex-Congressman E. Moody Boynton, of Newburyport, Massachusetts. His project is a single track railroad to be run by an engine built on the principle of a bicycle. He has worked the plan out in minute details and claims to be able to demonstrate its practicability to the last degree. Mr. Boynton is a spare man with coal black whiskers and black eyes. He wears an overcoat trimmed with beaver fur and a silk hat. He talks more words in a minute than the best stenographer would care to undertake to reproduce. Years ago he invented what are known as lightning saws, which were serrated and filed so that they cut both coming and going. He made a fortune out of the invention but lost it in unfortunate business relations. His wife is wealthy in her own name and their home at Newburyport is one of the finest in that part of New-England. The Emperor of Brazil was a guest there on his visit to this country. Mr. Boynton boasts of having been privately presented to Queen Victoria years ago. He was elected to Congress once by the Greenback and Labor vote and is still an intense advocate of the theories of Greenbackers.

Homer Loughlin, of the East Liverpool potteries, says that the manufacturers of chinaware in this country have recently been gratified by the discovery of beds of kaolin in Texas of a finer quality than anything that they have heretofore used in producing porcelain bodies. Colonel Baker, of Texas, tells this story about the discovery of the kaolin in that State—which reads like a fairy romance. On the tower of the old cathedral at San Antonio, Texas, is to be seen an arrow pointing to the northwest. Tradition says that it points to an old silver mine which is known to have existed many years ago, when Mexicans and Spaniards used to bring into San Antonio bars of silver ore, weighing from forty to sixty pounds. There are many of these old abandoned mines within a radius of 150 miles from San Antonio where the priests had fortified convents, and worked the mines with Mexicans. This pointer upon the cathedral is supposed to indicate the direction to a mine of immense value, and the manuscript regarding it, it is said, may be found in the archives of the church. For years past miners have been searching for this mine, the location of which was kept a secret, owing to the depredations of the hostile Indian tribes in possession of the country. Recently while prospecting for silver in the direction alluded to, some miners discovered the deposits of kaolin, or decomposed feldspar. It is better known as Chinese white. In appearance it looks like snow-white coal. There is also a vein of a beautiful pink ore; also another of blue. Six shafts have already been sunk and a large quantity has been raised to the surface.

In a talk with Mr. Loughlin and Colonel Baker, it was mentioned that fine clays of the character discovered in Texas are imported from Europe for use in the manufacture of white papers, as well as porcelain. The most famous porcelain works in the world are at Sevres, in France. The manufacture of pottery ware has grown rapidly in this country under the Protective Tariff from five or six potteries in 1861 to more than eighty at the present time. Trenton, New-Jersey, is perhaps the largest single city engaged in the pottery business. The largest number of workingmen is employed in the East Liverpool region in Ohio, but Greenpoint, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New-Orleans and Indianapolis are becoming large producers of porcelain ware. They have been handicapped by the necessity of going abroad for the best kaolin.

Chairman Hogeboom of the Assembly committee that was investigating the coal strike was asked if they had been able to get any definite information from the strikers with reference to the alleged evils of which they complained when the strike was begun. Mr. Hogeboom replied: "We had a large number of witnesses from among the laboring men but after we had heard two of them we might just as well have dispensed with the others as their relation was the same throughout. I think the investigation had a good effect in showing how strikes are started without a full appreciation or understanding by the men of the grounds of their complaints."

It is reported that a railroad combination is being formed by which the New-York Central may get direct access to Cincinnati other than over the "Bee Line" and that within a short time a company has been organized to build ninety miles of road from Geneva, N. Y., to a point in Northeastern Ohio which will make the connecting link to secure the desired object. The Ohio roads which would be controlled for this scheme would be the Cleveland, Mount Vernon and Columbus and the Scioto Valley, or if there should be a failure to secure the latter, the project is to build a few miles of the road below Columbus to Washington Court House and thence to go into Cincinnati on the Cincinnati and Northeastern road. The Cincinnati and Northeastern road is at present a narrow gauge but was recently reorganized, and having been originally prepared for the standard gauge is now being converted.

Major B. S. Henning, an old New-Yorker, who has transferred some of his interests in Orange County farms to orange groves in Florida, is a portly man, with a full round face, smooth shaven, except for a large gray mustache. He has two villas in Florida and is enthusiastic about the future of that State. In talking the other day he said: "Ten years ago General Grant after a visit to Florida made the prediction that it would some day be one of the wealthiest States. It took me a long time to understand what he meant. It he had made that prediction of Nevada I could have understood that he was dazzled by the gold and silver mines. It was only after I had spent some time in Florida that I appreciated what he meant. Florida will become the great pleasure ground of this nation, and when that has been accomplished it will accumulate wealth faster than any other portion of the country."

Major Henning declares that the orange growing industry of Florida is one of the most profitable in the world. He declared that the Sear's Grove of six acres near Sanford, Florida, raised oranges for two years in succession which netted $9,000 a year in cash to its owner or at a rate of over $1,500 an acre profit. He was asked incidentally if he had heard of the investment there made by Mrs. T. C. Platt, and he replied by giving some of the particulars of it. Ex-Senator Platt and his wife were in Florida two years ago on a visit to Major Henning. In going about the State they went among other places to see a grove on Lake Harris which contained about eighteen acres of land. Mrs. Platt became very much impressed with the beauty of the place and its probable productiveness and made overtures to the owner for its purchase. The house in which Senator Platt lived at Washington during his Senatorial term was owned by Mrs. Platt, and she had recently sold it. Rather against her husband's judgment she insisted upon buying the Lake Harris orange grove at a cost of $30,000. Major Henning says that it produced this year 4,000 boxes of oranges which he has ascertained will sell for two dollars a box, or $8,000 income on a $30,000 investment.

# WAGNER'S TRAITS AND WORK

## REMINISCENCES BY HERR ANTON SEIDE.

Anton Seidl, who yesterday closed a brilliant period of two seasons as conductor at the Metropolitan Opera House, and who will now go to Berlin to fill a like position, presumably for life, at the Royal Opera House, should consider himself a fortunate man, if at the age of only thirty-six years an artist who has attained the recognition which Herr Seidl has met in this country as well as abroad is to be esteemed fortunate, and if he also possess, as Herr Seidl surely does, the hearty good will and affection of all colaborers with whom he has been associated.

Herr Seidl was born in Buda-Pesth in 1850. He is a trifle under medium height, compactly built, of dignified demeanor and his face shows a singular combination of youth, perspicacity, calm and inflexible determination, and strength of character; lines which betoken a hard student, a philosopher with a kindly leaning toward the truly good things of earth, and, especially noteworthy, a countenance which has behind it a huge reserve force, which is expressive in the silence of the tongue and which carries the impression that the man could open his mouth and tell a vast deal.

Herr Seidl is particularly noted among his associates for his quietness and his absolute freedom from ostentation. He likes to listen to others and it is clear that he is "taking it all in." When his time to do the talking comes he is ready and he does it effectually. His calmness expands into geniality among friends and into an electric carrying power with the orchestra. Musicians like to be led by him, for his concentrated force permeates the orchestra and makes it enthusiastic in its work when Conductor Seidl leads.

Herr Seidl dresses with great care, yet with simplicity. He wears glasses and his long raven locks are put carefully back above his ears, only falling in disorder when he gives way to the charm of the baton. The conductor is living at No. 108 West Thirty-eighth-st., and there recently he entered into conversation about the personal traits of Richard Wagner, his manner of composing, and particularly spoke of his genius as a conductor. Herr Seidl evidently gave some interesting truths about himself. He said:

It was in my twentieth year that I resolved to adopt music as a profession. I had studied music from childhood, having a natural aptitude for it, and in the mere matter of pianoforte playing had made sufficient progress at twelve years of age to appear in public concerts. I had finished the usual high-school and university studies when I made up my mind to earn a livelihood with music. I now went to Leipsic and entered the Conservatory, where for a year and a half I studied counterpoint and composition zealously. Then Hans Richter went to Pesth as Kapellmeister and I left the conservatory to become his pupil. I studied the works of Wagner and Beethoven with him and took lessons in the art of conducting. In 1872 I went with him to Bayreuth to attend the ceremony of laying the cornerstone of the Wagner theatre. The impressions made on my mind on that occasion were so tremendous that I resolved at any cost to get near to Wagner. The opportunity offered much quicker than I expected. At the cornerstone laying Wagner said to Richter:

"'Send me a young musician who can carry out my intentions and aid in the musical work essential to the preparations for my 'Nibelungen' representations."

Richter asked me whether I was minded to live and study a few years in Bayreuth. Of course I leaped for joy at the prospect, and after a few months more of study I went to Bayreuth in the autumn of 1872. The six years during which I lived in the house and near to Wagner will never be forgotten by me; they determined my whole future. My mode of thought, the manner in which thenceforward I conceived everything, the vigor with which, thereafter, I attacked everything, all had their origin in that gracious and blessed house, where, with the utmost simplicity and naturalness, all strove continually for the loftiest and most ideal in life and art. The companionship of that great, era-making man was so fascinating that all who had the good fortune to be able to gaze upon him in the last few remaining years of his life, agree that in him God created one of his greatest men. When I came to Bayreuth the master was still engaged on the composition of "Die Gotterdammerung." He had just finished the sketch of the last scene of the third act. On one of the first evenings a few friends were gathered together, when Wagner, carrying his composition in a portfolio under his arm, entered the room, bowed with mock solemnity, and modesty to the company and begged their kind indulgence and mild judgment on the new work. Then with a comically serious face he seated himself at the piano and the reading began. Enlivening episodes like this happened by the thousands and mark the natural, merry, scintillant and witty manner of the master when in the midst of his friends and disciples. On the occasion in question I enjoyed the first privilege vouchsafed to mortal man to hear the mighty, cataclysmic sounds of the funeral music and the broad, world redeeming harmonies of "Brunhilde's" last address in the "Gotterdammerung."

It is impossible to speak with certainty about Wagner's manner of composing. He often laughed heartily when telling about some composer, whom he had visited, and found with a long pipe in his mouth engaged in completing a symphony, and who had complacently shown his composition, turning backward and forward among the pages and crying out while designating certain passages: "Here there is quiet; now it grows angry; now it is becoming dramatic; here I let loose a thunderbolt; here we begin the down grade; and now quiet again," the last word coming through a cloud of tobacco smoke. It is not necessary to say that Wagner could never compose in this manner. A glance into his scores will disclose the exalted seriousness with which he approached his task and the supercarthly regions in which he soared when he created his ideal characters. By the time that he had written the poem of his drama (during the work on which, of course, much of the music was originated in his mind) he had already noted down a great number of the musical thoughts upon loose pieces of music paper. These notes he made in pencil and there must be a vast number of them in existence which are being anxiously saved for late posterity by Frau Cosima Wagner. She has gradually gone over all of them with ink, otherwise the majority of them would have become illegible. Only a few can boast of having received one of these little sketches as souvenirs or reward from the master in some moment of peculiarly good humor.

After a considerable space had intervened since the completion of the poem and he had given himself wholly up to its musical spirit, he was not to be seen in his family circle until 2 o'clock in the afternoon. From 5 o'clock in the morning until 2 in the afternoon he worked almost without interruption; sometimes even longer. After dinner he rested, either taking a walk in the open air or attending to his private correspondence. This lasted until 7 o'clock, when supper was eaten. Then the whole family met in the music-room to pass the time till 11 or 12 o'clock with music alternating with conversation and the reading of essays. These evenings form the subjects of the most vivid recollections of my life. In one of them it was often possible for me to learn more than all the conservatories or great musicians could offer. To hear the master on occasions like this talk about Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Weber, Marschner, Spontini, or Aeber and Rossini, explain their music, occasionally illustrating what he said at the pianoforte or by singing, dissect their styles, or appreciate them by the power of his own genius, was so instructive and so amazing to me that I saw everything in a strange, magical sort of light and my understanding of such masters, for instance, as Bach, Beethoven, and Weber, took a course whose existence I had never even suspected, but from which I will never swerve. That this course is the only correct one to follow in the interpretation of the works of these masters is proven by the success of Wagner and Von Bulow in the production of Beethoven's works with the entire cultured portion of the public. I followed it, too, in my concerts. This mode of interpretation is not an arbitrary or accidental distortion of the tempi, but the product of ripe, thorough and minute study of the compositions. I am ready to advocate and defend all that I undertake in this respect.

I am convinced that Beethoven never made any metronome music and that consequently his symphonies are not to be played according to the metronome. We have too many proofs of his manner of conducting not to have firm ground for believing that although Beethoven put many more marks of expression in his music than Mozart, for instance, he nevertheless left the greater part of the question of interpretation with the conductor. Naturally to play "in tempo" is the simplest way to get along with Beethoven, but a conductor who has grown up under the musico-educational influences of to-day would be ashamed to stand before an intelligent orchestra as a wooden time beater. Let us leave this to the members of the classic "Moderation Society." Undoubtedly the "moderate" conductor had his justification in earlier days when Beethoven's spirit had not yet been grounded and the conductors performed his symphonies less often than they do now. But when performances became more numerous, understanding with the works became more widespread, it came to be expected that the conductor would take a little firmer hold of the business in hand, especially that there should be style in his performance and that he should demonstrate his tempo. I have been very much amused by a recent occurrence. Those who have heard the "Leonore" overture under my direction will share with me the conviction that this jubilation over the reunited husband and wife can well stand a stormy Allegro. The tempestuous outbreak of conjugal love which sweeps before it all barriers can not be imagined in a moderate, circumspect tempo, chosen for the sake simply of sensuous tonal beauty. But the very fact that with my stormy tempo I achieved the popular success that I wanted was sufficient to persuade a conductor of otherwise excellent qualities, when he gave the overture not long after, to take the tempo even slower than had been his wont. The musicians were startled and expressed their surprise, but the conductor declared that he had good reasons for now taking the time as indicated. Well, this presupposes a very flexible musical conscience or none at all.

But I intended to speak of Wagner, not of small people. Whoever saw Wagner conduct the "Eroica" in Vienna, in 1872, will remember the half-hour's jubilation on the part of the public which this performance inspired. The same thing happened when he performed the C minor symphony in Berlin, in 1873, with an orchestra composed of musicians who had been picked up all over and had never played together before. Here was a proof of his genius as a conductor. The performance made an impression which is indescribable. All were carried off their feet by the power and weightiness with which he infused this dramatic masterpiece of symphonic writing.

As a conductor, technically and intellectually, Wagner can surely be given the highest place. He ruled the musicians completely with his gestures—yes, even sometimes with his eyes alone. He lifted them up into the fairy realms of his imagination, and confided tasks to them which they had never before thought of. He inflamed them with his fiery eyes; an energetic sweep of his baton would bring out a heavy chord from his orchestra such as had never before been heard from it; the oboe player suddenly found himself able to play the so-called cadence in the first movement of the C minor symphony with a seemingly infinite breath and a sobbing tenderness which made one think he was listening to an entirely new phrase. In one of the rehearsals before the "Nibelungen" festival in Bayreuth, the oboe player declared that he could not conquer the technical difficulties offered by a passage in the first act of "Siegfried," but a word of encouragement and explanation of the proper mode of delivering the phrase cleared away all difficulties to the complete satisfaction of the master. The side-drummer in the Philadelphia Centennial march gave out a triplet figure which occurs very often in a somewhat careless manner; a glance from Wagner and a sharp accentuation of the rhythm from his left hand brought the man to rights without an interruption of the orchestra. He could charm as ravishing a piano out of the brass instruments as out of a violin; and to extract a pianissimo simultaneously from all the instruments of the orchestra was the most wonderful feature of his conducting. He was able to initiate the musicians in the mein of a composition without superfluous words; a sententious comparison, a witty remark would throw more light on Wagner's intentions than whole books which have been written about the controverted passages. In fact he was an enemy of many words; deeds were his demonstrations. His attitude before an orchesta was like that of a general, firm, sure, energetic; he did not shrink up to dwarf's size at a piano, nor jump up like a bird of prey at a forte, but seemed always a piece of majesty conducting, or rather composing the music. Only the muscles of the face the expression of the eyes, the angles of the mouth played the orchestral piece along with the musicians, and reflected the entire contents of the composition, and it was for this reason that the musicians learned his wishes so quickly. They were always in a state of enthusiasm and his witticisms thrown out in the pauses kept them continually in a state of good humor throughout the longest and most wearying rehersals.

# THE THEATRES.

## GOSSIP OF THE WEEK.

Mr. Wallack determined before leaving the city for Florida to alter the date on which he had arranged to close his season. As matters now stand Colonel John A. McCaull will take possession of the theatre for his summer season on May 9 instead of May 2. This extra week will be utilized by Mr. Wallack for the production of an old comedy which will be added to the repertory when his company begins its short travelling tour. It is worthy of remark that Mr. Wallack will, for the first week of May, have the only recognized stock company playing in New-York. On May 2 Mr. Daly and Mr. Palmer both open in Boston; on May 2 Nat Goodwin opens in Philadelphia and on the same date Miss Helen Dauvray begins a tour weeks' travelling season. Harrigan starts out on his journey to San Francisco by way of Brooklyn on that day and Em ner will have closed his engagement at the Standard Theatre. In fact the beginning of May marks definitely the close of the regular New-York season.

Colonel McCaull is sanguine as to the success of "Lorraine" at the Star Theatre to-morrow night. He considers Dellinger's new opera his masterpiece. The libretto is of the usual German order, inclining somewhat to the sentimental, but affording a good opportunity for De Wolf Hopper, the comedian.

Mr. Suetson is as keenly alive as any one to the more patent defects of "Ruddygore," but maintains that they are of such a nature as to be easily eradicable. Among those in his Philadelphia cast are Digby Bell, Hoff, DeAngelis, Laura Joyce and Miss Drew. The latter is a younger daughter of Mrs. John Drew of Philadelphia and is described as clever.

Colonel McCaull was asked recently as to the report that he is likely to have a New-York theatre in the near future. "I shall certainly not have one next year," said he, "for I am not ready for it; but I cannot say what will be the case the year after. Of existing theatres there is only one house I would take and that is unattainable. I mean Wallack's, which I look upon as the best theatre in every respect in New-York."

Richard Mansfield has met with even more success at the Union Square than he expected when he brought back "Prince Karl" after last summer's protracted run to a theatre which has latterly not harbored many successes. Every night last week the house was crowded. On Washington's Birthday, of course, the theatre was packed. "Prince Karl" will be continued until the close of the engagement and seats have already been booked far into the third week. Mr. Mansfield is not idle, though no piece is in actual rehearsal. He is studying his new dual part in "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," with which he expects to open his season at the Madison Square Theatre should he decide to spend his summer there. As may be supposed, this part is an arduous one, much of its effect probably, depending on the artistic execution of subtle details marking the difference and yet the similarity of the two characters. Referring to "Prince Karl" again it may be mentioned that A. C. Gunther, the author, complains that he has been accused of having originally written the play as a serious drama, and that on its failure in this form it was turned by Mr. Mansfield into burlesque. Mr. Gunther avers that it was copyrighted as a comedy, read to Mr Mansfield as a comedy, rehearsed as a comedy, and made a success at the Boston Museum as a comedy. This may be perfectly true, but it may be added that it was not until the play had been extensively altered and a new last act written that it succeeded in New-York.

Henry Arthur Jones is expected to arrive here today or to-morrow and will bring with him the manuscript of "A Noble Vagabond," the play now running at the Princess's Theatre, London. On Mr. Palmer's desk yesterday lay the manuscript of "Hard Hit." "I have just finished reading it," said Mr. Palmer, "and it is a thoroughly well written play."

The revival of "Peg Woffington" by Miss Dauvray still attracts large audiences to the Lyceum Theatre, and it is thought likely that the piece will reach its fiftieth night before a change of bill is necessary. Elaborate preparations are, however, being made for the production of the new play which has been in rehearsal for several weeks. It is to be called "Walda Lamar," and is of more serious import than anything Miss Dauvray has yet attempted. In order to strengthen the cast young Salvini has been engaged by permission of A. M. Palmer. Miss Ida Vernon will also be in the cast.

The four burlesques now forming the larger portion of the programme at Dockstader's have proved so successful that no serious change will be made there for this week. Professor Parker and his trained "dog and cat circus" will form an additional attraction.

W. H. Gillette is probably making enough to supply a little more than bread and cheese. Last week he played in Boston with A. M. Palmer's company in the "Private Secretary," having a direct and large interest in the profits. At the same time his play of "Held by the Enemy" was being played at the Boston Museum by the stock company of that theatre. On Washington's Birthday the receipts of the "Private Secretary," were: Matinee, $1,322 70; evening, $1,324 50. "Held by the Enemy" drew $1,117 30 in the morning, and $1,172 85 in the evening. Thus Mr. Gillette drew a percentage on $4,937 35—one day's receipts. In addition to this his own company is doing excellent business in "Held by the Enemy" on the road, so that his income is certainly not far short of $2,000 this week.

Washington Irving Bishop, who begins to-night a short series of Sunday evening entertainments at Wallack's, has arranged with the Randall Theatrical Bureau to give fifty lectures throughout the country. It is hoped by his managers that this evening he will out do any attempt he has hitherto made at thought-reading under difficulties. The old test of reading the numbers on a bank-note concealed in an envelope is to be undertaken, and a wager of $250 is said to have been made that Mr. Bishop will not correctly perform it. The amount is to be paid by the loser to the Actors' Fund. During this week Mr. Bishop will appear in Brooklyn, Orange, Plainfield and other neighboring places and next Sunday will give his second exhibition at Wallack's. He will soon afterward start on a tour of the county which will extend as far as Mexico, South America and California.

Charles Frohman is making preparations for a busy season at the end of this and the beginning of next year. He is going to devote himself to the handling of several important productions, controlling them entirely himself. Among these are two English pieces, "Shadows and Sunshine," and "The Faithful Heart," as well as Belasco and Green's play, "Under the Polar Star," which was produced last season in San Francisco. Next week the authors will finish their play for Lotta and will then make the alterations deemed advisable in the "Polar Star." Mr. Frohman has an interest in all McKee Rankin's plays so that his hands will be fairly well filled. He has disposed of "The Great Pink Pearl" to Daniel Frohman in order to devote his entire attention to these other matters. Should he not be able to arrange New-York openings for all of these pieces he will produce some of them first in Boston or Chicago.

John M. Morton, for whose benefit a performance has been arranged for this evening at the Union Square Theatre, is sadly in need of the helping hands so kindly held out. He has been growing blind and the doctors give him no hope of anything less than total blindness. An attractive programme is anticipated, for among those who have offered to appear are Mrs. D. P. Bowers, Miss Rose Coghlan, Miss Nellie McHenry, Miss Lillie Grubb, Miss Lois Fuller, Joseph Wheelock, Eben Plympton, N. C. Goodwin, Nate Salsbury, John Webster and Marshall P. Wilder.

# CURRENT ANECDOTES.

*NOT THE SAME.*
*From Drake's Travellers' Magazine.*

The children whom "THE TRIBUNE Fresh Air Fund" sends to the country are less noted for their good manners than for their well-developed faculty of observation.

A lady in the western part of New-York State—the wife of a minister—entertained a youngster from the Fourth Ward during his stay in the country.

One evening after the "Fresh Air" boy had been with her about a week, the lady invited a number of people to tea.

The guests had seated themselves at the table, and the blessing had been asked, when the member from the Fourth Ward picked up his shining silver tea knife, eyed it keenly, and remarked:

"We ain't never had dese knives on before."

"Hush, James," said the hostess, blushing slightly.

"Hush, me eye!" retorted James; "you can't play no snide racket on me"—then, glancing around the table—"You got dese silver knives on jis because dese udder blokes is